

What's in a Name?: "Oruko lonro ni" which means "Names affect behavior"

Anne Hoyer – Wood Intermediate School

Grade Level (Req.): 6th-8th grade	Content Area (Req.): World Geography, Human Geography, English/Reading	Unit (Opt.):
Connections to Other Disciplines (Opt.): • • •		
Time Frame (Req.): Approximately 1 class period	Goal (Req.): To learn how a name can identify where you come from and who you are.	
	Objective (Req.): Students will be aware that Yoruba people believe the name a child bears can influence his/her behavior; therefore, the names given to a child in Nigeria are chosen for their meaning.	
Materials Needed (Req.): • A book or website with the meaning of American names • • • • • •	New Vocabulary (Opt.): • • • • •	
Anticipatory Set/Introduction [Inquiry Question is required] (Req.): How do Nigerian parents choose their child's name? Discuss background information.		
Instructional Sequence/Procedure (Req.): 1. How did your parents select your name? Were you named after someone? (Assign this as homework before conducting this lesson.) 2. Have a discussion during class. Was there a ceremony when you were named? 3. What day were you born? 4. Does your name have a special meaning or does it come from a special source? 5. Who selected your name? 6. What is the meaning of your name? You may use the following websites to find this information: http://www.thenamelocator.com/ , http://www.babycenter.com/baby-names/ , http://www.homepaggers.com/names/index.html/ , http://www.babynames.com/ . 7. Discuss the Yoruba Naming Ceremony. 8. Visit a website that explores a Naming Ceremony. 9. Examine some African names and their meanings. 10. Do you think that the Nigerian way of naming their child is a good way? 11. 12. 13. 14. 15.		

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Formative Evaluation (Req.): Class discussion

Assessment (Req.): Write a short paper comparing the way Americans and Yoruba Nigerians name their children. List similarities and differences in the naming procedures used by Americans and Nigerians.

Iowa Core Curriculum Standards Used (Req.):

- Geography, grade 6-8: Understand how human factors and the distribution of resources affect the development society and the movement of populations.
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Common Core Curriculum Standards Used (Opt.):

- Speaking and Listening, grade 6-12: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on specific grade level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- Writing, grade 6-12: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
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NGS Standards Used (Req.):

- The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics
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Five Themes of Geography Used (Req.):

- Place
- Region
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School District Standards and Benchmarks (Opt.):

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21st Century Universal Constructs (Opt.):

Other Disciplinary Standards (Opt.):

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Other Essential Information (Opt.):

Other Resources (Opt.):

- For more detailed information on the Yoruba Naming Ceremony visit “A Nigerian Yoruba Naming Ceremony in the Washington DC Area” (<http://www.folklife.si.edu/africa/start.htm>).
- Meanings of Nigerian names can be found at Motherland Nigeria (<http://www.motherlandnigeria.com/names.html>).
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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Many Yoruba people believe names are meaningful and powerful. It is felt that the names children bear can influence their behavior. For example, if a child has the name of a thief, it will become a thief. A name can make or mar a person; therefore, naming a child is taken very seriously.

A child may also have more than one name. They may get names from their father, mother, and grandparents. They may also receive a Christian name when baptized in the church.

According to Yoruba tradition within seven to nine days after birth a baby must be named or it will die before its parent of the same sex.

Guests arrive for the special Naming Ceremony bringing gifts for the baby. Everyone gathers for the ceremony where special kinds of ritual food and objects have been placed. The ceremony begins with a hymn. Then each of the foods and objects are given to the child to taste or touch while the symbolic meaning of each is stated. Next there are prayers for the child's well being and good character and the baby's name is announced. The ceremony is followed with an evening of music and dance.

The following quotes denote the importance of a child's name.

"Names are important! They have meanings"

- Dr. Gilbert Ogunfeditimi

"A Name is an edifying emblem given to a child at birth by the parents, or brought from heaven by the child, during that child's birth. "

- Rev. Fred Ogunfeditimi