

Fatuma's New Cloth

Book by Leslie Bulion

Unit study written by Mary Machado

Social Studies -- Geography

Which countries are considered East Africa? (Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania). Your student may want to make maps and flags for each country in East Africa. What is the primary language of this region and these countries? (Swahili).

Language Arts -- Proverbs

Discuss proverbs-- what are they and how are they used? Share common proverbs and discuss or explain their meanings.

Compare the English proverb, "Don't judge a book by its cover" with the Swahili saying on the Kanga cloth from the book "Usihadaike na rangi tamu ya chai sukari" ("Don't be fooled by the color. The good flavor of tea is the sugar.") How are they similar? (The sugar can't be seen as the inside of the book is also unknown. The value of a person is on the inside) How does this saying relate to the girl in the story?

Here are some common proverbs to discuss with your student. You could also use some for copywork.

All work and no play make Jack a dull boy.

Absence makes the heart grow fonder.

Better an egg today than a hen tomorrow.

Don't cross a bridge till you come to it.

Don't make a mountain out of a molehill.

Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

Every oak must be an acorn.

Half a loaf is better than no bread.

If there were no clouds, we should not enjoy the sun.

A little learning is a dangerous thing.

The more you have, the more you want.
The last straw breaks the camel's back.
One is never too old to learn.
No news is good news.
They brag most who can do least.
Time and tide wait for no man.
When in doubt, leave it out.
You can't have your cake and eat it, too.
Where there is smoke, there is fire.
When all men speak, no man hears.

You can also add in a Bible lesson about proverbs. What sayings in the book of Proverbs provide wisdom for children? You may want to have your student memorize a verse in Proverbs this week as part of his Bible memory. Here are a few to get verses (not all are directly for children, but I had to include my favorites!):

Proverbs 1:8

Proverbs 4:1

Proverbs 16:8

Proverbs 17:17

Proverbs 17:22

Proverbs 18:24

Proverbs 20:7

Proverbs 20:11

Proverbs 22:6

Proverbs 23:22

Language Arts-- Description

The story includes vivid descriptions of colors by comparing them to objects or sights in nature.

"...the color of the deep sea and the early morning sky."

"...the color of eggplant and new grass."

"...the color of tomatoes and the sky at midnight."

Have students create similar descriptions of different colors. Or give them a description and ask them what color it makes them see in their mind. Or pull out a

variety of crayons and have cards that describe different colors and have them match crayon color to the description.

Language Arts-- Vocabulary

spices- a plant product (as pepper or nutmeg) that has a strong pleasant smell and is used to season or flavor food

flavor- the quality of something that affects the sense of taste

creamy- full of or containing cream; resembling cream in appearance, color, or taste

eggplant- a widely cultivated herb that is related to the potato and yields a glossy blackish-purple fruit

fooled- tricked

blessing- a good thing; favor from God

Math-- Cooking

There is a recipe for African Chai tea in the book. Use the recipe for discussing the concepts of doubling & halving. How much of each ingredient would you need if you doubled the recipe? How much of each ingredient would you need if you halved the recipe? Make a recipe card for each (one for the recipe doubled, one for the recipe halved). Determine which recipe (the original, the halved, or the doubled) would be the best one to make for your family.

Math-- African Vendors

You may want to set up shop and let your students pretend to be some of the different vendors mentioned in the story.

In East Africa, they don't use dollars and cents, instead they use shillings (each country has its own shilling). Your students may want to design some shillings (one to represent each country). If your student wants to know what the currency in each country looks like, you can attempt a Google image search (search for Kenya shilling, Uganda shilling, etc.). You could also print out some of the pictures to use

as play money (determine a value for each piece). Let your students buy and sell wares just like the vendors you read about.

Math-- Patterns

Discuss the concept of patterns using the patterns in the Kanga cloth borders from the borders of each of the pages.

Science-- Tea

Research about tea: what plant it comes from, how it is grown and cultivated, what is the difference between green/black/oolong teas, what are the chemical components of tea, what are its health benefits.

For older students this could cross over with additional history - the history of tea and how it has impacted the world through history (trade, exploration, culture/tradition, politics)

Have a tea party! Try a variety of different types of tea. Make the chai tea recipe found in the book.

Art-- Kanga Cloth

Kanga cloth - the kanga cloth has many uses - dress, shawl, head wrap, baby sling. See author's note. In addition to the bright colors and beautiful designs each piece contains a Swahili saying printed on it. The sayings are similar to our proverbs - sayings that have multiple meanings.

“The Kanga is a rectangle of pure cotton cloth with a border all around it, printed in bold designs and bright colors. It is as long as the span of your outstretched arms and wide enough to cover you from neck to knee, or from breast to toe. Kangas are usually bought and worn as a pair - called a "doti.”

Kangas are the perfect gift. Husbands give kangas to wives. children to their mothers, a woman may split a pair to give half to her best friend. Men can sleep in kangas, and often wear them around the house; women wear them everywhere; babies are virtually born into them, and are usually carried in a soft sling of kanga cloth. Kangas are extremely popular throughout East Africa not only for clothing but for their multiple uses; no one can ever have too many!”

