

AN EXPLORATION OF AFRICA

**How are the people and animals of Africa
affected by its diverse geography?**

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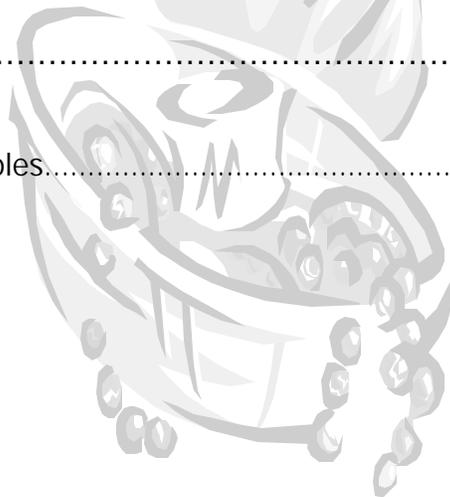
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AN EXPLORATION OF AFRICA
***How are the people and animals of Africa affected by its
diverse geography?***



Student Level: Created to enhance the 3rd grade social studies curriculum. Students in grades 4 through 6 can use the activities in each lesson as individual research projects.

Major Goals: To dispel false beliefs many students have about Africa. Students will understand that Africa is a diverse land, with customs, religions, daily practices, and spoken languages varying greatly from region to region.

**Instructional
Objectives:**

- ☞☞ Students will be able to correctly identify and describe the three major landforms: deserts, grasslands, and the rain forests.
- ☞☞ Students will conduct individual research on an African animal. They will write a paper and create an animal trading card that will be shared with the class.
- ☞☞ Students will create an original chart comparing and contrasting two tribes in Africa.

Time frame: 4 classroom lessons are at the core of this unit. However, students are expected and encouraged to do research outside of the classroom. There is great flexibility in planning, depending on the ability of the class. The research expected could be more in depth for an advanced group. For lower-ability classes, research can be done in pairs or teacher directed.

Setting: Whole class instruction, cooperative group research on class computer, individual research on class computer. Outside research is highly encouraged (home computers, library reference and nonfiction books, etc.)

Standards:

- ✍✍ Chancellor's English Language Arts Standard E1c- Read and comprehend informational materials.
- ✍✍ Chancellor's English Language Arts Standard E2a- Produce a report of information.
- ✍✍ Chancellor's English Language Arts Standard E2c- Produce a narrative account.
- ✍✍ Chancellor's Science Standard S2c- Demonstrates understanding of organisms and environments.

Culminating Activity: The class will go on a field trip to the Bronx Zoo to see the Congo Exhibit, as well as visit the Museum of Natural History to see artifacts from Africa. The Brooklyn Botanic Gardens offers hands-on workshops on plant life of the desert or the rain forest. The Brooklyn Children's Museum has a collection of objects from Africa, which the children can explore in a workshop format.

Lesson #1 – What are the major landforms in Africa?

Materials: One copy of *Topography of Africa* for each student.

One copy of *Can You Guess the Landforms of Africa?*

for each student.



Motivation: Give children the following scenario: “You are going on a trip to

Africa. What would you pack in your suitcase?” Create a web of all responses given. (This question will allow you to assess your students’ prior knowledge about Africa.)

Procedure:

☞ Open the class up for a short discussion on how climate and environment affect one’s daily life, from the food you eat to the clothes you wear. Ask students “What landforms do you think you will find in Africa?” List responses on the board.

☞ Distribute one map to each student. Have them color the desert regions yellow, the rain forest regions dark green, and the grassland regions light green.

☞ Give each student a copy of *Can You Guess the Landforms of Africa?* Under each picture, have students predict what each landform is.

☞ Create a class bar graph reflecting the children’s predictions.

☞ Students will find information on each landform and write a brief paragraph describing each, using the following sites:

www.encarta.com

<http://mbgnet.mobot.org/index2.htm>

http://library.thinkquest.org/16645/gallery/sievers_gallery.html

Extensions: Each student will write an individual narrative describing an adventure they had

using one of the three regions as their setting. Students can download pictures from

http://library.thinkquest.org/16645/gallery/sievers_gallery.html and create a postcard describing

a trip taken to one of the three regions.

Lesson #2 – What animals live in Africa?

Materials: Students should bring in nonfiction books on African animals and reference materials such as encyclopedias.

Motivation: Show children pictures of animals from all over the world.

Have them guess which ones come from Africa. Be sure to include pictures from other regions, such as a penguin or polar bear, so that you can assess whether your students realize how a continent's geography and climate effect what animals live there.

Procedure:

✍️ Separate students into three groups. Assign each group a region (desert, rain forest, or grassland) to research. Now that they are familiar with the different regions of Africa, they will be researching an animal from that region to write an expository report on.

✍️ Have all students go to <http://library.thinkquest.org/16645/safari/index.html> to familiarize themselves with the animals of Africa.

