

Sankofa - Searching the Past to Connect to the Future

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Overview

This curriculum unit will explore the retention and loss of African cultural values in the novels, Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison and Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe. The setting in the former is in the United States. The narrative in Things Fall Apart takes place in Africa. In comparison, both are books of experiences that tell what caused African cultural values to be degraded and shunned. Their diluted African history and culture have also adversely affected African American students. African Enslavement and Colonialization have prefaced a European worldview, dominating the standards for behavior and reality. Collective African survival is based on maintaining, protecting and advancing an African worldview. (Kabon 2003:29)

Literature is culture. According to Achebe, “Literature, whether handed down by word or mouth or in print, gives us a second handle on reality.” He says literature has social and political significance in critically analyzing our experiences, actions and relationships.

For nine weeks twelfth grade Literature and Language African American students will read Song of Solomon and Things Fall Apart. In this curriculum unit the students will analyze the use of literary elements (characterizations, setting, plot, theme, point of view, tone and style). They will identify, describe, evaluate and apply the African cultural values from the past to the present. The class will synthesize and evaluate the African cultural values for the future, taking the route of Sankofa (Go back and fetch it). This curriculum unit, “Sankofa - The Path to Connect the Past to the Present to the Future,” will require students to

reach the Pittsburgh Public School Communications Standards and master the Portfolio Pennsylvania State Assessment Requirements: Literary Analysis, Literary Interpretation, Informational Report, Literary Genre (short story, poem or play), Listening and Oral Presentation.

Rationale

“Culture is a set of shared behavior and ideas which are symbolic, systematic, cumulative and transmitted from generation to generation. It is the structure of language, customs, knowledge, ideas and values, which provide a people a general design for living and patterns for interpreting reality. As part of a people’s worldview, cultural values help to define, select, create, and recreate what is considered good or valuable....”(Nobles 1985: 54)

“Culture is the root of our people, and learning is the branching vine and flowering tree.” (<http://www.mindspring.com/~jeaton/culture.htm>) :1

“There can be no people without a culture and without civilization ...there is no people without an organized way of life” (Sekou Toure 1979 :439)

“Culture is the expression of collective social life, showing how the society is organized to project into the future. Thus a people’s culture contributes to universal civilization and culture.” (Toure 1979 :439)

Kwame Gyekye says that culture encompasses the entire life of a people - their morals, religious beliefs, social structures, political and educational systems, forms of music and dance and all other products of their creative spirit.

Joaqim Chissano, the former chairman of the African Union, recently said that language brought wisdom and enhanced culture. (<http://allafrica.com/stories/200407080806>) Literature reflects culture, history and the promises for the future. Through Anthills of the Savannah (114). Achebe stressed, “...The story is chief... Only the story can continue beyond the war and the warrior. The story is our escort; without it, we are blind.” By reading and analyzing the stories, Song of Solomon and Things Fall Apart and comparing the events and outcomes with their own lives, students will go back and fetch the African cultural values they deem worthy for reparations and restoration.

Just as the Dead family in Toni Morrison’s Song of Solomon, African American students have retained and practiced some elements of African culture. But those practices aren’t organized nor are they used to control and improve the conditions of African people. In Song of Solomon there was a crude naming ritual. (After his enslavement, the grandfather chose the names of his children

from the Bible.) In order to be accepted by the men in the community, Milkman had to endure a makeshift rite of passage, when he went down south searching for his roots, himself and his place in the world. The author featured the presence of the ancestors, but who was left to pass on the cultural values Milkman learned? The Dead family was dead because, contrary to African values, Milkman didn't use sex to procreate - to extend his family line. He only wanted to satisfy his desires, without thought or care.

Culture is life - the morals, religious beliefs, social structure, political and educational systems, forms of music, dance and all other creative expression. African rituals, principles and practices were ridiculed and suppressed in Things Fall Apart. Comparatively, African culture in America, as in Song of Solomon, has been diluted and oppressed by the dominant European worldview. If the purpose of being human is to contribute to the progress of world civilization, why don't students of African descent know what Africa gave to the world? Why don't they acknowledge their African cultural and historical heritage with pride? Why haven't African American students taken the responsibility to pass on African cultural values to the next generation? Why have students missed the proverb, "pretty is as pretty does" - to value a person's worth by her deeds instead of her material possessions or her distorted imitation of another image? Kwame Nkrumah had said, "People of African descent are linked through common history, culture, and experiences to struggle for a common destiny and just society." (422). "*Sankofa - The Path to Connect the Past to the Present to the Future*" will link literature to history and cultural experiences with a projection into the future.

How did the European worldview erase Africa from the journey and shape of history? How did the European worldview deny and denigrate African culture? Song of Solomon and Things Fall Apart expose the effects of African enslavement and the consequences of European colonialization. All people of African descent are still reverberating from the mass murder, terror, violence, destruction, domination, damage and exploitation caused by the dehumanization of enslavement and colonialization.

