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Bi-Okoto Drum & Dance Theatre

Akwaaba— Welcome to Ghana



Classroom photo by Rich Sofranko

STUDY GUIDE

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Artists on Tour

GHANA



Ghana is the first African country south of the Sahara to achieve independence led by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in 1957. The colonial power was Britain. However, the British were not the first Europeans to arrive in Ghana. The Portuguese were the first to arrive and they named the place the Gold Coast. This was the name of the country until independence when it was changed to Ghana. The British moved the capital of Ghana from Cape Coast to Accra in 1876.

The oldest traces of sedentary habitation in Ghana date back 30,000 or 40,000 years along the coast, notably near Tema, although little is known about the human beings who lived there.

Ghana has a population of about 17.7 million and has 10 regions: the Northern, Upper West, Upper East, Volta, Ashanti, Western, Eastern, Central, Brong - Ahafo and Greater Accra. Ghana is well known for its friendly people and its well-acclaimed hospitality.



GEOGRAPHY, LAND & CLIMATE

Ghana is located on West Africa's Gulf of Guinea only a few degrees north of the Equator. It is in Western Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean between Cote D'Ivoire (known as the Ivory Coast) and Togo. Half of the country lies less than 500 ft. above sea level, and the highest point is 2,900 ft.

Ghana has 334 miles of coastline that is mostly a low, sandy shore backed by plains and scrub and intersected by several rivers and streams, most of which are navigable only by canoe. A tropical rain forest belt, broken by heavily forested hills and many streams and rivers, extends northward from the shore, near the Cote d'Ivoire frontier. This area, known as the "Ashanti," produces most of the country's cocoa, minerals, and timber. North of this belt, the country varies from 300-1,300 ft. above sea level and is covered by low bush, park like savanna, and grassy plains.

The climate is tropical. The eastern coastal belt is warm and comparatively dry; the southwest corner, hot and humid; and the north, hot and dry. There are two distinct rainy seasons in the south – May-June and August-September; in the north, the rainy seasons tend to merge. A dry, northeasterly wind – the Harmattan – blows in January and February.

The manmade Volta Lake extends from the Akosombo Dam in southeastern Ghana to the town of Yapei, 325 miles to the north. The lake generates electricity, provides inland transportation, and is a potentially valuable resource for irrigation and fish farming.



LANGUAGE

English is the official language of Ghana and is universally used in schools, but in 1962 the government selected nine Ghanaian languages, in addition to English and French, for use in educational institutions: Akan, Dagaare/Waale, Dagbani, Dangbe, Ewe, Ga, Gonja, Kasem, and Nzema.

PATRIOTIC

INFORMATION



THE FLAG

The flag of Ghana consists of red, gold and green horizontal strips with a five-pointed black star in the center of the gold stripe.

The colors:

- ♦ Red represents the blood of those who died in the country's struggle for independence
- ♦ Gold stands for the mineral wealth
- ♦ Green symbolizes the rich forest

The black star represents the lone star of African freedom.



BASIC CONVERSATION

How are you? – Wo o te sen

I'm fine – Me ho ye

Come here (to children) – Bra

Go away (to children) – Koh

Yes – Aan

No – Dabe

Please (lit. "I beg you") – Me pawocheo

What's your name? – Ye ferew sen?

My name is . . . – Ye fere me . . .

Where do you come from? – Wo fri he?

I come from . . . – Me fri . . .

Thank you – Meda ase

You're welcome – Mme enna ase

Do you speak English? (lit. "White language") – Wote Borofo anna?

I don't understand – Mnta se

I'm married – Ma ware

(Please) give me water – Ma me nsuo

I want/like . . . – Me pe . . .

I'm not well – Me nti apoh

I'm hungry – E komdeme

COAT OF ARMS



The coat of arms of Ghana consists of a shield divided into four quarters by a green St. George's cross, rimmed with gold. In the top left-hand quarter is a crossed linguist staff and ceremonial sword on a blue background, representing local administration. In the top right-hand quarter is a heraldic castle on an heraldic sea with a light blue background, representing national government. In the bottom two quarters are a cocoa tree and a mineshaft representing the wealth of the country. In the center of the green St. George cross is a gold lion, representing the continued link between Ghana and the Commonwealth (of Great Britain). Surmounting the shield is a black five-pointed star rimmed with gold, representing the lodestar of African freedom, and this star stands on the wreath of the colors red, gold and green, which again stand on the top of the shield. Under the shield will be found the motto — "Freedom and Justice." The supporters of the coat of arms are two eagles, colored gold. Around each eagle's neck hangs a black star suspended from a ribbon of Ghana's colors.

MOTTO

One people, one nation, one destiny

THE NATIONAL PLEDGE

I promise on my honour to be faithful and loyal to Ghana my motherland.

I pledge myself to the service of Ghana with all my strength and with all my heart.

I promise to hold in high esteem our heritage, won for us through the blood and toil of our fathers; and

I pledge myself in all things to uphold and defend the good name of Ghana.

So help me God.