✍️ Each group is responsible for choosing an animal within that region to research. Each student will pick a different animal. Students must get information from at least three different sources- Internet or print.

✍️ Although the research will be done in class, and students will be working together in a group, their expository reports should be written at home individually.

Extensions: Each group will create a collage or mural depicting the animals of their region. Each student will also create an animal trading card listing important animal facts to present to the class. Other optional activities are to have each group create an original skit featuring the animals of their region, or have individual students create clay models of their animals and place them in a diorama depicting the animal's region.



Lesson #3 – What is life like in Cameroon?



Materials: One copy of *The Grassfields of Cameroon* per student.

Motivation: Show students where Cameroon is located. Have them predict whether Cameroon is part of the desert, rain forest, or grasslands.

Based on their answer, have them write a few sentences of what they think life is like there.

Show them a copy of the photograph taken from

<http://school.discovery.com/homeworkhelp/worldbook/atozgeography/c/089600.html>.

Ask anyone if they would like to add or change their ideas based on the picture.

Procedure:

Give students background information on Cameroon from

<http://school.discovery.com/homeworkhelp/worldbook/atozgeography/c/089600.html>

Powered by World Book Encyclopedia, this Discovery Channel Web site features an in-depth article on the government, people, land, climate, history and economy of Cameroon.

Put students into groups of five or six. Explain to them that they will be working together on the computer to find out more about life in Cameroon, Africa.

Give each child a copy of *The Grassfields of Cameroon*.

Direct the class to <http://www.nhm.org/africa/tour/cameroon/index.htm> (The "AFRICA:

One Continent. Many Worlds." Web site was designed to provide students with a rich experience. This on-line exhibit includes over 60 minutes of video and hundreds of photographs of cultural objects from the African collections of the Field Museum of Natural History and Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.) Students will explore the following pages: Introduction; Who are the Bamum?; From a kingdom to a republic; The Royal Palace of the Bamum; A double-headed serpent stands for the Bamum; The Kings and Queens of the Bamum; The room that holds the things of the kings Ceremonial items used by Bamum leaders; What is Bamum art?; Bamum artwork expresses who they are;

Anyone can be an artist; The wealthy and powerful bought the best that artists offered;
Richly decorated objects came from specialized artists; Elephants were royal animals;
Masks honored the Queen Mother at her funeral

✍️✍️ Students will find the answers to their worksheet based on the above Web pages.

✍️✍️ Students can hear the Cameroon National Anthem by clicking on

<http://www.emulateme.com/sounds/cameroon.mid>. This is a Web site that provides students with information on a countries flag, weather, and national anthem.

Extensions: Individually, each student should write a brief essay about how the life of the Bamum has changed since it has been under European rule. Provide materials such as clay, tag board, paint, and markers, so that students can create their own piece of Bamum artwork.

Lesson #4 – What information can we learn about the traditions of an African tribe?



Materials: Student copies of *Ashanti to Zulu, African Traditions* by Margaret Musgrove, software that allows children to create graphic organizers and charts.

Motivation: Show students the map of Africa in the back of the book *Ashanti to Zulu, African Traditions*. Ask students what they think the bold words stand for. Write answers on the board. Give students several minutes to work in pairs to discuss and define the word tribe.