In his paper "The Ethics of Reparations: Engaging the Holocaust of Enslavement", Maulana Karenga has stated:

"... The morally monstrous destruction of human possibility involved redefining African humanity to the world, poisoning past, present and future relations with others who only know us through stereotyping (slavery - slaves) . . . It also involved lifting Africans out of their own history, making them a footnote and forgotten casualty in European history; thus limiting and denying Africans the ability to speak their own special cultural truth to the world and make their own unique contribution

to the forward flow of human history. . . . It has limited and prevented us from building our own future and living lives of dignity and decency . . . [It is] our human right.”

Slavery practiced in the ancient world allowed those enslaved to fit right into the household, as was the case of Ikemefuna in Things Fall Apart. In some cases the enslaved rose to become kings. The enslavement of Africans for profit depopulated Africa, dispersed and displaced Africans all over the world. African enslavement dehumanized the African spirit. The 2002 Conference on Racism in South Africa declared the enslavement of African people a “crime against humanity.” To justify the exploitation of African labor and resources, racism prevailed. Instead of proud, self-determining African people, the images of savages were spread both in and out of Africa. Okonkwa in Things Fall Apart becomes a footnote in a colonizer’s book of notes on how to subjugate a “primitive tribe.” European culture and history were imposed to become superior to African culture and history.

Nkrumah cautioned that the incessant consequences of traders, exploiters and missionaries have had African people accepting inferiority. As the enslavement of Africa’s strongest weakened Africa, the scramble for Africa occurred during the late 19th and mid 20th centuries. Africa was actually carved up and divided among European nations during the Berlin Conference. Mudimbo defines colonialism and colonization as “organization or arrangement” from the Latin word *colere*. He says that the colonizer and the colonialist have both tried to organize and transform African elements into European standards. The colonization of Africa became another form of slavery. King Leopold of Belgium paid nothing while Africans lost lives, limbs, ears, eyes and other body parts in exchange for rubber. Aime’ Ce’saire emphasized that colonialism (collections of ears, burned houses and villages, invasions and evaporated cities) dehumanized even the most civilized man. Forced labor, intimidation, pressure, police, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, arrogance, dominance and degradation see the native as an animal, consequently treating him as an animal (20). “Millions of men have been torn from their gods, their land, their habits, their life – from life, from dance, from wisdom.” (22).

Africans have lost a great deal, but Africans have always resisted, retained their culture and have always reawakened the African genius. In Song of Solomon Guitar avenged the continued murder and terror of African people by executing “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.” Pilate held her ancestors close and maintained the little known family history and culture. Both authors, Toni Morrison and Chinua Achebe, use folktales and African cultural values to drive the literary elements.

“Oppression will always meet resistance”, as Nkrumah honored the feats and deeds of African ancestors who resisted against alien forces on the shores and land of Africa and the Americas. Running away was the most common form of rebellion. Randal Segal in the Black Diaspora reported that Africans joined forces with other Africans and revolted as soon as they arrived on the shores of America, killing the Spaniards. Then they joined the Native Americans who were engaged in guerrilla warfare. There were revolts. Persons who were marooned ran to hidden mountains or the forest and ambushed, attacked, raided, robbed and incited other Africans to rebel. Houses, plantations and mills were burned. Enslavers were assaulted or murdered. CLR James reported that in Dutch Guiana revolting Africans controlled the colony for months. Some Africans returned to Africa. (“The People Could Fly”) Writings, newspapers and organizations were used to protest tortuous conditions.

For four centuries Africa didn’t suffer from the raids of enslavers, the raping of resources and forced labor without a fight. Contrary to Achebe’s Okonkwo, most rebellions were organized and unified. In Sierra Leone Africans fought against taxation and the corporal punishment of their children by the missionaries. In Nigeria African women protested being taxed. African workers went on strike against hard labor and little wages. Africans used their fierce spirit of liberation to fight and many times win against invasion, coercion and oppression.

The question is how do African people take the path of Sankofa to “understand what it means to be African”? (Nobles 2003: 23) Franz Fanon called colonialism [also enslavement] a systematic negation of personhood and a furious determination to deny the attributes of humanity; therefore, the dominated people are forced to ask themselves “Who am I? Am I who I say I am? Am I all that I ought to be?” Africans didn’t call themselves Trinidadians, Jamaicans, Americans, Nigerians, Liberians, etc. They had a “total way of life.” (Walter Rodney 1996:707) They erected kingdoms, empires, institutions and systems of endurance.

The Adinkra symbol, Sankofa (go back and fetch it), is part of traditional Akan wisdom. The Adinkra symbols represent a cultural link between the living and the dead, the past and present and the present linked to the future. W. Bruce Willis has researched intensively to produce the Adinkra Dictionary. He translated Sankofa to mean “go back to the past in order to build for the future or we should not forget our past when moving ahead.” He says learning from the past is a building block for the future. Heike Owusu in Symbols of Africa interprets the symbol of the bird turning around to catch its “lost egg” to mean, “look to your past and you will recognize your future.” A bird looking backward so that its beak points to his tail represents Sankofa (206). Looking back is

“returning to the source”, researching, retracing steps, making decisions and completing the task. Willis calls Sankofa a realization of spirit and self - self-identity, redefinition and vision for one’s destiny and collective identity with the larger group. Who am I? Am I really who I said I am? Am I all that I ought to be?