ANTHEM

God bless our homeland Ghana,
And make our nation great and strong,
Bold to defend forever
The cause of Freedom and of Right;
Fill our hearts with true humility,
Make us cherish fearless honesty,
And help us to resist oppressors' rule
With all our will and might for evermore.
Hail to thy name, O Ghana,
To thee we make our solemn vow:
Steadfast to build together
A nation strong in Unity;
With our gifts of mind and strength of arm,
Whether night or day, in mist or storm,
In ev'ry need, whate'er the call may be,
To serve thee, O Ghana, now and evermore.
Raise high the flag of Ghana
And one with Africa advance;
Black Star of hope and honour
To all who thirst for Liberty;
Where the banner of Ghana freely flies,
May the way to freedom truly lie;
Arise, arise, O sons of Ghanaland,
And under God march on for evermore!



AGRICULTURE



FOOD CROP

Agricultural products include cassava, yams, corn, peanuts, sorghum, and rice.

CASH CROPS

Ghana is the world's third largest cocoa producer. Other crops are palm oil, coffee, cotton, tobacco, sugarcane, rubber, and kenaf (used in fiber bags). Tropical fruits are exported in small quantities.

FOREST TREES

Forests cover about one-third of Ghana's total area, with commercial forestry concentrated in the southern parts of the country. Timber was the country's third largest foreign exchange earner.

LIVESTOCK

Goats and sheep are the principal livestock reared.

FISHERIES

Fishing is important to the domestic market. Large-scale poaching by foreign vessels has severely depleted fish stocks in Ghana's 200-nautical-mile maritime Exclusive Economic Zone, causing major government concern. The most affected stocks are sea bottom-feeding fish.

RESOURCES

Ghana has a large amount of natural resources such as gold, timber, industrial diamonds, bauxite, manganese, fish, and rubber.

CURRENCY

The cedi is the official unit of currency in Ghana. One cedi is divided into hundred pesewas. Ghana's currency the cedi comes as notes and coins in denominations issued by the Bank of Ghana. The notes are ₵500, ₵1000, ₵2000 ₵5000 and coins are ₵5, ₵10, ₵20, ₵50, ₵100, ₵500. Travelers to Ghana are allowed by law to bring with them any amount of foreign exchange into the country, which can be changed to cedis in their banks or the Forex Bureaus.

ONE THOUSAND CEDI NOTE

Front



Back



ECOMONIC HISTORY

Ghana is one of the most developed countries in tropical Africa. The GNP per capita is above average for western Africa. Ghana's economy is based mainly on agriculture and mining. Agriculture accounts for nearly half GDP and employs over 50 percent of the work force. Manufacturing is dominated by import-substitution industries producing food products, beverages, tobacco, textiles, timber and wood products, refined petroleum, vehicles, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, cement, and metals. Electricity is generated almost entirely from hydroelectric plants, mainly the Akosombo Dam on the Volta River. Trade, transportation, finances, public administration, and services account for nearly two-fifths of the GDP and employ more than one-quarter of the work force. Both domestic and international flights are available at the Kotoka International Airport in Accra.

QUICK FACTS

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP): In 1992 GDP was US\$6.1 billion; per capita income US\$380.

BUDGET: In 1993 about ₦667 billion, including ₦119 billion deficit (roughly US\$1.1 billion and US\$187 million, respectively, based on mid-1993 exchange rate)

EXTERNAL DEBT: US\$4.6 billion in 1993

INDUSTRY: In 1960s largest manufacturing industries included aluminum, saw mills and timber processing, cocoa processing, breweries, cement, oil refining, textiles, and vehicle assembly. Factory output fell as low as 21 percent of capacity by 1982 but recovered to average of 40 percent in 1989. In early 1990s, many textile, pharmaceutical, leather, and electronics factories reportedly closed because of economic liberalization and foreign competition.

MINING: Major minerals are gold, bauxite, manganese, and diamonds. Mineral production fell precipitously during 1970s, recovered during 1980s. Minerals were the second highest export earner in early 1990s. Gold is the most important mineral, long associated with ancient and contemporary Ghana. Production in 1992 was more than 1 million fine ounces and rising, surpassing cocoa as chief export earner. One of the world's leading producers of manganese, but by the early 1990s production was less than half mid-1970s output. Diamonds were mostly industrial grade; 1992 production was 694,000 carats and increasing. Large bauxite reserves but little was exploited.

ENERGY: There are commercial quantities of petroleum offshore, but output was negligible in early 1990s. Hydroelectric generating capacity is nearly 1.2 megawatts, mostly at Akosombo Dam on Volta River; 60 percent is consumed by Volta Aluminum Company, remainder consumed domestically or sold to Togo and Benin. Significant expansion is planned. The Northern regions are being connected to the national power grid.

EDUCATION

The country's education system at the beginning of the 1993-94 academic year comprised primary schools, junior secondary schools, senior secondary schools, polytechnic (technical and vocational) institutions, teacher training colleges, and university-level institutions.

1.8 million pupils were attending more than 9,300 primary schools; 609,000 students were enrolled in about 5,200 junior secondary schools; and 200,000 students were enrolled in some 250 senior secondary schools.