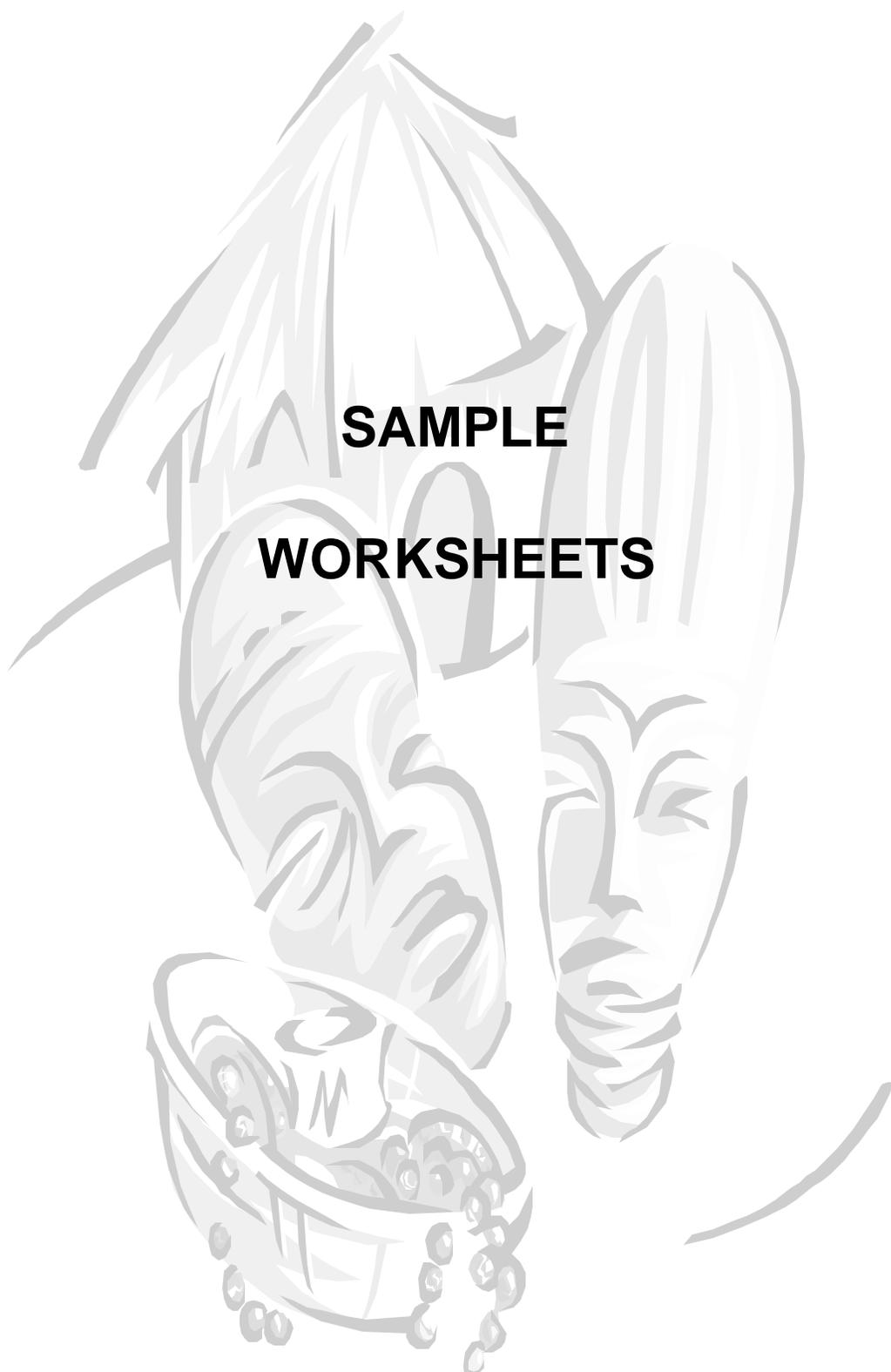
Procedure:

- ✍️ Give out copies of the book *Ashanti to Zulu, African Traditions* to each child.
- ✍️ Briefly discuss how a tribe is the same as a community, in that a tribe is a group of people who live, learn, and work together and, for the most part, have a set of common goals.
- ✍️ Explain to the students that they should write down the name of at two or three tribes as they read the book because they will be working on their own to find information about another African tribe.
- ✍️ At this point, children should feel comfortable enough with doing independent research on the computer. Give students <http://www.uiowa.edu/~africart/toc/people.html> as a starting point, however, throughout the unit, the students have already been exposed to numerous quality Web sites on Africa. They should begin their searches on either a search engine like www.google.com or an Internet encyclopedia or reference site such as www.encyarta.com or www.ipl.org/youth
- ✍️ Encourage students to go to the library to find non-fiction books on their topic.
- ✍️ The guidelines for the project are as follows: students must get their information from at least different three sites or resources.
- ✍️ Each student will create their own chart comparing the life of the Bamum people of Cameroon and the tribe they researched. They should include the following items: Tribe

Name, Location, Languages Spoken, Way of Living, Religion, Important Symbols, Customs, and other interesting information.

✍️✍️ Display student charts around a map of Africa and connect their papers to the tribe's location on the map with string.

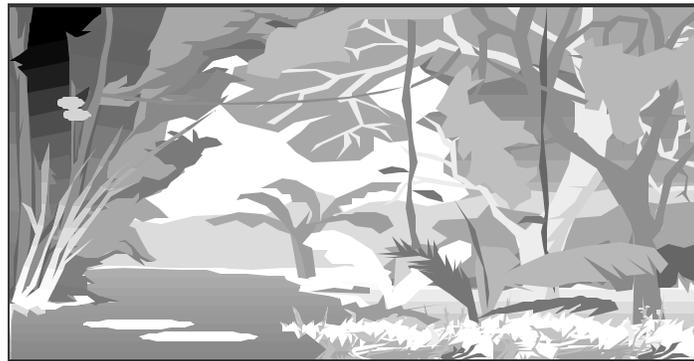
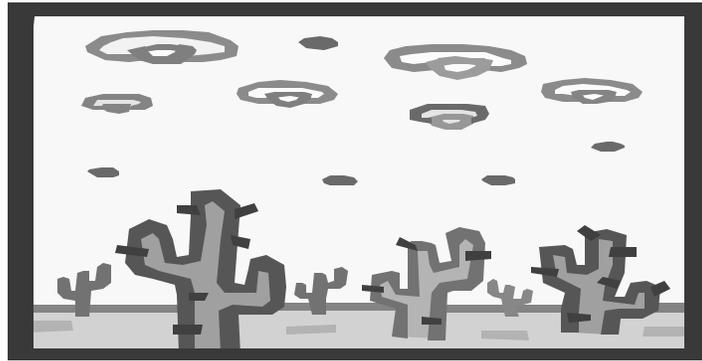
Extensions: Have students create an original African myth or legend explaining a way of life or custom of their researched tribe. Have students find an African recipe on-line, and ask them and their families to make the dish at home. Bring in the cooked dish into class to share with other students.



