

Folktales: Trickster Stories Across Time -- From African Ancestors to African American Rappers

Wilda F. Hayward
John Bartram High School

Overview
Rationale
Objectives
Strategies
Classroom Activities
Annotated Bibliography/Resources
Appendices-Standards

Overview

Folklore, expressed through forms and styles of communicating in everyday life, compresses aspects of human knowledge and experience accumulated through many generations. . Deeply rooted in African forms and styles of communication, folktales can provide a mechanism for bridging cultures in the African Diaspora. This literary genre goes beyond mere entertainment and the transmission of a good story. Folktales are brimming with vital information about life in the past and are foundational to hope for the future.

When Africans were taken involuntarily on their journey to the Americas they brought their stories with them. These stories, from the oral tradition had been passed down through generations as tools for renewing community life and African values. To keep them meaningful, tellers adapted their stories to the geographic location and historical framework of the slave settlements in the Americas. Stories, like people, can be marked by the places and times they have traveled through.

This unit will begin with the arrival of Trickster folktales to America and how these tales served as a historical record of the antebellum south to the lyrics of contemporary rap songs. Students will start with the story of the trickster Annasi and how he reached America. They will follow Trickster along his evolution through various guises as Brer Rabbit, John (of John and Old master), Stagger Lee, Shine and Signifying Monkey. Despite their different names and identities, all of these tricksters shared a capacity to use their wit to overcome their more powerful adversaries.

Further, students will learn to recognize forms of communication that express deep connections between African and African American culture and history. A key premise of this unit is that the study of shared history through folktales can foster greater understanding of these connections, and this understanding can help to defuse tensions among students from African and African American communities in Southwest Philadelphia.

Rationale

Historical Background

The enslavement of Africans and later African Americans in the American colonies began in the 1600s and endured until Emancipation in 1865. The capture and forced migration of West African peoples to the Americas propelled millions into lives of misery that extended for generations. Much of the history of African Americans is the history of their struggle for freedom and the retrieval of an identity that was first purloined from them by European slave merchants.

Since slave merchants were unconcerned about the social status of the people they captured, prisoners of all social ranks were shackled together and placed aboard slave vessels. Incredibly, this ignominious treatment did not destroy the cultural spirit of African people. Instead their culture equipped them with the strength and perseverance needed to adapt to extremely harsh living and working conditions.

Thus, during the middle passage to the Americas, Africans were wrested from their homelands, but they did not abandon their culture, language and customs. Slave owners used a variety of tactics to extinguish African identities. Slaves were prohibited from communicating in their native languages and were summarily separated from their ethnic groups for fear of uprisings or escapes from plantations. Consequently, West Africans who arrived speaking traditional languages were forced to communicate with one another using English, the language of the oppressor. Furthermore, slave owners banned slaves from learning to read or write English because they correctly deduced that educated slaves were a threat to the institution of slavery. They wanted slaves to remain ignorant about the world around them. Although many slaves lacked formal English education they were knowledgeable in other areas of life. They possessed various trade skills, farming techniques, and knowledge of medicinal remedies that surpassed European medicine at that time, such as variolation, a practice of innoculating people against a disease like smallpox by giving them a mild dose of it in order to stimulate the body's immune system.

The slaveholders' suppression of African systems of visual and auditory communication did not deter the resilient slaves from creating alternative own forms of communication. While the middle passage eliminated the griot, it did not eliminate stories and the great esteem in which storytellers, or "men of words," were held. The griot or griotee had been a historian, entertainer and preserver of the cultures within African communities. The telling of stories to reflect on the past, ponder the present, and suffuse listeners with hope for the future marked the continuation of African styles of communicating that had persisted for many generations in Africa. [To learn more about a griot (Kasse Mady Diabate) and listen to his singing style in Bambara, go to www.soundjunction.org] Therefore, folktales were welcomed in the slave communities and became part of the literary repertoires of African and African Americans.

To conceal their communications from slave owners, slaves had to communicate in coded language that conveyed two entirely different meanings -- one meaning for the slave owners, another for the slaves. Coded language appeared in the lyrics of songs and among characters in folktales. Consequently, to the master and his staff, slaves never made much sense. They were perceived as dumb, lazy individuals whom God placed on earth to work for them because they were inferior. Although slave owners heard songs sung by slaves, they were unable to decipher the lyrics. An oft-cited example is the spiritual, "Follow the Drinking Gourd." The drinking gourd was code for the big dipper, the handle of which pointed toward the north star, and the route one would have to take in order to get to a state in which slavery was banned. Similarly, the situations and characters in folktales belonged to the African community and could be used as a way to depict injustice and to manipulate slave owners, just as satire had been used in Africa to pressure the powerful into giving favors. (Pierson 1977)

For members of the slave community, folktales provided advice, modeled shared experiences and taught listeners to navigate the treacherous social world of the southern plantation. Although many stories were never written down, their persistence in oral tradition is a sign of African cultural vitality in the present. The early folktales told in this country were redefined tales from Africa. "Telling riddles was one of the favorite pastimes of slaves. Riddle telling carried on into the Reconstruction period after Emancipation. It became a wish telling about freedom. When one solved the riddle, one would be free." (The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales told by Virginia Hamilton p.159)

Through verbal arts, slaves were able to sustain a connection with their homeland. Joel Chandler Harris (1880) collected animal trickster tales with attention to the language as he heard it spoken by people in the plantation community. Although his work centered on Br'er Rabbit, there were other kinds of tales told in the Antebellum South. In order to understand the African slave culture during this period, we need to attend to the different kinds of tales that were told, who told them, to whom, and why. The stories traveled from the African continent, via the middle passage to the Americas. Like the African tales, the folktales told in America each had a moral (Roberts 1989). These tales were vehicles for protest: ways of both acknowledging and resisting the conditions under which slaves lived. Further, Zora Neale Hurston (1935, 2005) collected oral narratives that date back to the slave period. Collectors like Joel Chandler Harris and Zora Neale Hurston contributed to the traditions they sought to preserve by retelling them to wider audiences.

Trickster Stories

The Akan speakers from the West Coast of Africa named their folk tales Anansesem or spider stories. These stories appeared in Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Anansi stories were brought here by the peoples from these areas and told throughout the Americas. The story, *How Anansi Came to America*, tells that Anansi came to America by hiding in a captive woman's medicine bag. Although he pleaded to Nyame, the Sky God, to be allowed to return home, he was forced to remain with the slaves in Jamestown, Virginia in 1619 (Levine, 1977). This story may be viewed on the website

<http://anansistories.com>. Several generations later, another animal trickster, Bruh Rabbit, appeared on a horizon created through the interactions of African and Cherokee storytellers.

