

MUSICAL PICTURE BOOK 

Songs in the Shade of the Cashew and Coconut Trees

LULLABIES AND NURSERY RHYMES FROM
WEST AFRICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Songs collected by Nathalie Soussana Musical arrangements by
Jean-Christophe Hoarau Illustrations by Judith Gueyfier



GRADES 1-3

Teaching Guide



www.thesectionmountain.com

Themes: Cultural identity, West Africa and the Caribbean, geography, history, music, instruments, genres, language

BEFORE YOU LISTEN

Warm-up Exercises

Introduce core themes with these prompts, questions, and activities.

Music offered many Afro-Caribbean peoples a way of existing, communicating, and maintaining their identity and ties with their native cultures. What else makes up someone's cultural identity?

Open to students. For example, "I think language is important, too, since it's a part of music and communication."

Definition: Cultural identity is a feeling of belonging to a group of people that share certain characteristics, such as where they live, where their family comes from, their religion, their language, what they eat, how they dress, and more.

What role does music play in your life? When do you listen to it?

Open to students. For example, "I listen to it in the car with my parents. We like to sing-along together."

Songs in the Shade of the Cashew and Coconut Trees focuses on the shared history between the coastal regions of West Africa and the Caribbean. Africa is one of seven continents. Can you name the other six?

Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America

Where is Africa? (Use a map, globe, or Google "blank world map," and ask students to locate the continent.)

What do you know about Africa?

Open to students. For example: "I have a relative who went on a safari in Botswana and saw elephants and giraffes," or "My family is from Angola."

Can you guess how many countries there are in Africa?

There are 54 countries, according to the United Nations, in 2022.

The Caribbean is not a country. It is a region of the Americas made up of as many as 7,000 islands. What is an island?

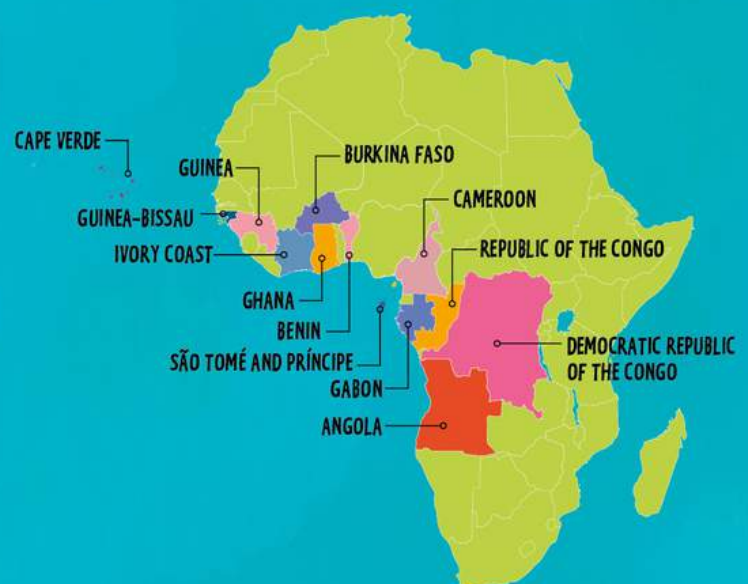
An island is a piece of land surrounded by water on all sides.

The islands in the Caribbean make up 13 countries and 17 dependent territories. Can you name any of the countries or territories?

Open to students. Answers may include Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Activity: Ask students to draw an “identity portrait” of Africa. Find the corresponding activity sheet in the appendix.

- An identity portrait contains symbols that represent **cultural identity**, including morals, core values, beliefs, customs, and general interests.
- Portraits should include at least one musical element.
- Read the sections “A shared history, an invitation to travel” and “Music as a way of existing” out loud if you would like to provide more context.



As the text says, “Slavery is without a doubt the most common link between sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean.” What is slavery?