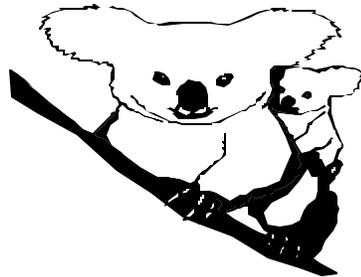
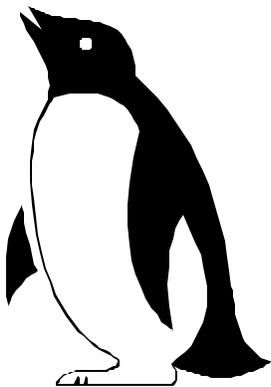
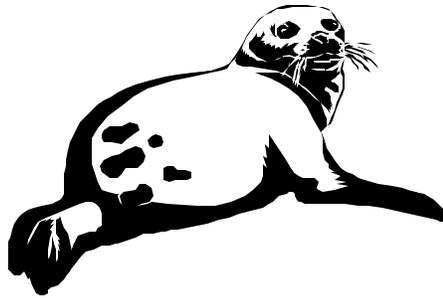
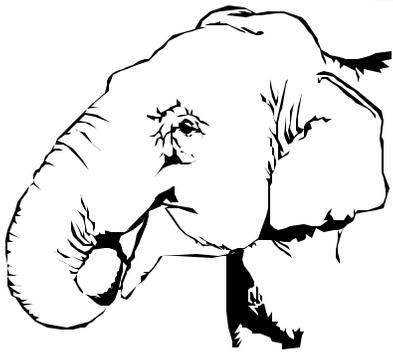
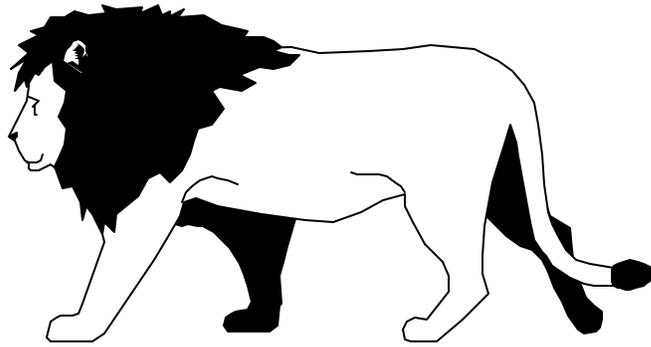
**SAMPLE
WORKSHEETS**

TOPOGRAPHY OF AFRICA

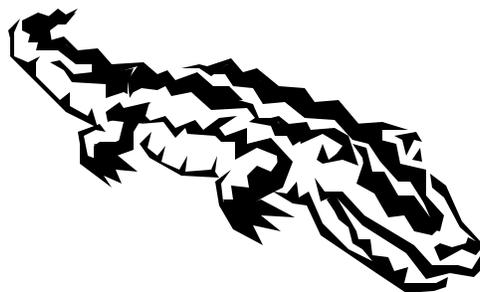
CAN YOU GUESS THE LANDFORMS OF AFRICA?



Which are African Animals?



Phascolarctos cinereus



Facts in brief about Cameroon

?? **Capital:** Yaounde

?? **Official languages:** English and French

?? **Official name:** Republique du Cameroun (Republic of Cameroon)

?? **Area:** 183,569 sq. mi. (475,442 sq. km). Greatest distances--north-south: 770 mi. (1,239 km); east-west: 450 mi. (724 km). Coastline: 250 mi. (400 km)

?? **Elevation:** Highest--Mount Cameroon, 13,353 ft. (4,070 m) above sea level. Lowest--sea level, along the coast

?? **Population:** Estimated 2000 population--15,245,000;

?? **Density:** 83 persons per sq. mi. (32 per sq. km); distribution: 56 percent rural, 44 percent urban. 1987 census:10,493,655

?? **Chief products:** Agriculture and forestry--bananas, cacao beans, coffee, cotton, palm oil, root crops, rubber, timber. Manufacturing--aluminum, beer, cocoa, petroleum products, shoes, soap. Mining--petroleum

?? **National anthem:** "O Cameroon, Thou Cradle of Our Fathers"

?? **Flag:** The flag has green, red, and yellow vertical stripes, with a yellow star in the center of the red stripe

