Discovery Theater

Kofi's African Village

Recommended for ages 3 to 7

PreK to Grade 2

A Reproducible Learning Guide for Educators

This guide is designed to help educators prepare for, enjoy, and discuss *Kofi's African Village*
It contains background, discussion questions and activities appropriate for ages 3 to 7.

Programs Are Made Possible, In Part, By Generous Gifts From:

D.C. Commission on the Arts & Humanities	DC Public Schools
The Nora Roberts Foundation	Philip L. Graham Fund
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Discovery Theater ● P.O. Box 23293, Washington, DC ● www.discoverytheater.org
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ABOUT KOFI DENNIS

Kofi Dennis is a master drummer, performer, and educator. He is a graduate of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, and studied early childhood and adolescent education at Komenda College, University of Cape Coast.

Kofi believes in the concept of learning through play. He has extensive experience in many areas of education and the performing arts in West Africa and the United States. Since moving to the United States in 1993, Mr. Dennis has delighted children, parents, teachers, and colleagues with his wonderful work in area schools and as a Wolf Trap Performing Arts Master Teacher/Trainer and presenter of West African Culture. As a professional percussionist and storyteller, he provides Arts Integrated classroom residencies and professional development workshops in music and creative drama for early childhood educators both locally, nationally and internationally. He has presented workshops and residencies in schools and centers nationwide: notably Kennedy Center, Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Wolf Trap's Theater in the Woods, and the Filene Center, and St. Thomas Folklife Festival, Virgin Islands.

For more information about Kofi, visit www.playforconcepts.com.

LET'S TALK ABOUT AFRICA!

Africa is the world's second largest continent, with 55 countries, and one billion people! Africa is home to the largest hot desert in the world- the Sahara Desert, which covers 3,600,000 square miles. The Nile is one of the world's longest rivers, and it is also located in Africa. It stretches over 4,000 miles, and runs through four different African countries. There are over 1,500 different languages spoken in Africa, including Swahili, Amharic, Hausa, and Oromo. Africa is the second most populous continent with about 16% of the world's population. Africa has the largest populations of lion, elephant, rhinoceros, cheetah, hyena, leopard and hundreds of other species.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE DRUM

Beat—the regular rhythmic pattern of a piece of music or a dance

Rhythm—the pattern of regular or irregular pulses caused in music by the occurrence of strong and weak beats
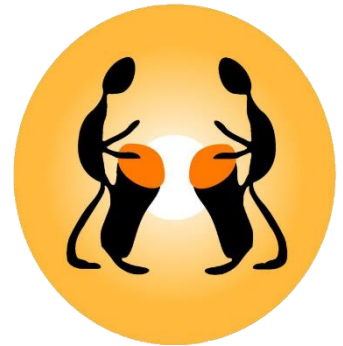
Tempo—the speed at which the beat moves

Dynamics—volume levels of loudness and softness in music
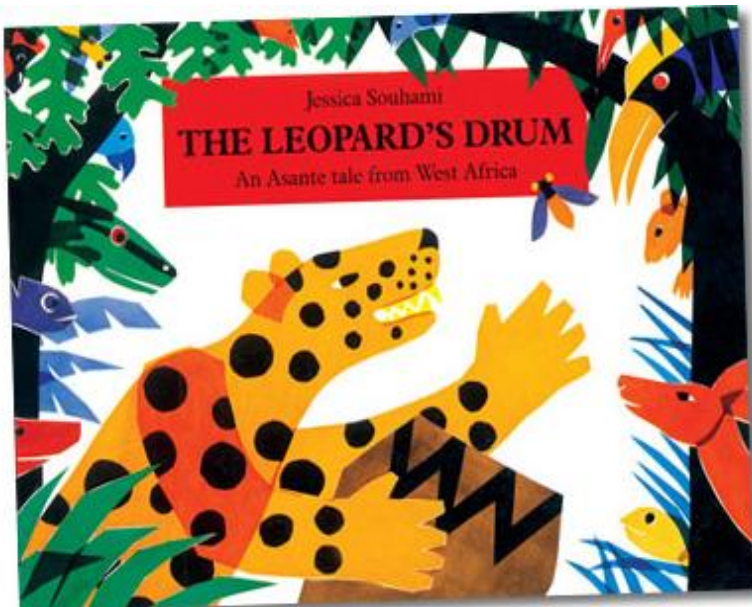
Timbre—the way a particular instrument sounds

Harmony—more than one note played at a time that result in a pleasing musical sound

Percussion Family—sound is produced by shaking, striking, tapping, scraping the instruments, such as drums, triangle, and piano.

READY TO READ!

The Leopard's Drum: An Asante Tale from West Africa

Osebo the leopard has a magnificent drum. All the animals desire Osebo's drum, but he won't let anyone else have it, not even Nyame, the Sky-God! So, Nyame offers a big reward to the animal that brings him the drum. This short, rhythmic story is perfect for reading aloud.

By Jessica Souhami

MAKE A KENTE CLOTH

Background

Kente cloth, is a type of silk and cotton fabric made of interwoven cloth strips, and is native to the Akan ethnic group of South Ghana. Kente cloth has its origin in the Ashanti kingdom, and was adopted by people in Ivory Coast and many other West African countries. At one time, Akan royal and sacred cloth was worn only in times of important times and was the cloth that kings wore. Over time, the use of Kente became more widespread.

