Bingo! U.S. - Africa Connections

**Rules:** The goal of the game is to get the most initials in the boxes within the given time. When a person who can answer yes to a question is found, s/he puts his or her initials in the question box. Every person can only list his/her initials once.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Have you eaten chocolate?</th>
<th>2. Have you read an Anansi story?</th>
<th>3. Have you studied the pyramids?</th>
<th>4. Have you met someone whose ancestors were Africans?</th>
<th>5. Have you read <em>Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters</em>?</th>
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<td>11. Have you met someone who has been to Africa?</td>
<td>12. Have you seen a picture of Nelson Mandela?</td>
<td>13. Have you used the word “guy?”</td>
<td>14. Have you used a smartphone?</td>
<td>15. Have you seen tires for sale?</td>
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<td>21. Have you seen a baton twirler?</td>
<td>22. Have you eaten yams or okra?</td>
<td>23. Have you watched Olympic track &amp; field events on TV?</td>
<td>24. Do you know where the country Liberia got its name?</td>
<td>25. Have you seen a TV show on African animals?</td>
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Explanatory Notes

This game illustrates the many connections we have with Africa through trade and history. Some of the connections are through the slave trade; these connections illustrate that people brought here from Africa brought more than their labor—they also enriched U.S. culture. The historical clues in the game merely offer pointers to broader influences African immigrants have had on U.S. life. The U.S. also has more contemporary connections developed through trade and immigration. An excellent resource to accompany this activity is the book *Africanisms in American Culture* edited by Joseph Hollaway.

The core concept of this activity is that we in the U.S. share connections with Africa on a daily basis in terms of the food we eat, the cell phones we use, the vehicles we travel in, the music we play, and the stories we tell.

1. Ghana and the Cote d’Ivoire are major producers of cacao, the beans from which cocoa and chocolate are made.

2. Anansi, the spider, is a Ghanaian trickster character. When Africans came to the Caribbean, the character sometimes became “Aunt Nancy.” The Brer Rabbit character also came from West Africa.

3. This clue is to remind ourselves that Egypt is part of Africa and that regions to the south and west of Egypt influenced ancient Egyptian history.

4. At one level, all of us have African ancestors. At another level, Africans are the ancestors of African-Americans and many Latin Americans.

5. *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters* is a Cinderella story from ancient Zimbabwe. Buildings from the 15th century that are still standing today serve as background in the book’s illustrations.

6. Nigeria is the tenth-largest oil supplier to the U.S., selling more than Indonesia, Australia and Russia.

7. Madagascar and Tanzania’s island of Zanzibar are the major producers of cloves in the world.

8. Diamonds are mined in a number of African countries, including South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
9. The banjo is mainly of African origin, brought over by Africans who came enslaved to the United States.

10. Jazz, a Kikongo word, has a strong African musical influence, as do other music and dance forms (such as rock n’ roll, the Charleston, and the rumba).

11. You may know of famous people who have traveled to Africa (e.g. Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Bill Gates, Oprah Winfrey) or perhaps someone from your community has traveled to Africa as a tourist, Peace Corps volunteer, or with a church group.

12. Nelson Mandela was elected the president of South Africa in 1994 during the first democratic elections in the country’s history, after the end of white rule.

13. “Guy,” “phony,” and many other words have their origins in the Wolof, a language widely spoken in Senegal.

14. According to Amnesty International, around 40,000 African children have worked in dangerous cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Cobalt is found in many rechargeable lithium-ion batteries used in smartphones and laptops.

15. Firestone Tires had one of the largest rubber plantations in the world in Liberia.


17. “The Lion Sleeps Tonight” is South African in origin, from the Zulu people. During the struggle for freedom, the song had a metaphorical meaning: the lion represents the black people of South Africa who were sleeping but would arise in freedom.

18. Kwanzaa is a holiday that celebrates African-American culture. The word kwanzaa is derived from the Swahili word kwanza, which means “first” and refers to the celebration of the first fruits of the harvest (mazao).

19. African artists and art influenced the works of many 20th-century artists, such as Picasso, Miro, and Modigliani. Picasso’s African Period 1906-09 drew from his exposure to African sculpture and African masks.

20. Major gold mines are located in South Africa. Ghana’s mines have been famous in Europe since the Renaissance.


22. Some types of yams, black-eyed peas, watermelons, and other foods were introduced to Americans by people who came enslaved from Africa.
23. Ethiopian, Kenyan, and Tanzanian athletes are among the fastest long-distance runners in the world.

24. Liberia was established as a country by former slaves from the U.S. seeking their freedom. Its capital, Monrovia, is named after former U.S. president James Monroe.

25. Many people think of wildlife first when they think of Africa. While the wildlife is splendid, it is only found in limited areas. Many Africans have never seen big game—unless they go to a zoo or a game park!

The books and stories mentioned here are available through the Boston University African Outreach Program, along with other resources for teaching about Africa.

Post-Activity Discussion

In order to reinforce the U.S.-Africa connections made clear in this game, students should reflect as a group after the activity. With younger students, teachers can list a number of different categories (e.g., food; minerals; music; art; literature; people; language; history; animals) and ask the students to classify each of the connections listed. With older students, you can ask them to research for homework or for a class project additional connections the U.S. has to Africa. In either discussion, the goal is to have students internalize the reality of how interconnected their world is with Africa and how when we study Africa we also study a part of our own cultural heritage.