After Africans acknowledge the painful psychological and spiritual path of enslavement and colonialization, they must ask the question: what was the African way of life before invasions, intervention, and historical memory deprivation? Through Sankofa, what are the cultural values Africans must fetch to organize for the future? As John Henrik Clarke has repeatedly said, “Africa was not sitting in darkness, waiting for Europe to turn on the light.” Africa was blazing with culture while Europe was still in caves. The power of the African mind built a foundation (the pyramids, MAAT –truth, justice, reciprocity, harmony, balance, propriety and order) that has endured after thousands of years.

“All European ethnic groups have a heritage that extends prior to their arrival in America. No other ethnic group... has been under such pressure to forget their origin and cultural past as Africans in America.” (Asante 1992 :11) However, Amiri Baraka says that “the culture of imperialism must either eliminate the colonized or assimilate them in order to exploit them. Cultural aggression is a weapon to destroy the seeds of resistance.”

Kwame Nkrumah said “the new African is defined by the humanistic principles from traditional society. The African worldview of culture consists of the following principles:

Cosmology:

Cosmology is the study of the universe. The whole universe is spiritually unified. There is no distinction between family, community, plants or animals.

Epistemology:

Epistemology is the study (science) of the methods and basis of knowledge (seeking the truth). How is knowledge reached? Asante says that language is the source of a people’s truth (257). Knowledge may be obtained through proverbs, folktales, music, dance, drumming, rituals, symbols, metaphors, imitation, reenactment, etc. The sacred writings on the tombs and pyramids from ancient Egypt were instructions, giving man the route to correct conduct and success. In Facing Mt Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta says the family is responsible for forming the character of the person, making sure he is an asset to society. Then the community and the whole structure and organization of the nation get involved to help the person become better and then best as she evolves around the life cycle. Through lullabies, songs and games, a baby or a toddler learns his family history, how to talk properly and how to act responsibly. Folklore, riddles, puzzles, dances and

sports teach laws, customs, morals, etiquette and character so that the person is a worthwhile member of the community. Knowledge is pursued from the cradle to the grave.

Axiology:

Axiology is what is worthy or valued. Children are wealth. The woman is valued as the center of gravity – of life. Because she represents perfection, MAAT (truth, justice, reciprocity, balance, order and harmony), in the form of a woman, is the measure and guide for all humanity. Upon a person's death she weighs the purity of his heart with an ostrich feather. It is valuable to be honored and called upon as an ancestor. A human being is more valued than material gain.

Ontology:

Ontology is a branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being, the existence of god and the origin of a people. The ancient Egyptians believed that NUN, the primordial water was before all creation. Water has always been considered the ancient creative energy and ... deified by all Africa. (Obinga 2004:101). God the creator is essentially a spirit. As in an Akan maxim "If you want to speak to God, tell it to the wind (Opoka 1975: 18). The Adinkra symbol, *Gye Nyame*, represents the omnipotence, the power, and the many attributes of God. Through libations, the intermediaries, the lesser dieties, priests and the ancestors direct the offerings of prayers. Religion is nature – Life passes through humans, plants, animals and inanimate objects. Creation is believed to be good everywhere . . . Through the act of creation men experience the love, care and concern the Creator has for his creatures (Opoku 1978:22). No temples or buildings are needed to worship God. Everything in the universe is alive and at one with the Supreme Force.

Aesthetics

Art and imagery reflect the worldview and experiences of the people. The images belong to the people, not the individual. What is beautiful? "Beauty is as beauty does." (Asante 1996: 258) Mothers have said this through time. Beauty is how a person serves the community. Beauty is goodness and perfection - divine. Beauty is grace and excellence through greetings and hospitality, language, dance, music, poetry, rituals, honoring elders, ancestors and the children unborn. Beauty is no jails, no slavery, no oppression, no torture, no exploitation, etc. (Obenga: 179-182)

Humanity

Mudimbe's research concludes that the (spirit) ntu is a force of life. To be human is to belong to the whole community, participating in the beliefs, ceremonies and rituals of the community. "A man is a man because of others . . . alone you are an animal." (Opoku 1978:92).

The Life Cycle corresponds with the four moments of the sun. From the spiritual world, according to Fu-Kiau's account of the Kongo belief system, (8), the birth of a child is the rising of a living sun in the community. The pregnant woman is the carrier of a new and holy package full of power and energy, a continuation of old radiations under a new form. The Akan wait seven days to see if the child survives and is then worthy to be called a person. After the seven days the child is given a name during the naming ceremony.

Puberty rites help make the child a social and responsible member of society. This process, which the birth rite began, continues to make him or her a fully developed person – possessing ideals of manhood and womanhood to enhance society.

