African Regions and their Folk Tales
Students research the regions of Africa through folk tales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Geography Standards</th>
<th>Arizona Geography Strand</th>
<th>Other Arizona Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ELEMENT THREE: PHYSICAL SYSTEMS</strong> 8. The characteristics and spatial distribution of ecosystems on earth's Surface.</td>
<td><strong>Grade 6</strong>  <strong>Strand 4 Geography</strong>  <strong>Concept 1 The World in Spatial Terms</strong> PO 1 Construct maps, charts, and graphs to display geographic information. PO 4 Locate physical and cultural features (e.g., continents, cities, countries, signifcant waterways, mountain ranges, climate zones, major water bodies, landforms) throughout the world. <strong>Concept 2 Places and Regions</strong> PO 1 Identify regions studied in Strand 2 using a variety of criteria, (e.g., climate, landforms, culture, vegetation).</td>
<td><strong>ELA Common Core Standards Reading Literature</strong> <strong>Key Ideas and Details</strong> 7.RL.3 Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). 8.RL.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. <strong>Craft and Structure</strong> 6. RL.5 Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot. <strong>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</strong> 6. RL.9. Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics. 7. RL.9. Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history. <strong>6-8 Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects Text Types and Purposes</strong> 6-8.WHST.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes. a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to...</td>
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<td><strong>ELEMENT FIVE: ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY</strong> 14. How human actions modify the physical environment.</td>
<td><strong>Arizona Geography Strand</strong></td>
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### African Regions and Their Folk Tales

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<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>PO 1 Identify common characteristics of contemporary and historical regions on the basis of climate, landforms, ecosystems, and culture.</td>
<td>b. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</td>
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<td>c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</td>
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<td>e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.</td>
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<td>f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.</td>
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### Overview

The geographical concept of regions and how and why they change is one that middle school students often find difficult to understand. The second largest continent, Africa, has several regions, each with distinct natural and human characteristics.

### Purpose

In this lesson, students will use research skills to compare the characteristics of three major natural regions of Africa: the desert, the rain forest, and the savanna. Students will also establish how the people who live there have affected these regions. Then students will listen to African folk tales from the three regions and describe the setting of each story.

### Materials

- Handouts 1, 2, and 3: Note Taking Sheets on the three regions
- Handout 4: Comparison Chart (extension activity)
- Handout 5: Writing Prompt
- Map of African Regions (with or without names)
- Teacher copy of *Talk Talk: An Ashanti Legend*
- Teacher copy of *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*
- Teacher copy of *The Storytellers* (out of print, but a great book if you can find it)
- Various classroom resources for research (i.e., almanacs, encyclopedia, nonfiction books about Africa's regions, Internet)

### Objectives

The student will be able to:
- explain the concept of region.
- identify the three major regions of Africa and relate their human and physical characteristics.
- choose and cite appropriate sources for research.
- take notes that summarize and paraphrase.
- incorporate notes into a paragraph.
- analyze African folk tales by describing the settings and the relationship to the reading selection

### Procedures

1. As a class, discuss and brainstorm about what students already know about the African regions and locate the African regions on the map.
African Regions and Their Folk Tales

2. Assign students to one of the three regions: desert, savanna, or rain forest. Within each group, assign individual research duties. Give each student a copy of the note taking sheets for his or her assigned region. Remind students to cite where they are getting their information.

3. Students research their question, continuing research for a day or two. Within groups, students should share their research results and citations by passing around a master copy of the note taking handout for their region.

4. For homework, students should write a paragraph summarizing the research findings.

5. Read aloud the three African tales: Talk Talk: An Ashanti Legend, of Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain, and The Storytellers. Based on clues in each tale, students will determine in which region the story is set. Lead the class in a discussion of the setting of each story and how it relates to the story.

Assessment

Paragraphs will be evaluated for the traits of ideas and word choice using the Six Trait Writing Rubric. Mastery will be considered 4 or higher.

Extensions

Distribute Handout 4, a comparison chart. Lead the class in a discussion of the various distinct elements of each of the three regions.

Groups could meet and share individual summaries, and then combine them into reports on their region.

Students write their own versions of African tales, distinctive to the region they researched.

Sources


Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain by Verna Aardema, Puffin Books, 1981. ISBN 0140546162


For further reading of African folk tales:


Folk Tales and Fables of the Middle East and Africa by Robert Ingpen & Barbara Hayes, Chelsea House, 1994.