Famine is one of several themes that appear in African trickster tales. A storyteller might introduce the audience to a story by explaining that a lack of food exists. For example, in the story "Tappin, the Land Turtle," the storyteller begins:

Once a time, there was land chil'ren and tree chil'ren. And there was the land turtle, he call isself Tappin. Tappin has six chil'ren. They are all hungry. Everybody hungry all on the land, for it was famine time.

Virginia Hamilton, 1985
Pages 20-25

Similarly the story, "Br'er Rabbit Earns a Dollar-A-Minute" opens with Br'er Fox planting goober peas (peanuts):

One fine morning, Br'er Fox decided to plant him a patch of goober peas. He set to with a will and before you know it...

Now Br'er Rabbit, he'd watched Br'er Fox planting the goobers and he told his children and Miz Rabbit where they could find the patch. Soon as those vines were ripe, the little rabbits and Br'er Rabbit would sneak on in and grab them goobers by the handfuls.

Retold by S.E. Schlosser
<http://www.americanfolklore.net>

In contrast to the fantasy world filled with magical events that characterizes many fairy tales, Tricksters operate in an ordinary world. Folklorists theorize that the absence of magic in trickster tales suggests that the tellers of these stories espouse the power of language and the triumph of wit over military and political might. Storytellers, of course, rely on the power of language, and become heroes through the comparison of the trickster in the story to the teller who fabricates a shared world using nothing but words. From these tales an assumption can be made that the behavior of the trickster was applauded because he was able to acquire food when others were not clever enough to achieve this goal. Further, the trickster, who was physically less powerful, not only challenged, but also made the larger, physically powerful animal appear foolish.

The trickster tales depicted a hierarchical social structure wherein the privileged group had the military and political power, but not much intelligence. Conversely, there was a group, at the lower strata, with no recourse to political and military power able to survive because of cleverness and sheer common sense. . This critical take on the inverse distribution of intelligence and might in society characterizes tales from West Africa as well as from the American South.

Parallel to the animal trickster tale is the African American trickster tale in which the trickster assumes human form. It is not apparent when tricksters metamorphosed into

humans; however, one can assume from the provenance of the texts that it was during the time of the Antebellum South (Roberts 1989). These tales are more clearly related to the African life experience in the United States. The social, economic and physical hardships endured by slaves created a hierarchy similar to those found in African societies. Since the African slave became property of slave owners, it was slave owners who held power and positioned themselves at a level of power. As participants within a socially imbalanced structure, slaves redefined the trickster tales to reflect their status and ability to outwit the master most of the time.

Historical materials such as the runaway slave advertisements and the WPA slave narratives provide glimpses of slaves as shrewd individuals who were able to outwit their masters not only in folktales but often in real life as well. The conniving behavior of the trickster is acceptable because it is necessary for survival. Real life situations such as finding sufficient food to eat, hard work, and other living conditions slaves endured became part of the tale. Yet, with all of these hardships, the trickster is able to overcome the situation. These tales became known as John and the Old Master Tales. Once the slaves began to experience life on plantations they needed a voice, a means to express and convey their feelings. More importantly, slaves needed to communicate without the master's knowledge of their feelings and network. They had to devise a way to plan escapes, learn to survive plantation life and to outsmart those in power on the plantation, especially the master. These "tales emphasized the necessity of understanding the ways of the powerful because only through such understanding could the weak endure." (Bailey 2006,1).

The Old Master and John stories manifest a recurring theme in African American folklore. John's character represents the antebellum slave who knew the ways of the master. John thinks of ingenious ways to steal necessities such as foodstuffs that are forbidden for slaves to consume. Further, in the Old Master and John tales, the more powerful master is challenged and bested by the subordinate slave. Through conversation, each learns about the other. There is a mental challenge between both characters that often allows John to win.

John became a character who represented slave life and "the changing insights about the "shape of time and history" (Roberts 1989, 61). This character became recognizable within the community as a model for survival. His trickster behavior was accepted and viewed as necessary in order for him to win over Old Master. Whenever John triumphed over Old Master so did the slave community, at least for the moment. However, the tales constantly reminded the slave community of the existence of the ongoing conflict between slaves and their masters. Such conflicts continued until the Emancipation Proclamation was signed in 1865.

The manner in which the story is told is just as important as the story itself. These folktales served as a means of communicating events rather than facts. Folktales provided a deeper structure for remembering the story. Traditionally, the storyteller "begins slowly and builds up tension and emotion as the story is told and finally reaches a climax" (Papa et al.). Further, the "rhythm of the language, along with repetition and short phases make

the story easier to remember” and pass down through generations (Papa et al.).

A post-bellum trickster character in the African American folktale collection is Shine. Shine shows the transformation of the relationship between Master and Slave into that between Master and Servant under the industrial capitalist regime that grew up in decades following the Civil War. His name is derived from his occupation: shining shoes. His story takes place on the Titanic where his job is to tend to the coal burner on the ill-fated luxury liner. Shine is the first person to recognize the damage the iceberg did to the ship. The captain and crew ignored his warnings until it was too late. Shine, in turn, ignores pleas for help from the ship's guests and concentrates only on his survival. His language is as salty as the salt air and rough as the waves caused by the sinking ship. Once again the reader becomes drawn to the story because of the use of language. The story has multiple endings, but one in particular ends with Shine enjoying himself in a theatre on Broadway.

Like Br'er Rabbit, Shine represents people in society who are devalued because of their socioeconomic status. They are also viewed as powerless, yet their common sense, wit and use of language makes them survivors and places them above the powerful if only for a moment. The parallel with African American storytellers and listeners is clear.

In the form of an oral narrative poem called the toast we find another trickster called the Signifying Monkey. The style of signifying presented in the poem resembles patterns spoken by Fon and Yourba priests who memorized sacred texts which they passed down through generations. The texts encoded a critique of the oppressive European involvement in their government and questioned the Europeans' espoused views on humanism (Gates 1988). The celebration of signifying draws attention to the power of the word, and celebrates the coding that conceals the communications enabling people to remain connected and to grow as a people in resistance to oppression.

Monkey expresses himself in a manner that insults others in the animal world, especially the Lion. He speaks about Lion's "mama" which is a "fighting word" among African Americans (and which is elaborated in Philadelphia streets through a verbal dueling routine known as "the dozens.") Monkey initiates trouble by lying to the Lion about what Elephant said about him. This is a way for the Monkey to seek revenge on Lion. Monkey is a success not only because of his use of language but his strategic ability as well.