In Opoku's book he cites Mbiti as saying, "Marriage is the focus of existence. It is where all the members of the community meet - the departed, the living and those yet to be born. The whole drama of history is repeated, renewed, revitalized with active players." Marriage is a duty to society. If a person doesn't participate, he has rejected society and society rejects him. Marriage is kinship – a union of families. Marriage is for procreation - to continue life.

The Elder is the person to whom all matters are referred, the one with the last word since he is the closest to the ancestors. Ancestors are people who have distinguished themselves on the moral plane. They are held up as models for the living to imitate. The ancestors are spirits, elders and predecessors, who have gone the path the living are walking. The ancestors are spirits next to the Creator, forming a union between the living and dead. They are everywhere (Opoku 1978:53).

Family kinship binds together the whole life of the community, embracing animals and plants. The family consists of the living, the dead and those yet to be born. The circle of life is unbroken. These African cultural values can be used to evaluate the two novels Song of Solomon and Things Fall Apart, as students are asked to synthesize the values to heal the community.

When Milkman took the path of Sankofa in Song of Solomon, to find the causes and effects of his ancestors' enslavement, resistance, dignity, murder, humiliation, and survival, he also found traces of persistent African culture. African influence is in the music, dance and the overall love of movement and rhythm. Folktales have carried the same messages and continuity as they did in Africa. Some foods and healing herbs were carried from Africa to the African

American community. The unrelenting grip of Africa has sustained African people from the first invasion, kidnapping and wrenching from the land. It has kept African people human under inhumane circumstances.

At the cliff Milkman and Pilate “flew” (as in “The People Could Fly”) back to Africa only to find the effects of colonialism in Things Fall Apart. Students will have to take Milkman further back to precolonial Africa in order to fetch the cultural values that have sustained African people. These cultural values will anchor them as they continue the path to take their place in the common flow of history.

Objectives

The objectives of this curriculum unit are to enable students to use reading, writing, observing, listening, and speaking strategies in order to think critically, practically and productively. Students will be able to understand, interpret, analyze and evaluate literature and the literary techniques the authors used to connect to the experiences of their readers. Using the authors as models of style, students will be able to respond and extend their interpretation of the literature by writing and speaking. Students will be able to compare and analyze the theme, setting, characters, ideas and writing style between authors and genres with supported evidence from text.

Students will acquire new vocabulary that is culturally relevant to the text. In order to extend their interpretation of the literature, students will be able to research and synthesize the material and information to build a better world. Using technology, students will examine the problems facing Africans now, plan, develop and design solutions. The solutions will include recommendations to project into the future. Through reading, discussing, listening and viewing videos, students will receive cultural orientation to nurture their circle of life and strengthen their passage within their community.

With a rubric as a guide for organization, content, style, language conventions, students will be able to revise and edit personal and peers’ writing. At the end of the year students will be able to process drafts that are considered *advanced* in the Portfolio Assessment.

Strategies

The lessons will integrate and coordinate listening, speaking, reading, writing, and learning. Students will follow the reading and writing processes. Students will use listening, speaking, reading, and writing to generate ideas and to learn. By posing problems and questions, students will interact and actively read.

Students will use graphic organizers to arrange ideas. Students will be expected to read, reflect and discuss independently, in pairs, in groups, and with the whole class. During the writers’ workshop, students will share their writing progress with their group. By reading stories, questioning the authors, and examining the authors’ craft, students will establish models for writing strategies. The teacher, as facilitator, will conference with each student about the student’s assessment of her progress or any obstacles she might be experiencing. The teacher’s role will be as learner, writer, and facilitator, not as evaluator. Based on the elements of good writing, the students and their peers will establish the standards by which the writing and presentations will be assessed.

The lessons will meet the communications content standards so that students will be reading and writing for a variety of purposes, thinking and judging critically, and exchanging information. Through word processing and imaging, technology will be integrated into the lessons. The lessons will center the experiences of the African American student as the frame of reference to approach the novels and use African cultural values as tools for analysis and as a springboard for transformation.

Classroom Activities

Ongoing Activities:

Explain to students that the following chart will be used to analyze and evaluate themselves, another person or a character.

Who am I?	Am I really who I say I am?	Am I all I ought to be?
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Put a proverb on the board each day. “Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten” Achebe 1994:7) Students should write in their Journals: reflecting on an event and/or a characterization – explaining the meaning of the proverb and its connection to the stories – giving examples as to how the proverb could be used to teach a lesson to strengthen the youth.

Lesson One:

Have students introduce themselves by writing a personal history account.

Example:

Lorena Amos-Brock is the descendant of those Africans who built civilizations and those enslaved Africans who survived the terror and torture of being kidnapped, maimed, raped and dehumanized from name, history, culture and land. Because of the rupture of family, she doesn’t know their names.

Lorena Amos-Brock is the granddaughter of Oscar and Martha Kenderson and Edward and Lillian Amos, the daughter of Edward and Jean Amos, an aunt, a niece, sister and cousin, the wife of Richard, the mother of Paul, Lisa and Roderick, a grandmother and a great grandmother. The honorable spirits of the ancestors and family have lifted and guided her.

Students will add on by interviewing and writing a two page narrative account of their family history.

