



Education Department

Title: What is Your Ghanaian Name?

Level: All Levels
Art & History (1 Lesson)

OVERVIEW

Students will learn that among various cultures in West Africa, children are often named for the days of the week. They will learn what their own name might have been were they named in the Ghanaian tradition. They will also learn about Adinkra symbols which are considered socially and spiritually significant to the people of Ghana.

California State Standards

Visual Arts **Standard 3.0** Students analyze the role and development of the visual arts in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it related to the visual arts and artists.

Visual Arts **Standard 3.3** Discuss art objects from various places and times.

Visual Arts **Standard 4.1** Discuss what is seen in works of art.

History and Social Sciences **Standard 7.4.5** Describe the importance of written and oral traditions in the transmission of African history and culture

OBJECTIVES (SWBAT)

1. Students will be able to discuss the traditional naming practices of a West African culture.
2. Students will be discover what their name might have been if they were born in Ghana.
3. Students will then make a name plate with their birth name on one side and their Ghanaian name, and its meaning, on the other side.
4. Students will be able to identify some Adinkra symbols and choose one which they feel best represents them to add to their name plate.
5. Students will see how traditions of one culture may be adopted by another.
6. Students will be able to find Ghana on a map of the World.

*Example¹: I was born on a Thursday and I am the 2nd born. My Ghanaian name would be **Yaw Manu***

*Example²: **Kofi Annan**, who served as Secretary General of the United Nations from 1997-2006, was therefore born on a Friday and was a fourth born.*

MATERIALS:

1. List of Ghanaian names for males and females according to the day of the week (Handout A)
2. List of Ghanaian names based on birth order (Handout B)
3. Perpetual Calendar (Handout C)
4. World Map (Handout D)
5. Supplies:
 - a. Name Card
 - b. Scissors
 - c. Glue Stick for decorative paper
 - d. Tacky Glue for heavier embellishments such as beads.
 - e. Markers, Crayons, Colored Pencils
 - f. Ribbons, Patterned Paper, Beads, Feathers, or other craft materials

PROCEDURE:

Introduction:

- a) Explain that most African-Americans in America are descended from West African ethnic groups.
- b) Have a discussion about how names vary based on the place of birth, cultural traditions, language or the choice of our parents.
- c) Discuss how, in some West African countries such as Ghana, children have been traditionally named based on the day of the week they were born.
- d) Find Ghana on the world map.

Lesson:

- a) Distribute the name grid and perpetual calendar.
- b) Pronounce the names phonetically and allow the students to repeat aloud. Discuss the meaning for each name.
- c) Explain how a perpetual calendar is used and assist students in finding the day they were born based on their birth date.
- d) Distribute charts of some of the Adinkra symbols of Ghana which may be found on the internet. See Resource list.

- e) Discuss the history and usage of Adinkra symbols, what they mean and how symbols are a form of language.
- f) Allow students to choose a personal Adinkra symbol based on its' meaning and the appeal of the design.

PROCEDURE:

- a) Fold 8 ½ x 11 card stock lengthwise.
- b) Students are to write their Ghanaian names and draw their adinkra symbol next to it on one side.
- c) Students are to write their birth name and its meaning (if known) on the flip side of the place card.*

**If meaning of birth name is unknown, research it and add it later.*

- d) Students may embellish their name plate with beads, ribbons, colored paper, feathers etc.....

Evaluation:

Once completed, each student should have the following:

- a) Clearly written Ghanaian name and birth name with meaning
- b) Adinkra symbol drawn on name card
- c) Creative decorations

Additional Resources:

1. About Ghana the Country:
<http://www.ghanaembassy.org/index.php?page=about-ghana>
2. Adinkra Symbols and Meanings:
http://www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra_index.htm
3. Pronunciation of Day Names
<http://www.twi.bb/akan-names.php>
4. Traditional Ceremony & Shrines in Ghana
http://easytrackghana.com/tour-ghana_traditional-ceremony.php
5. Other names of African origin
<http://www.behindthename.com/names/usage/african>

CHOOSING A BABY'S NAME

Choosing the name of a baby is a highly important decision. In some parts of Africa, as well as in other cultures around the world, it is believed that the actual choice of name can influence the life of both the child and the family. Babies might be given names that are considered powerful in the hope that the children will grow up accordingly. For parents who have suffered numerous miscarriages or infant mortality they might give their next baby a name meant to ensure long life.

In many traditions a child may have several names from different sources. A child could be named for one or more ancestors or other revered person. In the Catholic religion a child is confirmed into the church with a Saint's name. In Ghana and other parts of Africa there are traditions of naming a child based on the day of birth and birth order.

For various reasons a child may be given a name from another culture. South African Nelson Mandela was given the name *Rolihlahla* at birth but was later given the English name Nelson by a teacher. Born in Mexico to Kenyan parents, who were living there at the time, Lupita Nyong'o was given a very popular Mexican first name. Non-English speaking immigrants to America would often give their children English derived names which they felt would be more acceptable in their new country.