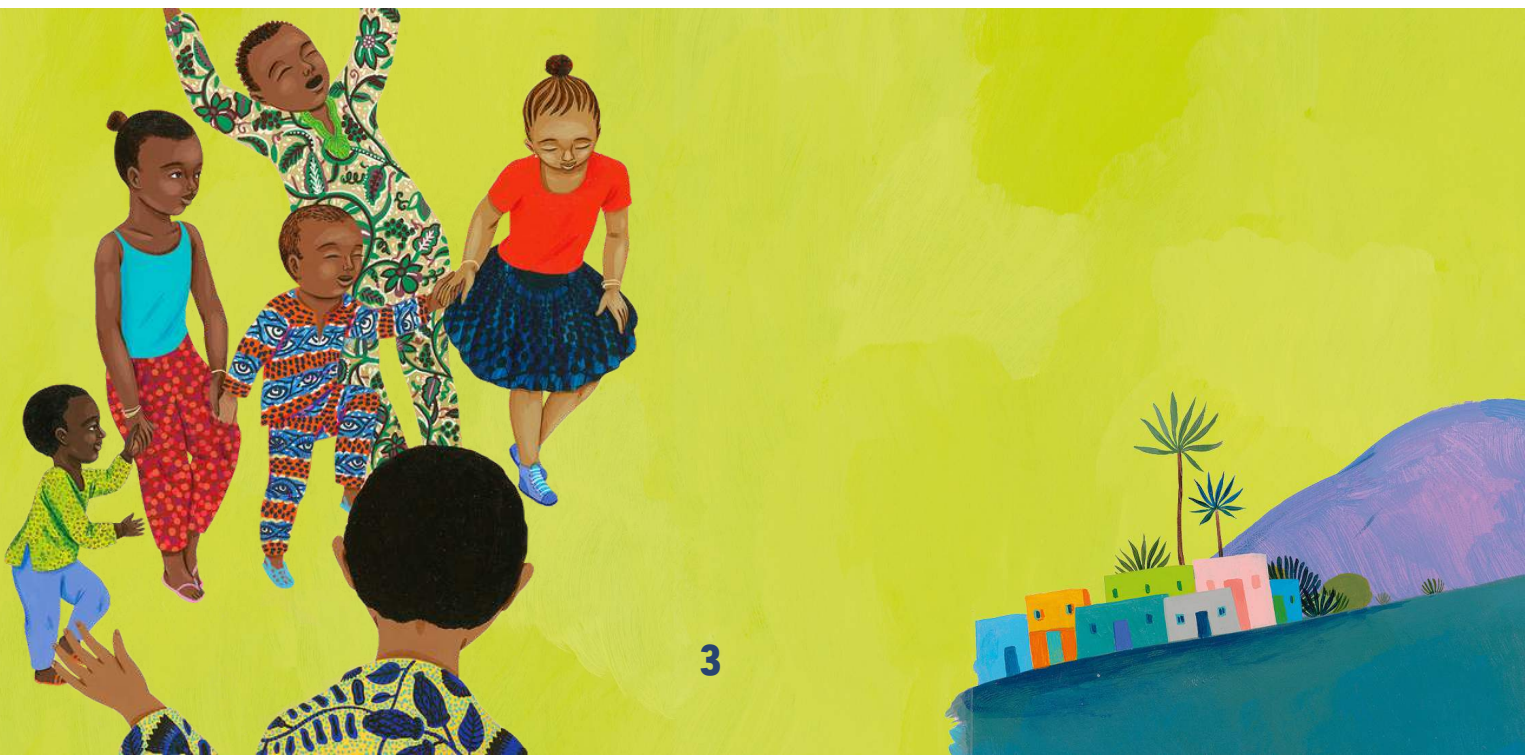
Definition: Slavery is the practice of owning other people as property. Enslaved people are forced to do unpaid work for owners. In the past, many societies had slavery. Now, almost all societies consider slavery to be wrong because it takes away basic human rights and freedoms.

Why is it important to learn about slavery?

Open to the students. Responses may include:

- So we can protect human rights.
- So we don't make the same mistakes again.
- To learn about the culture and traditions of enslaved peoples.
- Because it is important to honour the lives of enslaved people.
- Because racism still affects people today.
- So we can work to make the world a fairer place.

Read the section “Crossing the Atlantic to the Caribbean” out loud if you would like to provide more context.



LISTENING GUIDE

N'téné

Ancestry is a key theme in N'téné. Many of us come from a variety of backgrounds with ancestors from all over the world. What do you know about your cultural background?


Open to the students. For example: "My grandmother was born in Syria, and my father was born here."