Activity One

For homework require students to ask questions of their older relatives to discover and record their genealogy as the body of the narrative account as above. Students will ask the elders to tell about the 40's, 50's or 60's including the cultural values and wisdom that were passed on, education, opportunities, problems, community and world events and conflicts. Students will describe the setting and use dialog to liven the story. Students will organize the answers either chronologically or by events. This should take two weeks to work on outside of class.

Activity Two

To develop permanent writing partners, divide the class in groups of four. Have the class decide on the criteria for an outstanding paper (topic, organization, content, word usage, imagery, detailed description with examples, connection to the reader and following the conventions of the English language.) Use the agreed criteria as the rubric for the paper. Writing groups should meet at the end of the first week to review the first draft. The writer must read all papers to the group.

Lesson Two

Activity One

In order to introduce Song of Solomon, read "The People Could Fly" by Virginia Hamilton. Discuss the symbolism of "flying."

Activity Two

Brainstorm with students problems in the community that would make people want to "fly" away. Discuss possible solutions. Have each student choose a problem to take on as a project. Students will ask a question to research the problem (why, when, where, who, what, how) Refer to the list in Appendix IV. Students will have eight weeks to design, develop and present their projects.

Lesson Three

Activity One

Students should read Song of Solomon independently. The charts in Appendix III should be used as guides for the discussion. Have students lead the discussion by preparing questions to ask that refer to the text or experience.

Lesson Four

Activity One

Students should complete reading and discussing Song of Solomon at the end of three weeks. Use a chart to make a time line of Milkman's search for self and his development. Ask the questions of Milkman: Who am I? Am I really who I say I am? Am I all I ought to be? At the end of the story Milkman and Pilate have "flown" to the spirit world. Explain to the students the concept of the African life cycle. Have students listen to "Soufflés" by Sweet Honey in the Rock as they read it in the African American Literature (204).

Activity Two

Using the above chart, show the movie, Sankofa. Discuss the meaning and the significance of the Adinkra symbols. Ask students what would Milkman and Pilate have found if their spirits had flown back to Africa.

Activity Three

Have students search the Internet for images and information about ancient Egyptian society. Students may use *The Afrocentric Experience* as a search engine to find *Africa Within*. From the index students may answer the questions: What is culture? What is the African worldview? How did Africans see themselves, the universe and those around them? Direct them to make a PowerPoint presentation to introduce Africa to the class and to Milkman and Pilate. Questions to be answered:

Activity Four

Have students discuss, memorize and dramatically interpret Langston Hughes' "The Negro Speaks of Rivers."

Activity Five

Have students read in groups the excerpt from The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano. Have students enact their interpretation of the narrative.

Lesson Five

Activity One

What happened to Africa after so many of the strongest, skilled, and vital population were plundered, depleted and deported? Have students brainstorm possibilities. List the five African cultural elements (cosmology, epistemology,

axiology, ontology, aesthetics and humanity). Discuss the definitions with examples. Have students go back to Song of Solomon and find examples of characters that had some repressed memory of carrying in the cultural elements. Have students connect their own retention of some of the values.

Activity Two

Go to the local university. Gather a list of African students. Ask their permission and availability to be interviewed by twelfth grade students. Have students interview African students to compare views, practices, and rituals that reinforce the five cultural values (cosmology, epistemology, axiology, ontology, aesthetics and humanity). Students should write a narrative account of the comparison, the student's reaction and conclusion. Students should present the information to the class.

Lesson Six

Activity One

As students read Things Fall Apart, suggest that students take note of the practices of the characters that reinforce African worldview and cultural values (cosmology, epistemology, axiology, ontology, aesthetics and humanity).

Activity Two

Students should list all of the proverbs that Achebe uses and take turns putting one up for the daily journal entry.

Activity Three

In groups students should be given characters, rituals, key events and the setting to reenact. A set of standards for being able to understand, interpret, analyze and evaluate the setting, theme, plot, climax, point of view, characterization and tone of the story should be applied to a rubric.

Activity Three

Students should make a list of the metaphors and similes. Each student should choose one to share and explain to a group of four. The group should make a collage that represents the clues to understanding the metaphors.

Activity Four

At the end of the story have students discuss the parallel effects of African enslavement and colonialization on African cultural values. Students should make a Venn chart to show what was retained and what was lost. Students should make comparisons between their interviews (elder and African student), their practices and events, and the events and practices in both stories.

Lesson Seven

Activity One

As students find solutions to their problems in preparing to present their projects, have students read Countee Cullen's "From the Dark Tower" and "Yet I Do Marvel." Discuss the tone of defiance, beauty and survival. Ask students to bring in hip-hop recordings that depict victory over oppression and degradation (Common's "Geto Heaven"). Have students research the origin of rap to find that it started with African beats and culture

Activity Two

Have students select a proverb that is inspiring to overcome obstacles. Have students make up a short parable or fable that teaches the lesson of the proverb. Have students type the proverb in large letters on a transfer sheet for a tee shirt (front). Have students type the story on another transfer sheet for the back of the tee shirt. Students will choose a day when they will all wear their tee shirts. Later they should discuss reactions to their messages.

