

Return to Ghana: 2019 Year of Return

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Keywords Ghana, hiplife music, Okyeame Kwame, Year of Return, “Made in Ghana”

Overview In this lesson, students will explore and apply the concept of “return” within the contemporary and musical context of Ghana. Students will also create a poem inspired by the collective observations of the classmates in response to a musical excerpt.

Essential Questions

- What does it mean to return?
- Why do people migrate or move from one place to another?
- Can you be “made in a place” even if you’ve never been there?

Intended Grade Level 4th-5th

Intended Content Areas Social Studies

Standard Alignment with NC Standards

ELA-

RL.4.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including words that affect meaning and tone.

RI.4.2 Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

SL.4.2 Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

RL.5.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, recognizing specific word choices that contribute to meaning and tone.

SL.5.2 Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Social Studies-

I.1.7 Construct claims in response to compelling and supporting questions.

I.1.10 Construct responses to compelling questions with specific claims and information from teacher-provided sources.

Materials

- [Resource Slides for Classroom Use](#)
- Background articles and different perspectives on Ghana's Year of Return
 - ["Beyond the Year of Return: Africa and the diaspora must forge closer ties"](#)
 - ["We need to talk about Ghana's Year of Return and its politics of exclusion"](#)
 - ["The Year of Reckoning: A Return To ___?"](#)
 - ["Jacqueline Woodson on Africa, America and Slavery's Fierce Undertow"](#)
 - ["Okyeame Kwame tackles repatriation on 'Come Home'"](#)
- Paper, pencils, crayons, sticky notes

Suggested Length of Time 45 minutes

Procedures

- Looking at the first slide, what do you think "Akwaaba" means? (It is a Twi word that means "Welcome.")
- Ask students what it means **to return**.
 - (You return library books, return flight home, return a favor).
 - Every fall, you return to school. What is that like? What are the good/not so good parts of that?
 - What are some other "return" celebrations that you can think of? (College/HS homecomings, family reunions)
- In September 2018, Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo declared 2019 as the Year of Return in order to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of enslaved Africans in America. As part of the Year of Return, people of African descent, "the Global African Family," were invited and encouraged to return to Africa, specifically Ghana. Over 1 million tourists visited Ghana in 2019 and many went to historic sites to learn about or reflect on the slave trade, visited cultural centers, participated in trade conferences, and had fun celebrating Ghana's culture and heritage.
- Introduce students to the Ghanaian musician, Okyeame Kwame.
 - Lead students through a [SEE-THINK-WONDER protocol](#) based on this promotional image of Okyeame Kwame's 2020 song "Come Home."
 - Tell the students that they are now going to be careful listeners to part of Kwame's song "Made in Ghana."
 - Have students predict what the song will be about based on the image and title.
 - After the students listen to the clip, ask students how the song made them feel / what it made them think of / what they think the purpose of the song was.

- Have each student write three words or short phrases on sticky notes/padlet/chart paper that came to mind when they listened to the song.
- Share with students what some of Okyeame Kwame's shoutouts about Ghana actually are:
 - Kente (traditional woven cloth of the Ashanti people)
 - Banku and fufu (similar looking foods that are made from mashed up corn/cassava or cassava/plantains. This paste is made into balls and served with stews or soups.)
 - Hiplife (Ghanaian music style that fuses hip hop with highlife music)
- Give the students another opportunity to add words/observations to the sticky note/padlet/chart paper collection.
- Have all of the words clearly available to the students and instruct the students to create a poem in response to the song ***using only the brainstormed words and phrases that the class wrote.***

Optional Extension/Adaptation Activities:

- Students can write their poems either alone or in pairs.
- Encourage students to illustrate or perform or act out their poems or even turn it into a song.
- Have students write a poem or song about their hometown and things that are special about it for them in the style of "Made in Ghana."