Make a Kanga – Use a plain white bandana or other cotton cloth cut into a large square. Use fabric paint, watercolors, or markers to color patterns and pictures on their Kanga cloth. Using watercolors will make the cloth look similar to the muted, flowing colors used in the book's illustrations. This could also be done as a project on paper if you choose not to do cloth. Don't forget to add a proverb! Then, let your student wear the finished product.

Just for Fun

Recipe: East African Sweet Pea Soup

2 cups chopped onion
2 tsp minced garlic
1 tsp grated fresh peeled ginger
1 tsp salt
1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
1 tbsp. garam masala (spice)
2 tomatoes, chopped
1 sweet potato, diced
3 1/2 cups water
3 cups green peas (*fresh* if possible)

Braise onions and garlic in a pot for 5-10 minutes. Mix in the ginger, salt, and all spices and cook for a few minutes, stirring often. Add tomatoes and sweet potato, stir. Add 1 1/2 cups of water, stir. Bring soup to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 5 minutes. Add 2 cups of the peas and simmer, covered, for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and add remaining 2 cups of water. Puree in batches in a blender until smooth. return to the pot, add the last cup of peas, and cook on medium heat for 3-5 minutes.

Make your own garam masala:

1/2 tsp ground black pepper, 1 tsp ground coriander seeds, 1 tsp ground cumin seeds, 1/4 tsp ground cardamom, 1/8 tsp ground cloves, and 1/4 tsp cinnamon

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Spices

a plant product that has a strong smell and is used to season or flavor food



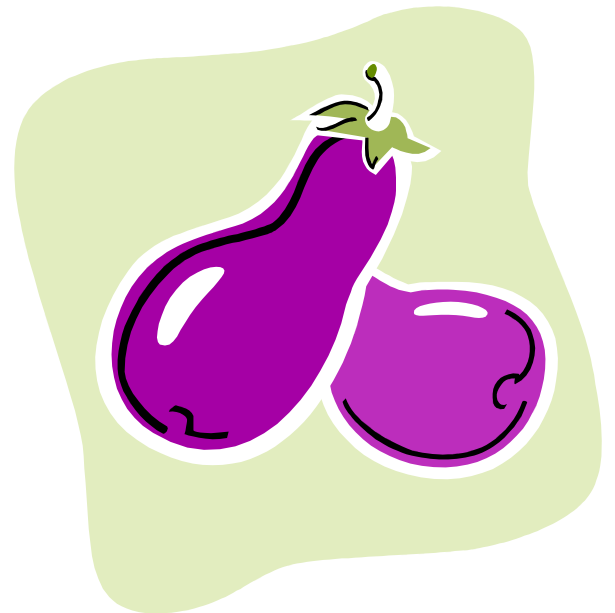
Flavor

the quality of something that affects the sense of taste



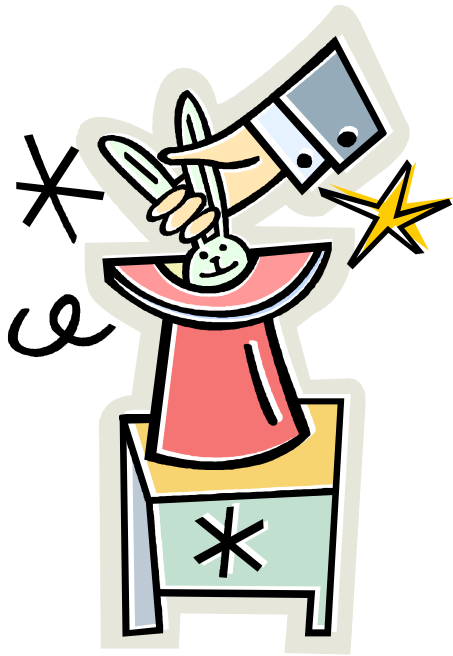
Creamy

full of or containing cream; resembling cream in appearance, color, or taste

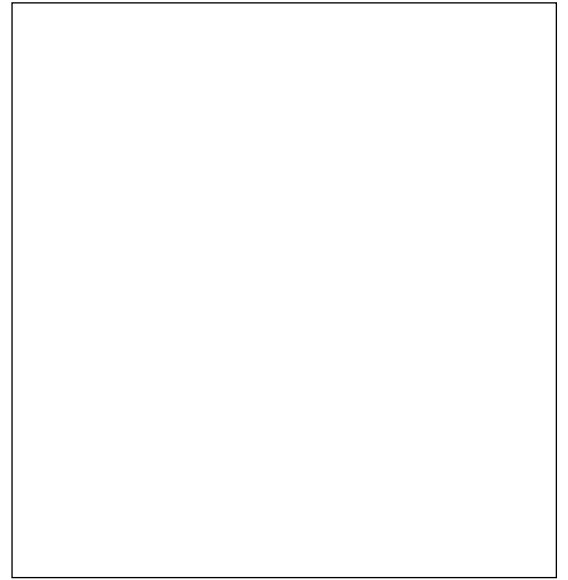


Eggplant

a widely cultivated herb that is related to the potato and yields a glossy blackish-purple fruit



Fooled
tricked



write or draw blessings in the box

Blessing
a good thing; favor from God