Sankofa – return to the source of power to move forward with strength, pride and power.

Annotated Teachers' Bibliography and Resources

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This anthology presents a world of rich African literature and history.

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This book includes the many speeches and philosophies of world – wide African scholars and activists from the beginning of civilization to the present.

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This is the basic text of the journey and search for identity as an African man in America.
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- Obenga, Theophila. Ancient Egypt and Black Africa-A Students Handbook for the Study of Ancient Egypt in Philosophy, Linguistic and Gender Relations. London, Karnack House, 1992
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- Shovit, Yaaeow, History In Black-African-Americans in Search of an Ancient Past, Frank Class, London, 2001
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- Jones, Del. The Black Holocaust, Global Genocide. Philadelphia. Del Jones Communications Unlimited, 1992
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Fu-Kiau, Kimbwandende Kia Bunseki, Self-Healing Power and Therapy Old Teachings Africa. New York. Vantage Press. 1991

Willis, Bruce W. The Adinkra Dictionary, Washington, DC. The Pyramid Complex, 1998

Annotated Students' Bibliography

Achebe, Chinua. Things Fall Apart. London: Heinemann, 1958.

Okonkwo, the hero of this story is full of flaws that make him human. He is faced with conflicts that force him to question and make decisions eventually for the good of his culture. Has Okonkwo earned everlasting fame? This novel should be an assignment for class and homework.

African American Literature Voices in Tradition. Florida: Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc., Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992.

This anthology presents a world of rich African literature and history.

Anderson, S.E. The Black Holocaust for Beginners. New York, Winters and Readers Publishing, Inc, 1995

Boone, Beth, Farmer, Margorie, Yesner, Seymour, Bemelman, Steven.

Composition and Grammar. Illinois: Lardlaw Brothers, 1985.

This book is one of the many that can be used to edit students' writing.

Dunn, Kathleen, Ebert, Daniel J, Kovacs, Mary Anne, Manear, John. Advanced Placement Writing—Strategies for Honors, Gifted, and AP Students. New York: The Center for Learning, 1999.

This manual has samples of student responses to prompts from the Advanced Placement Writing Tests. The samples and the evaluative comments are helpful for students to see what is considered advanced writing.

Foundations. Foundations for Learning Language 1, 2 3, and 4. New York: Scribner Educational Publishers, Mac Millan, 1987.

This is a workbook that provides an interview with Maya Angelou on reading writing, and excellence. An excerpt from Malcolm X in Volume I describes how Malcolm X became aware of his lack of

language skills and how he tackled the problem. The lessons in the series emphasizes the combination of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking skills.

Goheen, Richard, Craig. Literature and Language English and World Literature. Illinois: McDougal, Littell & Company, 1992.

This the core anthology textbook adopted by the Pittsburgh Public School District. The students will read and discuss stories to compare the heroic qualities of the characters.

Gunthrie, Danielle Taylor, editor. Conversations with Toni Morrison. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994.

The editor has collected interviews of Toni Morrison. In “The Seams Can’t Show . . .” Toni Morrison talks about her beginnings as a writer, her awareness of the reader, the setting, and her experiences to the page and her immersion into the character.

Murray, Alma and Thomas, Robert, editors. The Black Hero. New York: Scholastic Magazines, Inc., 1970.

This anthology of poetry and narrative essays is divided into section naming some of the characteristics of a hero. The subjects in these selections are ordinary people.

Robinson, Katherine, editor. Scope English Anthology Level 3. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1988.

There are many short stories, essays, and poems from which to choose as models of the elements of writing.

Rosenberg, Donna. World Mythology. Illinois: National Textbook Company, 1986.

The introduction of this anthology of world myths and epics provides an explanation of common themes in most cultural stories.

Walker, Margaret. How I Wrote Jubilee. New York: Feminist Press, 1990.

Margaret Walker talks about her life writing, other writers, and her views and opinions of world affairs and people.

Welty, Eudora. Thirteen Stories. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1937.

The introduction gives the background about Eudora Welty’s life, her views, and the editors review of her writing.

Wynn, Ellen C. The Short Story: Twenty-Five Masterpieces. St Martins Press, New York:1979.

Any anthology of short stories is sufficient in providing students with examples of writing techniques, story elements, and the characterization of the hero, but this book includes what is considered the masters of short story writing.

Audio Tapes

Carson, Clayborne, Shepard, Chris, editors. The Landmark Speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, “Address to the First Montgomery Improvement Association Mass Meeting”. New York: Time Warner, 2000.

Students should listen to this tape to be able to determine and describe his character just by his speech and the setting. How does a hero come through trials and tribulations and make decisions?

Common, Like Water For Chocolate, “Geto Heaven”. California: Universal Music Co. 2000.

“Geto Heaven” is telling the audience to find heaven in the ghetto in you. Find your own solutions to the problems.

King, Stephen. On Writing. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000.