Materials

- 11 x 17 Construction Paper
- Scissors
- Markers or patterned paper
- Glue stick

Directions

1. Fold a piece of construction paper hamburger style.
2. Cut two strips of paper, each 1-inch thick.
3. Hold the paper with the fold towards you, and starting 1 inch from the end, cut 7 straight lines about 1 inch apart, stopping with an inch left at the other end.
4. Weave the first strip of colored paper across the black paper, alternating over, under, over, under, all the way to the end.
5. Then weave the next strip of paper, reversing the over / under pattern, and push this strip up against the first one. Repeat two weaving steps until you use all your strips.
6. Glue down all the loose edges.
7. Finally, draw simple shapes and designs, or glue squares of patterned paper onto the cloth.
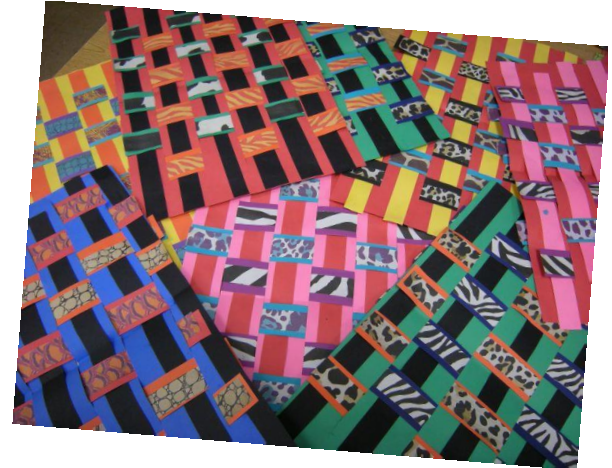
MAKE A DRUM!

Materials

- Empty cartons or jars
- Plastic bags or fabric
- Rubber bands or string
- Paper
- Tape
- Stickers, paint, or markers for decorating

Directions

1. Cover the sides of your container with bright paper or paint.
2. Cut a plastic bag or fabric it in a circular shape to cover the top of the drum. Make sure you cut a large enough circle that the sides fold down over the lip of the drum.
3. Secure the circle of plastic/fabric with a rubber band. The tighter you pull the fabric the better sound you will achieve.

Smithsonian Connection: African Art Museum

After the show, take some time to visit the African Art Museum. It's right down the hall! If
you don't have time, be sure to check out the Classroom Resources page on their website.
Curricula on African art were developed for use in the classroom and include activities for elementary through
high school students. There are even two about drums from West Africa! To learn more about the classroom
curricula, borrow videos, or learn about outreach in your classroom, visit
https://africa.si.edu/education/classroom-resources/.

Open daily from 10:30am to 5pm

Located at 950 Independence Ave SW,
Washington, DC 20560

Resources

http://www.drumafrica.co.uk/articles/the-djembe/

http://africa.si.edu/exhibits/ntan.html

http://africa.si.edu/exhibits/baga.html

http://drummagazine.com/10-things-every-beginner-should-learn/

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/world_music/music_africa2.shtml

➔ For more online resources, visit the Smithsonian's Learning Lab!

https://learninglab.si.edu/

Vocabulary

Call and response song: A musical form in which one phrase is followed by a second phrase, usually in the form of a question and an answer.

Rhythm: The placement of sounds in time.

Music theory: The study of the practice and possibilities of music.

Measure: A measure is a term used in music theory. A measure is a space of time decided by the amount of beats in the time signature. If the time signature is 4/4, then the bar would consist of 4 counts. Here is an example of a measure of music.

Bar: A bar is a term used in music theory. A bar is a measure of time decided by the amount of beats in the time signature. If the time signature is 4/4, then the bar would consist of 4 counts. Here is an example of a bar of music.

Crescendos: The act of raising the volume of a beat for certain duration of time. Crescendos are used to build energy, and transition songs from one style to the next. Crescendos take a lot of control with your dynamics, something every drummer should be aware of.

Decrescendos: Bringing the volume of a song, beat or feel down in duration of time. These are the opposite of crescendos, and are great to bring down the energy level of a song. This takes control of dynamics, and is something every drummer should practice.

Note value: The duration of time you play a certain note for. The value of a note determines how long you play the specified note for. For example, quarter notes have a quarter note value, meaning you play for one quarter note. Drummers practice note value exercises to help develop control of their sticks.

Djembe drum: Hand drums that offer a distinct tone when played. These are African drums that are usually carved out of wood, and are topped with an animal skin. These are similar to bongos; however they can range from small sizes to very large sizes. Djembes are shaped like an hourglass.

Ghost notes: A note played on the drum that is felt more than it is heard. Ghost notes are quieter notes played in between the regular notes. These are played at lower volumes to be almost hidden behind the beat. These are used to spice up a boring pattern, and to add a new dynamic to the song.

Smithsonian Institution

OUR MISSION: "THE INCREASE AND DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE"

Smithsonian Associates advances the Institution's mission through life-enriching educational and cultural experiences inspired by the Smithsonian's research and collections for DC-region students, families, and adults, and for learning communities nationwide.

Discovery Theater has been presenting DC-area children with live educational performances for almost 40 years. With programs that enrich the Smithsonian experience for nearly 50,000 children annually, Discovery Theater is a gateway to the exhibits, collections, and themes contained in the museums and galleries on the National Mall and beyond. We explore American history and cultures, folk tales from around the world, and exciting, accessible science and math programs in the company of puppeteers, storytellers, dancers, actors, and musicians. Discovery Theater performances unite ideologies, enact themes that reflect the diversity of its audiences, open avenues of self-reflection, and offer an enjoyable means for parents and teachers to demonstrate life's lessons. There's so much to do and explore at the Smithsonian—and Discovery Theater is the ideal place to begin!

Our Location
The S. Dillon Ripley Center, 3rd Sublevel
1100 Jefferson Drive, SW
Washington, DC 20024

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