Africa

Literature Focus Unit

Bethany Kost
Literature Selection

- Nelson Mandela’s Favorite African Folktakes by Nelson Mandela
- Off to the Sweet Shores of Africa: And Other Talking Drum Rhymes by Uzo Unobagha
- Sense Pass King: A Story from Cameroon by Katrin Tchana
Literature Selection (Cont.)

- *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* by John Steptoe
- *Why Do Mosquitoes Buzz in People’s Ears: A West African Tale* by Verna Aardema
- *For You Are a Kenyan Child* by Kelly Cunnane
Literature Selection (Cont.)

- We All Went on Safari: A Counting Journey through Tanzania by Laurie Krebs
- Anansi the Spider: A Tale from the Ashanti by Gerald McDermitt
- Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain by Verna Aardema
• Jambo Means Hello: Swahili Alphabet Book by Muriel Feelings
• Moja Means One: Swahili Counting Book by Muriel Feelings
• Mama Panya’s Pancakes: A Village Tale from Kenya by Mary Chamberlin
Literature Selection (Cont.)

- *Africa for Kids: Exploring a Vibrant Continent* by Harvey Croze
- *A is for Africa* by Ifeoma Onyefulu
- *Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions* by Margaret Musgrove
Literature Selection (Cont.)

- *Africa’s Most Amazing Plants* by Angela Rayston and Michael Scott
- *Journey Into Africa: A Nature Discovery Trip* by Tim Knight
- *Along the Luangwa: A Story of an African Floodplain* by Schuyler Bull
Literature Selection (Cont.)

- *Africa Is Not A Country* by Margy Burns Knight
- *African Acrostics: A Word in Edgeways* by Avis Harley
- *Ikenna Goes to Nigeria* by Ifeoma Onyefulu
- *Ebele’s Favourite: A Book of African Games* by Ifeoma Onyefulu
Theme Study

• Students will develop a broader perspective of their world by studying and learning about Africa, its people, and its culture.

• Students will explore Africa, its people, and its culture through literature whose themes will be incorporated in all areas of the curriculum including reading, writing, social studies, science, mathematics, art, music, and P.E.
Language Arts: Reading Activities

- Students will read the selected books for the unit, which include both fiction and non-fiction stories, as well as some poetry. The reading may be done by the teacher aloud, by the students aloud, in partner reading, or by listening to the story read to them on a CD.
- Students will read about a specific African country as they research it for their report.
- Students will read the book of African tales that they and their classmates created together.
- Students will have the chance read the African tales they created aloud to their classmates.
- Students will read their African country reports aloud in front of the class.
- Students will read the letters received from pen pals or the class sponsored child in Africa throughout the year.
- Students will have the chance to read their journal entries aloud to their classmates.
Language Arts: Writing Activities

• Each student will be assigned an African country to write a short report about.
• Students will write in their journals as they learn about Africa, sharing their thoughts and feelings about it.
• Students will write about what it would be like to live in Africa or about going on an African safari.
• Students will write their own African Tale that will be compiled into a class book.
• Students will work in groups to write and create their own rhyming poem/song to be performed with African drums.
• Students will be assigned a pen pal in Africa to write to throughout the year or the class will sponsor a child together and take turns writing letters to that child.
Language Arts: Speaking Activities

- Students will read their report about an African country aloud to their classmates.
- Students will be given the chance to share their journals or African tall tales aloud to their classmates.
- Students will learn how to speak a little bit of Swahili (numbers and simple words/phrases).
- Students will participate in a grand conversation about African culture and how it’s different from theirs and alike theirs.
- Students will perform their rhyming poem/song with the African drums.
- Students will participate in small group discussions about books read in class and individually.
- Students will prepare and ask questions of the guest speaker who comes and presents.
Language Arts: Listening Activities

• Students will actively listen as their peers share their African country reports aloud.
• Students will actively listen as their peers volunteer to share their African tall tales or from their journals.
• Students will listen to African music.
• Students will listen to stories read aloud either by the teacher or on a CD.
• Students will actively listen to the teacher as she teachers about Africa, its people, and its culture.
• Students will actively listen to each other throughout a grand conversation and small group discussions.
• Students will actively listen to a guest speaker.
• While students work, the teacher will play African music quietly in the background.
Language Arts: Viewing Activities

• Students will view pieces of African art.
• Students will view pictures from different parts of Africa, including things such as the landscape, the people, the food, the houses, the traditional dress, the animals, etc.
• Students will watch videos about Africa.
• Students will view live safari cameras.  
• Students will visit the local zoo to look for African animals.
• Students will explore the National Geographic Kids website to look deeper into some African countries (http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/places/find/)
Language Arts: Visually Representing Activities