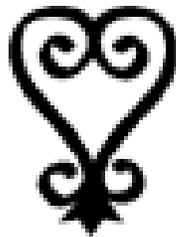
While baby names often go in cycles of popularity there are many parents, including African Americans, who have chosen to give their children names from their cultural past. Entertainer Kanye West's first name originates both from the Igbo and Yoruba cultures of Nigeria and basketball player Kwame Brown was given a Ghanaian name. In many instances a name may be given to a baby just because the parents like the sound of it rather than for its' meaning or origin.

ADINKRA SYMBOLS

The origin of Adinkra symbols may be traced to the Asante Tribe of Ghana and the Gyaman people of Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast). According to legend there was an armed conflict between Adinkera, King of Gyaman (now Ivory Coast) and the Ashanti King, Nana Osei Bonsu-Panyin of Ghana. King Adinkera was defeated and killed and his battle cloth designed with Adinkra symbols was stripped by the Asante as a trophy.

Although there are different stories about the origin of Adinkra, the people of Ghana and Ivory Coast value their symbolism and continue to incorporate them in fabric prints, jewelry, artwork, tableware and so on. They may also be seen as architectural elements on public and private buildings. New Adinkra symbols continue to be added to the traditional collection. Adinkra symbols have also been accepted by other African cultures and by African Americans who have an interest in African culture, art and design.

Adinkra symbols have an intrinsic beauty which makes them extremely popular as design elements and their accepted meanings add to their impact. It is possible to make a statement without saying a word. Some of the most well-known are Sankofa (*learn from the past*), Gye Nyame (*I fear none except for God*) and Mpatapo (*reconciliation and pacification*).



SANKOFA



GYE NYAME



MPATAPO

HANDOUT A

<u>DAY OF THE WEEK</u> MONDAY	<u>MALE NAME</u> KOJO (ko-joe)	<u>FEMALE NAME</u> ADWOA (ad-woe-a)	<u>MEANINGS:</u> peace, calm, tranquil
<u>DAY OF THE WEEK</u> TUESDAY	<u>MALE NAME</u> KWABENA (kw-b-nah) -	<u>FEMALE NAME</u> ABENA (a-bay-nah)	<u>MEANINGS:</u> warm, gentle, eloquent, <u>compassionate</u>
<u>DAY OF THE WEEK</u> WEDNESDAY	<u>MALE NAME</u> KWAKU (kwa-koo)	<u>FEMALE NAME</u> AKUBA (a-koo-ba)	<u>MEANINGS:</u> spider, mischievous
<u>DAY OF THE WEEK</u> THURSDAY	<u>MALE NAME</u> YAW (yow)	<u>FEMALE NAME</u> YABA (yaa-bah)	<u>MEANINGS:</u> earth, skillful with people

<p><u>DAY OF THE WEEK</u></p> <p>FRIDAY</p>	<p><u>MALE NAME</u></p> <p>KOFI</p> <p>(ko-fee)</p>	<p><u>FEMALE NAME</u></p> <p>AFUA or EFUA</p> <p>(a-foo-ah)</p>	<p><u>MEANINGS:</u></p> <p>fertility, wanderer adventurer, wise</p>
<p><u>DAY OF THE WEEK</u></p> <p>SATURDAY</p>	<p><u>MALE NAME</u></p> <p>KWAME</p> <p>(kwa-me)</p> <p>-</p>	<p><u>FEMALE NAME</u></p> <p>AMMA</p> <p>(ah-mah)</p>	<p><u>MEANINGS:</u></p> <p>God's day</p>
<p><u>DAY OF THE WEEK</u></p> <p>SUNDAY</p>	<p><u>MALE NAME</u></p> <p>KWASI</p> <p>(kwa-see)</p>	<p><u>FEMALE NAME</u></p> <p>AKOSUA</p> <p>(a-ko-so-wah)</p>	<p><u>MEANINGS:</u></p> <p>Universe, protective of others, patient</p>

HANDOUT B

<u>BIRTH ORDER: FIRST</u>	<u>MALE NAME</u> PÌÈSÍÉ	<u>FEMALE NAME</u> PÌÈSÍÉ
<u>BIRTH ORDER: SECOND</u>	<u>MALE NAME</u> MANU	<u>FEMALE NAME</u> MÁANU
<u>BIRTH ORDER: THIRD</u>	<u>MALE NAME</u> MENSÃ	<u>FEMALE NAME</u> MÁNSÃ
<u>BIRTH ORDER: FOURTH</u>	<u>MALE NAME</u> ANAN	<u>FEMALE NAME</u> ANANÉ
<u>BIRTH ORDER: FIFTH</u>	<u>MALE NAME</u> NÚM	<u>FEMALE NAME</u> ANÚM
<u>BIRTH ORDER: SIXTH</u>	<u>MALE NAME</u> NSIA	<u>FEMALE NAME</u> NSIA

PERPETUAL CALENDAR

Directions: Look for the year you want below.
The letter opposite each year is the letter above the calendar to use for that year.

