



**When Africa  
Was Home**  
*Unit Study*

# When Africa Was Home

Book by Karen Lynn Williams

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## SOCIAL STUDIES

### Geography: Africa, North America, and other Continents

Peter's family live in Africa but return to America for a short time.

Introduce the seven continents. What is a continent? See how many continents your student can name. Using a world map, cut out the continents and make a short book. For each continent, you may want to write the countries found there or some other information about it.

Africa is one of the seven continents. It has 53 countries in it. Find it on a wall map, globe or atlas.

Locate the oceans around Africa. Point out that the island of Madagascar is part of Africa. Use a blank world map to locate Africa and color it in. You may want to print a map of Africa that has the countries on it. Find Malawi on it and color it.

North America is also one of the seven continents. You may want to find America on a map or globe and point out that there are two continents that have America on them. One is North America which is the United States of America, the country of Canada, the country of Mexico and the countries of Central America. South America is the other continent.

### Cultural Awareness

There are many differences between Africa and America. Many of these are mentioned in the book or can be seen in the pictures. How many can you spot or remember? Discuss how life in a village may differ from life in a city. Compare the village in Africa (huts with thatched roofs) to the picture of the city in America (tall buildings). Make a list of the differences or have child draw them.

Project: To help compare the differences in city life and village life, your child might like to make a replica of a skyscraper and a village hut. For the skyscraper, you might use LEGO, sugar cubes or wooden blocks. For the village hut, you might like to use brown construction paper made into the round hut and yellow pipe cleaners or string for the thatch roofs. For older students or those who are really creative, you may want to construct a diorama.

### Manners

Peter's mother tells him that in America we eat with a fork and a spoon. This is the polite way in America she tells him. What are manners? What happens when we don't use them? Discuss this with your child.

Activity Ideas- Research manners in Malawi or in Africa in general. Then research manners in America and compare them. You can make this regional as in southern manners or northern manners. Make a list of manners and draw them. Have a formal family dinner after studying manners.

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## SCIENCE

### African Animals

What kind of animals do you see in the pictures of Africa? Take notice of the giraffe in the picture of Peter walking in the snow. Make a list of the animals or draw pictures of them. Pick one to do an animal report on. Visit a zoo and look for the animals in the book. Are any of the animals native to the US?

Peter's dad mentions getting a kitten. Read books on cats. Discuss with your child that domestic cats are in the feline family with tigers and Lions. If interested, gently introduce animal classification.

### Airplanes

The book says they boarded a plane bigger than a house with hundreds of seats and buttons and switches. Does your child know what kind of plane this is? Read about passenger planes and airports. Draw a picture of a plane they think Peter may have flown in. Visit an airport or plane museum if possible.

Older children may like to research the different types of planes and their uses.

Make paper airplanes for fun.

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## ART

### Oil Wash on Board

The illustrator, Floyd Cooper, uses a method called oil wash on board. He calls it subtractive process. Mr. Cooper paints an illustration on a board using oil paint then uses a stretchy eraser to erase the paint and make a picture.

Two illustrations in the book to note are the dedication page (green hues) and the page of Peter in bed (the blanket).

If a student is old enough, try this method with oil paints. If not, draw with crayon and use eraser to get the same effect.

### Artist Study: Albert Dreher

Dreher pioneered the oil wash technique. If your student is interested, look up his paintings and compare to the illustrations Mr. Cooper created. Can your student see how the same technique was used?

### Clay

Peter and friends made dolls from wet earth from the riverbed. Use clay to mold their own creations. This can be dolls or pottery or anything else they would like. For fun, gather dirt from the yard and make wet to resemble the clay Peter might have used. You can also use air dry clay in different colors. Visit a kiln or speak to an artist that makes pottery.

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## LANGUAGE ARTS

### Vocabulary

nanny- a child's nurse or caregiver (usually someone other than the mom)  
paw-paw trees- common name for a tropical and subtropical tree and its fruit  
maize- corn  
riverbed- channel occupied by a river

mango tree- tree which grows the mango fruit which is sweet  
antelope- slender deer like animal that usually has horns  
paste- dough (there were several definitions but this fits the use in the story)  
mosquito net- a net or screen used for keeping mosquitoes out  
sugar cane- a tall grass usually grown as a source of sugar  
statue- representation of a person, thing or animal made by casting, molding or sculpture

### Language Arts- Adjectives

There are many describing words used in the book. For students who are ready, introduce the word adjective and its meaning. Look through the book for descriptions. Here is one to get you started: "They made dolls with wet earth from the riverbed." Wet describes earth. Have student create his own words to describe objects around the house or pictures from the book.

### Language: Chichewa

Peter learns to speak the Chichewa language while living in Africa. Several Chichewa words are used throughout the book such as

Mayi- mother in Chichewa

Achimwene- little brother in Chichewa

Activity: Learn some words in Chichewa for everyday things. Practice using them throughout the day. Make a book with the words in the story and their meanings. It might be fun to include the English words and pictures for each entry in your book.

### Language Arts: Italics

Show your student the words in the text of the story that are italicized. Does your student know why we use italics? If not, explain that in books or other writings, the names of books and ships are italicized. When we hand write these, we underline them.

Activity: On note cards or small slips of paper, write the names of ships or other objects that should be in italics. On another set of paper, write the same words in italics and another set of paper with the words underlined. Have your child find matches. Older students can do this by copying a passage from a book that has used italics or that the parent provides. Have child copy the passage correctly.

