

# Kpanlogo: A Celebration Through Dance

## Overview:

Cultures around the world have their own unique way of celebrating at social gatherings. This lesson focuses on the Ghanaian style of drumming and dance called Kpanlogo and how it gained its popularity. Students and teachers will explore dance as a form of expression that evolves throughout time and will discuss how young people drive the trends of dance in Ghana, the United States, and the world. This lesson is designed to help students make connections to their own traditions and see the influence of the youth in society.

## Grades:

3rd -5th grade

## Intended Content Area:

General Music

## Essential Questions:

- What purpose or function does music and dance have in social gatherings?
- How are cultural values represented through music and dance?
- How does music and dance change over time?
- How does the youth influence the trends in music and dance?

## Standard Alignment with NC Standards:

(while the standards listed below are for grade 3, you may adapt as needed for grades 4 and 5)

<b>Performance Based Objective-</b> Students will be able to
MU:Cr1.1.5a Improvise rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic ideas, and explain connection to specific purpose and context (such as social, cultural, and historical).
MU:Cn11.0.3a Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.
MU:Re7.2.4a Demonstrate and explain how responses to music are informed by the structure, the use of the elements of music, and context (such as social and cultural).

Learning Intention		Success Criteria
<b>“I am learning...”</b> About dance trends in Ghana and the United States	<b>“I am learning it because...”</b> Learning about others helps me learn about	<b>“I know I have learned it because I can...”</b> Perform a simplified drum and dance routine in the

	myself	style of the Kpanlogo
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## Materials:

1. [Google Slides](#)
1. Spotify, youtube, or other music streaming service
2. [Kpanlogo Percussion Rhythm Rehearsal Audio](#)
3. Cowbell or agogo bell
4. Drums
5. Shekere, shakers, or cabasas
6. An open space to dance

## Duration:

3-4 days (50 minutes lesson each)

\*This lesson may take longer depending on the level and needs of your students

## Preparation:

Key Concepts and Vocabulary for this unit
<p><b>Key Concepts:</b>            Connection - "How is it connected to other things?"            Perspective - "What are the points of view?"</p> <p><b>Enduring Understandings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Values, beliefs, and events contribute to a place's identity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Musical expressions reflect the culture and history of communities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Citizens contributions influence the communities in which they live</li> </ul>

## Procedure:

### Day 1-Introduction & Percussion

- As students enter the classroom and take their seats, play the song Celebration by Kool & The Gang on Spotify or other music playing source.
  - You can also find the song on [youtube](#)
- Present the Google Slides Presentation on the class TV or board
- Encourage students to think about ways that they celebrate with their families and communities.
  - What role does music play in these celebrations and gatherings?
  - Have you been to a family reunion or cookout where there was group dancing? What about a wedding or party?
  - What dances do you know? (teacher provides examples such as the Electric Slide, Cupid Shuffle, Cha Cha Slide, etc.)
- Introduce the idea that people around the world have different ways of

celebrating.

- Show the video of the Sunkwa Music & Dance Academy found in the Google Slides presentation
  - Ask students what part of the world they think the video example is from.
- Show the Ghanaian flag
- Tell the students that they will be learning specifically about a celebratory dance from Ghana called: Kpanlogo.
- Locate Accra, Ghana on the world map using [Google Earth](#)
- Present the performance based objectives and learning intentions to students
- Discuss the Kpanlogo dance and drumming, where it comes from, and what instruments are used
  - The “K” sound in the word Kpanlogo is silent and the word is pronounced like "PAHN-loh-goh"
  - Show a picture of the Kpanlogo drum from the Google Slides Presentation. Mention to students that these drums may be intricately carved and decorated. Ask the students if they can name any other types of drums similarly shaped to these such as the Latin American conga drum.
  - Explain the history of the Kpanlogo and how it was created in celebration of Ghana gaining independence
  - Explain that it is traditionally performed with three large Kpanlogo drums and show picture examples
  - Show pictures of other common instruments used such as the cabassa/shekere (gourd with beads) and a Gankogui (metal bell like a two toned cowbell or agogo bell)
  - Kpanlogo is performed in a call and response form where the main drummer is the call (orally taught)
- Kpanlogo, like many dances around the world, has many variations to it. Show students another example of Kpanlogo in videos from Google Slides Presentation and ask them:
  - What do you see?
  - What do you hear?
  - What do you wonder?
  - What differences or similarities do you see between the various Kpanlogo dances you've seen so far?
- Say: “Today we are going to learn an example of basic rhythm patterns/ostinati that are found in Kpanlogo drumming which may be heard in various Ghanaian celebrations. Remember, there may be other variations of this rhythm as change and improvise the rhythm over time.”
- Guide students through playing ostinati rhythms on instruments in the style of the Kpanlogo
  - Explain to the students that music and rhythm is traditionally learned orally and that sometimes there are nonsense syllables that are used to represent the sounds of the drum when learning how to play- \*listen to the [Kpanlogo Percussion Rhythm Rehearsal Audio](#) for guidance if needed
  - Have the students echo the syllables of the main drum part while patching