The Grassfields of Cameroon

- 1. What do the Bamum people get from their fathers? Mothers?**
- 2. Who is the founder of the Bamum people?**
- 3. What does “Fumban” mean?**
- 4. What European country colonized the Bamum people in 1844?**
- 5. After World War I, which European country had control over Cameroon?**
- 6. What does it mean to be a republic?**
- 7. Which Bamum king made the double-headed snake the Bamum symbol?
Why?**
- 8. What does the spider represent?**
- 9. How many kings and queens have ruled the Bamum since the 1600s?**
- 10. What king changed the laws about art and being an artist? What were some
of his inventions?**

Comparing African Tribes

Tribe Name		
Location		
Languages Spoken		
Way of Living		
Religion		
Important Symbols and Customs		

Resources

Africa

D.V. Georges; Children's LB, 1982

City and Village Life

Warren J. Halliburton; MacMillian LB, 1993

Geography: Africa Activity Book

Edupress Inc, Dana Point, 1996

Refer to this book for great reproducible pages, activity ideas, and suggested children's literature.

<http://www.amnh.org/Exhibition/Expedition/Endangered/>

This Web site from The American Museum of Natural History is a companion to their exhibition, Endangered! Exploring A World At Risk. Students will be able to tour the exhibit, as well as learn more about endangered animals and their habitats.

<http://www.si.edu/resource/faq/nmnh/zoology.htm#vz>

A good resource by the Smithsonian listing many links to different zoology Web sites

www.ipl.org/youth/

The Internet Public Library is an excellent starting point for students engaged in online research. Students can either click on subject areas or conduct a search for specific topics.

<http://www.animalsoftherainforest.com>

Part of the Jason X projects, this Web site includes many images and facts of rain forest animals around the world. It also includes environmental information of our planet.

<http://www.congogorillaforest.com/>

The Wildlife Conservation Society's online tour of the amazing Congo Gorilla Forest exhibit at the Bronx Zoo. The exhibit includes a huge 6.5-acre African rain forest.

<http://www.desertusa.com/animal.html>

This Web site contains facts and information about desert animals and wildlife. Students will find answers to questions such as "how do animals survive the desert?" Links to animals, birds, and insects of the desert.

<http://www.sandiegozoo.org/special/heartofafrica>

Follow field researcher L. Armstrong as he journeys through the San Diego Zoo's new exhibit, The Heart of Africa. Along with the beautiful visuals, students can read pages from Armstrong's journal or look at animal photographs and video clips taken from his research camp.

<http://www.nhm.org/africa/science/index.htm>

Introduces students to the natural history of Africa. Students can look at the climates of Africa and how they influence patterns of vegetation. Descriptions of African plant communities and the kinds of animals they support lead into a general introduction to the characteristics and classifications of mammals. Students then examine the animals of Africa and their adaptations to their environment and to each other.

<http://school.discovery.com/homeworkhelp/worldbook/atozscience/>

Powered by Worldbook Encyclopedia, this Discovery Channel site offers information on many African animals.

Bibliography

Africa

Yvonne Ayo. Photographed by Ray Moller and Geoff Dann. New York: Knopf, 1995.
Learn about the geography of this vast continent and its people. Did you know that this huge continent is a land of deserts, savannas, mountains, waterfalls, and forests?

Africa

Colm Regan. Austin, Texas: Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1997.
Study the countries of Africa and learn their geography, history, resources, environment, and their people.

Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions

Margaret Musgrove. Pictures by Leo and Diane Dillon. New York: Dial Press, 1976.
This beautiful book won the Caldecott Medal as the Most Distinguished Picture Book for Children when it was published. Meet the people of Africa and learn about their many cultures.

