Ghana: An Annotated List of Resources for Elementary Teaching About Ghana

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Traveling Kit

Ghana Kit

This kit offers a window into Ghanaian life. Students learn by exploring the real stuff from kids in Ghana: school uniforms, books, Ghanaian kids’ own homework and other items. The kit also includes a detailed curriculum guide and a terrific video that follows one child throughout her day.

Rental from: African Studies Center, Boston University (full address and telephone above) for $40 for 2 weeks. Rentals can also be arranged through The Children’s Museum, Boston. Call 1-800-370-5487 or write to The Children’s Museum, Kit Rental Dept., 300 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210-1034

Children’s Book

(for elementary grades unless otherwise noted)


Anansi and his wife outsmart the Sky God and win back the beloved folktales of their people.


This beautiful picture book introduces a contemporary Ghanaian weaver and his art.


This is a beautiful book with lovely, color photographs. However, there are a number of errors in the text. 1) When discussing the Golden Stool, the author mistakenly tells readers that “only the Ashanti King can sit on it” (however, not even the King sits on the Golden stool, which is a symbol of the country), 2) Asante not “Ashanti” is the
indigenous name of this Ghanaian group, 3) The Asante speak the Twi language, not “Ashanti.” Overall the text appears to be a vehicle for a stunning set of photographs.


This is a book of well told traditional folktales. Recommended for upper elementary or middle school.


Amoko, a little girl living on Ghana, takes her favorite teddy bear everywhere that she goes and is heartbroken when she thinks he’s lost. This is a picture book.


This picture book briefly introduces various African kingdoms and events, including several in Ghana.


Anansi Spider Man trades various items with the people he encounters, until he himself is distracted by a bird and ends up empty-handed.


The story of a man, considered a good-for-nothing, who decides to do something positive with his life. Grade level is upper elementary in subject matter but elementary in reading level.

Boateng, Yaw Ababio. The Young Detectives. Chelsea House, 1994. Twin brothers happen to see three jewel thieves and help the police to capture them.


Joanna loves adventures but is always getting into trouble. Everyone tells her she behaves like a boy. But why can’t girls run in races or go to the airport on a field trip? Joanna decides to prove she can do anything boys can.


With large, clear photos and simple explanations, this book manages to cover a great deal of ground very quickly. Readers learn about Ghana’s history, economy, city and rural life; students also briefly “meet” several families, both wealthy and working class. Upper elementary.


When Yaa, who loves to talk while she works, hits the Sky God one too many times with her pestle, he disappears high up into the heavens. This is a picture book.


A story of how one twin gets into trouble while the other one gets blamed.

A story of a boy and mistaken identity.


This tale explains how Anansi obtained the world’s stories from God.


This perceptive historical novel won the 1995 African Studies Children’s Book Award for Older Readers. It contrasts two cultures, the Asante kingdom of Ghana and New England during the era of slavery. The novel tells the story of Kofi, a young boy who was kidnapped in what is now Ghana and enslaved in the United States. This is for upper elementary or middle school.


This introduction to Ghana covers the country’s culture and history.


This very brief (30pp) book offers an introduction to two of Africa’s great independence leaders, including Nkrumah of Ghana. Middle school and up.


Anansi the Spider uses a strange moss-covered rock in the forest to trick all the other animals, until Little Bush Deer decides he needs to learn a lesson.


In this picture book, Anansi the Spider talks inside a melon and fools Elephant into thinking the melon is talking.


This picture book is a retelling of an Akan tale about the creation of the world and all its different peoples. This retelling is an adaptation of a legend that appears in *Gods and Men: Myths and Legends from the World’s Religions.*


A survey of the legends and history of the West African kingdoms of Oyo, Benin, and Asante with discussion of the slave trade and its effect on the peoples of the Guinea Coast. Middle school and up.


This picture book uses Asante art forms to tell the story of Kwaku Anansi and his six sons.


