

FreshSTARTs Program

African Drumming and Dance

Appropriate for: Grades K-5

Materials needed: none

This program meets the following Sunshine State Standards:

MUSIC: MU.A.1.1 - MU.E.1.1 - MU.E.2.1 - MU.C.1.1

MU.A.2.1b: performs expressively with appropriate dynamics and tempos on classroom and ethnic instruments

MU.B.1.1a: improvises appropriate “musical answers” (e.g. simple rhythmic variations) in the same style to given rhythmic phrases

MU.C.1.2b: describes how basic elements of music (e.g. rhythm, melody, timbre, texture, and dynamics) are used in different types of music around the world

FOREIGN LANGUAGES : FL.C.1.1 - FL.B.1.1 - FL.B.1.2 - FL.D.1.1

DANCE : DA.C.1.1 and DA.C.1.2 – Dance to explain cultural differences

VISUAL ARTS: VA.C.1.1- visual arts in relation to history and culture

Objectives:

Students will know African greetings, songs, dance movements, words from the Twi dialect of Ghana, and will be introduced to the intricacy of African drumming’s polyrhythms.

- Say some words from Twi (West African) and Swahili (East African) dialects
- Know that African people dress differently from Americans
- Know that English words like hat, blouse, pants have different names in the language of Twi
- Know a little about the members of the Ashanti nation’s royal families in Ghana, West Africa
- Know that African chiefs are very rich and not all Africans are poor
- Know the history of Kente and Adinkra cloth
- Sing the song Kye Kye Kule, an African counting song for children that is used in schools
- Know that Africans live in cities as well as in the village and they ride in cars and busses
- Know a little about the animals of Africa and that tigers live in Asia not Africa; that it snows in South Africa; and that there are not real jungles in Africa but rather rainforests
- Know that African dancing and music are fun

Connections to Learning:

Social Studies – learning about other cultures, language, lifestyles

Art – the colors and designs of the African clothing and how they are made

Music – experiencing African music, dance and singing

Geography – location of another continent and geographical information

Introduction/Background Information:

Teachers should be aware that rhythm and blues, rock-n-roll, and rap music are rhythmically based in African music. Jazz, tap and hip hop dance are also all rooted in African dance.

Unlike western clothing, African clothing and cloth has significance within the society. It is not mass produced like western clothing and making cloth is often a skill handed down through generations of a family. It is artistic and creative.

Instruments that are now called “drums” all have individual names and only began being labeled as drums by the Europeans. To an African drummer, a “drum” stores oil.

Through varied rhythms, Africans communicate with their drums.

Program Experience:

Introduction: students are greeted with a African greeting and all participate in a call and response song. Students are invited to take a journey to the African continent to a festival of song and dance.

Throughout the performance common English words are taught in Twi and Swahili, African languages.

Segment 1: Students and teachers learn “Kye Kye Kule” a West African children’s counting song and must participate in an accompanying dance.

Students are taught “Ago and Amey” from the Yoruba language of Nigeria – (Ago = are you listening? Amey = Yes, I’m listening). This serves an artistic and functional purpose as it is used throughout the program to quiet students down when necessary. Students are also taught an accompanying hand game.

Segment 2: Using student’s pre-dressed in African costumes, African clothing demonstration by artist to show students different African Fashions.

Segment 3: Drummer displays and discusses the various drums on stage and then invites volunteers to play them.

Segment 4: “Fanga” dance is sometimes performed by the artist (Margo Blake-Tyler) and a drummer depending upon the time allowed by the school.

Segment 5: Farewell – artists say good-bye in Twi and stress the importance of staying in school and learning about other cultures.

Additional Materials:

Teachers and students can listen to African children’s music or watch videos of African dances and lifestyles. Such materials can be purchased or borrowed from the Internet or library.

Reflection/Follow-up Activities:

The teacher can invent creative ways to review information from the show, such as using some of the newly learned African words as greetings or to quiet down the students in the classroom.

The students can also design their own clothing in art using symbols to tell a story on the cloth, or they could write about what they remember from the show.

Students can review Kye Kye Kule or learn other African songs in music class.

Assessment:

A variety of assessment methods are possible including teacher observation, student self assessment, peer assessment, individual, small or large group assessment, rubrics, and journals.

The assessment may be a performance, task or product. Students can participate in rhythmic call and response patterns and can be quizzed on the new African words they learned by using the vocabulary hand-out.

Teachers are encouraged to use “Ago – Amey” in the classroom to quiet students.