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## APPLIED MATH

### Time

When Peter and family fly to America they fly through the day and a night. Discuss time. Usually when we speak of a day, we talk about the hours of sunlight. Does your child know that there are 24 hours in a day? Explain that there are 12 hours for day and 12 hours for night. You may also want to discuss how many minutes in an hour.

Older students can research the time zones (Peter's family changes time zones while flying) or may want to research the length of time it takes to fly from Africa to America. Make a map of the world and add in the time zone divisions. With supervision, you may want to have the student view an airlines departure and arrival times for flights from your closest airport to Malawi. They may want to make a plane ticket for their trek; be sure to include a passport!

### Polls/Graphs

If your child isn't familiar with a poll explain to him that it is a questioning of persons to obtain information or opinions. Tell him that he is going to poll various friends and family members to find out where they consider home to be. Let him call friends/relatives and ask this question. Have him record each response. After he has collected the data, explain to him what a graph is. A graph is a way to visually compare the information. Help him chart the information.

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## BIBLE

### Apprehension and Anxiety

Peter is apprehensive about his move back to America. He is afraid it will not feel like home because Africa is his home. Discuss anxiety. At some point we all feel anxious over something. Tell your child about a time when you have been anxious. What did you do to help with the anxiety? Did you talk about it, pray or keep a journal? Share verses from the Bible that your child can read when he is anxious. Comment one to memory.

Here are few you might like to share: John 14:1, John 14:27, Philippians 4:6-7. Choose one of appropriate length and use as copy work. It may be helpful for your child to prepare a prayer to say when he is anxious.

### Home

Another good topic for discussion is home. Has your child heard the phrase “Home is where the heart is”? Explain to your child this simply means that no matter where you are, your home is where you make it. If your family has moved, use this to start your discussion. Does your child remember the move? If not, you might want to share how he felt at the time or how you felt. It is okay to feel anxious over a new place; discuss healthy ways to deal with anxiety. Again, the Bible verses will help.

If you have recently moved or are planning a move, try this activity. Make a When \_\_\_\_\_ was Home book. This can be as simple as your child drawing pictures or you can use photos you have taken and make a mini scrapbook. Have fun and enjoy the memories this project will bring.

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## JUST FOR FUN

### Cooking

A good way to end this unit is to have a Malawian food night. Celebrate your new knowledge of the country with recipes from Malawi. Nsima is the staple food for Malawians much like bread or pasta for other countries. It is a porridge made from corn, cassava or another starchy flour. It is used as a spoon to scoop up soups and stews.

### Nsima

1 cup ufa (cornmeal or cassava)  
2 3/4-3 cups water for each cup ufa  
butter or margarine *optional*

Use a wooden spoon to stir nsima. Heat the water in the saucepan until lukewarm. Mix a little of the ufa with the water, stirring well to make sure there are no lumps. Bring to a boil, stirring well, then lower the heat and let boil gently for a few minutes. The mixture should look like a thin transparent porridge. Sprinkle the

remaining ufa over, a little at a time, stirring continuously to avoid lumps from forming, until the desired consistency is reached. Keep stirring until the nsima is smooth and well cooked. A little butter or margarine may be stirred in at this stage. Serve in a dish accompanied by a relish such as pumpkin leaves or tabasco sauce.

### Vegetable Ndiwo

3 cups greens chopped

1 small onion chopped

1 TB oil

2 small tomatoes chopped

1 cup water

salt to taste

Sautee' onions in oil until tender. Add other ingredients, cover and simmer over medium heat until greens are tender. Serve with rice or Nsima. (see list below for common greens)

Cassava Leaves = *Ntapasya* or *Chigwada*

Sweet Potato Leaves = *Ntolilo* or *Kholowa*

Bean Leaves = *Nkwanya*

Small Bean Leaves = *Chitambe*

Pumpkin Leaves = *Mkhwani*

Chinese Cabbage = Chinese

Mustard Leaves

Rape Leaves

Kale Leaves

Cabbage

### Knitting/Sewing

Peter has a ski cap that reminds him of Africa. Learn to knit a ski cap that looks like the one in the story. Another way is use fleece and sew a cap. Remember to add the tassels. This project also lends itself to the topic of the bright colors used in African clothes.

Make small hushpuppies and dip in cocktail sauce and pretend to be eating corn paste and fish sauce just like Peter.

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## Library List

*Manners* by Aliko

*Chicken Fingers, Mac and Cheese... Why Do I Always Have to Say Please?* by Wendy Rosen and Jackie End

*Eyewitness Africa* by Yvonne Ayo

*One Big Family: Sharing Life in an African Village* by Ifeoma Onyefulu

*City Mouse, Country Mouse* retold by Alan Benjamin

*The Jet Alphabet Book* by Jerry Pallotta

*The Fantastic Cutaway Book of Flight* by Jon Richards

*Take It Apart Plane* by Chris Oxlade

*Talking with Artist Volume 2* by Pat Cummings

*The River that went to the Sky* by Mary Medicott

*The Mean Hyena: a Folktale from Malawi* by Judy Sierra

*Malawi* by Renfield Sanders

*African Animals ABC* by Philippa-Alys Browne

*The Jumbo Book of Outdoor Art* by Irene Luxbacher

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