In this tale from Ghana, a farmer is shocked when a yam, his trusted dog, a fish, cloth, and water criticize him. This is a picture book.

A farmer is startled when first a yam and then a dog, a tree, and a stone talk to him.


A drunken cab driver hits a girl with his car, though it doesn’t kill her. To scare him sober, the girl’s sister dresses up as a ghost to haunt him. Middle school.


With bold illustrations adapted from her own shadow puppets, Jessica Souhami retells the story of how a very small tortoise outwits a boastful leopard in this traditional tale.


In this trickster tale from West Africa, Anansi the Spider sets out to retrieve all the stories of the world from Nyame, the Sky God. This is a picture book.

**Teacher Resources**

*Adinkra Symbols: Bulletin Board Kit* (AFAM International)

716 Cortwright, Pontiac, MI 48340, (313) 334-4877

This kit contains a dozen 8 x 11 cardboard display sheets of Adinkra symbols, plus several large-print pages explaining them.


This is a kit with a book and an audio cassette. There are nineteen songs from the Akan of Ghana and Shona of Zimbabwe. The book offers a detailed guide for teaching the songs.

*African Names,* (Center for African Studies, University of Illinois, 210 International Studies Building., 910 South 5th Street, Champaign, IL 61820), 217-333-6335

This book contains many easy-to-follow descriptions for teachers or for older students of naming practices in various countries, including Ghana.


A highly detailed set of lesson plans on a variety of topics for teaching about Ghana in the first grade.

*Curriculum Materials for Teachers,* (Center for African Studies, University of Illinois, 210 International Studies Building, 910 South 5th Street, Champaign, IL 61820), 217-333-6335. This book is a treasure trove of activities and 2 page essays on a wide range of topics important for teaching about Africa, including Ghana.

Crane, Louise. Games of Strategy. (Center for African Studies, University of Illinois, 210 International Studies Building, 910 South 5th Street, Champaign, IL. 61820), 217-333-6335. This book contains useful descriptions, game rules and information on building the game boards for a number of games of strategy from Ghana.

This hands-on book of projects contains a clearly contextualized activity for elementary children around Ghana’s Adinkra cloth.


Includes over 50 symbols of Adinkra cloth from the Asante people of Ghana.


This book of reproducible pages contains hands-on activities on a variety of West African cultures, including a number of activities for Ghana. Each project is placed in its cultural context.


A cookbook for American children that focuses primarily on recipes from Ghana but includes information on recipes and foods used generally in West Africa. Provides some insight into aspects of life in Ghana.

**Videos for Children**


This 15 minute video explores the life of children in Ghana by following Georgina Williams, a 9 year old girl, as she goes through her daily activities. Viewers get to know Georgina as she does her household chores, attends school, hangs out with her friends, and goes shopping with her mother.

*Stories from the Black Tradition.* Children’s Circle, 1992. 52:00 total in 5 short segments, the first of which is a folktale from Ghana. All five stories were previously published in book form: “A Story -A Story,” “Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters,” “Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People’s Ears,” “The Village of Round and Square Houses,” and “Goggles!”

**Internet Resources**


Boston University’s African Studies Center’s Outreach Program. By May 1999, the Program will have put a large number of lesson plans for K-12 as well as other resources up on the website.

[http://www.library.yale.edu/~fboateng/fbhp.htm](http://www.library.yale.edu/~fboateng/fbhp.htm)

If you have difficulties accessing, try Yahoo – type in address – select Ghana life. This site gives excellent overview of Ghana today. Includes coat of arms, social etiquette, family, geography, regions and their capitals, government, legal system, journalism, clothing, festivals, local time in Ghana and interesting links.

[http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies)

University of Pennsylvania’s African Studies Center: a wide-ranging site with great links to other sites.

[http://www.marshall.edu/akanart](http://www.marshall.edu/akanart)

The art of the Akan people of Ghana which includes kente weaving.

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