Students love Stephen King’s movies. He had written a book on his views and the craft of writing. Since he does use a lot of profanity, listen first and use caution. On tape two, he provides the listener, reader, writer and learner with the steps of reading, writing, and integrating the two.

Television Program:

“First Drum”. Bravo Channel, New York. February 2003.

This documentary is an inspiring commentary of The Last Poets’ contribution to rap and hip-hop. Students will love the references to their favorite rap artists and the honor the rappers give to The Last Poets. Each member of the group tells how compelled he was to write and spread the “good word” or “good speech” for the benefit of African people.

Film:

Gerima, Haile. “Sankofa”. Myphehuh Films, Inc. 1993. 125 minutes

Appendix I

Pittsburgh Public Schools' Communications Content Standards

1. All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies.
2. All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts.
3. All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.
4. All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, to inform and to persuade in all subject areas.
5. All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotype and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.
6. All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications.
7. All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify their purpose, structure and use.
8. All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that is designed to persuade, inform or describe.
9. All students communicate appropriately in business, work and other applied situations.

Pittsburgh Public Schools' Citizenship Content Standards

1. All students demonstrate an understanding of major events, cultures, groups and individuals in the historical development of Pennsylvania, the United States and other nations, and describe the patterns of historical development.
2. All students examine and evaluate problems facing citizens in their communities, state, nation and world by incorporating concepts and methods of inquiry of the various social sciences.
3. All students develop and defend a position on current issues, confronting the United States and other nations, conducting research, analyzing alternatives and, organizing evidence and arguments, and making oral presentations.
4. All students demonstrate their skills of communicating, negotiating and cooperating with others.

5. All students demonstrate that they can work effectively with others.
6. All students demonstrate an understanding of the history and nature of prejudice and relate their knowledge to current issues facing communities, the United States and other nations.
7. All students demonstrate an understanding of the various roles they can play as citizens through participation in a community service project.

Appendix II

Conflict

Elder versus youth	White versus Black	Man Versus Nature	Modern versus Traditional values and customs	Man/ woman versus himself/ herself	African traditions versus European traditions	Old versus New	Man versus Woman	Death versus Life	Pride versus Shame
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Setting

1960's 1800's	United States Africa	City Rural	Climate	Sights and sounds	Culture and attitudes	Contribution to mood and tone	Contribution to plot, conflicts, characters
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Themes to Discuss:

Ambition	Change	Race	Pride	Betrayal	Culture	Greed	Despair	Religion	Good And Evil	Family Relationships	traditions
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Appendix III

The final project must:

- reflect the stories and the connections to past, experiences, problems and solutions today
- emphasize the cultural values which should be retained and maintained for a better future
- meet the standards of reading that show you as a reader thoroughly understood the text
- show growth in skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking
- be accompanied by a proposal
- be accompanied by a plan of organization
- may be accomplished in groups of no more than 2
- must be presented with visuals and explanation

Standards:

- Show important ideas in story
- Explain complex material, ironies, double meanings, proverbs, metaphors, similes, symbols
- Make and support connections with evidence from other sources: other texts, media, or real life experiences
- Interpret story clearly
- Make and support inferences (judgments) about content, characters, settings, themes, and style
- Explain the author's purpose, strategies and style in relationship to the story
- Challenge and evaluate the author's conclusions, craft, and style in writing

Growth in Skills - This project should be an accumulation of your growth and understanding in:

- vocabulary usage
- writing to the reader
- questioning the author
- figurative language
- the role of the woman
- African and African American culture
- the characteristics of a hero
- gathering and connecting experiences and information for evidence and examples
- presenting to an audience with clarity, organization, and ideas to emphasize or influence
- listening to summarize, reflect, evaluate and ask meaningful questions

Proposal (100 Points):

- State a community problem and exactly what and how you are going to solve it, using Sankofa – the past to move forward.
- Detail how you are going to influence and inspire your audience to prepare for a powerful future.
- Explain how your project will reflect the story and the cultural values.
- Tell the strategies you will use so your project will help solve the problems in your community.
- Explain what parts of the novels your project will emphasize.
- Give the resources you will use to find your evidence or examples.
- Tell what evidence or examples support your project.
- Describe your visual or product
- Detail the job of each group member
- Your proposal should be a narrative 1-2 pages long – 14 font – single-spaced

Organizational Plan (100 Points):

- How will you develop your project?
- Use a graphic organizer or an outline.
- What do you want to do?
- What is the main idea?
- Introduction
- Supporting evidence or examples
- What is the cultural value and how does it relate to the theme in the story?
- How do you want to organize?
 - cause and effect?
 - compare and contrast?
 - sequential order?
 - pros and cons?
 - changes or journey chart
 - list of characteristics
 - diagram of setting or custom
 - questions and answers
 - historical, current, or other textual relationships
 - stage directions
 - main idea and details on a story board

Appendix IV

SUGGESTIONS

These are suggestions. Please don't let them limit your imagination.

