



The African Country Project: Making Ancestral Connections

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Connections to Middle and High School

Studying the continent of Africa is not only a world study, but it is also an African study that should be presented with a more positive and humanistic approach. This lesson will allow students to research an assigned African country.

Goal

Students will develop a comprehensive report on an African country. This research project should also provide a more respectful and legitimate view of Africa and its varied people.

Objective

Students will conduct research about an African country using a variety of resources.

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Standards

History

- Enable learners to develop historical comprehension so they might reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage, identify the central questions addressed in historical narrative, draw upon data in historical maps, charts, and other graphic organizers; and draw upon visual, literary, or musical sources;
- Assist learners in developing historical research capabilities that enable them to formulate historical questions, obtain historical data, question historical data, identify the gaps in available records, place records in context, and construct sound historical interpretations;
- Guide learners in acquiring knowledge of the history and values of diverse civilizations throughout the world, including those of the West, and in comparing patterns of continuity and change in different parts of the world;



Culture and Cultural Diversity

- Assist learners to apply an understanding of culture as an integrated whole that explains the functions and interactions of language, literature, the arts, traditions, beliefs and values, and behavior patterns.

Warm-up (Anticipatory Set)

Inquire about students' knowledge of Africa: its geography, people, history, languages, religions, economy, etc.

Activity (Instructional Input)

Identify each African country on a map. Inform the students of the African origins of humans from an anthropological perspective and the African-American origins from Africa via the Middle Passage. Instruct the students about the importance of acknowledging the African Diaspora, the people of Africa, and their disbursement. This will connect the multiple cultures of people of African descent.

Inform students they will research a particular African country. Assign each student an African country to research.

Give instructions for research:

- The students will receive five grades for this project
 1. physical presentation of the project
 2. oral presentation of the project
 3. basic content of the project
 4. visual presentation #1
 5. visual presentation #2(Please refer to the attached rubrics for details and criteria.)
- Allow the students approximately three weeks to complete this project.
- Students are to use the following resources: books, maps, encyclopedias, the Internet, periodicals, etc.
- Each student must stand to give an oral presentation about his or her country.



- The students must choose two out of the six visual assignment options.
- Instruct the students to type the project and maintain a notebook with proof of their research.
- This project can be completed in class or independently.
- Encourage the students to be as creative as possible.

Have students choose two out of the six visual project choices:

- **Tourist Scrapbook** – Use a scrapbook page to display artifacts and souvenirs from the country such as the currency, a letter or postcard to a loved one describing a trip to the country, ticket stubs, brochures, maps, photos, etc.
- **Language, Religion, or Economy Pictograph** – Create a pictograph using five different icons to represent quantities on a graph to present information about the country.
- **Cultural Cuisine Placemat** – Create a visual display of the foods or meals customarily eaten in the country. Use clay, construction paper, or other art supplies to depict a plate of food.
- **Landmark Accordion Case** – Create folder pockets with construction paper. On cards provide facts about landmarks in the in the country. Insert the cards into the folder pockets.
- **Animal or Plant Fan-fold File** – Fold a large piece of construction paper in half three times to create a display. Glue fact and photo cards about the country’s animals and plants to the display.
- **Costume Dolls** – Use construction paper to make paper dolls or use Barbie-type dolls and create clothing to depict attire worn in the country.

(Visual projects are from **Gravois, Michael. *Country Report Projects for Any Country*. New York: Scholastic, 2004.**)

Assessment

The students must achieve a significant score for finding and fulfilling information for a particular African country based on the rubrics. Use the rubric to score for each item.



Project Rubric

Physical Presentation of Project

Student's Name _____

Country _____

Actual Points	Criteria	Possible Points
	Project submitted in a folder.	10
	Project is typed, double-spaced	10
	Project is organized, neat, in order	10
	Cover page (centered: student name, Date, country, class name)	10
	Table of Contents (a list with the order in which data is presented)	10
	Spelling, punctuation, grammar	10
	Pictures, drawings	10
	Bibliography page	10
	Submitted on due date	10
	A notebook showing evidence of Research (notes, printouts)	10
	Total points if all requirements are met	100



Oral Presentation of Project

Actual Points		Possible Points
	Criteria Presenter is adequately prepared for the presentation and artwork is displayed.	25
	Presenter indicates an understanding of the topic.	25
	Presenter delivers ideas in a clear and concise fashion with little reliance on notes.	25
	Presenter speaks loudly and clearly and maintains eye contact.	25
	Total points if all requirements are met	100



Basic Content Rubric

Actual Points	Criteria	Possible Points
	Map of the country	2
	Flag of the country	3
	Capital(s)	2
	Demonym or nationality	2
	Population	2
	Currency	2
	Life Expectancy (male and female)	4
	Religious	5
	Languages	5
	Tribes, ethnic groups and cultures	6
	Environment, climate zone, terrain	5
	Land area	3
	Land forms, nearby islands, elevations	3
	Geographic features	
	Waterways	3
	Major cities, provinces, tribal boundaries	3
	Resources	5
	Imports and exports	5
	GDP (gross domestic product) or GNP (gross national product)	2
	Plant life	3
	Animal life	3
	In what part of Africa is the country located?	2
	Form of government	2
	Was the country ever colonized? By whom?	10
	When did it gain independence?	
	Famous presidents, rulers, leaders, kings, dictators	8
	The country's history, wars, former political names	10
	AIDS/HIV rates and information	5
	Other interesting facts	5
	Total points if all requirements are met	110



Rubric for Visual Assignments

Actual Points	Visual # 1	Criteria	Possible points
		The artwork is clean, neat and well-organized.	25
		The artwork contains all required items and information.	25
		The artwork demonstrates understanding of the concepts and topic depicted.	25
		The artwork is colorful and creative.	25
		Total points if all requirements are met	100



Actual Points	Visual #2 Criteria	Possible points
	The artwork is clean, neat and well-organized.	25
	The artwork contains all required items and information.	25
	The artwork demonstrates understanding of the concepts and topic being depicted.	25
	The artwork is colorful and creative.	25
	Total points if all requirements are met	100

Cumulative Score Report for African Country Project

Student:

Country:

Physical Presentation Score	
Oral Presentation Score	
Basic Content Score	
Visual Assignment #1	
Visual Assignment #2	



Teacher Resources

www.nhc.rep.nc.us/pds/maailib.htm The Making of African American Identity Volumes I-III, free online collections of primary resources, National Humanities center. This collection includes primary resources – historical documents, literary texts, and works of art – thematically organized with notes and discussion questions.

Michael Gravois, *Country Report Projects for Any country*. New York: Scholastic, 2004. www.cia.gov/worldfactbook

Books

- *African Origins of Civilization* by Cheik Anta Diop
- *Black Man and the Nile* by Yosef Ben Jochannan
- *Introduction to African Civilizations* by John G. Jackson
- *Nile Valley Civilizations* by Ivan Van Sertima
- *Nile Valley Contributions to Civilization* by Anthony Browder
- *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* by Joy DeGruy Leary
- *Stolen Legacy* by George G.M. James
- *They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America* by Ivan Van Sertima