

ASP Summer Institute 09 Lesson Plan Template

Lesson Title: Elements of African Oral Literature

Subject and Grade Level: Language Arts 8th Lesson # _____

Time Required (minutes, class periods, etc.) 3 55- minute class periods

Lesson description: The teacher will introduce the lesson with a motivational question such as, "Who do you know that could relate (tell) the history of your entire family?" List responses on the board. Note commonality of answers – oldest or older person in the family. Ask, "Who do you think could tell the history of your street, neighborhood or community? Lead students in a 5-minute discussion of the importance of knowing their family history.

Students will read about and discuss African oral literature with a focus on the roles of griots/bards. The teacher will lead the students in making a connection between the preservation of their family history and the ancient literary form of African oral literature. The teacher will lead the students in examining the use of music and musical instruments to accompany oral literary text.

Students will highlight unfamiliar words and use context clues to comprehend their meanings. Students will identify and evaluate the importance of characterization, setting, theme and conflict evident in African oral literature, African traditional written literature and African-American folk stories (folktales, proverbs).

Objectives:

Students will be able to analyze the influence of African oral literature upon African traditional written text

Students will be able to identify, define and evaluate the roles of griots / bards in African oral literature

Students will compare/contrast the elements of African oral literature to African-American folk stories

Students will be able to perform and experience an oral literature presentation

Key Ideas and/or Driving Questions:

African oral literature contained all the elements we find today in written literary text.

Folktales and proverbs originated as oral literature.

Key Vocabulary:

Oral literature	Proverbs	Evaluate
Culture	Folktale	Explain
Tradition(al)		
Slavery	Myth	Analyze
Griot		
Bard		
Storytellers		

Background Needed (teacher and student): Teachers will need a basic, general knowledge of the African slave trade and knowledge of a specific area or region of Africa. Students will need to know plot structure, and academic vocabulary (identify, evaluate, explain, analyze).

Materials: Blackboard/chalk; handouts - vocabulary list, oral literature overview; a folktale, list of proverbs and a myth; musical instruments (made, borrowed or both), a highlighter.

Procedures:

Distribute handouts and highlighters.

Introductory activity

Teach the lesson

Review

Model performance assessment

Assess

Closure & Assessment (tie to key ideas - what was learned):

- ❖ Written test
- ❖ Performance test (Students will create a family or neighborhood "tree". Present it to the class in the form of oral literature. Musical accompaniment may be included.

Example questions:

- ❖ What is oral literature?
- ❖ Who performed it and why?
- ❖ What were the various roles of the griots and bards?
- ❖ How is oral literature connected to African traditional written literature?
- ❖ How was African oral literature performed in certain regions of Africa in ancient times and today?
- ❖ How does history influence African-American folktales?

Extension / Connections (including possible grade level and interdisciplinary modifications):

- ❖ Social Studies - Research and write about the traditions of a specific people in a specific Country in Africa, i.e. the Ibo people in Nigeria
- ❖ Music – Make musical instruments
- ❖ Art – Draw pictures of griots and bards depicting the traditional attire.

Related Standards:

- ❖ 8.3.6 – Identify significant literary devices
- ❖ 8.3.7 – Analyze a work of literature (heritage, traditions, etc.)

Resources (include useful web links);

African Oral Literature: Backgrounds, Character, and Continuity by Isidore Opewho

- ❖ Yoruba Folktales by Amos Tutuloro
- ❖ People Who Could Fly by Julius Lester
- ❖ Prentice Hall Literature (Grade Eight)
The American Folk Tradition- pp. 914-916
Brer Possum's Dilemma by Jackie Torrence