

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

TALES FROM AFRICAN DREAMTIME

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www.florisbooks.co.uk

Themes/issues addressed in this book

Wisdom, morality, virtue, honesty, greed, good versus evil, patience, cunning, deceit

Book Summary

Tales from African Dreamtime is a collection of stories and fables from many different African traditions. From Senegal in the west to Malawi in the south-east, these tales tell of how Man lost his tail, how Camel came to be, why Porcupine was called Peacemaker, and why Little Cloud was more powerful than both Sun and Wind. Over forty tales are narrated in a lively, conversational style, each one portraying the deep values of African society, at the heart of which lie simple wisdom and morality.

BEFORE READING

Group Activities

- Discussion: what is a fable? Do you know any?
- Discussion: where is Africa? How many African countries can you name? Can you find Malawi on a map of Africa?
- Discussion: do you think there are any connections between Scotland and Africa? Who was Dr David Livingstone? Why is he famous? Where did he come from?
- Discussion: what do you think children your age do in an African country like Malawi? Do they go to school? Do they have bicycles? Do they have shoes? Do they have clean water? Do they live like you?

AFTER READING

Individual Work

- Write a paragraph on the thoughts and feelings you had when you read:
 - a) The Two Brothers (p.20)
 - b) Elephant, Hippopotamus and Clever Tortoise (p.46)
 - c) The Toad and the Frog (p.62)
 - d) The Seven Bridegrooms (p.89)
- Look through the book and pick your favourite animal. Write five paragraphs on why you think this animal would make a good pet. Think about what changes you would need to make to your house if it came to live with you. Would you have to demolish a wall to get it into the house? Where would it sleep? Would it need two double beds? What would you feed it? How would you take it for a walk? Remember that it is a wild African animal!
- Who is the oldest person you know? Go to them and ask them to tell you the best story from their childhood. Write this story down and remember it. Some day you may be asked to tell a story too!

Group Activities

- Group activity: look through the various stories in the book and find one example each of: greed, cunning, betrayal, wisdom, ingenuity. Talk about these things in your group and write a paragraph on what you think the characters in the stories learned from their experience.
- Class activity and discussion: turn to the back of the book and read about The Children's Fund of Malawi on the last page. Then using the Internet, go to www.childrensfundmalawi.org and read the section on 'Facts about Malawi'. This will tell you a little bit about what children's lives are like there. Talk about their quality of life in comparison to your own. Do you think you are fortunate? Did you know that Tales from African Dreamtime will help to give some children in Malawi a better chance in life? How do you feel about that?

(continued overleaf)

THE CHILDREN'S FUND OF MALAWI

The Children's Fund of Malawi was set up in 1992 to give children in the country a better chance in life. Run by a small group of volunteers in Malawi, the fund provides food, shelter, education and healthcare. All funds raised go directly to projects. Since 2007 the fund's particular focus has been to raise money for the Chiuta Children's Village for orphans in southern Malawi.

CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS COVERED

5-14 Curriculum (Scotland)

Years: P4-P7

Listening:

Listening in Groups
Listening for Information, including instructions and directions

Reading:

Reading for Information
Reading to Reflect
Awareness of Genre

Talking:

Talking in Groups
Talking about Texts
Talking about Experiences, including feelings and opinions

Writing:

Functional
Imaginative

National Curriculum (England, Wales, Northern Ireland)

Key Stage 2

English: Reading

Reading Strategies
Response to Texts, including analysing and evaluating

Reading for Information

National Literacy Strategy:

Text-Level Reading

Text-Level Writing

Vocabulary

- Group activity: proverbs and old sayings. At the end of the tale on page 54 it states 'Ninety-nine lies may help you, but the hundredth will give you away'. What do you think this means? Compile a list of ten old sayings and write down what you think they mean. Here's one to start you off: 'Time and tide wait for no man'.
- Class (school!) activity: if you are not already twinned with a school in Malawi, find out how you can become twinned with one. If you are, then create the following: a Book of Dreams for Malawi, in which each pupil writes down what he or she wishes or dreams for the future of Malawi's children on a separate page. Write a little bit about yourself – your name and age, and what your favourite thing is. Decorate your page and draw a picture of yourself on it too. When you are doing this, remember how different your life is to the life of a Malawian child, and keep your favourite things simple – a Malawian child may not know what a Nintendo DS is! Send your book to your twinned school when you have finished. Create suitable a cover for it – perhaps with a Scotland/Africa theme. Can you make it as pretty as the cover of Tales from African Dreamtime?

Resources: www.childrensfundmalawi.org, www.scotland-malawipartnership.org, www.ideas-forum.org.uk

Vocabulary

- Check you know what the following words mean (page numbers of examples in brackets):

agile (89)	boundary (49)	garment (20)	prosperity (69)	suitor (43, 63)	vine (68, 90)
alternate (33)	delectable (17)	hoe (29)	protrude (21)	torrential (55)	virtue (7)
amulet (52)	ebony (89)	menial (90)	renew (81)	transfixed (50)	wilderness (44)
barren (77)	eloquent (17)	plumage (17)	resonate (9)	transition (9)	
bellow (82)	emphasise (9)	preen (90)	speculation (50)	treachery (21)	