A Journey to West Africa

Performing Arts: Meeting Arizona Arts & Academic Standards

The learning activities in this study guide address specific standards to assist classroom teachers in integrating the performance to meet Arizona Arts and Academic Standards. The specific standards will be noted in a text box accompanying learning activities.

About the Show

Dressed in traditional clothes reflecting the status of the wearer, such as the Kente cloth worn by the King of Ghana, Keith Johnson shares his passion for preserving traditional African folklore. Keith, his dancers and a drummer create a memorable and thoroughly entertaining experience for audiences of all ages. Using dance, storytelling and drumming rich with African culture, the performance will truly take the audience on “A Journey to West Africa.” A highlight of the presentation will be the stilt dance that blends traditional African culture with the contemporary world. As a special treat, through the use of some of these instruments, students will experience a tropical rain forest and even help recreate the sounds.

Let’s Talk About It!

Before you start, take a few minutes to discuss the following points:

1. What do you think African Ceremonial Dance means? Can you think of any special dances or events with dance in that are celebrated in the United States?
2. What are some traditions your family practices? Why are these traditions special to you and your family?
3. How can dance or music help communicate a story?

Theatre Etiquette

YOU, the audience, are the most important part of any live theatre event. Performers depend on you to:

 autoCompleteChoice("Remain seated")
 autoCompleteChoice("Listen")
 autoCompleteChoice("Refrain from talking during the performance")
 autoCompleteChoice("Laugh when something in the show is funny")
 autoCompleteChoice("Clap to show appreciation")

Please turn off cell phones and other devices. Cameras and other recording devices are prohibited.
Pre-Show Activity

Objective - *Create:* Students will create Kente cloths using agreed upon colors that display personality traits.

Materials: (Paper may be ordered from MDC.)

- Black construction paper (12” x 18”) one for each student. (Cut per instructions [Diagram])
- 10 sheets of construction paper in each of the following colors blue, green, red, yellow cut into 1”x12” strips. (108 strips each color)
- 20 sheets of white construction paper cut into 1”x12” strips. (216 strips)

Discuss -

In African Kente cloths, each color represents a different trait. Using the internet show students example of Kente cloths. As a class brainstorm common personality or physical traits (Ambitious, curious, playful, brown hair, green eyes, etc.) Narrow down the selection to 5 of the most prevalent traits with the color white representing the most common among the students. Determine what the remaining 4 colors should each represent.

Create a Kente cloth:

- Each student will get 6 white strips representing a trait all students share. (i.e. “I am a student.”)
- Each student will select 3 strips of TWO additional colors that represent 2 more of their individual traits. (i.e. 3 green strips and 3 yellow strips)
- Begin weaving the colored strips in and out into the black paper. Row 1 is under, over, under, over until the end. Start with one of the TWO colors they chose as their individual traits.
- The second row will be the white (group trait color) and start by weaving over, under, over, under, etc.
- Continue the pattern until all 9 strips have been woven into the black paper.
- Cut a fringe (roughly 1.5” in length on each end of the ‘cloth’.
- Have each student discuss why they felt their 2nd and 3rd color choices represented them.
- Display the ‘cloths’ in class until after the performance.

Arizona Arts, Academic, and College and Career Ready Standards

AZ Common Core Standards; English Language Arts;

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration
SL.1 Participate in collaborative conversations
SL.3 Ask and answer questions

Arizona Arts Standards

VA.CR.1. b. Collaboratively set goals and create artwork that is meaningful and has purpose to the makers (such as individual works with a similar purpose

VA.CN.10. Create a work of art that reflects community or cultural traditions.

Arizona Social Studies Standards

Describe cultural elements in a community of areas studied.
S4:C4:PO 4
S4:C4: PO 6
**Post-Show Activity**

**Objective** - Demonstrate: Students will create a travel brochure to demonstrate their understanding of the diversity of the rainforest.

**Teacher:**
Following the performance, discuss the sounds of the rainforest created during Keith Johnson’s A Journey to West Africa. Use books or online resources to learn about other aspects of the rainforest such as its people, wildlife, plants, and weather. Discuss what innovations (such as medicines, rubber, chewing gum . . . ) have come from the rainforest. Check out points of interest.

**Materials:**
- Paper/drawing paper
- Pencils, crayons or markers
- Rulers
- Glue/glue sticks
- Magazine photos or printed photos of rainforest locations/animals/people/products.

**Students will:**

Break into groups of 4-6 students.

Discuss what they learned about the rainforest and what they would tell others to get entice them to visit the rainforest.

Using various materials, create a travel brochure or flier that will describe each group’s favorite discoveries about the rain forest to a potential tourist.

Share the brochures/fliers with their class mates or other classrooms.

**Extended activity** - Using drawings and recycled materials, turn the classroom into a rainforest. Have students lead tours of the rainforest, explaining what they have discovered during their research.

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**AZ College and Career Ready Standards; English Language Arts;**

**Speaking and Listening**

Comprehension and Collaboration
SL.1 Participate in collaborative conversations

Comprehension and Collaboration
SL.3 Ask and answer questions