The story recapitulates the a classic "he said, she said" formula that often catches humans off guard. Usually the experience culminates in big problems that could have been avoided. In the process modeled by animals, Monkey's words result in Lion being beaten by the Elephant. Later, when reflecting on what happened, Lion realizes in humiliation and anger that he was a fool to listen to the Signifying Monkey. This scenario, like so many found in folktales, will be recognized by students as a recurring situation that leads to conflict among themselves. Exploring the scenario as it unfolds in the animal world can be a way to facilitate a discussion among students of social problems in their own lives.

The last trickster to be presented in this curriculum is Stagger Lee. Unlike previously mentioned tricksters, he was a real person. Stagger Lee was an African American cab driver and a pimp in St. Louis, Missouri. He belonged to a group called the Macks that emphasized dressing well and looking good. Lee murdered William Lyons, in a tavern, over a Stetson hat. The St. Louis *Globe* published a newspaper article in 1895 and Stagger Lee evolved within a few decades into an African American archetype: a fearless gangster who defies authority and challenges mainstream laws. His notoriety motivated many musicians to create songs of ambivalence about Lee's lifestyle and criminal ways. Teachers may find the graphic lyrics to be inappropriate for classroom use. For example, Dick Clark, who was the host of American Bandstand in Philadelphia in 1958, asked Lloyd Price to rewrite the lyrics. The themes of gambling and murder were changed to love over a woman and forgiveness. In this version Stagger Lee and Lyons forgive each other, reconcile their differences and become friends once again.

The Stagger Lee mythoform appears in the 1920s blues music of Mississippi John Hurt. Further, Elton John (1976) recorded "Shoulder Holster" in the album "Blue Moves". In this version Lyons' wife seeks revenge on Stagger Lee. Furthermore, in the film *Black Snake Moan* (2007) the actor Samuel L. Jackson sings "Stackolee" which is based on Lee's perspective. This song version is from the album *Well, Well, Well* (R. L. Burnside).

Stagger Lee embodies the feelings of resistance that are connected to slavery and how opportunities to participate fully in American life were and continue to be systematically denied to African Americans (Nelson 2005). In examining the lyrics of contemporary rap artists' the reader finds that young people use this medium as a way to express themselves. Music allows the truth to be spoken. As if history was once again repeating itself, there are codes embedded in the lyrics of many rap songs which only African Americans truly understand, just like the "steal away" songs had deeper meaning for the slaves who planned to escape.

Nearly four hundred years have passed since the first arrival of Africans to the shores of America. As slaves and as free people, Africans have influenced every aspect of American life as we know it today. In particular, metaphors set to African styles of music have become hallmarks of protest in American public space. The protest songs of the 60s illuminated the way to political change and the advancement of civil rights.

Of course, the trickster in rap is not always a glorified gangster. There are tricksters in contemporary rap who portray wit and the importance of making it in society. The lyrics of such artists as Biggie Small, *It Was All A Dream*; Jay Z, *Beach Chair*; Kanye West, *Through the Wire* all show how wit, and perseverance will ultimately triumph over America's deferment of the dreams of minorities.

In conclusion, although slaves lost their names and connections to ancestral lands of West Africa, what remained in their hearts and souls were folktales of the past and the creation of new ones as they experienced life throughout history. One way of gathering information and understanding the lives of individuals is through folktales. The African/

African American folktales retell life through the eyes of slaves that is often different from the perspective found in textbooks.

Although textbooks chronicle historical events, they often exclude the voices of people who participated in a specific time and space. A way of investigating and learning about people in these times is through literature. Folktales are a literary genre that opens doors to understanding the life of African/African Americans across time.

This curriculum unit will focus on the traditions of tricksters in folktales through a socio-historical lens that will inform the reader about life in the antebellum south to present day rappers. The early period will include the animal trickster tales (Anansi tales) from Africa, the American animal trickster (Br'er Rabbit) and John and Old Master tales. Further, tricksters such as Stagger Lee, Shine and the Signifying Monkey appear later in history during different historical events. In more recent years, rappers have used the trickster character to sing and write about within a musical framework.

Objectives

Before the literature and history of a people can be understood, students must learn where places are situated around the world. It is important for students to know that Africa is a continent of many countries and each has an ancestral history that is rooted in legends and rich vibrant stories. The stories that are familiar to the West African students are the same stories told by griots and great storytellers from ancient African civilizations. It is significant for students to see their connection with the past and the salience of oral history. Therefore, folklore is a bridge that connects the past with the present and the present with the future. Keeping this in mind, students will learn to value folktales as a literary genre that can provide a historical perspective. In order for students to comprehend life through time, the trickster was selected because he represents humankind. The trickster while not perfect endures hardships and struggles to survive in an often unjust world. Using critical thinking skills, students can begin to analyze fictional and non-fictional texts to get a broader perspective on life and events in selected time periods of African American history. They will discover parallels among the tricksters in stories and people in reality. What would have been Trickster's fate in the Americas if African styles of communicating had not been suppressed?

Strategies

When newly arrived ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) students enter a school system, they encounter social and linguistic obstacles that may affect their language acquisition and content knowledge. In order to assist these students to excel, language teachers and social studies teachers should collaborate to develop curricula to effectively instruct students in both areas.

Social studies teachers should contemplate content differently. Historical information can be imparted through many channels. In order to connect with ESOL students, best practices should be incorporated as part of the instructors' repertoire. This

challenge begins with an understanding of the learning styles of the students. The questions that should always be in the forefront: What nuances exist in the languages of the students? What are the learning styles of the students? Which instructional strategies are best suited for the students needs?

The notion that students, with lower proficiency language skills, are unable to learn content material is flawed. If a teacher merely stands in front of a class and reads from a history textbook, students will not master the content. However, if the teacher encourages the students to interact with the text, learning will occur. In addition to academic components, hands on activities, the performing arts and the fine arts are beneficial to lesson enhancement because these elements bring another dimension to the learning process.

The ninth grade students in my classroom have an average reading level of 1.5 years. Their reading level is attributed to their interrupted schooling in war torn or famine-ridden countries in Africa. For example, although some students were too young to remember the details of the war in Liberia, their families have become victims of its horrors. The students and families have been scarred socially as well as economically. Before the Liberian war of the 1980s and 90s, many families owned businesses or had jobs that allowed them to provide for their families, but following the war, they were stripped of the life they had worked so hard to achieve.

