Kente Cloth

VITAL INFORMATION

Subject(s): Language Arts (English), Social Studies

Objective(s):
1. Students will be able to discuss the importance of cloth weaving in West Africa.
2. Students will be able to apply what they have learned to write an informative magazine article about strip weaving and Kente cloth.

Purpose:
The purpose of this lesson is for students to read about the cultural importance of African arts and crafts. In many places in Africa south of the Sahara, craftspeople continue to practice traditional crafts for local use, for the tourist trade, and for export. In this lesson students will learn about West African strip weaving and the making of Kente cloth. They will read several articles and study many drawings and photographs to gain in-depth knowledge about the production of this popular textile form.

Prerequisite Skills: None

Grade Level: 9-12

Materials: Computer, printer, highlighters, pen, pencil, paper.

Anticipatory Set:
Teacher: "I had the pleasure of traveling to Ghana, West Africa this summer. On the table in the front of the room, you will see some of the Kente products that were handwoven at the Kente Village that I visited while I was there. I have several purses, a neck tie, photographs of the looms used in the process, head cloths, and a pillow."

Teacher: "Traditional African arts and crafts have influenced art throughout the world. Contemporary African textiles, such as Kente cloth, and African motifs often show up on city streets in North America. West Africans use small strip looms to weave narrow strips of fabric which they sew together to make large pieces of cloth. In this activity, you will learn more about the weavers, the cloth, and the traditional patterns. You will also be able to study many photographs that will help you learn about West African textiles."
Teacher: "In today's lesson, you will read several articles about West African strip weaving of Kente cloth. You will learn about the cultural context in which strip weaving occurs. You will be able to study many photographs covering both the weaving process and the finished results. You will also read about a master weaver from Ghana and view a book that he has co-authored. You will answer four questions about your reading and then compose an informative magazine article about strip weaving and Kente cloth."

Teacher: "Now, let's look at some of the photographs that I took while in Ghana. Pass them around, and have a discussion about what you see in these still photographs."
Check for Understanding: Teacher: "Who can tell me what they think the first step of the Kente weaving process is, based on the ten photographs you have seen?" "Let's walk through the different steps of the weaving process together."

Guided Practice: Teacher: Using the Smartboard, the teacher goes to the AfricanCraft.com website. She clicks on "Articles" in the menu. Browse through the articles, beginning with the slide show "West African Strip-Cloth Weaving." She reads an article, and instructs the students to read all of the remaining articles, including the children's book.

Teacher: Return to the main screen, and then click on "Craftspeople." Click on "Gilbert 'Bobbo' Ahiagble, Ewe Kente Weaver, Ghana." Read about Mr. Ahiagble.

Teacher: Click on "Portfolio" and "Photos in the menu at the left of the page and browse the pages.

Teacher: "Using the information you gathered while browsing the site, you will answer a few questions."

Closure: Teacher: "Who can tell me three steps in the Kente weaving process?"

Teacher: "Who can tell me where the Kente strips are woven?"

Teacher: "Who can tell me the name of a Master weaver from Ghana, West Africa?"

Teacher: "Good job! I knew you would get this!"

Independent Practice: Teacher: Using the information you gathered while browsing the site, answer the following questions:

1. How does Ashanti folk hero Anansi figure in the history of strip-weaving? Who normally uses strip weaving looms in West Africa?

2. List products made by strip weavers. Why do people often prefer these products to goods made using imported cloth?

3. What do the butterfly and the parrot symbolize when they are used in Kente cloth?

4. How has Gilbert "Bobbo" Ahiagble spread knowledge about Kente cloth outside Ghana?

Enrichment: 1. A master weaver from Ghana will visit your community in several weeks. He will visit schools and speak to local groups, demonstrating the weaving of Kente cloth using a strip loom. Write an article on Kente cloth and strip weaving for your local newspaper's Sunday magazine. Your article should answer the following questions: What is Kente cloth? What is strip weaving? Where is it done? Who does the weaving? How do the weavers make the cloth? Why do people still make cloth this way? Your article should contain at least five paragraphs and may include graphics or photographs. The article must follow the Six Traits of Writing.

Remediation: For students who struggle with finding the answers to the questions, they will be paired with another student, or they will be allowed to work in groups.

Standard(s):

AZ- Arizona Academics Standards

Subject: Social Studies (2006 Final)
Subject/ Grade/ Domain: High School

- **Strand**: Strand 2: World History
  - **Concept**: Concept 9: Contemporary World
    - **Performance Objective**: PO 5. Connect current events with historical events and issues using information from class discussions and various resources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, television, Internet, books, maps).

- **Strand**: Strand 1: American History
  - **Concept**: Concept 10: Contemporary United States
    - **Performance Objective**: PO 1. Describe current events using information from class discussions and various resources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, television, Internet, books, maps).
    - **Performance Objective**: PO 2. Identify the connection between current and historical events and issues using information from class discussions and various resources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, television, Internet, books, maps).

Subject: Language Arts

- **Subject/ Grade/ Domain**: Writing
  - **Grade**: Grade 9
  - **Strand**: Strand 1: Writing Process
    - **Concept**: Concept 5: Publishing
      - Publishing involves formatting and presenting a final product for the intended audience.
      - **Performance Objective PO 1**: Prepare writing that follows a format appropriate for the purpose (e.g., for display, sharing with others, or submitting to a publication).
  - **Strand**: Strand 2: Writing Elements
    - **Concept**: Concept 5: Sentence Fluency
      - Fluency addresses the rhythm and flow of language. Sentences are strong and varied in structure and length.
      - **Performance Objective PO 1**: Use a variety of sentence structures (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex) and lengths to reinforce relationships among ideas and to enhance the flow of the writing.
      - **Performance Objective PO 2**: Show extensive variation in sentence beginnings, lengths, and patterns to enhance the flow of the writing.
      - **Performance Objective PO 3**: Demonstrate a flow that is natural and powerful when read aloud.