

BINGO! U.S. - AFRICA CONNECTIONS

by Barbara Brown, Ph.D., November 2020

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. The person with five in a row in any direction wins. After the game is over, learn from the explanation sheet what the African connections are. If you'd like, show the Bingo game to your parents and see if they can say yes to all the questions. Then see if they know why these have African connections.

1. Have you eaten chocolate?	2. Have you read an Anansi story?	3. Have you studied the pyramids?	4. Have you met someone whose ancestors were Africans?	5. Have you read <i>Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters</i> ?
6. Do you know someone who has planted a tree?	7. Have you smelled a clove?	8. Have you seen a diamond ring?	9. Have you heard banjo music?	10. Have you heard jazz music?
11. Have you met someone who has been to Africa?	12. Have you used the word "guy?"	13. FREE	14. Have you used a cell phone?	15. Do you know people who live in cities?
16. Do you know someone who drinks coffee?	17. Have you heard the song "The Lion Sleeps Tonight (Wimoweh)?"	18. Have you heard of the Kwanzaa celebration?	19. Have you seen a Picasso painting?	20. Have you seen gold jewelry?
21. Have you seen a baton twirler?	22. Have you eaten yams or okra?	23. Have you watched Olympic track & field events?	24. Do you know how the country Liberia got its name?	25. Have you seen a TV show on African animals?



EXPLANATORY NOTES

The core concept is simple: Africa is not far away. Americans enjoy African connections on a daily basis from the foods we eat, to the cell phones we use, the music we listen to, the stories we tell, the jewellery we wear and much more. Some of these connections come from the enslaved Africans who brought more than their labor—they brought their languages, music and their thirst for freedom. These 24 questions on the Bingo board are only the tip of the iceberg, as our connections are wide and deep.

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 called "Aunt Nancy." The American Brer Rabbit character also came from West Africa.
3. Don't forget: Egypt is part of Africa!
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. Kenyan women in the Green Belt Movement have planted over 51 million trees. They wanted firewood for cooking and food. They also wanted to protect the soil for their crops from being washed away.
7. Madagascar and Tanzania are the major producers of cloves in the world.
8. Diamonds are mined in a number of African countries, including South Africa, Botswana and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
9. The banjo is mainly of West African origin, brought over by Africans who came to the U.S. enslaved, yet continued to make music for their community and beyond.
10. Jazz, a Kikongo word, has a strong African musical influence, as do other music and dance forms, including rock n' roll, tap dance, the Charleston, and the rumba.
11. You may know of families in your community who have come from an African country. Perhaps someone from your community has traveled to Africa as a tourist, Peace Corps volunteer, or with a church group. Many famous people have traveled to Africa, such as Prince Harry, Oprah Winfrey, Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, and Bill Gates.

12. “Guy,” “phony,” and many other words have their origins in Wolof, a language widely spoken in Senegal. Enslaved Africans brought their languages with them and enriched American English.

13. FREE (no clue)

14. Cell phones are found everywhere across Africa. Over 470 million Africans use their cell phones to send & receive money for family, for education, for business and much more.

15. In 2020, almost half of Africans live in cities. Some cities are huge: for example, over fourteen million people live in Lagos, Nigeria and over nine million in Cairo, Egypt.

16. Coffee originated in Ethiopia. Today, a number of African countries produce coffee to sell to the world, among them Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya.

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

18. Kwanzaa is a holiday celebrating African-American culture. The word kwanzaa comes from the Swahili word kwanza, meaning “first” and refers to the celebration of the first fruits of the harvest (maza).

19. African artists and art influenced the works of many 20th-century artists, such as Picasso, Miro, and Modigliani.

20. Major gold mines are in South Africa. For over a thousand years, Europeans have bought gold, beginning with the empires of West Africa.

21. Baton-twirling has African as well as Anglo-American roots.

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’s name comes from the word liberty, because former slaves in the US settled there and named their capital Monrovia, to honor 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, like you, or to a game park!



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 name the categories they see in the game, then keep their eyes open for other connections between the US and 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.