The emergent ESOL level students in my classroom are faced with overage, below grade level literacy skills, lack of formal education and the challenges of living in a neighborhood that threatens their safety and well being daily. Since it is challenging for my students to locate their homelands on a map, this became the introduction to the study of this West African folktale unit.

When I thought about a theme and the goals for this curriculum I had to consider what my students knew and how to present the information in the textbook to them. Although my students were unfamiliar with the historical past and geography of the West African countries where they were born, they loved to tell and listen to stories. The stories I read with expression, dressed in costumes and utilized a variety of artifacts, became the best fifteen minutes of a school mandated period called DEAR (Drop Everything and Read). In response to my stories the students recollected stories about people, elephants, lions and other characters. The students never read their stories from a book. Their stories always had a lesson to teach and **made** the audience laugh or shudder in disbelief. Recognizing these strengths, I began to think of ways to invite my students to enter the world of African American history through literature.

Assessment strategies are important means of assisting teachers as well as students in determining whether learning objectives have been met. For teachers, it may be necessary to refine teaching strategies and for students, it provides an opportunity for clarification. Assignments can be graded by rubrics that clearly show students what is necessary to attain a certain grade. Additionally, observations, short answer quizzes, cloze activities, group projects. Oral presentations, and class discussions all have merit.

The Lessons

The lessons that I propose for this unit are appropriate for ESOL Entering and Basic level high school students who follow the African American History curriculum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The lessons will accompany information found in the district wide textbook, *African American History*, Hine, Hine & Harrold, Prentice Hall, 2006.

Unit 1 Chapter 1 -Africa and Chapter 2 - Middle Passage

Unit 2 Slavery, Abolition, and the Quest for Freedom - Chapter 6

Unit 6 The Black Revolution - This unit is comprised of 11 lessons that focus on art, geography, literacy, literature (folktales), social studies, and critical thinking. All of the lessons may be adapted to suit the instructional needs of ESOL and mainstream students. It is always positive for students to maintain their work in portfolios. For this unit the African American Portfolio should contain selected writing assignments that are compiled into a class folktale book that could be published by the class and shared with others in school or students at other locations via the internet.

Classroom Activities

The Lessons

Lesson 1- Africa: A Continent of Many Countries

Background

Although many of the students whom I teach are from West African countries, they are unable to locate the continent of Africa on a map and identify West African countries. Therefore, a geography lesson is important for the students to learn the location of the country where they once lived. Further, the students should begin to think about their ancestors who lived on the land before them and which groups of people live there today. After class discussions and map inquiry, students will realize that there is a connection between the older empires and the countries that exist along the West African coast today. It is important for the students to learn the geographical location of the empires that created the slave trade.

Objectives

Students will:

- Complete a map of West Africa with the assistance of the teacher
- Locate and label 15 West African countries
- Identify at least five countries on a **blank** map
- Identify two major West African kingdoms from the 1500s
- Compare the kingdom areas with the countries today
- Find the location of cities that aided slave trade

Discussion Questions

- What do you know about Africa?
- Is Africa a continent or a country?
- How many countries are in Africa?

- How many West African countries can you name?
- How many languages are spoken in Africa?
- How many languages do you speak?
- Why is West Africa an important part of African American History?
-

Resources and Materials

African Climatic Map

African Political Map

Colored pencils

Yarn or waxed cord

Large world map

Transparencies of outline maps

Vocabulary-Word Wall

Senegal	Cote D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)	river
Gambia	Liberia	Benin
Mali	Ghana	desert
Guinea	boundaries	forest
Atlantic Ocean	Sierra Leone	Togo
Guinea Bissau	Burkina Faso	slave

Instructional Plan

Divide the class into study groups. Give each study group a half sheet of chart paper. Ask the students to write what they know about any country or countries in West Africa. Using magnets or tape place completed work sheets on the board. Ask the group's recorder to read the sentences and underline the name of any country mentioned. The teacher will list the countries mentioned on the board and add countries if necessary. (Later copy the names on word strips for the word wall).

Provide blank maps for each student. Ask students to label the countries of West Africa on their maps. Allow students to look at maps in an atlas for help. Encourage students to use boundary clues to find the location of West African countries. Provide enough time for students to complete the assignment. Use an overhead projector or other image server to project the same political map that is given to the students. Ask students to check their work with the atlas or projected map.

It will be helpful to ask emergent learners to color countries certain colors. Such an activity reinforces color names in English and helps to identify a country.

The completed maps should be placed in the students' African American Literature Portfolio.

Part II – The Following Day or Extended Period

Brief Review

Review the information taught during the previous class period. Ask students to recall names of West African countries. Place the names on the board as the students recite them.

Using overlay transparencies, show students how the ancient lands have changed and become the countries that we know today. Ask students to circle on the transparency, cities whose geographical location may have influenced the slave trade. Allow time for students to locate the following places on their maps to help them with further study:

Atlantic Ocean

Red Sea

Gulf of Guinea

Sahara Desert

Equator

Nile River

Provide a copy of the worksheet below for students to complete (students may work in study groups).

Assessment:

Read the following clues to help you locate a country in West Africa. Use a map of Africa in an atlas or the map on page 953 of the textbook. The maps in Chapter 1, Section 2, pages 15 and 18 will help you answer the questions below.

1. This country is located east of Liberia and west of Ghana _____
2. Name the country where the Ashanti Empire existed. _____
3. The equator is located within this West African country _____
4. This country has many African American ancestors. _____
5. Timbuktu was an important city where slaves, gold, salt and other goods were traded. What was the name of this empire during the 1300s _____?

Mini Project

Using the five themes of geography (location, place, human-environmental interactions, movement and regions) students will work in their study groups to develop a geographic sense of the West African countries. Allow each group to select and answer questions about the country. Guide students through the research process by selecting specific websites, books or other appropriate materials.

Each group will prepare a poster with images and captions to support answers to the following questions or statements:

- Locate the West African country on Earth by using latitude and longitude.

- What does the country look like? What physical characteristics exist?
(Mountains, Beaches, Wildlife)
- What kind of food, clothing and houses exist?
- How do you think people have changed the environment? For example, new buildings built in Monrovia, Liberia changed the skyline.
- How has African American culture and fashion influenced the country?
- How does the country that the group is studying differ from your homeland?
How are the regions different? For example, how is Nema County different from other counties in Liberia?