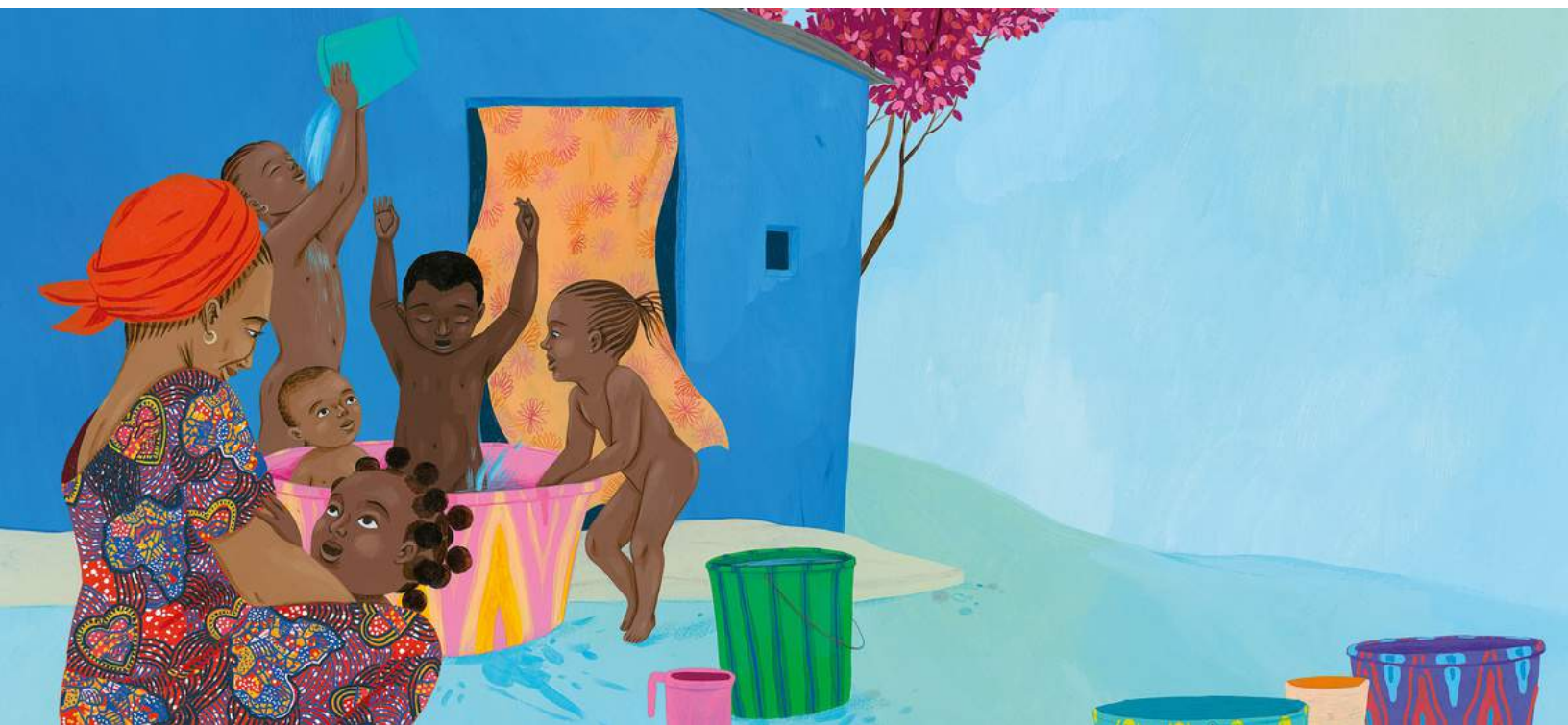
Can a person identify with more than one culture? Explain your response.

Open to students. For example: "Yes, I am Canadian, but my parents were born in India and I relate to both cultures in different ways."

Although N'téné is about suffering, it sounds joyful. Why might the artist Sidó want to convey a sad topic with happy music?

Open to the students. For example: "Happiness can exist with sadness. Sidó also sings that he has pride in his values and his heart is great."

 **Activity:** If your ancestors formed a band, what kind of music would they make? Fill out the activity sheet [My Band of Ancestors](#) to explore your musical heritage.



LISTENING GUIDE

Bikilou

Listen to this lullaby with the lyrics. In your opinion, who is singing to the baby? Explain your response.

Open to the students. For example: "I think it is the baby's brother or sister since the lyrics mention that the mother is doing farm work."

Read the description for the song in the back of the book. Why do you think the sister offers to give her brother the cricket heads?

Open to the students. For example: "The heads probably taste better, since the belly is described as less appetizing."



Did you know crickets have twice the protein of beef, twice the iron of spinach, and three times more potassium than bananas?

Day-O

Read the lyrics and description. Who is singing and what are they doing?

The song is sung by dockworkers as they load crates of bananas into ships in the early morning. The workers go home when "daylight comes."

Listen to Day-O, then [play](#) the popular 1956 version called **Banana Boat Song (Day-O) by Harry Belafonte. What do the songs have in common?**

Open to the students. Responses may include: Both songs use drums, the singers tally bananas, the singers want to go home, both songs use a call-and-response structure.

What is different about this version compared to the Belafonte version?

Open to the students. Responses may include: The phrase "Day-O" in the opening is more drawn out and sounds more tired. The rhythm of the verses is much faster. There is a female singer, Agnès Akouakou.

LISTENING GUIDE


Lóba

This song is a “call to conserve nature.” To “conserve” can mean to protect plants and animals. What does it mean to you?

Open to the students. For example: "I think it means we should recycle and create less garbage so that we can protect animal ecosystems."

Lóba is performed during a festival that brings together people who live on the banks of the Wouri River. What is a natural site near your home?

Open to the students. Use the discussion to encourage students to reflect on the natural spaces close to where they live.

 **Activity:** **Lóba** is a song of joy accompanied by a dance performed to honour ancestors. In some traditions, the dance involves moving the shoulders, arms, and hips. Play the song and ask students to interpret what that means.

Ninãncia




Listen to the song without reading the lyrics. Based on the music, what type of song do you think this is?

Open to the students. For example: "I think it's a lullaby since the singer sings softly and the rhythm is relaxing."


Read the lyrics in both languages. How do you say “one, two, three” in Cape Verdean Creole?

Um, dôs, três.