the rhythm on their bodies with alternating hands

- Once the students have mastered the rhythm by saying it, then patching it on body percussion, teach them about each of the different sounds on the drum (bass, tone, and slap)
- Demonstrate for the students that the bass is the lowest or deepest sound played with the palm of their hand in the center of the drum. The tone is played near the rim of the drum with the tips of their fingers and the slap is played with a relaxed hand striking the rim with the tips of the fingers-

\*\*consider using the following videos for reference since the conga drum is the most common drum found in most American music classrooms and is similar to the Kpanlogo drum

▶ Conga : How to Play the Bass Tone : Kalani

▶ Conga : How to Play the Slap Tone : Kalani

- Rehearse the rhythms slowly and separately building confidence and accuracy before increasing the tempo and layering in other ostinati patterns

Drum Support Rhythm 1: (written phonetically for students to match sounds on the drum)

■	“Pay-tay	Pay-tay	GOON	pa”
	(tone tone	tone tone	bass	slap)
	Ti-ti	Ti-ti	Ta	Ta
	(1&	2&	3	4)
	“Pay	Pay-tay	GOON	pa”
	(tone	tone tone	bass	slap)
	Ta	Ti-ti	Ta	Ta
	(1	2 &	3	4)

\*\*Another idea is to have students use words to help them remember their rhythm such as: “We can play Kpanlogo, we play Kpanlogo”

Bell Rhythm:

Low	low		low		high	high
Ta-i		Shh	ti	Shh	ti	Ta
(1e-a		2	&	3	&	4)

\*\*This rhythm is often found in African American music, Afro-Cuban *son*, and Puerto Rican *salsa*. Teachers may choose to have students listen for the rhythm in the [Bo Diddley Beat](#) and in the “calves” of the following [song](#) (sounds like the Kpanlogo rhythm). This rhythmic pattern originated in Africa and teachers may choose to explore with students the trans-Atlantic timeline of how this particular pattern spread from Africa to the Americas and back as Africans grew fond of Cuban and Caribbean music in the mid-20th century.

Shekere Rhythm:

Maintain an eighth note steady beat

(Ti-ti      Ti-ti      Ti-ti      Ti-ti)

\*\*May use shakers or cabassa if a shekere is not available

### Hand Clapping Rhythm:

<b>Clap</b>	(right palm up)	(left palm up)	<b>Clap</b>
Ta	Shh	Shh	Ta
(1	Rest	Rest	4)

- Put students into small groups to take turns rotating through different rhythm parts
  - The teacher (or a student with a strong sense of pulse) may be the beat keeper
  - Consider using a designated “call” rhythm to signal the students for changes in the music (example: to start and stop or rotate to new station)
- Have students practice performing the percussion instruments along with this [song](#)
- After playing the instruments, the teacher will now tell the students that the whole class will focus on learning basic dance movements in the next lesson of this unit

### Day 2- Movement & Song

- Review Kpanlogo and what it means
  - Say: “Remember last time when we learned an example of basic rhythm patterns/ostinati that are found in Kpanlogo drumming? Today we will rehearse our rhythms again before adding dance moves that may be performed with these rhythmic patterns. We will discuss how the dance moves follow what can be heard in the drum rhythms.”
- Rehearse ostinati patterns learned in the last lesson with the students
- [Watch video](#)
  - What do you notice?
    - The dancers follow the drummer and move in response to the main drum (non vocal call & response)
    - Listen for the call in the drum to know when to change the dance movements
    - Movements match the drum beats
- Explain to students how the dance has grown in popularity across the country of Ghana but also around the world.
  - The dance, while it is based on some traditional movements, is ever evolving and changing with the people.