Education is free, although students have recently begun to pay textbook fees. The Education Act of 1960 foresaw universal education, but the constraints of economic underdevelopment meant that by the early 1990s this goal had not been realized. On the primary level, instruction is conducted in the local vernacular, although English is taught as a second language. Beyond primary school, however, English is the medium of instruction in an education system that owes much to British models.

Before the introduction of reforms in the mid-1980s, students at what was then the middle-school level took either the Middle School Leaving Certificate Examination and terminated their studies, or, at any time from seventh to tenth grade, the Common Entrance Examination, which admitted them to secondary or technical study. With the traditional six years of primary education, four years of middle schooling, and a seven-year secondary education (five years of preparation toward the Ordinary Level Certificate and two years of Advanced Level training) before entering degree granting institutions, the average age of the first-year university student in Ghana was often about twenty-five.

Despite a number of proposals for educational reform, until mid-1980 the education system continued to place emphasis on traditional academic studies. Proponents of reform argued that the country's development needs required an education system that, beginning at the middle-school level, placed equal emphasis on training students in vocational and technical skills. It was further suggested that reforms could contribute to reducing the number of students who dropped out of school for lack of interest in traditional academic studies.

Partly as a result of earlier proposals for reform and partly in keeping with the government's economic reform program, fundamental change in the educational structure of the country was undertaken in the mid-1980s. The overall goals were to make curricula at all levels more relevant to the economic needs of the country, to reduce the length of pre-university instruction, and to improve the quality of teacher preparation. Increased enrollment in primary schools and a reduction in the rate of illiteracy were also to be pursued. The reforms were to be implemented in two phases: those for primary and middle schools were to be introduced in 1987-89, and those for secondary schools and the universities, in 1990-1993.

The much discussed changes in education became a reality in 1987 when all seventh-level students, who otherwise would have entered the traditional first year of middle school, were instead admitted into new junior secondary schools (JSS) to begin a three-year combined training program in vocational, technical, and academic studies. The JSS system was a radical change in the structure



of education in the country. It replaced the four-year middle school and the first three years of the traditional five-year secondary school system. After three years at the JSS, three years further training would be available in senior secondary schools (SSS), after which students could enter polytechnic institutions or the universities.

Pioneers in the JSS system sat for the first Basic Certificate of Education Examination in 1990. In this same year, seniors of the old middle-school system took the last Middle School Leaving Certificate Examination. Supporters of the JSS argued that the system would attract more students into technical, vocational, business, and agricultural institutions. It was also suggested that those students who did not gain admission into the SSS would be better equipped to enter the job market. Results of the first SSS certificate examination, announced in May 1994, however, showed that only 3.9 percent of students received passing marks. This poor showing was attributed to lack of textbooks, equipment, and trained teachers, and to inadequate time to prepare for the examination. Despite loud protests from students and parents, reform of the education system remained on course.

In addition to revamping middle-school education, changes were also introduced on all other educational levels. Fees for textbooks and supplies were instituted, primary curricula were revised, and food and housing subsidies were reduced or eliminated in secondary schools and the universities. In the early 1990s, however, the government appeared to be moving slowly in implementing further proposed reforms, such as new curricula in secondary schools and restructuring of the universities.

In the early 1990s, higher education was available at three institutions – the University of Ghana (located principally at Legon outside Accra), founded in 1948 as the University College of the Gold Coast; the University of Science and Technology at Kumasi, opened officially in 1952 as the Kumasi College of Technology; and the University of Cape Coast at Cape Coast, founded in 1961.

ACTIVITIES

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS

1. Circle the capital of Ghana on a map. Where is it located?

2. What gulf of water borders Ghana? _____

3. What are the colors of the Ghanaian flag? _____
What do the colors represent? _____

4. What is the official language of Ghana? _____
Can you name another major language? _____

5. Name two of the major ethnic groups in Ghana. _____

6. What is the population of Ghana? _____

7. List one type of food crop from the packet. _____

8. Ghana is the world's 3rd largest producer of what resource? _____

9. What type of currency (money) does Ghana use? US Dollars or Cedi? _____

10. What is the overall climate like in Ghana? _____

12. The British colonized Ghana in what year? _____

13. What is Ghana's main forestry product? _____

14. Ghana was the first African country to do what? _____

15. What is Ghana's motto? _____

THINGS TO LOOK AND LISTEN FOR DURING THE PRESENTATION

1. Are the dancers improvising or telling a story through movement?
2. What is the dance about?
3. What do movements tell you?
4. What type of emotions/expressions/gestures are shown through the movement?
5. What colors are the dancers wearing?
6. What meaning does the colors have in relationship to the dance?
7. What happens when the drummer plays fast or slow?
8. Are the dancers making patterns, moving in straight lines, dancing in circles or making shapes?
9. Are the dancers moving high or low, left or right?
10. Are the dancers repeating a movement? How many times? Are all of the movements repetitious?
What is the sequence? Does the drum cue the dancers?
11. How does the dance/movement relate to you or the environment?
12. How much space is utilized?
13. How does the music make you feel?
14. Are the dancers using props?
15. Are the dancers using everyday movements/gestures to create a movement?