- 1776 (J) 1851 (D) 1926 (F)
- 1777 (D) 1852 (L) 1927 (G)
- 1778 (E) 1853 (G) 1928 (H)
- 1779 (F) 1854 (A) 1929 (C)
- 1780 (N) 1855 (B) 1930 (D)
- 1781 (B) 1856 (J) 1931 (E)
- 1782 (C) 1857 (E) 1932 (M)
- 1783 (D) 1858 (F) 1933 (A)
- 1784 (L) 1859 (G) 1934 (B)
- 1785 (G) 1860 (H) 1935 (C)
- 1786 (A) 1861 (C) 1936 (K)
- 1787 (B) 1862 (D) 1937 (F)
- 1788 (J) 1863 (E) 1938 (G)
- 1789 (E) 1864 (M) 1939 (A)
- 1790 (F) 1865 (A) 1940 (I)
- 1791 (G) 1866 (B) 1941 (D)
- 1792 (H) 1867 (C) 1942 (E)
- 1793 (C) 1868 (K) 1943 (F)
- 1794 (D) 1869 (F) 1944 (N)
- 1795 (E) 1870 (G) 1945 (B)
- 1796 (M) 1871 (A) 1946 (C)
- 1797 (A) 1872 (I) 1947 (D)
- 1798 (B) 1873 (D) 1948 (L)
- 1799 (O) 1874 (E) 1949 (G)
- 1800 (D) 1875 (F) 1950 (A)
- 1801 (E) 1876 (N) 1951 (B)
- 1802 (F) 1877 (B) 1952 (J)
- 1803 (G) 1878 (C) 1953 (E)
- 1804 (H) 1879 (D) 1954 (F)
- 1805 (C) 1880 (L) 1955 (G)
- 1806 (D) 1881 (G) 1956 (H)
- 1807 (E) 1882 (A) 1957 (C)
- 1808 (M) 1883 (B) 1958 (D)
- 1809 (A) 1884 (J) 1959 (E)
- 1810 (B) 1885 (E) 1960 (M)
- 1811 (C) 1886 (F) 1961 (A)
- 1812 (K) 1887 (G) 1962 (B)
- 1813 (F) 1888 (H) 1963 (C)
- 1814 (G) 1889 (C) 1964 (K)
- 1815 (A) 1890 (D) 1965 (F)
- 1816 (I) 1891 (E) 1966 (G)
- 1817 (D) 1892 (M) 1967 (A)
- 1818 (E) 1893 (A) 1968 (I)
- 1819 (F) 1894 (B) 1969 (D)
- 1820 (N) 1895 (C) 1970 (E)
- 1821 (B) 1896 (K) 1971 (F)
- 1822 (C) 1897 (F) 1972 (N)
- 1823 (D) 1898 (G) 1973 (B)
- 1824 (L) 1899 (A) 1974 (C)
- 1825 (G) 1900 (B) 1975 (D)
- 1826 (A) 1901 (C) 1976 (L)
- 1827 (B) 1902 (D) 1977 (G)
- 1828 (J) 1903 (E) 1978 (A)
- 1829 (E) 1904 (M) 1979 (B)
- 1830 (F) 1905 (A) 1980 (J)
- 1831 (G) 1906 (B) 1981 (E)
- 1832 (H) 1907 (C) 1982 (F)
- 1833 (C) 1908 (K) 1983 (G)
- 1834 (D) 1909 (F) 1984 (H)
- 1835 (E) 1910 (G) 1985 (C)
- 1836 (M) 1911 (A) 1986 (D)
- 1837 (A) 1912 (I) 1987 (E)
- 1838 (B) 1913 (D) 1988 (M)
- 1839 (C) 1914 (E) 1989 (A)
- 1840 (K) 1915 (F) 1990 (B)
- 1841 (F) 1916 (N) 1991 (C)
- 1842 (G) 1917 (B) 1992 (K)
- 1843 (A) 1918 (C) 1993 (F)
- 1844 (I) 1919 (D) 1994 (G)
- 1845 (D) 1920 (L) 1995 (A)
- 1846 (E) 1921 (G) 1996 (I)
- 1847 (F) 1922 (A) 1997 (D)
- 1848 (N) 1923 (B) 1998 (E)
- 1849 (B) 1924 (J) 1999 (F)
- 1850 (C) 1925 (E) 2000 (N)

A

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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APRIL							MAY							JUNE						
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29	30	31					28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JULY							AUGUST							SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
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29	30	31					27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30

OCTOBER							NOVEMBER							DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30			24	25	26	27	28	29	30

B

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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APRIL							MAY							JUNE						
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JULY							AUGUST							SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
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29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29

OCTOBER							NOVEMBER							DECEMBER						
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29	30	31					25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29

C

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
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29	30	31					24	25	26	27	28			24	25	26	27	28	29	30

APRIL							MAY							JUNE						
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29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29

JULY							AUGUST							SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11				

G

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28						27	28	29	30	31		
30	31																			

H

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	26	27	28	29				25	26	27	28	29	30	31
29	30	31																		

I

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
28	29	30					25	26	27	28	29			24	25	26	27	28	29	30

J

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29		23	24	25	26	27	28	29

K

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	29	30	31				

L

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	31			

M

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29						27	28	29	30	31		
31																				

N

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29					26	27	28	29	30	31	
30	31																			