**\*\*Note:** See the teacher reference [video](#) for the basic movements below. I adapted these movements for the classroom and therefore may not be referencing dance steps with traditional or technical terms. I was guided by a friend who studied under Bernard Woma (Master Drummer of the Ghanaian National Dance Troupe)-there are some of his youtube videos cited in the sources at the end of this unit

- **Basic Movements**

- March in place to the beat while clapping to the rhythm (same clapping pattern as before)- clap on beats 1 & 4 while alternating hands punch the air on the rests (can also do palms up motion)
  - Step the right heel to the side with the toes up in the air while the right hand reaches down towards the toes.
    - Alternating with left and right (rolling hands in between each side)- when going to the left have the left hand pointed into the air rather than to the toes (see video for reference)
  - Swim arms out as if doing a breaststroke and bring palms up in front of chest
  - Travel 4 steps to the right sweeping the right arm up in the air, then travel 4 steps to the left sweeping the left arm in the air
  - March forward alternating a bounce of one hand under each elbow
  - Swim hands out before pushing the forward with hands while hopping backwards
  - Hop forwards while pulling invisible rope
  - Tap right knee and step left foot backwards (doing this motion in a circle)
- After introducing each movement, practice the dance steps again with the [video](#)
- Mention the song lyrics heard in the video and allow students to practice it in a call and response form
  - For teacher reference -Song: “Baba Baba Shi Ba ba O”  
 \*\*\*The above is a phonetic spelling. The song is usually taught by rote and I haven’t found a transcription of the words.
  - See the following video of Master Drummer Bernard Woma teaching the song and its meaning in a more traditional way  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&si=OY2i\\_mtOKWIMemuN&v=WiPIaHyp2EQ&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&si=OY2i_mtOKWIMemuN&v=WiPIaHyp2EQ&feature=youtu.be)
- Discuss the purpose of the song and talk about the importance of unity and community in African cultures.
  - Our singing and playing together are a form of expression that also provides spiritual connection with the other performers.
  - An example is the idea of Ubuntu (an ancient South African proverb meaning humanity towards others: “I am because you are”). We need each other. “No man is an island”. Discuss being “Somebody’s somebody” and what that means. We are all someone important.
  - How might this idea relate to what we are doing in music class?
  - How do ensembles work together? We need each other to perform the song. No part is more important than the other.
  - Sing and perform together with respect.

- Divide the class into two groups: instrumentalists and dancers
- Play the [video](#) a third time allowing the students to perform both the dance and instruments along with it.

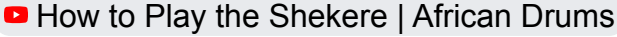
### Days 3 & 4- Conclusion

- Review and practice the performance of dance, song, and percussion from the previous lessons
- Practice the Kpanlogo dance movements to this [song](#) but this time, allow the students to be creative and come up with their own alternative movements demonstrating how every version of the Kpanlogo is different and unique to the performers.
  - The teacher may choose to have students work as a whole class to choreograph their dance or work in small groups.
  - Provide the students with choices of movements if they need encouragement. They can also take movements they already know and adapt them for the music.
- Allow students time to rehearse and perform their own versions of the Kpanlogo.
- Discuss how the youth influences society through music and dance. Talk about how trends are ever changing
  - Today's popular African music is a mixture of traditional and contemporary sounds
- Showcase the modern trends with examples (Tik tok and social media)- examples are embedded in the Google Slides presentation
  - How do popular trends influence who we are and shape our behavior as individuals? How does it impact the community at large?
  - How does the youth influence the trends in music and dance and how does it change over time?
  - How might we use social media for a positive change in our society through dance?
- Share with the students examples of how Ghanaian trends influence the world (Azonto Dance and Akwaaba)

### **Extensions:**

- Read the book [“The Electric Slide & Kai”](#) at the beginning of the unit to make connections to how Americans celebrate at weddings with group dance
- An optional Drum Support Rhythm 2 that may be layered with the bass drum part mentioned earlier in this lesson:
  - **“BOOM BOOM bidi-bidi bi”**  
Ta Ta Tika Tika Ta

(1            2            3-e-&a            4)

- The video provides a great example of how syllables can be used to teach the drum sounds with body percussion before transferring to the drums:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BO3JPDRQqXM>
- In addition, you may consider showing the example of how to play the shekere if you have access to one in your classroom:  

- If you have access to a Quaver Music Subscription, check out the African Dance Examples. There is a video called Akwaaba Traditional Drum & Dance

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