 **Activity:** How many ways can you count to three? Fill out the activity sheet **Count to Three, 3 Ways** to find out.

LISTENING GUIDE

Amina

 **Activity:** Amina is a clapping game common in Gabon and many other places. Play the song and ask students to clap at the right moments. For an added challenge, form partners and clap together as depicted in **video one**, **video two**, or **video three**.

Or, challenge students to come up with their own clapping game!

Kumandja

 **Activity:** Read the description for **Kumandja**, then take part in your own introductory dance!

- Put on music.
- Form a circle by holding hands.
- When the leader (your teacher) calls your name, enter the circle and do a little dance, then return to the circle.
- Repeat until everyone has made their introduction.

Owanan bélé nana

Owanan bélé nana is a very short lullaby parents sing to lull babies to sleep. Close your eyes and listen to the song. What makes it so relaxing?

Open to the students. For example: "The simple and repetitive lyrics are calming and hypnotic."



LISTENING GUIDE


Oyiri Marie

Oyiri Marie is a song about hair braiding. When is it okay to touch someone's hair?

Only when someone gives you permission and invites you to touch it.

As the book explains, hairstyles correspond to various stages in life, such as birth, marriage, and death. They can also provide information about age, religion, and status. What does your hairstyle express about you?

Open to the students. For example: "I wear my hair natural because my mom says it's beautiful that way."

 **Activity:** All hair is beautiful! Use the activity sheet [How I Wear My Hair](#) to share your hair pride.

Kūkū ē

 **Activity:** Listen to **Kūkū ē** while you play the Owl game!

- Find a small object to use as a token.
- Choose a leader ("mulemba") to stand in the middle and have the others stand in a circle and hold hands.
- The mulemba closes their eyes while the token is hidden in the hand of one of the kids in the circle.
- The kids in the circle start to dance by moving their bodies up and down.
- The leader opens their eyes.
- Those in the circle should try to pass the token between one another without the mulemba seeing.
- If the mulemba correctly identifies the person with the token, that person becomes the next mulemba, and the game continues.



LISTENING GUIDE

Blimundo

Blimundo is sung from the perspective of a young shepherd who must save a kingdom from a scary bull. After listening to the song, how do you think the shepherd feels about this task? Explain your response.

Open to the students. For example, "I think the shepherd feels brave because he sings in a calm voice."

Gandú ê

Gandú ê is a lullaby, which is usually a quiet, soothing song sung to help put a child to sleep. Listen to the song. What instruments do you hear?

Open to the students. Instruments include flute (peul flute) and guitar.

Are these instruments always soothing or does it depend on how they are played?

Open to the students. For example: "No. Sometimes the guitar makes me want to dance."

What aspects of this song are soothing? Explain your response.

Open to the students. Responses may include:

- The singer, Ana Maria Veiga Mendes Ferreira, sings in a calm and quiet way.
- The rhythm of the song is relaxing and not too fast.
- The tone sounds happy, not sad or angry.
- The sound of the waves is peaceful.



LISTENING GUIDE

Hormiguita retozona

In the illustration, ants carry bowls and pots on their heads. What other items do people carry on their heads in the book?

Answers may include bananas, a jug, a pot with a shark, bull horns, monster and animal masks, a straw hat, and headscarves.

Why might someone carry something on their head?

Open to students. For example: "It might be easier. My backpack always feels so heavy!"

Yindulé

Yindulé is about making the right choice between good and evil. What does it mean to be a "good" person?

Open to the students. For example: "A good person helps people who are less fortunate than them."

Iro yé

This lullaby is used to thank a friend, put a child to sleep, offer wishes to someone close, or bless a woman before marriage. What are other ways to offer thanks to someone?

Open to the students. For example: "I give my sister a hug after she plays games with me."



Head-carrying is common in many parts of the world. Some studies show that people can carry up to 20% of their own body weight using the same amount of energy it takes to walk without carrying something. But it takes practice to strengthen your muscles and bones to master the technique.

LISTENING GUIDE

Ogoun Feray

Read the description and listen to the song. Who is Ogoun Feray?

Ogoun Feray is an Afro-Haitian Vodou divinity—protector of the brave and god of fire, iron, and war.

Doodonin kɔnɔma

Read the description and listen to the song. What are doodonin?

A doodonin is a small species of pufferfish that can inflate its body.

In the song, doodonin are used as a metaphor to describe the pregnant belly disguise young girls wear during Lent. What is a metaphor?

A metaphor compares one thing to another in order to create an image or explain an idea. Unlike similes, which use the words "like" or "as" to make a comparison, metaphors suggest one thing is another.

For example: **Simile:** You are like a star. **Metaphor:** You are a star.

Ahlínhán



Read the description and listen to the song. Can you identify the metaphors?

A person is referred to as a "beautiful peacock" and their hair is referred to as "pretty feathers."

 **Activity:** Find the animal metaphors that best describe you with the **I'm an Animal** worksheet.

LISTENING GUIDE

Gongon

Read the description and song lyrics. What type of stories does the grandma tell to stop kids from going out at night?