A is for Africa

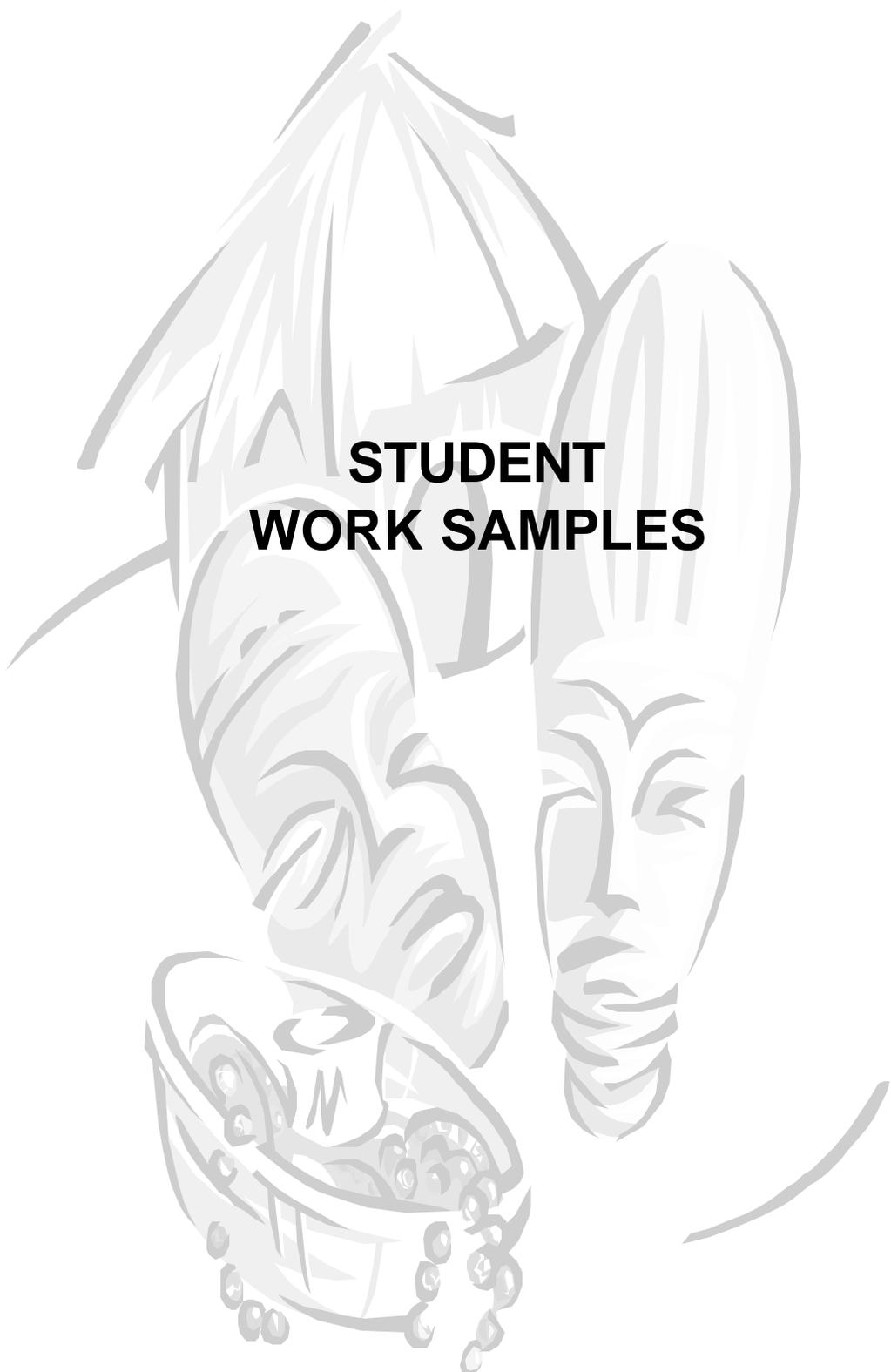
Ifeoma Onyefula, Cobblehill Books, 1993.
This Nigerian author's book of words and pictures shows us the many faces and worlds of African people.

Africa (Eyewitness Books)

Yvonne Ayo, Dorling Kindersley Books, 1995.