- √ Collect proverbs, meanings and pictures that will help guide the youth today and tomorrow.
- √ Make up an allegory or folktale that tells a lesson to use for a better future.
- √ Make up a play that does the above.
- √ Chart or compare the culture, customs and traditions that were used in traditional Africa and retained by African Americans.
- √ Give an historical, pictorial view of Nigeria.
- √ Write a monologue from one of the characters that explains what happened and how he or she would be effected today.
- √ Create a festival to heal your community, that compares with the ones in Things Fall Apart
- √ Chart and compare the journey and changes of Milkman, Okonkwo and the youth of today.
- √ Role-play a conflict and the solution for the future and the children not born.
- √ Compare the positive and negative traits of the characters and the effects of enslavement and colonialism. How do the traits compare with people today? How can the effects be reversed?
- √ Make a pictiography of the Ibo vocabulary or the new words you learned.
- √ Choose a symbol that reflects the theme of the stories. Dance, draw or mime to explain the symbol.
- √ Find or write a poem that compares with the theme of the stories and inspiration for today.
- √ Find or write an historical or current event that compares with the theme of the story. Turn the event into headlines.
- √ Write and explain the religious beliefs in Things Fall Apart.
- √ Compare the position of the women in the stories and women today with the role of women in the traditional matriarchal society.
- √ Conduct an African traditional trial. Describe and compare it with the criminal justice system used today in the United States.
- √ Prepare and compare African food with African American food. What traditions were kept?
- √ Write imaginative diary entries of one of the women characters. What advice would she give her descendants?
- √ Research and play out the importance of drums/music.
- √ Use songs to interpret themes and ideas and the main idea

Appendix V

Some Websites

Food

www.motherlandnigeria.com/recipes.htm
www.globalgourmet.com/destinations/westafrica/wafrmena
www.folklife.si.edu/vfest/africafoods.htm
www.siftthru.com/recipes_from_nigeria
www.elon.edu/student/cmendoza/nigerep
www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/701014/posts
www.beautyworlds.com/foodancient.htm

Pictures of people and landscape

www.motherlandnigeria.com/pictures.html
www.ifnc.org/pictures.html
www.fayeml.com/Endorse
www.mazzlol.it/index.htm
www.sitevoilafr/Voyage_au_Nigeria
www.media.urova.fi/~rkorpela/images.html
www.sorrel.humboldt.edu/~rwji/afr.html
www.members.carol.net/~josh/igbo

Women

www.aga.edu/~womanist/1995/mezu

Drumming and Dance

www.meltingpot.fortunecity.com/navarino/212/drums/drums
www.african_drumbeat.co.uk/new_rhythms/IBO.htm
www.ashikodrums.com/history
www.olatunjimusic.com/hear.html
www.qt.com/clark/papervu/ensame

Art

www.uiowa.edu/~afriart/toc/chapters/kml/KMEL.html
www.valdosta.peachnet.edu/~cawalker/afrocentric

Colonialism & Racism

www.65.107.211.206/victorian/history/race/rcov.html
www.boondocksnet.com/ai/kipling/kipling.html
www.westafricareview.com/vol2.1war.htm

Map

www.siu.edu/~antro/mccall/jones/map_satellite/world_11513.gif
www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies
www.raremaps.com/maps/big/4633.jpg

Twins

www.vanguardngr.com/articles/2002/columns

Restaurant

Safari Restaurant (Nigerian) (The owner would be very happy to answer your questions.)

2031 Penn Ave. (Strip District)

(412) 281-4190

Appendix VI

Technology and Ways to Present

- Brochure
- Newsletter
- PowerPoint
- Book
- Game
- Comic Strip
- Magazine
- Cut and paste pictures and images from the internet with notes
- T- shirt design
- Collage
- Dance
- Epic rap
- Video clips
- How-to book
- Mock trial
- Debate
- Illustrated book
- Computer game
- Design a compound or village. Recreate village life.
- African Fashion Show
- African Weaponry
- Research African geography, geology, nutrition, natural resources (locusts, smelting iron, yams, palm trees)
- Research politics of African government before colonialism, during and after. What traditions should be kept?
- Research the effects of colonialism and slavery on African people (Reparations).
- Research the meaning and importance of rituals, religion, and festivals in all cultures. Compare.
- Design and make a mask representing the *egwugwu* (the spirits of the ancestors), giving advice and hope for the future.
- Research Nigerian or Adinkra symbols and their meanings. Make a wood carving with symbols.
- Make a drum. Tell the story of the Ibo or an aspect of the story.
- Make an armlet or anklet, showing symbols for healing the community. (Design decorations.)
- Use animals to tell the moral or lesson of the story (fable).

- Think about how the British thought of Africans as being “uncivilized”, “heathen”, and “primitive”. Research how that same point of view is played out today. Find and discuss images. What can be done?
- Research about Nigeria today. Interview a Nigerian about Nigeria today. Take pictures.
- Research and compare the children in traditional African culture and the children today from birth to ancestry.
- Make a graph
- Find an e-mail partner in Nigeria and write to him about the book.
- Compare elders’ treatment and description in Umuofia and Mbanta and the treatment of elders in your community now.
- Make a crossword puzzle or any other puzzle.