The grandma tells stories of witches who eat little children.

What story does she tell to help the kids sleep well?

The grandma tells the story of a lovesick mermaid and her fisherman.

What is your favourite type of story to read before bed?

Open to the students. For example: "I like to read funny stories before I fall asleep because scary stories give me nightmares."

I da je

This lullaby is sung to calm children when their parents are away from home. Who would sing this lullaby to you?

Open to the students. For example: "My grandmother looks after me when my parents are at work," or "My babysitter watches us sometimes."

Nénné yô

Listen to the lullaby. How does the singer change the volume of his voice by the end of the song? Why would he do that?

The singer sings more softly toward the end of the lullaby, probably because the child is falling asleep. In musical terms, gradually getting quieter is called a diminuendo or decrescendo.

LISTENING GUIDE

Sala ye mwana

In this song, the mother goes to work so she can provide a hot meal. What does the father do?

The father stays home to look after the baby.

Papa Danmbala

Read the description and listen to the song. Who is Papa Danmbala?

Danmbala is an Afro-Haitian Vodou divinity represented as a snake god. He is the positive force that inhabits springs and rivers.

As the song lyrics say, "we are all created equal." What do the singers want from Papa Danmbala?

Open to the students. For example: "The singers want freedom. They ask Papa Danmbala why they are not free if we are all created equal and ask the god to look upon them."

AFTER LISTENING

Making Connections

Identify connections and key themes with these questions and activities.


Three songs in this collection (**Oyiri Marie**, **Doodonin kɔnɔma**, **I da je**) are shared by Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Ghana, and Guinea. Explore the map, illustrations, and other resources. What do these nations have in common?

Open to students. Answers may include:


- They are all located near one another
- They are located near the west coast of Africa
- Three out of the four are on the ocean (and two out of three illustrations feature water)
- French is an official language in three countries

What do the songs **Bikilou** and **Sala ye mwana** have in common?

Open to the students. For example: "In both songs, the mother goes to work to bring home food."

 **Activity:** **Sala ye mwana** and **Bikilou** feature the sanza. Listen to the song and then use the activity sheet **Imagine the Sanza** to draw what you think the instrument might look like. When the drawings are finished, show the students a video or image of what it really looks like.

[Click to watch Lulendo play the sanza](#) (video in French).


 **Activity:** Ask the students to complete a research project about one of the countries or territories featured in this book. Use the activity sheet **Spotlight on....** so students can fill out information about the country of their choice.



AFTER LISTENING

Reflection Exercises

Reinforce key themes with these prompts, questions, and activities.

 **Activity:** Return to the "identity portraits" of Africa that students drew during the warm-up exercises. Ask the students to add what they've learned to the portrait, either within the continent or outside of it.

What did you learn about Africa and the Caribbean?

Open to the students. Encourage students to discuss song styles, instruments, languages, traditions, and other themes.

What instruments did you learn about for the first time?

Instruments featured in the book include:

- **Balafon:** A type of African xylophone.
- **Cavaquinho:** Similar in sound to a ukulele, this four-stringed instrument is played by plucking strings.
- **Caxixis:** A closed bell-like basket filled with seeds or other small objects that create sound when shaken like maracas.
- **Mukenge:** A double bell made of welded iron that is struck with a stick. The sound can be controlled with one's hand or chest.
- **Ngoni:** A stringed instrument with a resonance chamber carved out of wood and covered with animal skin. Its nylon strings are attached to leather rings and plucked with the right thumb and index finger.
- **Peul flute:** A bamboo flute held horizontally, which has three holes. The flutist speaks or sings into the flute as it is played. It was originally played by shepherds.
- **Sanza:** Known by some as a "thumb piano," this small keyboard is played pressing metal strips that are attached to a resonating box.

Activity Sheets

- Identity Portrait: Africa
- My Band of Ancestors
- Count to Three, 3 Ways
- How I Wear My Hair
- I'm An Animal!
- Imagine the Sanza
- Spotlight on ...
- Word Search



Identity Portrait: Africa

Draw objects and symbols that represent Africa's cultural identity. Include at least one musical element.



My Band of Ancestors

If your ancestors formed a band, what type of music would they create together? Fill in the blanks below to find out.

My _____ is from
(choose a relative)

1 _____

A traditional style of music from
1 _____
is called

2 _____

This style of music is

3 _____

(choose an adjective)

Name a traditional instrument

4 _____

My _____ is from
(choose a relative)

1 _____

A traditional style of music from
1 _____
is called

2 _____

This style of music is

3 _____

(choose an adjective)

Name a traditional instrument

4 _____

Mashup part of your mother's maiden name with part of your father's last name to create a band name, or come up with your own name:

5 _____ *(e.g. Williams + Garcia = The Willcias)*

Complete your band description:

5 _____ fuse 2 _____ and 2 _____

traditions from 1 _____ and 1 _____ with the

3 _____ and 3 _____ sounds of the

4 _____ and 4 _____.

