



AFRICAN CULTURE

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AFRICAN CULTURE

- Main Idea (Objective):



- Enslaved Africans developed rich cultures that influenced many other cultures, including their own.

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- Lecture Focus (Essential Question) :



- Do you have any traditions that have been in your family for a long time? We are going to look at how Africans took their culture with them when they were enslaved and sent overseas.

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- “We are almost a nation of dancers, musicians and poets,” declared **Olaudah Equiano** in describing the Igbo people of West Africa.



- He might have added artists, woodcarvers, weavers and metalworkers as well...because numerous African people like the Igbo excelled in many art forms.

AFRICAN CULTURE

- When Slav traders seized Africans like Equiano from their homelands, they also uprooted their cultures.



- Africans carried these cultures with them in what has become known as **African Diaspora...the spreading of African people and culture around the world.**

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- People of African descent held on to memories of their cultures and passed them down from generation to generation.



- The heritage of Africa can be seen and heard in the United States today, not just in the people and voices of African decedents, but in their gifts to our own culture.

AFRICAN CULTURE

- **Questions:**

- **1)** What are some of the many art forms that African cultures were known for?
- **2)** What does African Diaspora mean?
- **3)** How was the Africans able to keep their culture intact?

AFRICAN CULTURE

- **Questions:**
- **1) What are some of the many art forms that African cultures were known for?**
 - **Dancers, musicians, poets, woodcarvers, metalworkers and weavers**
- **2) What does African Diaspora mean?**
 - **The spreading of African people and culture around the world**
- **3) How were the African decedents able to keep their culture intact?**
 - **Passed memories of their culture down from generation to generation**

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AFRICAN ART

- Cave paintings are the earliest form of African art that historians know about.



- They show people hunting animals, dancing, farming and doing day to day chores.

AFRICAN ART

- As in other parts of the world, African art and religion developed at the same time, hand in hand if you will.



- Early African cave paintings, as well as more recent cave art display different types of religious meanings, idols and practices.

AFRICAN ART

- Woodcarvers made masks and statues to celebrate tribal religious beliefs and to honor many different gods and goddesses.



- Each carved piece of wood captured some part of the spiritual world.

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AFRICAN ART

- African works of art also told stories and served practical purposes as well.



- Artists worked with materials, such as wood, ivory or bronze, often times displaying faces of important leaders, everyday people and later on, European explorers and traders.

AFRICAN ART

- Weavers also designed cloth similar to the cloth worn today, the **Kente Cloth**.



- Weavers used fibers to make cloth that actually looked like baskets, sewing colorful strips together in vibrant patterns.

