Dispelling Stereotypes about Ancient Senegal and Sundiata
Lesson plan written by Kim Freeman

Overview Stereotypes alter people's perception about a race, culture, or a group of people. Senegal is a rich, diverse, and a vibrant country. Awareness and facts dispel the misinformation and the falsehoods about Senegal. In this lesson, students will learn about common stereotypes about Africa and the definition of stereotypes. Students will learn about the origins of Ancient Senegal and the importance of the Sundiata story to Senegalese culture.

Grade level 2-5

Suggested time 2, 45-minute lessons

Essential Questions
> Whom do we believe and why?
> How do stereotypes influence how we view groups or individuals?
> Why should we study other cultures?

Key Concepts and Vocabulary
Stereotypes perceived ideas or judgements about people based on their characteristics.   **Civilization** any complex society characterized by the development of a state, social stratification, urbanization, and symbolic system beyond natural spoken language.   **Senegal** a country in West Africa.   **Sundiata** the legendary Mali King who united ancient Senegal. Scholars disagree about whether or not he was a real person.   **Historical figure** a person from the past who has made a significant and lasting impact on society both during their time and/or in the present

Standard Alignment with NC Standards
(while the standards listed below are for grade 2, they can be altered as needed for grades 3-5)

Performance Based Objective: Students will be able to define and recognize stereotypes. Students will learn about the common stereotypes about Africa. Students will learn about the history of Senegal and the importance of Sundiata.

2.C.1.1 Explain how artistic expressions of diverse cultures contribute to the community (stories, art, music, food, etc.).   2.C.1.2 Recognize the key historical figures and events that are associated with various cultural traditions.   2.H.1.2 Identify contributions of historical figures (community, state, nation and world) through various genres.

2.C&G.1.2 Explain how governments establish order, provide security and create laws to manage conflict.

2.H.1.3 Compare various interpretations of the same time period using evidence such as photographs and interviews.

Lesson 1: Dispelling Myths and Stereotypes about Africa

Brief Overview This lesson will explain the key terms stereotypes and myths for students. Students will share and learn about common myths and stereotypes about Africa.

Preparation This lesson explores the vocabulary *stereotypes* and *myths* to help students understand that generalized hurtful words or thoughts against a group of people can distort an individual's point of view. It is important to discuss the meaning of these words with explicit instruction to open a dialogue about diversity and inclusion of people. The teacher will use a pre-made T- anchor chart for the lesson. See the example below in Lesson 1. The Teaching Tips Section will provide the background information necessary to instruct the lesson.

Materials
1. Google Slides to display during the lesson.
2. Poster paper or large whiteboard, dry-erase markers
3. Optional: 1 subject notebooks set for each student (for use throughout the unit-- teachers may choose to use other media and technology to record the required information for each assignment)
4. Anchor T-chart labeled Stereotypes on one side and the other side labeled Facts about Africa (prepare prior to lesson)

Example of anchor chart	
Stereotypes	**Facts about Senegal**

Procedures

Before the lesson put the students in assigned pairs or groups. Display the premade T-chart and the Google slides for Unit 1 during the whole group discussion and lesson. The students will need their notebooks to record their thoughts during the lesson.

1. Introduce the lesson about myths and stereotypes. Ask the 3 students to share what they know about Africa. Ask the students: "What do you know about Africa?" Record their answers on poster paper or white board.
2. Explain what the words myths and stereotypes mean (slide 4).
3. Tell the students that they will watch a video about Senegal (slide 5).
4. Once the video finishes, write an example for one of the writing stems (slide 6).
5. Model completing a writing stem on the board: "One important fact is that the Griot is a cultural keeper in their country."
6. Using the teacher's model as a guide, students will complete the sentence stems in their notebooks.
7. Ask students to copy the T-chart into their notebooks.
8. Model filling out the T-chart-- stereotype: "All Africans live in huts"; fact: "Africa is a land of diverse people and cultures."
9. Students have 5 minutes to complete their own T-chart.
10. THINK|PAIR|SHARE: The students will turn to their partners and discuss their observations with each other.

Lesson 2: Introduction to Ancient Senegal Civilization/Griot

Overview This lesson provides an integrated social studies and reading unit to front-load background knowledge for later lessons. The content introduces the beginnings of Senegalese culture, the griot, and Sundiata, the legendary king of Mali.

Materials

1. Google Slides to display during the lesson
2. Poster paper or large whiteboard, dry-erase markers.
3. 1 subject notebooks for each student (for use throughout the four units-- notebooks are optional and teachers may choose to use other media and technology to record the required information for each assignment)
4. Anchor T-chart labeled Griot on one side and the other side labeled Sundiata (prepare prior to lesson)

Example of anchor chart	
Griot	**Sundiata**

Procedures
This lesson connects to the previous lesson and uses the same [Google slides](#). Put the students in the same preassigned groups and pairs from the previous lesson.

1. Review the previous lesson by asking students what the vocabulary words "myth" and "stereotype" mean.
2. Review the poster from the previous lesson. Give the students two minutes to share their thoughts again from the T-Charts in their notebooks.
    a. THINK|PAIR|SHARE: Students will use the writing stems from Day 1 to review what they learned about the previous lesson.
3. Introduce the new anchor chart and present the purpose for the lesson
    b. "Today we will learn about 2 important aspects of Senegalese culture, Griots and Sundiata. Griots are African storytellers, and Sundiata is the legendary king who united Mali, part of which became Modern-day Senegal."
4. Do you know what a Griot is? (Slide 6)
    a. A griot is a historian, musician, poet and praise singer from Western Africa.
    b. We might even call them teachers or advisors because they educate people about the past, give them lessons for the present situation and have even advised very important kings like Mansa Musa of the Empire of Mali.
    c. Most parts of West Africa have professional history tellers and musicians but they are called by other names.
    d. The one thing all these historians have in common is that they memorize these histories and speak and perform them.
    e. This type of history is called oral history, it relies on memory. Griots are descendants of the Empire of Ghana and Mali.
5. Show the video clips on Slides 7, 8, and 9. Students may have trouble understanding the Griot's accent and benefit from translation from you.
6. Griots are important cultural gatekeepers in Senegal. Griots use music to tell the history of Senegal, including the story of Sundiata and the Mali kingdom.
7. Show the videos on slides 10 and 11.
8. Introduce the new anchor chart and present the purpose for the lesson and have students turn to the next clean page in their notebooks and copy the T-chart into their notebooks.
9. Allow students time to fill out their T-chart.
10. Return to the sentence stems on slide 5. Allow students time to complete the stems in their notebooks.
11. THINK|PAIR|SHARE: Have students turn to their partners and discuss their ideas with each other.
12. The teacher will close the activity by asking student volunteers to share their recorded thoughts on the class anchor chart.

Optional Extension
Create your own passport to Senegal

Materials
1. Google Earth Website
2. Passport PDF

Procedures
- Select five famous sites in Senegal to explore with students.
  - In Google Earth, click on the picture of Dakar on the top right, then scroll down and click on Points of Interests.
- Explore the five points of interest with the class.
- Ask students to select two places to draw and write in their passports.