

Discovery Theater & African Art!

Classroom Activities

Artful Rhythms

In the NMAA galleries you saw examples of visual patterns in art from Africa. Now it's your turn – **design your own “Kente” cloth!**

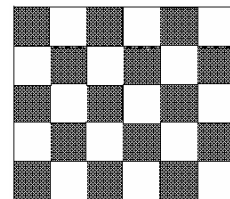
1. Learn about West African Kente Cloth from books or websites like:
 - *The Spider Weaver: A Legend Of Kente Cloth* by Margaret Musgrove (ages 4-8)
 - *Kente Colors* by Debbi Chocolate (ages 4-8),
 - *Master Weaver from Ghana* by Gilbert Ahiagble and Louise Meyer.

2. The colors used in African Kente cloth have special meanings. Here is a very simple version of some of these meanings:

- Red - Life and Blood
- Green -Mother Africa, Mother Earth
- Black - People and Unity
- Gold - Strength and Fortune

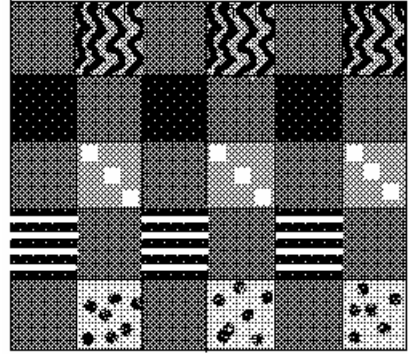
Choose 3 or 4 of your favorite colors to use to make your “Kente” cloth. If you like, give each one a meaning that's important to you. (Note: The patterns used in African Kente cloth have special meanings as well. As you make up patterns, you might want to give them special meanings, too – like “pizza” or “how I feel when I ride my bike” or “Recess!”

3. Take a piece of paper. Using a ruler and a pencil, draw lines 2 inches apart to make a “checkerboard” of 2-inch squares. (For an easier project, use smaller paper...for more of a challenge, use bigger paper.)
4. Put a small dot in every other square. For instance, if your paper WERE a checkerboard, you would put a dot where every black square would be.
5. Use your chosen colors to make a pattern in one of the dotted squares. Then make that same pattern in ALL THE OTHER DOTTED SQUARES.



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6. Look at the blank squares across the top row. Chose two or three colors and make up another pattern. Make that same pattern in all the other squares on that row.
7. Move down to the next row. Make up yet another pattern for the blank squares in that row. Repeat for every row on the paper.
8. Turn your visual patterns into sound patterns! Using clapping, drumming, and your voice, make up a rhythm for each of your Kente patterns. Play your Kente cloth!



Word Patterns

In this program you heard rhythm in music (sound patterns) and you saw visual patterns in art. Now try creating some word patterns!

1. Write a 4-line **poem** about the performance, or about something you saw in the galleries. Here are two ideas for patterns:
 - Use words that **begin with the same letter** (for example, “tapping, turning, twirling”)
 - Use words that **rhyme** (for example, “tap, clap, snap”)
2. Can you think of **other word patterns** to use in your poem?
3. Make a poster – using interesting lettering, copy your poem in the center, then use **visual patterns** to make a border!



Smithsonian
National Museum of African Art

africa.si.edu

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1. Click “RESEARCH”

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1. Click “ART AND PROGRAMS”

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1. Click “ART AND PROGRAMS”
2. Click “PUBLIC PROGRAMS”
3. Select “TOURS AND OUTREACH”

To access curriculum resources:

1. Click “PUBLIC PROGRAMS”
2. Select “FAMILIES, KIDS, TEACHERS”