Count to Three, 3 Ways

How many ways can you count to three? Try in three languages! For clues, look at the lyrics and translations for "Ninância" (Track 5).

1

2

3

ENGLISH

onetwothree

CAPE VERDEAN CREOLE

Pick a language!

CAPE VERDEAN CREOLE

três um
dôs

FRENCH

trois
deux un

SPANISH

uno dos
tres

How I Wear My Hair

There are many ways to wear your hair! Draw three hairstyles you like to wear below, including braids, ponytails, hats, or head scarves.



My Hair Heritage

My hair is _____ just like my _____'s hair.

I like to wear my hair _____

because _____.

I'm An Animal!



Similes and **metaphors** compare one thing to another to create an image or explain an idea. While a simile uses the words "like" or "as" to compare two things, a metaphor suggests one thing is another.

Read each sentence below and circle the correct option.

I was as hungry as a hippo.

simile | metaphor

She was a cheetah at the race.

simile | metaphor

The wind howled like a wolf.

simile | metaphor

Don't be a chicken, you can do it!

simile | metaphor

He's a monkey on the jungle gym.

simile | metaphor

Draw a picture for each animal metaphor!



It's raining cats and dogs!



He was a pig at dinner.



The classroom was a zoo.

Fill in each blank with an animal to make your own metaphor!

I have the mind of a _____ and the heart of a _____.

Imagine the Sanza

The sanza is an instrument played across Africa. Known by some as a thumb piano, and by others as a mbira, likembe, kalimba, or gongoba, the instrument features a small keyboard of metal strips that are attached to a resonating box.



Listen to **Bikilou** (Track 2) and **Sala ye mwana** (Track 22).



Draw what you think the sanza looks like based on how it sounds.



Use the description above for clues!



Spotlight on _____

Pick a country from **Songs in the Shade of the Cashew and Coconut Trees** that you would like to learn more about. Use the book and other resources to colour in the flag, draw a picture, and fill in the blanks.