Lesson 2

Traditional Ghana-Kente Cloth

Introduction

The visual and performing arts complete the circle of knowledge. One aspect of learning about people is through their art. The Ashanti people of Ghana have made Kente cloth since the 12th century. A story about the cloths states that two men were hunting and happened to see a spider weave its web. From their observations they created a way to weave the cloth. Kente is not an ordinary cloth. Originally it was used for ceremonial purposes. The patterns that make up the cloth have traditional meanings rooted in history, values, oral traditions and other aspects of life. Additionally, the colors used in the patterns have meanings. Men were the traditional weavers, but women have been included in this artistic craft. Kente cloth patterns now include abstract designs. For more information and pictures the following websites are helpful:

www.virtualexplorers.org/ghana/kente.htm

<http://members.aol.com/davilojo/p1.htm> (powerpoint)

Objectives:

Students will:

- Design Kente cloth that uses patterns and colors of traditional weavers
- Learn that Kente cloth can be seen as repeated shapes that form patterns and have meanings

Discussion Question

Do you wear clothing made from cloth that has symbolic meaning?

Vocabulary

Ashanti

Ghana

Kente Cloth

Instructional Plan

Share samples of different Kente cloth patterns and discuss the meanings of the various designs and colors in the Ashanti culture with the students. The students will

create their own Kente patterns on paper using markers or paints. Shapes and patterns will be discussed as they evolve into finished projects.

Resources and Materials:

Samples of authentic Kente Cloth
Paper (suitable for paint)
Pencils
Colored Markers
Tempra Paint / Watercolor
Paper Towels
Brushes

Assessment:

Students will write a description of the meaning of their Kente Cloth and share with class. Finished project must show authenticity when displayed with actual Kente cloth. Work will be displayed with other projects in the classroom.

Lesson 3 – How Anansi Came to America

Introduction

This story explains how Anansi, the spider trickster, left the shores of West Africa with captives and arrived in Jamestown, Virginia in 1619. Michael Auld created a comic strip based on the story, “How Anansi Came to America”. See the website below for the comic strip and story.

http://anansistories.com/Anansi_Came_to_America.html

Objectives

Students will:

- Read and discuss Anansi’s behavior in the story as a means to introduce the trickster character
- Trace Anansi’s journey from West Africa to Jamestown, VA on a world map
- Compare and contrast Anansi’s journey with human captives on board the slaver
- Write a four- day journal explaining what Anansi may have experienced on the Middle Passage.

Discussion Questions

What are the characteristics of a trickster?

What human qualities does Anansi have?

Resource Materials

A copy of the story for each student

Large black felt/ wire spider (type used at Halloween)- prop

Small pouch or shoulder bag

Vocabulary-Word Wall

Anansi	Nyame (Sky God)	indicated
warhog	grumble	miles
bush	grassland	juicy

Instructional Plan

Ask students if they were told stories as children and if their parents knew the same stories as their grandparents. Explain that stories are often passed down from generation to generation.

Change your persona into a storyteller.

Greet the students with the Twi greeting *a kwaaba* (aquah bah). Anansi's Twi name is Anansesem. Ask students if they know the spider Anansesem (Anansi) and to describe this character. Write some of the character traits that the students provide on the board and tell students that they will discover out more about this trickster.

Read or tell the story to the class using expression and voices to hold their attention.

After reading the story, ask students to assemble in their study groups and prepare to reenact a moment in time from the story. Allow the group to present this moment to the class. Ask students to describe, in English, the moment they choose.

Then ask students to think about the moments from the story that they shared and begin to think about Anansi's character. What kind of person is Anansi?

For example, is he selfish? Provide an example. Ask students to think about more examples and write them on the chart paper. Share the responses and start a Trickster Character Chart that lists the names of the tricksters in this unit. This can be a large poster board size chart and/or individual charts to go into the portfolio.

The chart may look like the following:

Trickster Character Chart

	Anansi	Brer Rabbit	John	Stagger Lee	Shine
Selfish					
Rude					
Callous					
Lawless					

Additional traits can be added to the list as more tricksters are introduced. For example, radical, beats all odds etc.

Assessment

The teacher can assess the students' knowledge through observation. More information about the student's understanding can be ascertained by asking students to retell the story through illustrations accompanied by captions for each drawing. Students can create their own strip boxes or commercially printed black line masters may be distributed. Often students complain about not drawing well. This is a very simple story to draw because Anansi can look somewhat human, like the stick figure viewed in the comic strip. The other characters can be depicted through stick drawings as well.

Extended Activities

To discover more about Anansi, students may read about this trickster in the story, *Wulbari the Creator*. This story explains how Anansi stole stories from the god Wulbari. The teacher should read this story because of the necessary voice changes and props.

Students will answer questions and discuss character traits after the reading. Once again the chart can be used. Highlight how Anansi changes form from a spider to a somewhat human form. His physical form supports his ability to become a character of many faces and trick people.

Wulbari is a sky god whose story is told by the people of Benin and also among the Krachi people of Togo. The students can refer to the maps in their portfolios for the location of these countries.

Wulbari the Creator

African American Literature

Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc, 1992

Pages 99-100

Additional Stories:

Spider and the Honey Tree This story about spider is from Liberia and is written in play form for the entire class to enjoy and discuss afterwards. The reading level is appropriate for Entering/Basic level students. Once again students can learn more about the trickster. The story is located on the following website:

www.phillipmartin.info/Liberia/text_play_spider.htm

Ananse's Trick Does Double Work

Plays From African Folktales

Carol Korty

Charles Scribner's Sons

New York 19775

Another group activity is to read the play, [Ananse's Trick Does Double Work](#). In this

story from Ghana, Ananse is unable to trick the other animals because of his negative reputation. Discuss the possibility that tricksters do not always win. Students can make props and study their parts for the play. This play can be video taped for later viewing. Such activities provide English language practice.

If professional storytellers are unavailable, the following websites may be helpful to teachers and students:

[www.communityarts.net /readingroom/archivefiles/2003/10/telling-it.php](http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2003/10/telling-it.php)

www.howtotellagreatstory.com

[www.folkways.si.edu /search/AlbumDetails.aspx?D=2086](http://www.folkways.si.edu/search/AlbumDetails.aspx?D=2086)

Elders in the community can share more stories with students. A recent publication, *From West Africa to West Philadelphia: Storytelling Traditions of Philadelphia's Liberian Elders* is a collection of stories told by elders at the Agape Center in Southwest Philadelphia. Projects like this help students remain connected to their culture.

Lesson 4- The Trickster in the Antebellum South

Introduction

The tricksters in folktales during this period in history appear in animal or human form. Many of the stories have conflict over food because the stories parallel life at that time. Reading folktales from this time period provides an understanding about survival in the human and animal world. Brer Rabbit often outsmarts the larger stronger animal, the bear and the believed to be wiser animal, the fox. Wit and hope usually prevail in the Brer Rabbit tales.