AFRICAN ART

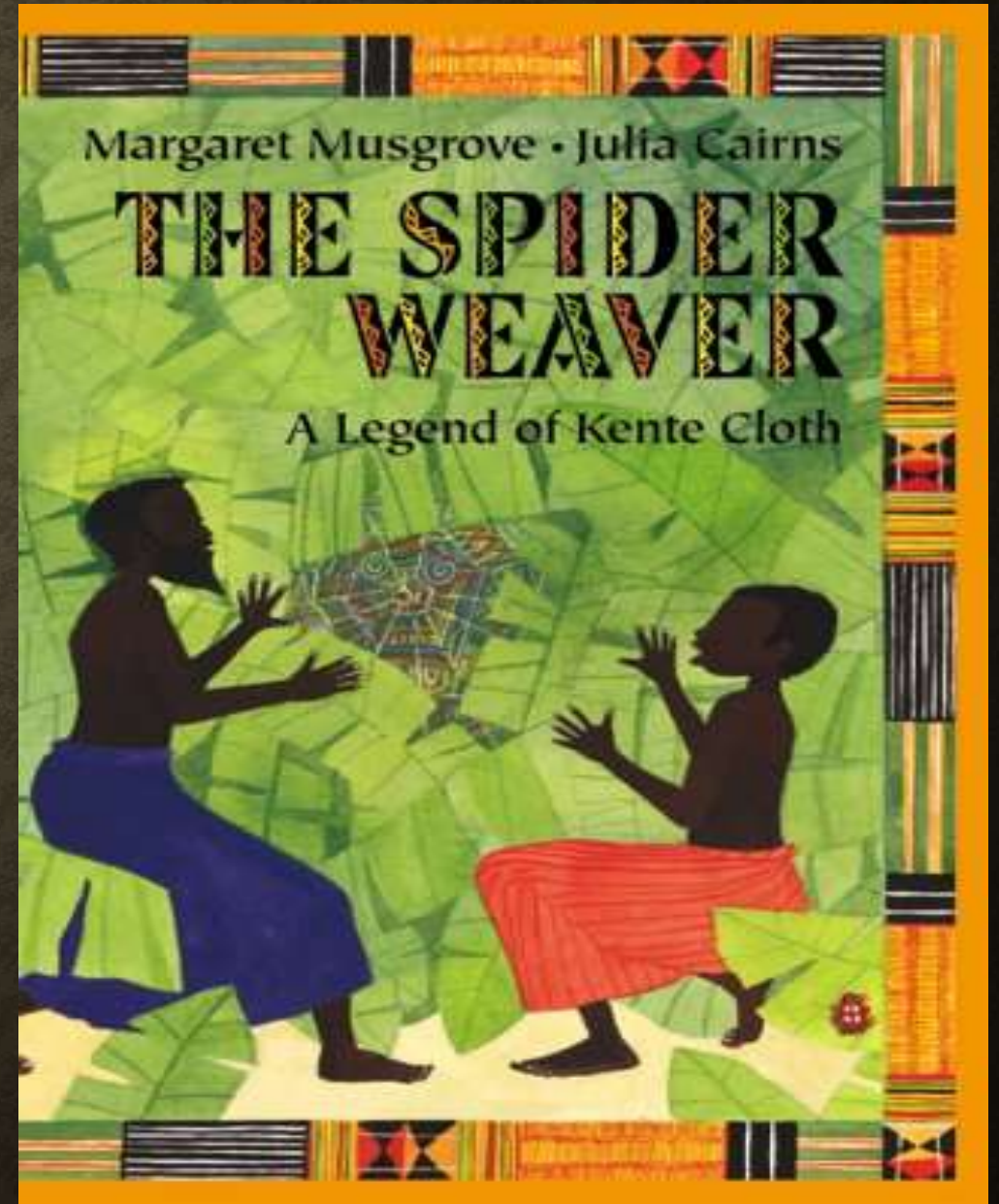


- **Kente** has been passed down from generation to generation and was worn by tribal chiefs of Ancient Africa, as well as being popular today.

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AFRICAN ART

- There is a African Folktale that helps to explain the Kente Cloth legend.
- One day two friends walked through the rain forest and saw a spider creating designs in its web.
- They took the spider web to show their friends and family, but were greatly upset when the web fell apart in their hands.



AFRICAN ART



- They returned the next day to watch and learn as the spider did a weaving dance and spun another web.
- The two friends then took their newfound skills to their looms and made colorful cloth that they called Kente.

AFRICAN ART

- **Questions:**

- **1)** What are the earliest forms of African artwork that we know about?
- **2)** What did woodcarvers create to celebrate African religious beliefs?
- **3)** What kinds of materials did African woodcarvers use and whose faces did they carve?
- **4)** What was the special cloth designed to look like patterns on a basket called?

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AFRICAN ART

- **Questions:**

- **1) What are the earliest forms of African artwork that we know about?**

- **Cave drawing depicting hunters and dancers**

- **2) What did woodcarvers create to celebrate African religious beliefs?**

- **Mask and statues to celebrate religious beliefs**

- **3) What kinds of materials did African woodcarvers use and whose faces did they carve?**

- **Wood, ivory and bronze that depicted leaders, everyday people and explorers**

- **4) What was the special cloth designed to look like patterns on a basket called?**

- **Kente Cloth**

MUSIC AND DANCE

- Music played an important part in almost all aspects of African life.



- People used music to express their religious feelings or as a way to get through difficult times, such as the stressful harvest season.

MUSIC AND DANCE

- In many African songs, a singer calls out a line, then other singers repeat the same line back.



- Musical instruments, such as drums, whistles, horns, flutes and banjos were used to keep a flowing beat.

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MUSIC AND DANCE

- Africans believed dance allowed the spirits to express themselves also.



- They used to celebrate important events such as birth and death with music and dance.

MUSIC AND DANCE



- Entire villages would dance together, swaying and clapping their hands, with individual dancers leaping and twirling,

MUSIC AND DANCE

- Enslaved Africans sometimes relied on music to remind them of their homeland.



- Songs of pain and hardship eventually developed into a type of music that we know today very well, the **Blues**.

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MUSIC AND DANCE

- Songs of religious faith and hopes for freedom grew into spirituals or, gospel songs.



- Over the centuries, other forms of African-based music developed, such as ragtime, jazz, rock and roll and more recently rap.

MUSIC AND DANCE

- **Questions:**

- **1) What did Africans believe dancing allowed them to do?**
- **2) What were drums used for during African music?**
- **3) What forms of music developed from traditional African Music?**

MUSIC AND DANCE

- **Questions:**
- **1) What did Africans believe dancing allowed them to do?**
 - **Express religious feelings and allowed the spirits to express themselves**
- **2) What were drums used for during African music?**
 - **Keeping a beat and maintaining rhythm**
- **3) What forms of music developed from traditional African Music?**
 - **Blues, Ragtime, Jazz, Rock and Roll and Rap**

STORYTELLING

- As we talked about during the Africa unit the histories of all African peoples were kept alive through their storytelling traditions.



- A few enslaved Africans were able to escape and record their stories, while most were retold as stories.