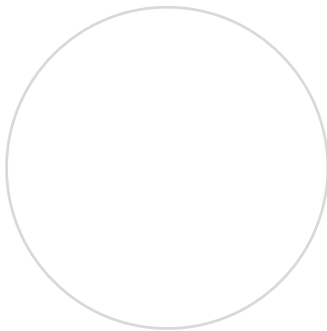


Capital: _____

Continent: _____

Population: _____

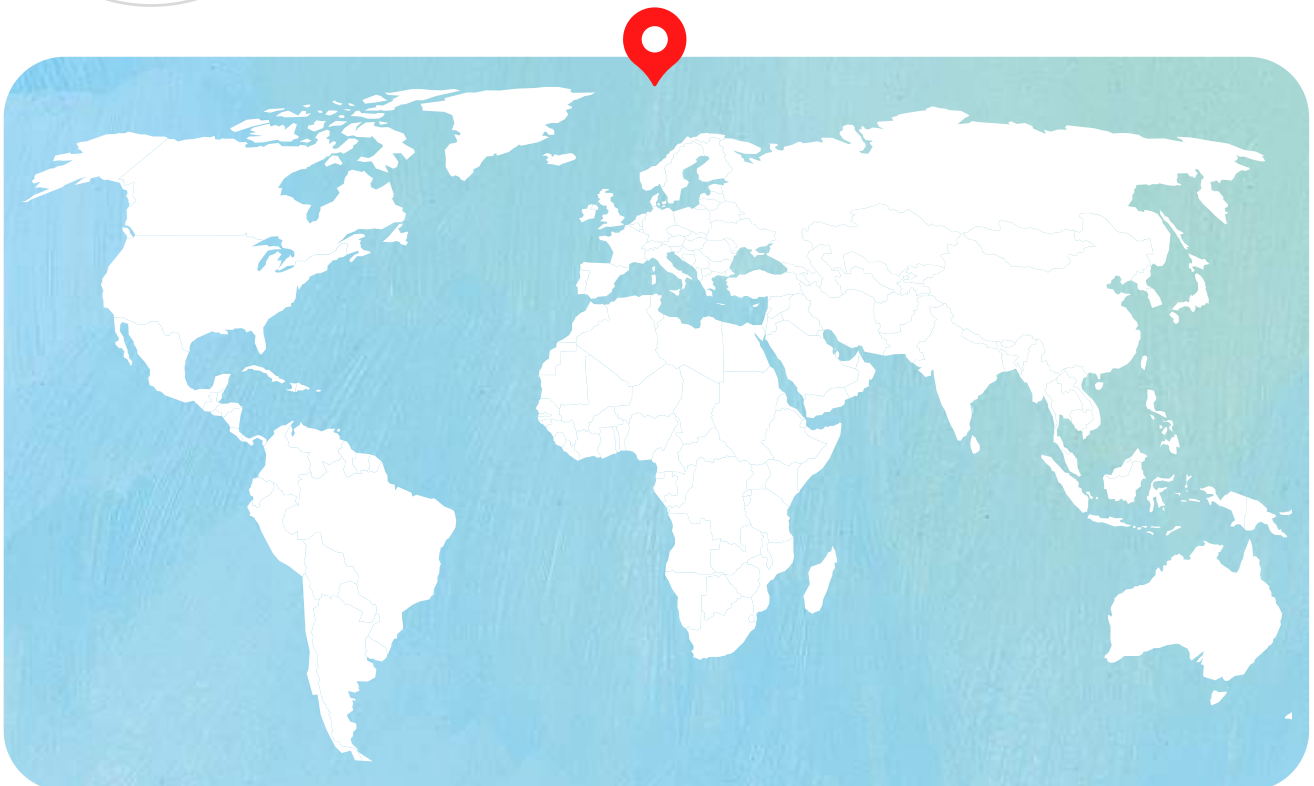
Language(s): _____



Fact #1: _____

Fact #2: _____

Fact #3: _____



Pinpoint, colour-in, or circle the country on the world map.

West Africa & Caribbean

Can you find all the countries and territories from **Songs in the Shade of the Cashew and Coconut Trees?**

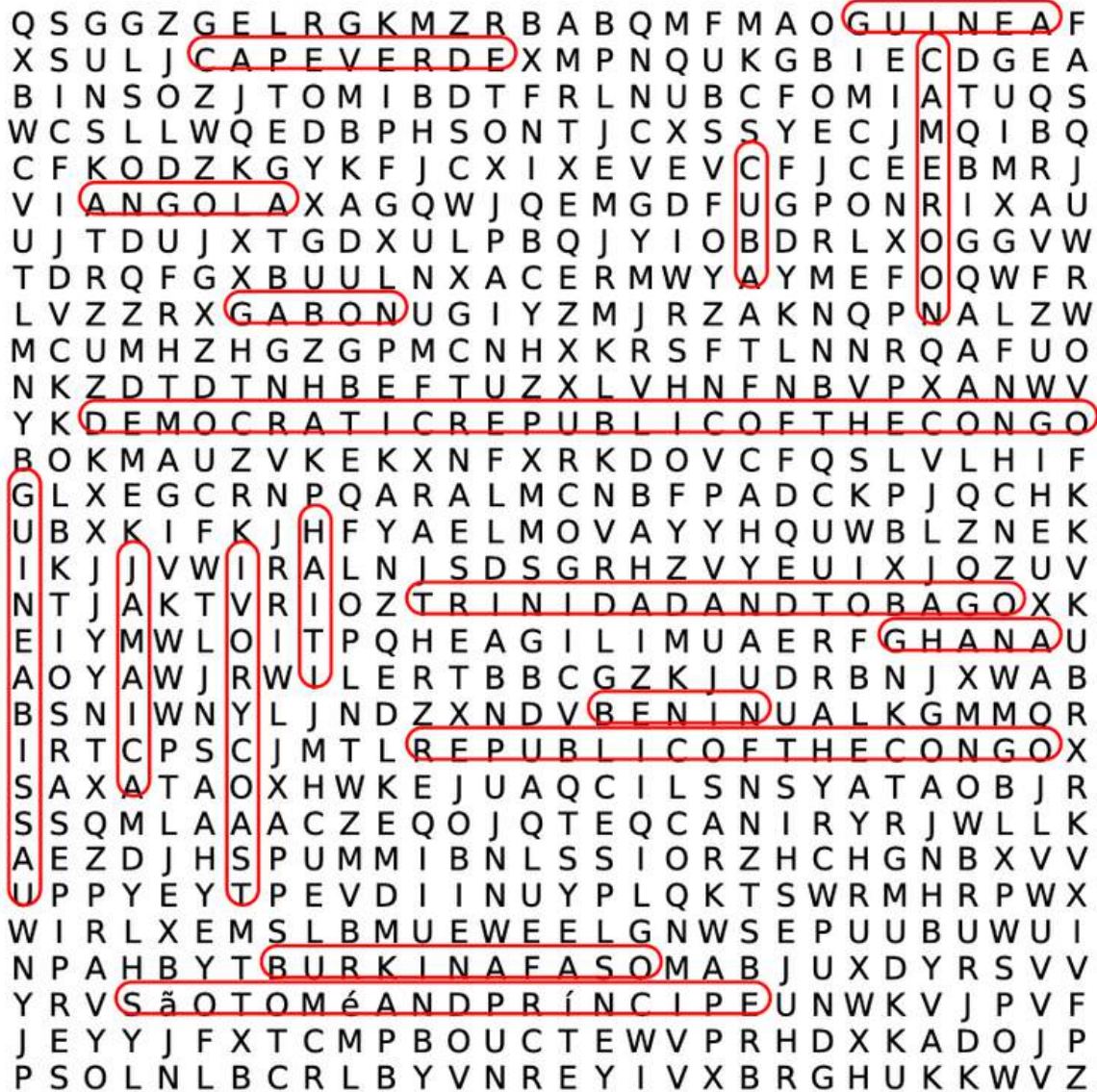
Q S G G Z G E L R G K M Z R B A B Q M F M A O G U I N E A F
 X S U L J C A P E V E R D E X M P N Q U K G B I E C D G E A
 B I N S O Z J T O M I B D T F R L N U B C F O M I A T U Q S
 W C S L L W Q E D B P H S O N T J C X S S Y E C J M Q I B Q
 C F K O D Z K G Y K F J C X I X E V E V C F J C E E B M R J
 V I A N G O L A X A G Q W J Q E M G D F U G P O N R I X A U
 U J T D U J X T G D X U L P B Q J Y I O B D R L X O G G V W
 T D R Q F G X B U U L N X A C E R M W Y A Y M E F O Q W F R
 L V Z Z R X G A B O N U G I Y Z M J R Z A K N Q P N A L Z W
 M C U M H Z H G Z G P M C N H X K R S F T L N N R Q A F U O
 N K Z D T D T N H B E F T U Z X L V H N F N B V P X A N W V
 Y K D E M O C R A T I C R E P U B L I C O F T H E C O N G O
 B O K M A U Z V K E K X N F X R K D O V C F Q S L V L H I F
 G L X E G C R N P Q A R A L M C N B F P A D C K P J Q C H K
 U B X K I F K J H F Y A E L M O V A Y Y H Q U W B L Z N E K
 I K J J V W I R A L N J S D S G R H Z V Y E U I X J Q Z U V
 N T J A K T V R I O Z T R I N I D A D A N D T O B A G O X K
 E I Y M W L O I T P Q H E A G I L I M U A E R F G H A N A U
 A O Y A W J R W I L E R T B B C G Z K J U D R B N J X W A B
 B S N I W N Y L J N D Z X N D V B E N I N U A L K G M M Q R
 I R T C P S C J M T L R E P U B L I C O F T H E C O N G O X
 S A X A T A O X H W K E J U A Q C I L S N S Y A T A O B J R
 S S Q M L A A A C Z E Q O J Q T E Q C A N I R Y R J W L L K
 A E Z D J H S P U M M I B N L S S I O R Z H C H G N B X V V
 U P P Y E Y T P E V D I I N U Y P L Q K T S W R M H R P W X
 W I R L X E M S L B M U E W E E L G N W S E P U U B U W U I
 N P A H B Y T B U R K I N A F A S O M A B J U X D Y R S V V
 Y R V S ã O T O M é A N D P R í N C I P E U N W K V J P V F
 J E Y Y J F X T C M P B O U C T E W V P R H D X K A D O J P
 P S O L N L B C R L B Y V N R E Y I V X B R G H U K K W V Z