Beautiful illustrations and brief descriptions describe life in Africa. Read about the social life and customs, history, clothes, myths, medicine, houses, musical instruments, and foods of Africa.

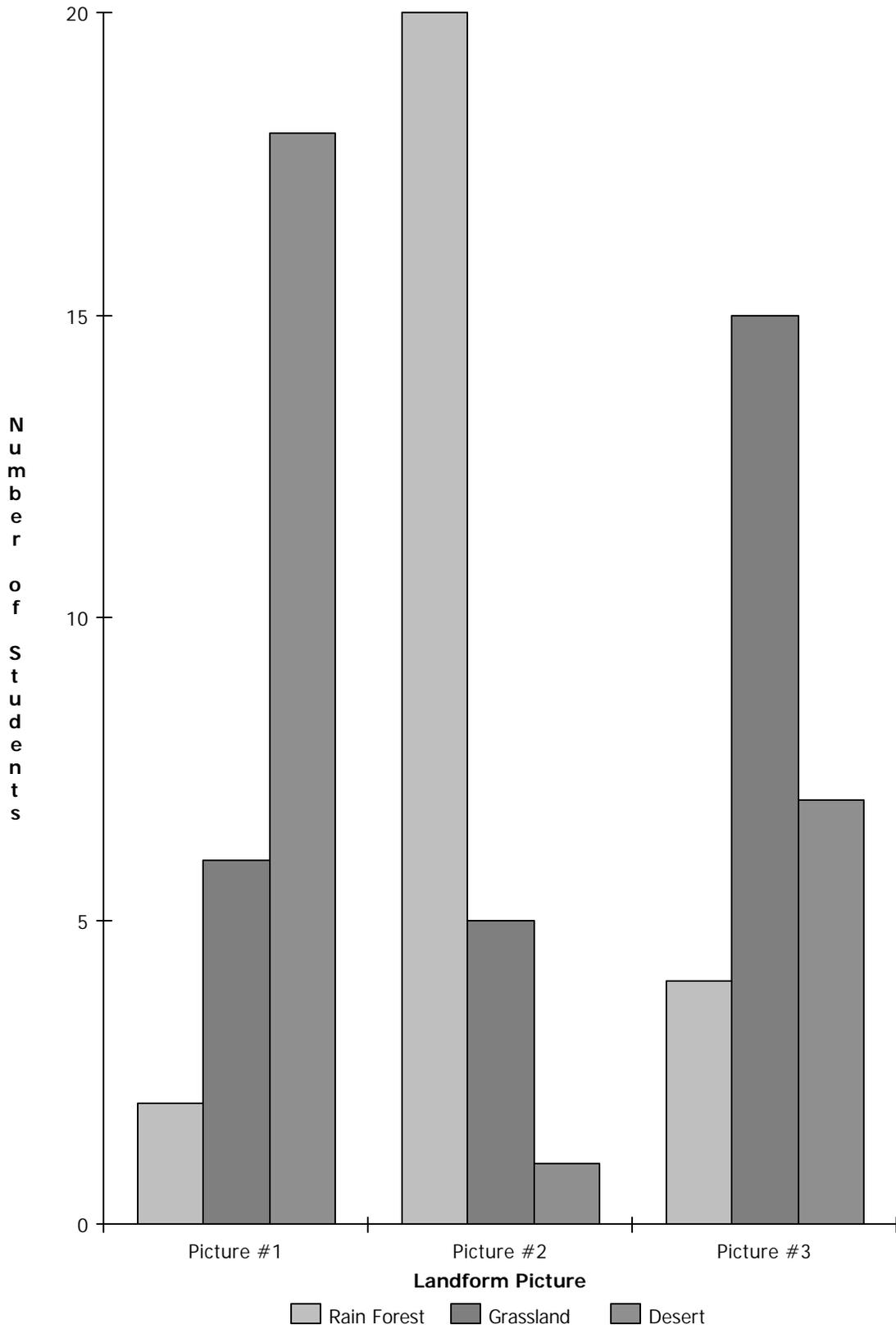
The Leopard's Drum: An Asante Tale from West Africa

