

# **Adinkra Sketchbook Covers: Art**

Lesson Plan by Tara Wilson

**Overview:** Students will learn about the Ghanaian art form Adinkra, whose meanings and symbolism offers insight into Ghana's cultures. They will also be introduced to a second Ghanaian art form, Kente cloth, through its history, color significance, and patterns. Using pronged folders that pages can be added to, students will create an original sketchbook cover using an Adinkra symbol as the main compositional element. They will intertwine lines and meaningful colors inspired by Kente cloth to complement their subject. This lesson is also a great way to review primary and secondary colors, as well as the elements and principles of art. To combine art and literacy, students will complete an "Adinkra and Kente Cloth Reflection Sheet" for understanding.

## **Essential Questions:**

- What is the significance of Adinkra symbols?
- What is the history and meaningfulness of Kente Cloth?
- What elements and principles of art can I find in both Adinkra symbols and Kente cloth?
- How are symbols used to communicate feelings and ideas?
- How can I creatively use Adinkra symbols and Kente cloth patterns to make a sketchbook cover that represents me as an artist?

**Grade Levels:** 3-5

**Content Area:** Visual Art

## **Standard Alignment with NC Standards:**

V.1 Use the language of visual arts to communicate effectively.

V.2 Apply creative and critical thinking skills to artistic expression.

V.3 Create art using a variety of tools, media, and processes, safely and appropriately.

CX.1 Understand the global, historical, societal, and cultural contexts of the visual arts.

CX.2 Understand the interdisciplinary connections and life applications of the visual arts.

CR.1 Use critical analysis to generate responses to a variety of prompts.

## **Materials:**

- Google Slide Show of Adinkra and Kente Cloth examples [Adinkra Sketchbooks Lesson](#)
- Adinkra Symbols and Kente Colors Sheet (Printable Handout Attached) [Adinkra Symbols and Kente Colors Sheet.pdf](#)
- Adinkra and Kente Cloth Reflection Sheet (Printable Handout Attached) [Reflection Sheet.pdf](#)
- Manila Top Tab Fastener/Pronged Folders (that pages can be added to)
- Pencils, Pens
- Sharpies
- Washable Markers, Colored Pencils, Crayons
- Paint Sticks
- Sticky Notes

## **Suggested Length of Time**

Three, 40- or 45-minute sessions

## **Procedures:**

### **Day 1: Teacher will:**

- Show the Google Slide Show presentation of Adinkra symbols and Kente cloth when students arrive.
- I say, you say, “Adinkra” and “Kente Cloth.”
- Have an open class discussion asking scholars if they have ever seen clothing and symbols like this, do they know what it is, what it is used for, what part of the world it is from, do you wear it, what art words can we use to describe it.
- Allow students to find Ghana, Africa, on the world map and explain that both Adinkra symbol and Kente Cloth are significant to Ghanaian culture.
- Explain and pass out Adinkra Decoder sheets. Allow students to practice drawing the symbols, while understanding their meanings.

### **Day 2: Teacher will:**

- Review Adinkra and Kente Cloth discussion/activities from the Day 1 class session. Allow students to do a “Sticky Note Storm”. Ask students to brainstorm and think about what they learned and liked most about the lesson. Give students 3 to 5 minutes to write it down on a sticky note. Multiple sticky notes can be provided if needed. At the end, students can review each other’s responses or share out loud.
- Next, distribute Manila Top Tab Fastener/Pronged Folders.
- Explain to students that they will be creating a sketchbook cover. Scholars will select one Adinkra symbol that represents them, as their main compositional element. They will add Kente cloth-inspired lines and patterns to the background, using a variety of

colors. Encourage creativity and make it their own! (Students should be able to work for approximately 30 minutes on Day 2).

- Explain to students that the purpose of having a pronged folder is to be able to add additional pages. This is a great way to store and collaborate any Africa related information/documents that students make or learn about.

**Day 3: Teacher will:**

- Pass out Manila Top Tab Fastener/Pronged Folders that students have started on. As an opening activity, allow students to “Mingle, Pair & Share”. Students can move around the room to interact, find a partner, and share their sketchbook cover creations. Both partners can talk about the colors that they plan to use, why they selected their Adinkra symbol and what their overall artistic goal is.
- Give students most of the class period to finish designing their sketchbooks.
- Wrap up the lesson with the “Adinkra and Kente Cloth” reflection sheet. Each student should receive a sheet. This can be placed inside the completed sketchbooks.