Brer Rabbit Earns a Dollar-A-Minute

<http://www.americanfolklore.net/folktales/ga7.html>

Objectives

Students will:

- Identify the elements of trickster stories
- Recognize human traits in animal tricksters
- Continue to complete the trickster chart
- Recognize similarities between the experiences of the animals and slaves

Discussion Questions:

- What human qualities are found among animal tricksters?
- What can this story tell the reader or listener about human behavior?
- How does this story inform the listener about slave life in the Antebellum South?

Resource Materials

A copy of the story for each student or internet access.

"Brer Rabbit Earns a Dollar-A-Minute"

<http://www.americanfolklore.net/folktales/ga7.html>

Vocabulary – Word Wall

earn	goobers	glib
decided	sapling	bullfrog

minute
patch

hickory
forelegs

grumpy
scampered

Instructional Plan

Read the story to the students. Ask students which character appears to be the smartest as the story progresses. Further ask why they believe Br'er Bear got tricked. Point out that Br'er Rabbit knew he was wrong and wanted to protect himself. Why do tricksters often want to “cover their tracks.?” Ask students to respond to the last paragraph. How did Brer Rabbit really feel at the end of the story? What kind of person exhibits behavior like this?

Assessment

Provide an opportunity for students to develop an understanding of the elements of a folktale by completing the following activity sheet:

Characters

List the characters in the story

- a.
- b.
- c.

Name the protagonist

Name the antagonist

Setting

Where did the setting take place in the beginning of the story?

Problem

Write one sentence to explain the problem among the animals in the story

Solution

Who was the trickster in this story? Provide examples.

Moral

What lesson can be learned from this trickster folktale?

Lesson 5

John and the Master

Introduction:

The purpose of this lesson is to help students understand the conflict between two people. John and the master encounter conflicts concerning work, food and equality. The conflicts usually end in John's favor. However, the conflict improves John's situation only momentarily. He always remains a slave regardless how well he is able to outsmart the master.

Objectives

Students will:

- Use information in the textbook to help them understand the life slaves endured.
- Look at the texts to compare descriptions of certain events

- Find examples of satire in the stories

Discussion Questions

- Why do people steal?
- Why were the themes of stealing food and inequality so prevalent in the trickster literature during the Antebellum South
- What is satire and how is it used in trickster tales?
- Does the conflict between John and his master have a deeper meaning?

Resource Materials

John Steals a Pig and a Sheep
 A treasury of Afro-American Folklore
 Harold Courlander
 Marlowe & Company 1976

Vocabulary-Word Wall

steal	knock
sheep	banjo
fellow	
tenant	

Instructional Plan

Although this story is brief, it shows how clever John can be when confronted by the master. After reading the story, ask students to provide reasons why the master would go to John's house at night. Discuss the strategies that John uses to protect himself from the crime he committed.

Assessment

Ask students to prepare a story map that includes setting, characters, problem and solution. Students can create the visual presentation in their own way.

Lesson 6

Lesson 5 – Code Language

Introduction:

Code language is used when communication is meant for a select group of people. It is a secret language that allows members of the group to hide information from outsiders. Since most slaves were unable to read or write they devised ways to provide information through codes. Many slaves used a code language to plan escapes and keep important information from their masters. Coded messages appeared in the lyrics of songs and spirituals, in conversations and in non verbal forms of communication such as quilts. Slaves were not the only people to use code language. Explain to students that spies used code languages throughout history.

A code language that was never broken during WWII was spoken by the Navajo code talkers. Further explain that people use code language when they text and email each other.

Objectives

Students will:

- Develop a literary analysis of 2 spirituals
Use historical time and place to help decode the lyrics of these spirituals:
Wade In the Water
Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child Focus Questions
- What is the hidden meaning of the words in the spiritual?
- Use deductive reasoning to decipher and create codes

Discussion Questions

- Have you ever created a secret language that only a few people understood?
- Why was it necessary for you to create a code and disguise your language?

Resource Materials

Wade in the Water

The Fisk Jubilee Singers in Bright Mansions CD #15

You Tube – The meaning behind a Negro spiritual

A newer arrangement from Frankovan in You Tube

www.lyrics007.com

Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child

(songsforteaching.com)

simplified cryptology sheet that provides examples of different code styles

(Common patterns found in language books – lumping the letters

of words together that changes a sentence into one large word)

(Another example, assign numbers or pictures to letters)

These are only a few of the many code patterns. Students can use these patterns to create their codes.

It would be helpful to have background information about both spirituals and connect the lyrics with events in the lives of African Americans.

Vocabulary Word Wall

spiritual

secret

code

information

motherless

cryptology

wade

water

Instructional Plan

Follow discussion questions. Ask students if they created code languages in

their homelands. Explain that the creation of codes is called *cryptology*.

- Ask students to write a text message on notepaper that invites a friend for pizza after school. Then ask the students to write the same message to an older person (an adult). Compare and contrast the notes and explain how they are different. Were there any hidden messages in the text invitation that “outsiders” would not be able to decipher?
- Next provide examples from the oral languages the students use. Although the term is quite old, when a student says “my bad”, they mean, I’m sorry. Allow students to share some of the secret meanings of words in English and /or their first languages.
Explain to the students that spirituals had secret meanings that were understood only by the slaves.
- Allow students to listen to the recording and follow along with the lyrics. In study groups ask students to select one spiritual to think about. Help students to make connections between the historical information, the folktales and lyrics.
- A graphic organizer highlighting information from the three categories are given to students to complete. This assignment will help them think critically and gather data to write a response.

Historical Information

Folktales

Lyrics

1.

Assessment

After sharing ideas in their study groups and completing the graphic organizer students will write a response about the message that is being conveyed to the slaves through the lyrics of the spiritual.

Extended Activity

Students may work alone or with a partner to create a code. Explain a few code patterns to the students to help them develop ideas. Ask students to write a coded message to Brer Rabbit or John. Then ask other students if they can decipher the code and write the message.

Lesson 7-

John and the Two White Men in Court

American Negro Folklore

J.Mason Brewer

Quadrangle Books 1968

Discussion Questions

How did racial inequality continue to negatively impact the lives of African-Americans after the Civil War?

Does inequality exist in the court system today?

