A Letter Writing Unit on Ghana

**Grades:** Geared for grades 3-6

**Length of study:** Two weeks

**Academic Standards:** W03-S1C2-P01, 02, 03, 06 / W04-S1C3-P02, 03, 06 or W05-S1C1-P01, 02, 03, 04 (writing and revising); W04-S1C1-P02, 03, 04 (prewriting). W03-S1C4-P01, 02, 03 / W05-S1C4-P01, 02, 03 (editing); W03-S1C5-P04 (publishing)

**Content Objective:** The students will write letters to students in Ghana. Purpose: To develop and improve their writing skills by having a genuine audience and purpose for their writing. A secondary purpose is to introduce the students to and have them interact with people from a different culture.

**Language Objective:** By using resources (dictionary, thesaurus, personal word banks, and class word walls), the student will successfully complete a letter to a student in Ghana that includes a variety of descriptions, sentence lengths, interesting word choice, and correct grammar and conventions.

**Introduction:** The students will see pictures of Ghana that show people, places, and a school. The students will also see artifacts from Ghana that includes drums, clothing, artwork, and woodcarvings. Included in this introductory period will be several books about Ghana. Pictures can be obtained from the Internet that shows various people, places, and artifacts from Ghana.

**Lesson:** After looking at pictures, books, and items from or about Ghana, the students, along with the teacher, generate a list of ideas that can be used in the letters to the students. The students generate a list of questions that they will use to select several questions that will be included in their letters. Finally, the students will develop a list of topics about their lives. They will select several topics about their lives to discuss in the letters.
I Do: The teacher will model the correct form of a letter, including the date, greeting, body, closing, and salutation. The students will be instructed in the correct use of writing conventions (including paragraph breaks), ways to improve sentences by adding descriptive detail and sincere but interesting voice.

We Do: The teacher will start a letter (date, greeting, and first sentence). The students will be encouraged to orally contribute sentences to follow the first sentence. Together, the class will read, edit, and revise the letter in order to make a complete, polished piece of writing that is publication ready.

You Do: The students will work with a partner to write, edit, and revise a letter (each partner will complete their own letter) that is to be sent to a school in Ghana. Prior to the letters being mailed, each student will conference with the teacher regarding the written letter. Letters that still contain errors will be corrected with the teacher’s assistance and the student will have another opportunity to complete a letter.

Assessment: The assessment for this lesson is the completed letter. For those students who have difficulty, sentence frames will be provided. The student will use the sentence frames as the foundations for sentences but will be required to fill in the sentence frames with personal/self selected information and/or word choice.

Closure: The students will select from a variety of items (pencils, erasers, notepads, sticky note pads, stickers, coloring pages and crayons, etc) to be included with their personal letter as a sign of good will and friendship.

ADJEI, ABYNA-ANSAA, Ghana at 50
Personal Pictures
Topics and Questions
(Examples. Each class will develop their own)

Topics:
Lunch at school (type of food)
Surrounding community
Local activities
Daily Life – chores, babysitting siblings, helping with meals
Games
Pets

Questions:
1. What grade are you in?
2. Is school hard in Ghana?
3. Do you have a lot of homework?
4. What is your favorite subject in school?
5. Do you live at the school?
6. Do you get to take fieldtrips to the beach?
7. When is your birthday?
8. What do you want to do when you grow up?
9. What are school lunches like?
10. How many people are in your family?
11. How many people live in your house?
12. Do you have to do chores at home? What chores do you have to do?
13. What is your favorite food?
14. What places do you want to visit when you grow up?
Sentence Stems:

My name is ______ and I am _______ years old. I am a student at ______ and I am in the ______ grade.

In my family, there are _______ girls and _______ boys. I am the ______ child. I also live with ________________________________.

My family and I like to ________________________________.

Unrelated sentence stems:

I like to play ________________.

My favorite sport/game/movie is _________________________________. I like ________________ because _________________________________.

