

An Integrated Social Studies Unit Design on Life in Africa

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Throughlines or focus themes:

1. How can I find my own questions and make my own discoveries?
2. How can asking questions help me understand?
3. How can I share my learning and ideas with others?
4. How can I learn from other learners' strengths?
5. How do books and story help me understand?
6. What kinds of life cycles do we see in our lives?
7. How are living things alike and different?
8. How are human beings alike and different?
9. How are cultures alike and different?
10. How can art help us to think and to see?
11. What is Life and what connections do all living things and non-living things have with each other?
12. How do I look closely at my work?

Culminating Task:

Students write a Travel Diary as they "travel" through the Serengeti Grasslands region of Tanzania and Kenya in Africa, observing and notating the characteristics and behavior of wildlife and environmental influences, as well as the culture of the Massai and Himba tribes, compared to modern life in the city of Nairobi, Kenya and Larchmont, New York.

Essential Question:

What is Life?

Guiding Questions:

1. How do the region's environments influence the life of animal and human communities?
2. What are the similarities and differences of the communities of animals and tribal cultures?
3. What do the cultures look like in this region?
4. What are the similarities and differences of the tribal cultures of today and those of Native Americans and Aborigines?
5. What are the similarities and differences of traditional tribal cultures and modern cultures as experienced in the city of Nairobi and in Larchmont?
6. What life cycles are evident in the Serengeti?
7. How is art expressed within the culture, and what are the common elements that we see with other art observed and studied?
8. What do the stories tell about the culture and its people?
9. How does the migration of the wildebeest compare with the migration of other animals and humans?
10. How do maps help us to travel and to learn?
11. What are the patterns that we see in the environment and in the art forms?
12. What are the characteristics of the cultures and life in the Serengeti?
Example: appearance, foods and gathering, homes and habitats, tools, learning, recreation, religion and celebration, art , group "rules", changes.

Performance Indicators:

ELA Performance Indicators

- Write a diary which is consistent with the convention and identifiable structure of the genre
- Develop information with appropriate and factual supportive material tive and interesting language and voice

- Use of effective and interesting language and voice
- Gather, interpret, analyze, and synthesize information from a variety of non-fiction sources
- Produce stories which are related to material studied
- Select information appropriate to the purpose of the task
- Select and use strategies taught for beginning research
- Describe the migration route using maps and symbols
- Present information clearly in a variety of organized and written forms
- Use details, description, and experiences to explain content
- Use the writing process effectively .observe editing part of process with use of checklist
- Self-evaluate the quality of the over-all product with criteria used to evaluate illustrations, appeal, believability, and text
- Take part in the sharing of part of the published piece

Social Studies Performance Indicators

- Know the characteristics of the cultures and communities studied, such as traditions, foods, homes and habitats, etc.
 - Show how the environment influences the life of people and animals of the region .read myths, legends, biographies of Africa to learn how people lived and survived
 - Show evidence of understanding of the similarities and differences of cultures and of animal communities .understand how the terms social, political, economic, and cultural can be used to describe human activities or practices
 - Draw maps and diagrams of the physical features of the region
- Investigate how people depend on and modify the physical environment
- Gather and organize geographic information from a variety of sources, including more than one Atlas and map
 - Know some ways the groups attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing natural resources

Additional Tasks Leading to Culmination:

1. Create an illustrated written report on the characteristics and behavior of wild-life in the Serengeti Grasslands using research skills and class headings.
2. Create a story for a storytelling circle in class.
3. Create maps and diagrams of the the region and applicable topics, such as speeds of animals, group names, hooves and horns, etc.
4. Create artwork related to the cultures of the tribes such as pots, masks, shields, paintings, and patterns.
5. Create charts of factual information.
6. Create charts of the characteristics, similarities, and differences of life.
7. Use technology to e-mail a family on safari and or experts in the field.
8. Create a piece for the class newspaper to highlight the trip and news of the Serengeti.
9. Create a piece for the web-page which gives knowledge of your trip.
10. Work on a class mural to show the migration route and life on the Serengeti.
11. Create a visual of your animal, including details of color, shape, and markings.
12. Add to the class fact list giving unusual information about your animal.
13. Use the vocabulary learned to help create a class dictionary.
14. Write a fable telling how an animal got a characteristic. Include a moral or lesson.
15. Design an imaginary animal with description of its characteristics.
16. Take part in a panel discussion and debate from the point of view of a tribes-person and a modern day industrialist who wants the region and its people to change.
17. Use the microscope to compare natural patterns in nature to art forms of the region.
18. Take part in discussions of African Americans who have greatly influenced our own culture.
19. Gather information from all stations organized for our virtual journey.
20. Write an illustrated postcard to a family member from Africa.
21. Letters to Himba tribe in Namibia, sharing aspects of our culture, and asking meaningful questions of theirs. Ex. How do you hunt? What do you fear?
22. Create animal story problems using factual information from the content learned.

23. Invite “experts” in to speak on related topics such as safari journeys, visiting the Maasai, zoo vets., etc.

Optional:

Contribute to the organization “Kids for World Health” by working on awareness activities and /or fundraising for the elimination of Sleeping Sickness or Tripanosomiasis in Africa.

Learning Opportunities:

1. The basic components of letter writing.
2. The basic steps in research.
3. The basic steps in writing reports.
4. The art of storytelling.
5. The basic steps in writing a journal and a diary.
6. A review of animal families and their characteristics.
7. An understanding of maps and their components.
8. Observation and discussion of primitive art-forms.
9. Construction of a web-page and newspaper using the computer.
10. The study of fable and myth.
11. Review of biography.
12. Use of information in math story problems and the creation of two and three step problems.
13. Review of biomes and habitats, and life cycles.