Objectives

Students will:

- Learn the role of professionals in the court system
- Participate in a mock trial
- Develop oral expression
-

Resource Materials

Courtroom props

Vocabulary-Word Wall

guilty	stealing	defendant
innocent	charged	plaintiff
imitate	sufficient	wheelbarrow
boll-weevils	sheriff	cotton crop
Colonel	accused	witness
destroyed	dismissed	

Instructional Plan

Students enjoy acting, but this lesson requires students to critically think about John's case. Allow students to choose their parts. There will be a judge, two lawyers, and jurors. If more assignments are needed, students can become court recorders and paralegals to assist the lawyers. Time must be given for the students to prepare for their court presentation. Some of the preparation can be done at home or in the library.

Assessment

Students will follow the guidelines of an oral presentation rubric. During the mock trial the following components will be included:

- Baliff will announce
- Opening statements
- Plaintiff's case
- Defendant's case
- Closing case
- Jurors' discussion - guilty or innocent

If the mock trial is videotaped, students will be able to view their English language strengths and weaknesses.

Lesson 8: The Trickster After Reconstruction – Stagger Lee

Introduction

Stagger Lee has the characteristics of the earlier tricksters but he has gone a step farther and killed a man. In previous tales mentioned in this unit, the trickster used his wits and

not weapons. Stagger Lee is an archetype whose story was published in the St. Louis, Missouri Globe-Democrat newspaper in 1895. Who he was and what he did for a living exists today. In fact, some students may be aware of Stagger Lee's lifestyle. The incident that occurred between Stagger Lee and William Lyons has become a legend that has influenced several musical recordings.

Discussion Questions

What is an archetype?

What characteristics does Stagger Lee share with earlier tricksters?

How is Stagger Lee different from other tricksters?

Objectives

Students will:

- Learn the meaning of an archetype
- Use the 5 W's to extract information from a newspaper article
- Read the lyrics of a song based on the events surrounded by Stagger Lee's crime
-

Resource Materials

Bob Dylan "Stack A Lee" in World Gone Wrong

<http://bobdylan.com/songs/stacklee.html>

In 1958, Lloyd Price recorded another version of the song that eliminated gambling and murder.

Vocabulary-Word Wall

Stetson hat

money

cruel

railroad

spied

barroom

gamble

debt

Instructional Plan

Provide a copy of the article that appeared in the St. Louis Globe. Use the 5W's to find important information from the article. The language used in the original article may be too difficult for Emergent learners. An option would be for the teacher to model this exercise for the students or rewrite the article using appropriate reading level.

Assignment 2

Review events of the Stagger Lee story with the students. Ask them to write a criminal report about what transpired between Stagger Lee and Lyons.

Assessment

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the writing process by completing drafts at scheduled times. The news article will be based on a writing rubric for a grade.

Lesson 9: The Trickster After Reconstruction – Shine

Introduction

Shine's name reflected his profession as a shoeshine specialist. His social rank in society was much lower than the people he served. Like Stagger Lee, there is a story that immortalizes him. His job as a coal tender on The Titanic was one of the lowest jobs aboard the ship. Yet, instead of sinking with the ship, he rises to the top because of his talents. Unfortunately, the language used in this story is inappropriate for classroom use unless the text is modified.

Discussion Questions

- How does a trickster story relate to issues in your life?
- Why does society measure one's intelligence by one's profession?

Resource Materials

An appropriate edition of the story- Shine

Vocabulary-Word Wall

Words will depend on the selection

Instructional Plan

Ask students to create a dialogue between two tricksters based on an event they create. This response may be in any genre. The finished product will become part of the class book.

Assessment

The plot, the content of the dialogue and the character traits of the tricksters will determine the students' grade.

Lesson 10: The Trickster After Reconstruction – Signifying Monkey

Introduction

The Signifying Monkey is a folk ballad that uses street language to tell the story of a trickster monkey. Once again the text will have to be adapted.

Discussion Questions

What is the meaning of signifying?

What is the significance of certain styles of dressing?

Does the way a person dress demand respect?

Was the same attitude about dress existent throughout African /African American history?

Objectives

Student will:

- Recognize similarities about the importance of dressing among African Americans in different periods of history including today.
- Examine monkey's behavior and find five ways he influenced others to create conflict.

Resource Materials

An adapted copy of the ballad, “Signifying Monkey”

Vocabulary-Word Wall

coconut	clean
signifying	death
monkey	dumbest
cousins	ugly

Instructional Plan:

Discuss how the three characters interact with one another in the ballad. Hand out a 3 interlocking circle graphic organizer. Place the name of one trickster in each circle, then ask students to work together to think of ways the tricksters are alike.

Then discuss the importance of dress in the African American community and how it demands respect. Think about Stagger Lee’s Stetson hat and signifying monkey’s Longine watch.

Assessment

Briefly write a response to the question: How important is the way you dress in your community? What are the expectations of the way you should look? What happens when a person does not meet these standards?

Lesson 11: Raps Songs and Tricksters

Rap songs were initially misunderstood by the mainstream because of the style of music and the lyrics. As time passed, the younger generations enjoyed the rhythmic sounds and the messages expressed in the lyrics. During the past ten years, the tricksters of rap have taken on the persona of “gangstas.” The lyrics from “gangsta” rap will not be part of the discussion in this unit. Instead, rap lyrics that tell stories about people who overcome obstacles and have dreams will be discussed.

Discussion Questions

- Can rappers be considered storytellers?
- Do the tricksters in raps have the same characteristics as those in folktales?

Objectives

Students will:

- Read rap lyrics to determine if trickster traits exist
- Compare the elements in a folktale with those in the lyrics of three rap songs

Resource Materials

CD or Download “It was all a Dream” – Biggie Small (Christopher Wallace)

<http://www.lyricsdepot.com/jay-z/a-dream.html>

“Beach Chair” – Jay Z

<http://www.lyricsdepot.com/jay-z/a-dream.html>

Through the Wire

www.lyrics007.com/Kanye%20West%20Lyrics/Through%20The%20Wire%20Lyrics.html

Vocabulary-Word Wall

Karma	poverty
demons	sardines
dreams	jealousy

Instructional Plan:

Provide copies of the three rap songs for the students. Each song is about a dream. Ask students to work in their study groups and think about what is mentioned in the lyrics. Also, think about what is symbolic about the beach chair, eating sardines and time change.

Assessment

Ask students to work with a writing partner. Together select an issue and write lyrics for a rap or song from the viewpoint of a, trickster. Think about the past, present and future and how issues become part of their lives. The songs may be performed or the lyrics read to the class. For additional help in planning and writing refer to the CD Get It From the Drums, A School District of Philadelphia publication. There are several songs related to timely issues that have been mixed with contemporary songs that the students will recognize.

