

KENTE CLOTHS

Gr. P-3 ELA GCO 4: Students will be expected to select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts. **GCO 8:** Students will be expected to use writing and other forms of representation to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings; and to use their imaginations

Math GCO E: Students will demonstrate spatial sense and apply geometric concepts, properties, and relationships

Social St. GCO B: Students will demonstrate an understanding of culture, diversity, and world view, recognizing the similarities and differences reflected in various personal, cultural, racial, and ethnic perspectives

Age: 6-8

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Objectives

- Students will learn the history of Ghanaian Kente Cloths.
- Students will practice using geometric shapes to design their own Kente Cloth strips.



An example of Kente Cloth

Vocabulary:

- **Kente**
- **Ghana**
- **Geometric**

What You Need:

- Items for demonstration (Kente strips and fabrics, caps and key rings, etc. using Kente symbolism, pictures, great resource website: <http://www.si.edu/nmfa/exhibits/kente/strips.htm>)
- 18 x 4 inch strips of good quality white paper
- pencils
- rulers
- red, green, blue, black and yellow tempera paint
- paintbrushes
- water cups and paper towels

What You Do:

1. Present lesson:
 - o **Who:** African Canadians, Africans, anyone who celebrates African heritage
 - o **What:** Kente Cloths, strips of fabric woven by hand in the colors that represent Africa.



Red - Life and Blood
Blue - Innocence
Green -Mother Africa, Mother Earth
Black - People and Unity
Gold - Strength and Fortune

Strips are sewn together to make cloth. Always woven from cotton threads.

- o **When:** Celebrations: Weddings, Births, Graduations, and Ceremonies to bring in new leaders; Whenever you want to respectfully show your African heritage.
 - o **Why:** To symbolize African culture
 - o **Where:** Most examples from Ghana, worn in Africa, America, and wherever people show African heritage.
2. Discuss the difference between geometric and organic shapes and lines.
 3. Direct students to design geometric patterns of stripes, squares, diamonds, triangles, etc. on the paper strips.
 4. Pass out trays of paint, brushes, water cups, and paper towels. Remind students that the colors are very important in Kente cloth, so they should do their best to keep the colors clean and not muddied.
 5. When the strips are dry, it is sometimes very effective to use a black marker to outline the shapes and stripes. It gives the paper an embroidered look. This is your choice.
 6. I display these strips on a black paper covered bulletin board with posters informing the viewer of the history of Kente cloth. Students often make these types of posters or writings in Social Studies during Black History Month.

*Note: This project looks really cool using pieces of colored yarn and glue instead of paint! Just substitute tag board for the white paper.

More Information:

Kente Slide Show

Recommended Books:

Kente Colors

by Deborah M. Newton Chocolate, John Ward

In brilliant poster colors, this picture book celebrates the kente cloth made by the Ashanti people of Ghana and the Ewe of Ghana and Togo.