Assessments and Guidelines for Study:

(While examples of the following are given, it is recommended that students and teachers work on the language of the checklists together.)

1. Student Checklist for report on the characteristics of animal wildlife in the Serengeti (see attached)
2. Student Reflection on Process, Product, and Unit of Study (see attached)
3. Teacher Observation of Process and Work (see attached)
4. Student and Teacher Storytelling Checklist (see attached)
5. Student Projects Checklist (see attached)
6. Student Oral Presentation Guide (see attached)
7. Student and Teacher Evaluation Rubric for Culminating Task (see attached)
8. Contents of African Segment of Student Portfolio
 - a. Diary
 - b. Report
 - c. Fable or legend
 - d. Visual artwork
 - e. Photographs of art and crafts
 - f. Copy of e-mail and letters
 - g. Drawing and Description of imaginary animal
 - h. Class Newspaper
 - i. Lab Sheet of microscopic observations
 - j. Biography
 - k. Postcard to family
 - l. Math Story Problems
 - m. Beginning questions and ending reflections
 - n. Kids for World Health write-up -optional

#2 Student Reflection on Process, Product, and Unit of Study

Student Reflection on Process

Teacher Prompts:

1. Look through your portfolio of special work and the entries of your Travel Diary. Choose two tasks that you feel are special to you. What did you find to be helpful as you constructed these tasks and what did you find to be difficult?
2. Find two tasks or activities which are important to you. How are they related within this study, and in what ways do they support each other in your knowledge of the life in the Serengeti?

Student Reflection on Product

Teacher Prompts:

1. Look through your work on the Serengeti and find a piece you feel especially good about. Tell what qualities this work has that makes you feel this way. If you were to do this project again, would there be anything that you would have done differently?

Student Reflection on Unit of Study

Teacher Prompts:

1. What in particular did you like about our study of Africa, giving examples and reasons for your thoughts. Was there something you did not like about the unit? Give examples and reasons for your thinking..
2. What other suggestions do you have for this unit of study?
3. Review the questions that you asked about animals and culture. After studying about the Life of the Serengeti, what other questions come to your mind about life here and in general?

#6 Student Oral Presentation Guide

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Content: _____

- Make meaningful connections with the culture ,a cultural problem, or region.
Example: How was Martin Luther King , Jr. affected by his African- American culture?
- Describe how these connections have affected their life, and the lives of other lives. Example: What did MLK do as a result of these connections, to make a difference in the lives of his people?
- Describe the characteristics of the person, culture, or animal being presented.
Example: What were the beliefs, religion, environmental conditions, customs, etc. that were important to MLK and /or his work?

2. Organization: _____

- Present a clear presentation with sentences that make sense and are in the appropriate order of sequence.

3. Visual Aids: _____

- All visuals are clear, appealing and used at the appropriate time in the presentation.

4. Eye-Contact and Delivery: _____

- Eye-contact is used well throughout the presentation to hold the audience's attention.
- Voice and expression are interesting to listen to and hold the audience's attention.

Resources:

Fiction:

1. Aesops Fables
2. Songs for Survival- compiled by Nikki Siegen-Smith
3. River That Went to the Sky/African Storytellers- Rain-Manya Mary Medlicott
4. Children of Promise,African-American Literature and Art for Young People- Charles Sullivan
5. Abiyoyo- Pete Seeger
6. Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters- Steptoe
7. Follow the Drinking Gourd- J. Winter
8. The Great Kapok Tree- Cherry
9. How Night Cane –J Troughton
10. Tigress- Helen Cowcher
11. Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky-Dayrell
12. Ashanti to Zulu- African Traditions- Margaret Musgrove
13. If You Traveled on the Underground Railroad- Ellen Levine
14. The Troubles of Kings: Two Tales from Africa- L. Schatz
15. Why Mosquitoes Buss in People's Ears-V. Aardema
16. Anansi Does the Impossible: An Ashanti Tale-V.Aardema
17. Moja means one: Swahili Alphabet Book-Feelings, Muriel

Non-Fiction:

1. On Safari- Crabtree
2. What is Migration- Bobbie Kalman
3. The Africans- Crabtree
4. One Small Square of the African Savannah-Scientific American
5. The Life Cycle Series- Raintree
6. The Life Cycle Book- Crabtree
7. The Web of Life- Ranger Rick Big Book
8. Animal Fact, Animal Fable- Seymour Simon
9. Africa: The Serengeti- I-Max- Omnimax Film and Text

12. Tree of Life: the World of the African Baobab- Barbara Bash
13. Endangered Savannah animals-David Taylor
14. Songs for Survival / Songs and Chants of Tribal People Throughout the World- Nikki-Siegen Smith
15. Animals of Africa-Beaux Arts Editions
16. Elephants- Claire Robinson
17. The Truth About Gorillas- Susan Meyers
18. Cooking the African Way- Constance Nabwire
19. The Art of Africa- Shirley Glubok
20. A Day in the Life of Africa- Pfizer Inc.
21. Tanzania-Allan CarpenterThe Cheetahs of the Serengeti Plain- BK?FS
22. Durban/ Life in South Africa- Raintree
23. Africa- Raintree

Left to Write:

Assessment:

1. Student Checklist for report on the Characteristics of animal wildlife in the Serengeti #1.
2. Teacher Observation of Process and Work#3
3. Student and teacher Storytelling Checklist#4
4. Student Projects Checklist#5
5. Student and teacher evaluation Rubric- 2 parts...{not entirely convinced that this is the best assessment.}

Numbers 1 – 4 are written with students as their study progresses.