• Students will make a comparison chart comparing life in Africa and life in the United States.
• Students will create an “African Safari Wall” in the classroom.
• Students will create and put together their own African map puzzle.
• Maps and pictures of Africa will be hung around the room.
• Students will create their own African masks, which will be hung around or outside the classroom.
• Students will create their own “Passport to Africa” and put something in it to represent each country they learn about.
• Students will create a picture to go with their African tale.
Science Activities

• Students will share the characteristics of animals found in Africa.
• Students will list how the animals in Africa survive.
• Students identify different plant life found in Africa.
• Students will identify the different environments found in Africa (deserts, rainforests, savannah, etc.).
• Student will view the different land formations found in Africa (mountains, volcanoes, waterfalls, etc.).
Mathematics Activities

- Students will use a Mancala game board to practice counting and to perform simple mathematical equations, such as adding and subtracting.
- Students will learn to count in Swahili.
- Students will compare the temperatures in Africa to where they live and graph them.
- Students will look for symmetry and patterns in African patterns and then create their own paper plate African necklace using it.
- Students will play around with African money in the “market simulation” activity.
- Students will learn how to measure ingredients to make African foods for their “African celebration.”
Social Studies Activities

• Students will identify Africa and several of its countries on a map.
• Students can dress up in traditional African dress.
• Students will learn about the culture of Africa and then have an African Celebration at the end of the unit where they will be able to taste African foods and play some African games.
• Students will learn about bartering and trading and then take place in a “market simulation” using African money.
• Students will create and put together their own African map puzzle.
• A guest speaker who is from Africa (or has been to Africa) will come in and talk to the students about the culture.
Music and Art Activities

- Students will learn about different instruments used in Africa and get a chance to play some of them.
- Students will learn and participate in some traditional African dances.
- Students will work in groups to write and create their own rhyming poem/song to be performed with African drums.
- Students will model the singing in rounds that many African tribes participate in.
- Students will create their own African masks.
- Students will create their own paper plate African necklaces.
- Students will create a picture to go with their African tale.
- Students will create their own “Passport to Africa” and put something in it to represent each country they learn about.
- Students will create animals and other things to put on the “African Safari Wall.”
  (http://www.janbrett.com/mural_hhl/honey_honey_lion_mural.htm)
P.E. Activities

- Students will play the African game “Spear the Disc.”
- Students will play the African game played like Blob Tag called “Da Ga” (Big Snake).
- Students will put together a map of Africa in a relay.
- Students will play the African game “Mbube, Mbube” (Lion, Lion).
  - Children stand in a circle with two in the center.
  - The two children in the center are blindfolded. One is the “impala” and one is the “lion.”
  - The children on the outside of the circle change “mbube, mbube,” which speeds up as the lion gets closer to the impala.
  - After a while or when the lion catches the impala, new children are put in the center.
- Students will play a favorite game in Africa, soccer.
- Students will learn and participate in some traditional African dances.
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| Language Arts | • Read *A is for Africa* aloud to the students  
• Teacher presents information about Africa  
• Watch a few videos about Africa  
• View some pictures of Africa  
• Small group reading and discussion of other books about Africa | • Read *For You Are a Kenyan Child*  
• Journal about what it would be like to live in Africa  
• Make a comparison chart to compare life in the U.S. to life in Africa  
• Grand conversation | • Read *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale*  
• Read *Sense Pass King: A Story from Cameroon*  
• Read *Why Do Mosquitoes Buzz in People’s Ears: A West African Tale*  
• Read *Anansi the Spider: A Tale from the Ashanti*  
• Students will write their own African tale | • Introduce pen pals or class sponsored child  
• Write letters to their pen pal/sponsored child  
• Continue writing and revising African tale (peer conferences) | • Share African tales |
| Art/Music | • Listen to African music and explore African instruments  
• Learn and perform some traditional African dances | • Read *Off to the Sweet Shores of Africa: And Other Talking Drum Rhymes*  
• Work in groups to write and perform a rhyming poem to be performed with drums | • Look at examples of African masks  
• Create their own African masks | • Finish African masks  
• Create a picture to go with their African tale | • Listen to more African music, using rounds  
• Practice singing in rounds |
<p>| P.E.     | • Play “Spear the Disc”                                              | • Play African map relay                                               | • Play “Da Ga”                                                            | • Play Mbube, Mbube                                                        | • Play soccer                                                             |</p>
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| **Math**  | • Read *Moja Means One: Swahili Counting Book*  
• Count together in Swahili  
• Use Mancala game boards and pieces to practice adding and subtracting  
• Compare the temperature here to the temperature somewhere in Africa  
• In small groups, graph the temperature difference | • Look at African patterns, pointing out symmetry  
• Discuss patterns and symmetry | • Review patterns and symmetry  
• Students will create their own paper plate African necklace using patterns and symmetry | • Talk a bit about African money  
• Review bartering and trading  
• Market simulation activity |
| **Science** | • Teacher will present information on different land formations found in Africa (volcanoes, mountains, waterfalls)  
• Students will learn about different environments and plant life found in Africa (rainforest, deserts, savannah)  
• Students will begin to create their “African Safari Wall” (landscape)  
| • Read *We All Went on Safari: A Counting Journey through Tanzania*  
• Students will learn about the animals found in Africa and how they survive  
• Students will add more to their “African Safari Wall” (animals) | • Field trip to local zoo to look for African animals | • Extra time to work on projects that may need to be finished (African country report, African tale, etc.)  
• If finished, can read other African books |
| **Social Studies** | • African maps  
• Create “Passports to Africa”  
• Assign countries for African country report  
• Make and put together African map puzzles  
• Explore NGKids website and research country  
| • Learn a bit about bartering and trading  
• Continue researching and revising country report (peer conferences)  
| • Share African country report  
• Add to passports throughout presentations | • African celebration (foods, games, can dress up in traditional African clothes, etc.)  
• Guest speaker |
Technology