Extended Activity

Students can compare the trickster characteristics in American rappers with Atalaku, a Congolese rapper. This rapper is called a trickster because he is rebel. He is against tradition. Atalaku is a vocalist, dancer and shouter. Other rappers around the world may be considered rebels because they speak out about controversial issues.

Annotated Bibliography/Resources

Annotated Reading List for Students

Hamilton, Virginia. [The People Could Fly](#), New York: Scholastic Inc. 1985.

A collection of tales divided into four categories: He Lion, Bruh Bear, and Bruh Rabbit; Tales of the Real, Extravagant, and Fanciful; Tales of the Supernatural; Slave tales of Freedom. Some of the tales are written in colloquial language.

Hine, Darlene., William C.Hine, and Stanley Harrold. African American History. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2006.

This is a required history textbook for the African American history course in

Philadelphia.

Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. [African American Literature Voices in a Tradition](#). Austin, Texas: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1998.

A collection of different genres of African American writing represented throughout history.

Korty, Carol. [Plays From African Folktales](#). Studio City, CA: Players Press Inc., 1998. The author presents four plays based on classic African tales. The play, Ananse's Trick Does Double Work, is appropriate for the unit. Ideas for costumes and music are included.

Smith, Alexander McCall. [Children of Wax African Folk Tales](#). New York: Interlink Books, 1999.

This is a collection of short folktales that the teacher can read to students.

Annotated List for Teachers Background and Research

Abrahams, Roger, ed. [African American Folktales](#). New York: Partheon Books, 1985. A collection of African American folktales with an introduction to each section.

Bailey, Joseph A. What Slaves' Folktales Say About Whites. Thursday, 21 December 2006. www.blackvoicenews.com

An article that expresses the importance of folktales as a way to learn about slaves and their lifestyles.

Courlander, Harold. [A Treasury of Afro-American Folklore](#). New York: Marlowe and Company, 1996.

A collection of folktales represented from countries throughout the Americas.

Brewer, J. Mason. [American Negro Folklore](#). Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968.

A large collection of short tales written in the vernacular.

Dundes, Alan. [Mother Wit From The Laughing Barrel](#). New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. 1973.

A collection of readings on African American folklore. The book is available at the University of Pennsylvania Van Pelt Library.

Echevarria, Jana and Anne Graves. [Sheltered Content Instruction](#). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007.

This book provides updated strategies for teachers to use in sheltered classrooms.

Gates, H. L., Jr. [The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literacy Criticism](#). New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

This scholar presents a theory that suggests signifying comes from traditional African

roots.

Hufford, Mary. [From West Africa to West Philadelphia: Storytelling Traditions of Philadelphia's Liberian Elders.](#) Philadelphia, PA: Center for Folklore and Ethnography, 2008.

A collection of folktales told by Liberian elders at the Agape Center in Southwest Philadelphia.

Hurston, Zora Neal. [Mules and Men.](#) New York: Harper Perennial, 2005.

A research classic of a collection of African/African American folktales.

Levine, Lawrence. [Black Culture and Black Consciousness. New Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom.](#) York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Although this book is old, it serves as a foundation for the possible meaning of African American tales. The book is available at the University of Pennsylvania Van Pelt Library.

O'Malley, J. Michael and Lorraine Valdez Pierce. [Authentic Assessment for English Language Learners.](#) New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.Inc. 1996.

A handbook for using assessment measures with ESOL students

Papas, Maggie, A.Gerber, and Abeer Mohamed. African American Culture through Oral Tradition. www.gwu.edu/~e73afram/ag-am-mp.html

This article discusses the value of the oral tradition among African slaves.

Pierson, William D. 1977. "Puttin' Down Ol' Massa: African Satire in the New World." In *African Folklore in the New World*, ed. Daniel J. Crowley. Austin: University of Texas Press, pp. 20-34.

Roberts, John W. [From Trickster to Badman: The Black folk Hero in Slavery and Freedom.](#) Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 1989.

The author provides a discussion about tricksters throughout African American history.

Websites

www.afroam.8media.org

www.americanfolklore.net

www.bluefieldstate.edu/library/afamlinks.htm

www.communityarts.net /readingroom/archivefiles/2003/10/telling-it.php

www.folkways.si.edu /search/AlbumDetails.aspx?D=2086

www.howtotellgreatstory.com

www.lib.jmu.edu/African/

www.lyrics007.com)

www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/title.html

www.soundjunction.org]

www.songsforteaching.com

“It was all a Dream” – Biggie Small (Christopher Wallace)

<http://www.lyricsdepot.com/jay-z/a-dream.html>

Bob Dylan “Stack A Lee” in World Gone Wrong

<http://bobdylan.com/songs/stacklee.html>

“Beach Chair” – Jay Z

<http://www.lyricsdepot.com/jay-z/a-dream.html>

Through the Wire

www.lyrics007.com/Kanye West

Get It From The Drums –

A History of Protest and Protest Songs of the 1960s and 70s CD

Compiled by Wynne Alexander

Appendices - Standards

African American History Standards (School District of Philadelphia)

Pennsylvania State Standard:

8.1 Historical Analysis and Skill Development

Standard Statement

A1 Chronological Thinking
B1, B6 Historical Comprehension
C1 Historical Interpretation

ESOL Course 1

Pennsylvania State Standard

1.1 Learning to Read Independently

Standard Statement

B. Analyze the structure of the informational materials explaining how authors

- used these to achieve their purposes.
- C. Use knowledge of root words and words from literary works to recognize and understand the meaning of new words during reading. Use words accurately in speaking and writing.
 - D. Identify, describe, evaluate, and synthesize the essential ideas in text. Assess those reading strategies that were most effective in learning from a variety of texts.
 - F. Understand the meaning of and apply key vocabulary across the various subject areas.
 - G. Demonstrate, after reading, an understanding and interpretation of both fiction and nonfiction text, including public documents.

Pennsylvania State Standard

1.2 Learning to read in all Content Areas

Standard Statement

- A. Read and understand essential content of informational texts and documents in all academic areas.
- C. Produce work in at least one literary genre that follows the conventions of the genre.

Pennsylvania State Standard

1.3 Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Literature

Standard Statement

- A. Read and understand works of literature.
- B. Analyze the relationships, uses, and effectiveness of literary elements used by one or more authors in similar genres including characterization, setting, plot, theme, point of view, tone, and style

Pennsylvania State Standard

1.4 Types of Writing

Standard Statement

- A. Write short stories, poems, and plays

Pennsylvania State Standard

1.6 Speaking and Listening

Standard Statement

- A. Listen to others
- B. Listen to selections of literature.
- C. Speaking using skills appropriate to formal speech
- D. Contribute to discussion