Jessica Souhami. Boston: Little, Brown, 1995.
Read this folktale about Osebo the leopard, who has a beautiful drum that he won't share with anyone else. Nayme, the Sky-God, offers a reward to the animal who will bring him the drum.



**STUDENT
WORK SAMPLES**

Class Prediction of Landforms

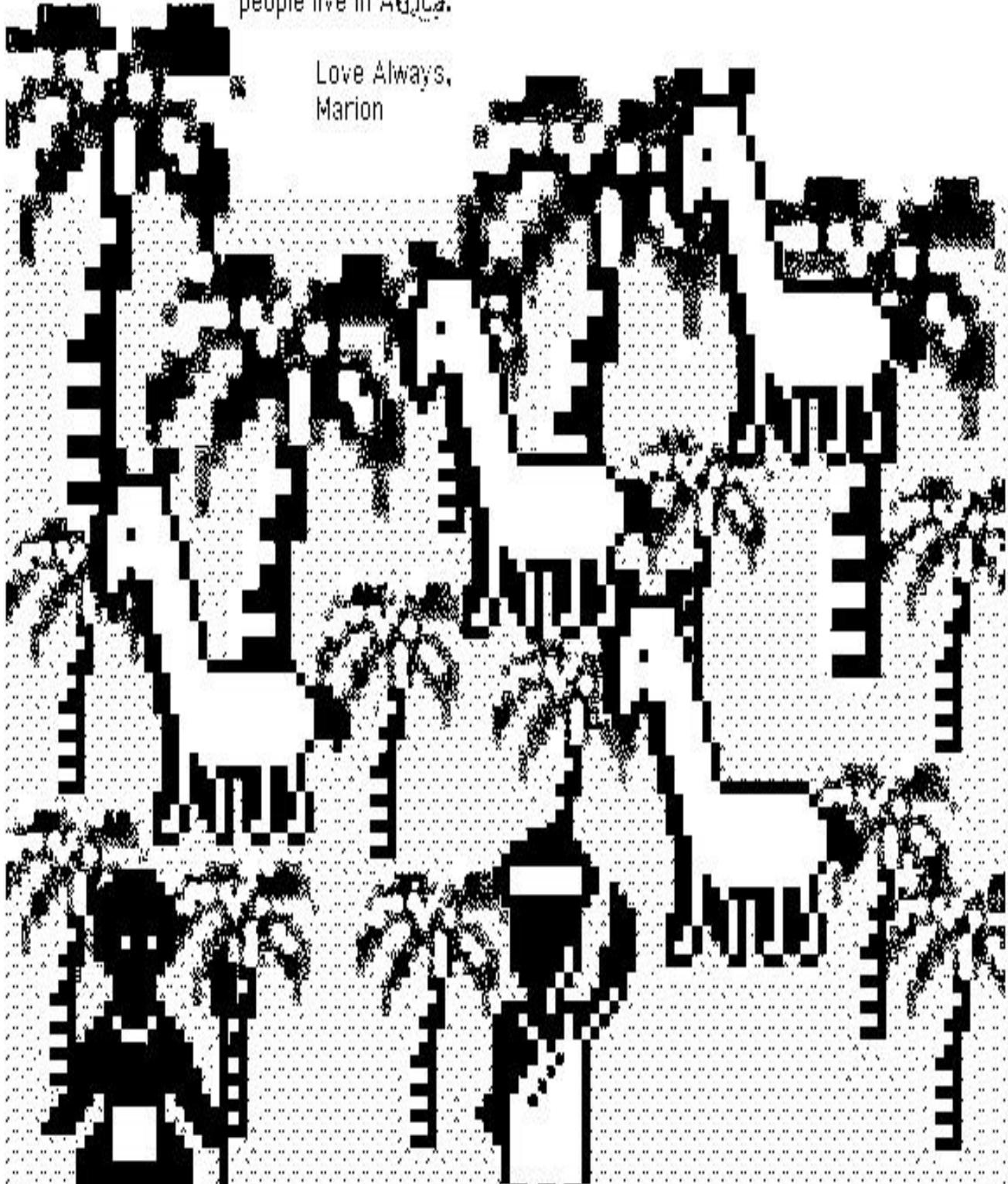


Sample Postcard, created in Kidpix

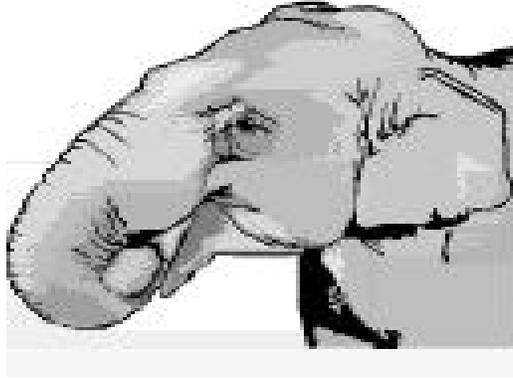
Dear Mom,

Hello! I am writing from Zaire, Africa. The weather has been very warm here. Today I went on a safari and saw a group of giraffes eating leaves off a tree. I can't tell you how beautiful it is here. I am learning so much about how people live in Africa.

Love Always,
Marion



Sample Animal Trading Card



African Elephant

- ?? Males weigh between 11,000-13,200 lbs.; their height is 9' 10" - 11'
- ?? Females weigh between 6,600-7,700 lbs.; their height is approximately 8' 4"
- ?? Gray or brown rough skin with scattered bristles and sensory hairs
- ?? Found in almost any region south of the Sahara
- ?? Needs plenty of water and trees
- ?? Considered to be an endangered animal because of the demand for ivory
- ?? Does not eat meat, must eat around 330 lbs. of food each day
- ?? Generally spends 16 hours each day feeding and only 4 or 5 sleeping On average, an elephant will travel up to 50 miles in several days while in search of water
- ?? When water is not available, elephants will flap their ears in order to cool down the blood flowing throughout the body
- ?? Predators are the lion, spotted hyena, and man
- ?? Females live together with their babies; males live alone
- ?? There are typically 9 to 11 elephants in a herd

Tribe Name	Bamum	Tuareg
Location	Southeastern part of Cameroon Grasslands	Niger, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali
Languages Spoken	Bamum (Macro-Bantu)	Temajeg
Way of Living	Most Bamums are farmers who grow maize, yams, and peanuts as staple crops. They also raise some livestock, including chickens and goats, which play an important role in their daily diet. Women are responsible for the tasks of planting and harvesting the crops. Men are responsible for clearing the fields for planting and practice some nominal hunting.	Throughout history, Tuaregs have been known as nomads. They acted as merchants who were responsible for bringing goods from these cities to the north. From there, the goods were distributed throughout the world. Tuaregs were also responsible for bringing enslaved people north from west Africa to be sold to Europeans and Middle Easterners. Over the years, many Tuaregs have settled into the communities with which they traded, serving as local merchants and representatives for their friends and family who continue to trade.
Religion	The Bamum people have great respect and honor for their ancestors. They believe that the spirits of the ancestor live in the skulls of those once living. The skulls are in the possession of the eldest living male in each family. Even when a family decides to move, a diviner must first purify their new place so that the skulls can be brought in. The spirits of ancestors whose skulls are not saved and have no resting place are believed to cause trouble for the family.	Most, if not all, Tuaregs are followers of Islam. While daily prayers are made to Allah, many of the other rules are not strictly followed. While most of the feasts are observed and celebrated, the fasting that is required during Ramadan is often excused because of so much travel. There is also a belief in the power of spirits
Important Symbols and Customs	Recognizing the importance of the skull, representations of the head are found in nearly all decorated items. Masks are widely used in education and ceremonial purposes.	Most men wear protective amulets that contain verses from the Koran. Men also begin wearing a veil at age 25 that conceals their entire face excluding their eyes. This veil is never removed, even in front of family members. Women are not veiled.