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
|  Angola |  Ghana |  Burkina Faso |
|  Benin |  Guinea |  Democratic Republic of the Congo |
|  Cameroon |  Guinea Bissau |  São Tomé and Príncipe |
|  Cape Verde |  Haiti |  Trinidad and Tobago |
|  Cuba |  Ivory Coast |  Republic of the Congo |
|  Gabon |  Jamaica | |

ANSWER KEY

West Africa & Caribbean

Can you find all the countries and territories from "Songs in the Shade of the Cashew and Coconut Trees"?



- | | | |
|--|---|--|
|  Angola |  Ghana |  Burkina Faso |
|  Benin |  Guinea |  Democratic Republic of the Congo |
|  Cameroon |  Guinea Bissau |  São Tomé and Príncipe |
|  Cape Verde |  Haiti |  Trinidad and Tobago |
|  Cuba |  Ivory Coast |  Republic of the Congo |
|  Gabon |  Jamaica | |

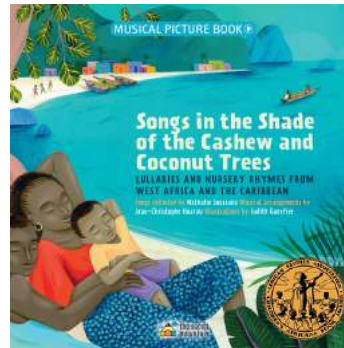


A World Music Series



Lullabies and Nursery Rhymes from East and Southern Africa

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Lullabies and Nursery Rhymes from West Africa and the Caribbean

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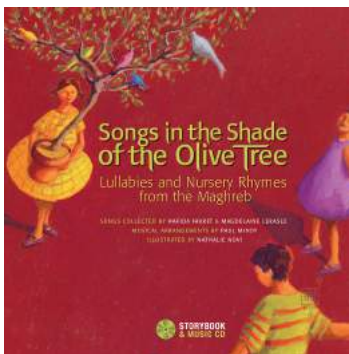
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Lullabies and Nursery Rhymes from Brazil and Portugal

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Lullabies and Nursery Rhymes from the Maghreb

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French Creole Lullabies and Nursery Rhymes

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African Lullabies and Nursery Rhymes

[Read more](#)



Jewish Lullabies and Nursery Rhymes

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