My favorite holiday is _________________________________.

I like Phoenix because _________________________________.

Last year I _________________________________.

I hope that _________________________________.

**Grades:** Geared for grades 3-6

**Length of study:** 2nd concentration of two week time frame.

**Academic Standards:**
- **Elements of Dance:** S1-C3-P0101 (demonstrate moving to a steady beat in different tempos);
- **Relate Social & Cultural Influences:** S2-C2-P0102 (identify meaning, purpose and the roles people play in various social, cultural, and folkdances);
- **Evaluate – Understand dance:** S3-C1-P0105 (evaluate personal reactions/feelings to or about a dance).

**Visual Arts:**
- **S2-C1-P0101:** TSW describe the role that art plays in culture and how it reflects, records, and interacts with history in various times, places, and traditions;
- **S2-C2-P0102:** TSW discuss how art works are used to communicate stories, ideas and emotions;
- **S2-C4-P0101:** TSW judge an artist’s success in communicating meaning or purpose in their artwork; interpret meanings and or purposes of an artwork using subject matter and symbols.

**Content Objective:** The students will learn a common children’s song and the movements for the song and compare the song, its movements and meaning to common songs children sing here the US. The students will also learn some history about the Ashanti people and some of the Adinkra symbols that are commonly used in their art.

**Language Objective:** By using resources (books, pictures, Internet, and viewing artifacts from Ghana), the student will successfully learn and participate in the performance of a dance related to a Ghanaian’s children’s song. The student will also select an Adinkra symbol or two or three that the student feels is representative of the student and place that symbol on a tee-shirt using fabric paint. The student will be able to state the name of the symbol and its meaning correctly and state how or why that symbol(s) was selected.

**Introduction:** The students will see pictures of Ghana that show people, places, and a school. The students will also see artifacts from Ghana that includes drums, clothing, artwork, and woodcarvings. Included in this introductory period will be several books about Ghana.
Pictures can be obtained from the Internet that shows various people, places, and artifacts from Ghana. Students will also visit pre-selected Internet sites in order to view children's songs, lyrics, and dances.

**Lesson:** After looking at pictures, books, and items from or about Ghana, the students, along with the teacher, practice and learn both the lyrics and movements for the song OBWISANA (The Rock Has Crushed My Hand). The students will also learn some of the history of the Ashanti people and see a variety of Adinkra symbols. After the students have learned the song, they will select between one and three Adinkra symbols that they feel represents them and apply those symbols to tee-shirts. The students will then perform the song and dance while wearing their tee-shirts. The students will be able to orally articulate the symbols meanings and name correctly.

**I Do:** The teacher will model the correct pronunciations of the words to the songs and the dance steps. During the discussions about the Adinkra symbols (which will take place on the same days as the song and dance lessons) the teacher will model the correct usage of the symbols in sentences.

**We Do:** The teacher and the students will practice the song lyrics and dance steps together. The teacher and students will practice drawing the Adinkra symbols that are selected to go on the tee-shirts.

**You Do:** The students will apply their self selected Adinkra symbols to their tee-shirts and wear the tee-shirts while performing the song and dance OBWISANA.

**Assessment:** The assessment for this lesson is the participation in the dance and the completed tee-shirt. The students must be able to orally state the meaning of the song, correctly pronounce their self selected Adinkra symbol and give the meaning of the symbol.

**Closure:** The students will select from a variety of items (pencils, erasers, notepads, sticky note pads, stickers, coloring pages and crayons, etc) to be included with their personal letter as a sign of good will and friendship.
Resources:  http://www.mamalisa.com
            http://kidsmusictown.com/childrenssonglyrics/chants/fungaalafeeya
            http://www.abibitumikasa.com/forums/childrens-learning-resources
            http://www.songsforteaching.com/socialstudies/geography/thecontinentofafrica
            http://content.ghananation.com/templates
            http://www.africawithin.com/tour/ghana/adinkra_symbols