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STORYTELLING

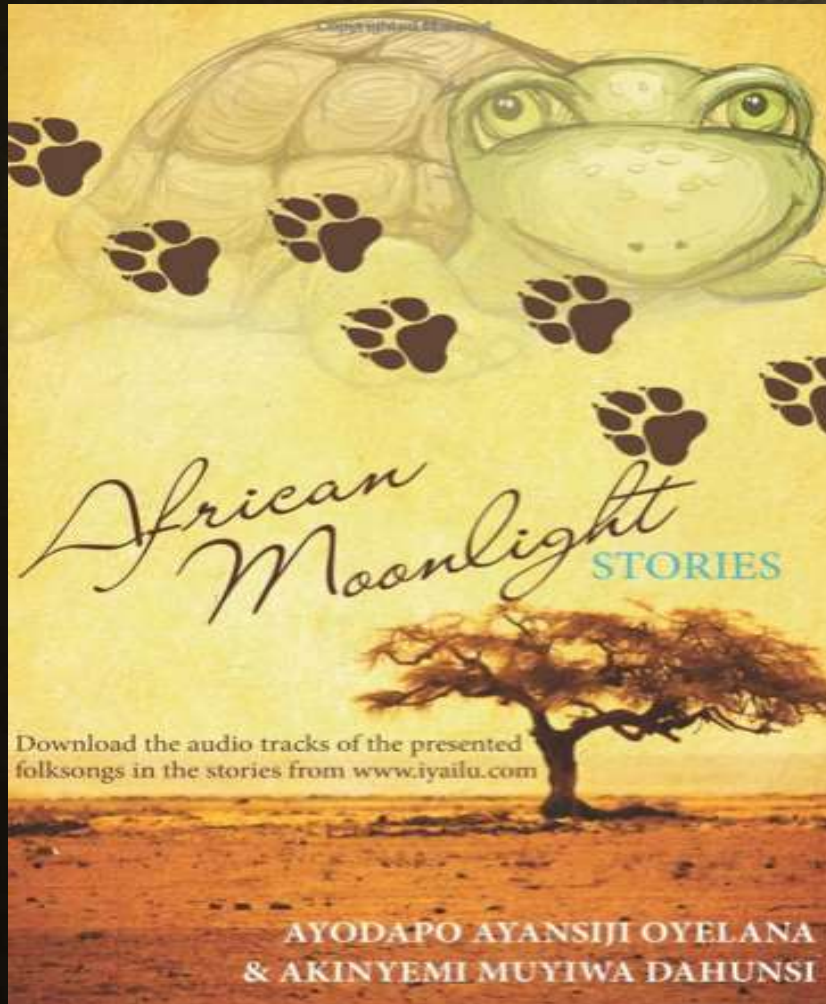
- Those who heard the stories would repeat them to their friends and families, thus keeping their history alive.



- They also retold the tales taught to them by African Griots, prior to becoming enslaved.

STORYTELLING

- In more recent time, some African Americans have renewed ties with their past by taking African names or giving them to their children.



- This helps keep alive the story of Africa and the rich culture that they created centuries ago.

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STORYTELLING

- **Lecture Check:**

- Answer the following question in a well crafted 3-4 sentences response. Draw upon what we have talked about in the African Culture Power Point and Lecture to properly answer the question.

- Why did Africans use dance to celebrate important events? Do people in the United States use dance as a form of celebration and if they do, how?

TIME TRAVEL TIME: KWANZAA



• Time Travel Time: **Kwanzaa**

TIME TRAVEL TIME: KWANZAA

- **Kwanzaa** is a week long celebration held renowned in the United States and other parts of the world, especially Western Africa.



- The celebration honors African heritage and in the United States African-American culture, and is observed from December 26th to January 1st, culminating in a feast and gift-giving.

TIME TRAVEL TIME: KWANZAA

- **Maulana Karenga** created Kwanzaa in 1965 as the first specifically African-American holiday.



- According to Karenga, the name Kwanzaa derives from the Swahili, meaning "first fruits of the harvest".

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TIME TRAVEL TIME: KWANZAA

- Kwanzaa is a celebration that has its roots in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, and was established as a means to help African Americans reconnect with their African cultural.



- Africans also connected with their historical heritage by uniting in meditation and study of African traditions and *Nguzo Saba*, the "seven principles of African Heritage" which Karenga said "is a African philosophy".

TIME TRAVEL TIME: KWANZAA

- During the early years of Kwanzaa, Karenga said that it was meant to be an "**oppositional alternative**" to Christmas.
- However, as Kwanzaa gained mainstream supporters, Karenga altered his position so that practicing Christians would not be alienated.



TIME TRAVEL TIME: KWANZAA

- He stated in the 1997 that *Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community, and Culture*, "Kwanzaa was not created to give people an alternative to their own religion or religious holiday."



- Many African Americans who celebrate Kwanzaa do so in addition to observing Christmas

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TIME TRAVEL TIME: KWANZA