



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1993 Volume IV: The Minority Artist in America

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## The History and Aesthetics of African Jewelry

Guide for Curriculum Unit 93.04.02  
by Lucille Camera

My curriculum unit will focus on the jewelry from various groups from Africa. I will bring into view the history behind the jewelry as well as the beauty of different pieces from different regions. Three regions I will be focusing on are the Equatorial region, the Savannah and the Sahara Desert. Each brings to us unique and beautiful jewelry.

The Equatorial rain forest brings us Ivory and bronze. Jewelry from this area possesses strong beliefs as well as fine ornamental charm. The Savannah with its beautiful grass plains shows us the gold and man-made objects that enhance their people and worship their ancestors. Copper and iron alloy are used a great deal to make pendants and simple jewelry. Found objects are added to these to produce a personal and religious piece. In the Sahara Desert the temperature goes anywhere from shimmering hot during the day freezing cold at night. The jewelry found here has been mostly derived from trade. They possess beautiful pieces of jewelry made from brass and venetian glass. They wear their jewelry to help cure sicknesses of the blood. All these groups are highly religious and very creative in their designing of their jewelry. From dowries to the pendants, their beliefs are strong and practiced and their jewelry exquisite.

(Recommended for Art, Grades 3-5)

### **Key Words**

*Africa Jewelry African Afro-American*

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