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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2002 Volume I: Survival Stories

Middle Passage: A Journey of Endurance

Guide for Curriculum Unit 02.01.05
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In the 21st century, as has held true in the past, misconceptions about Africa and her people are embraced on a widespread basis: many students at all grade levels continue to associate Africa past and present with Tarzan, dark-skinned people, primitive villages, jungle, and wild animals. Little attention is focused on Africa today, a land fused with modernization and traces of the past. Little correlation is made with the existence of great African empires rich in culture and social structure prior to and including the onset of European exploration and slavery. Middle Passage: A Journey of Endurance has been written to examine these aspects of African heritage with emphasis on Ghanaian culture.

Divided into three sections, this interdisciplinary unit includes Ghana, Pre-Slavery (taking a glimpse at the ancient Ghanaian empire); The Treacherous Slave Trade (where students "experience" the dehumanizing journey from Ghanaian shores to the Americas; and Traditions Embraced (generally highlighting African traditions embraced today). Targeted at students in Grades 1 and 2, Middle Passage can be modified for use with upper grade students.

Middle Passage: A Journey of Endurance is an adventure in learning, one that sparks engaging dialogue, an understanding of people across cultures, a celebration of diversity, and a respect and appreciation of the strength of people of African descent. Experience the journey!

(Recommended for Language Arts, Social Studies, and Social Development, grades 1-5.)

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