• Students will use the internet for researching their African country report.
• Students can listen to audio versions of selected literature.
• Students will watch videos about Africa.
  – Destination: West and Central Africa
    (http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/places/regions-places/africa-tc/africa-westcentral-dest/)
  – Destination: Southern Africa
    (http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/places/regions-places/africa-tc/africa-south-dest/)
  – Destination: Eastern Africa
    (http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/places/regions-places/africa-tc/africa-east-dest/)
  – Destination: North Africa
    (http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/places/regions-places/africa-tc/africa-north-dest/)
• Students will view live Safari cameras:
• Students will explore and use information from the following websites:
  – http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/places/find/
  – http://www.janbrett.com/mural_hhl/honey_honey_lion_mural.htm
Language Arts Strategies

- Connecting: Students will make connections between African culture and theirs.
- Revising: Students will make numerous revisions to their African country report.
- Playing with language: Students will use creative language as they journal, write their own African tales, and write an African rhyming poem.
- Brainstorming (generate): Students will brainstorm as they write their own African tales.
- Elaborate: Students will continually add details to their African tales throughout the revision process.
- Narrow: Students will narrow the topic of Africa down to a specific country to write their report on.
- Organize: Students will organize both their African country report and African tall tale into a structure that flows well.
- Proofread: Students will proofread their own papers as well as their peers’.
- Repair: Students will fix any problems in their writing throughout the revision process.
- Visualize: Students will visualize what Africa actually looks like in their heads.
Grouping Patterns

- **Large group**: grand conversation, market simulation, African safari wall, African celebration (end of unit), field trip to the zoo, comparison chart, Soccer, DaGa game, Mbube Mbube game, singing in rounds, viewing videos and photos, identifying Africa on the map, listening to the guest speaker, counting/small phrases in Swahili, viewing African art, listen to stories read aloud, listen to African music, listen to the teacher present information, PE activities

- **Small group**: creating and performing rhyming poem, peer conferencing, small group discussions, Africa map relay, traditional clothes dress-up, Spear the Disc game, playing African instruments, graphing temperatures, read/listen to books together

- **Individual**: African tall tale, journals, African mask, mancala math, exploring National Geographic Kids, “Passport to Africa,” African map puzzle, create their own symmetrical paper plate African necklace, read/listen to books, art activities
Assessments

• African country report (6+1 Writing Traits rubric and peer conferences)
• African tall tale (6+1 Writing Traits rubric and peer conferences)
• African drum rhyming poem/song (performance, rubric, and skills checklist)
• Participation both in speaking and actively listening throughout the grand conversation
• Participation both in speaking and actively listening throughout small group conversations (rubrics or checklists)
• Participation in small group teamwork (checklist)
• Participation in P.E. and Music activities
• P.E. activities skills checklist
• Math graphs, social studies maps, comparison charts (checklists)