

A Celebration to Honor
African American People
and Their Past

Name:



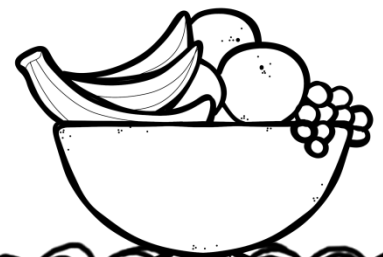


What is Kwanzaa?

Kwanzaa was started in 1966 by an African American teacher named Dr. Maulana Karenga. He wanted to create a specific time of the year for African American people to learn about their African history and customs. It is not a religious holiday, but a cultural celebration.

Kwanzaa begins on December 26th and ends on January 1st. It lasts for seven days and is based on Nguzo Saba, or the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa. These principles are unity, self-determination, collective work & responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. Kwanzaa is a time where African history, culture and customs are explored, remembered and honored.

The word “Kwanzaa” comes from the East African Swahili language and means “first fruits of the harvest”. In Africa it is customary to celebrate the harvest before the beginning of the dry seasons, and Dr. Karenga felt that was the perfect word to describe the type of celebration he created.



Nguzo Saba: The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa

- Principle #1: Umoa (Unity) – To strive to stay together as families, communities, a nation and a race.
- Principle #2: Kujichagulia (Self-determination) – The right to decide who we are and what our names will be. The right to speak for ourselves, create for ourselves and decide what we will become.
- Principle #3: Ujima (Collective Work & Responsibility) – To build and take care of our communities together. To solve problems together as they arise.



Nguzo Saba: The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa

- Principle #4: Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics) – To build and maintain our own business and share the profits together.
- Principle #5: Nia (Purpose) – To make our people and our communities the best that they can be. To develop the skills we need to be successful.
- Principle #6: Kumba (Creativity) – To use our unique and personal gifts to create homes and communities that are beautiful and thriving.
- Principle #7: Imani (Faith) – To believe in the worth of our own people, our struggle and our victory.

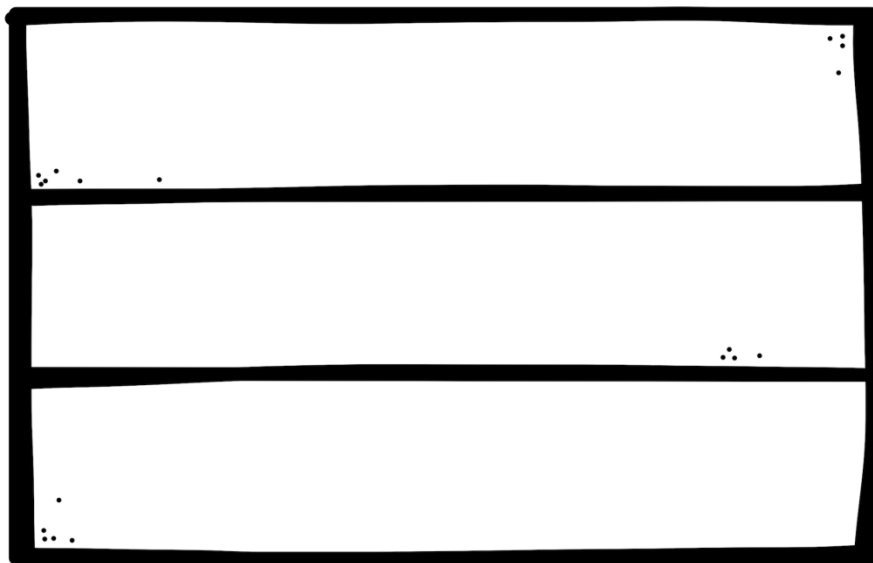


Bendera!

Dr. Karenga wanted a symbol that would mean something special to African American people. While searching, he learned about a great leader named Marcus Garvey who had already created a flag for African American people. It is called a *bendera*.

Use the sentences below to color the bendera to show what this special flag looks like.

- The stripe on top is **red**. It represents the struggle of the past and present.
- The stripe in the middle is **black**. It stands for unity and togetherness.
- The stripe on the bottom is **green**. It stands for the African land, but also the hopes and dreams of all African American people.

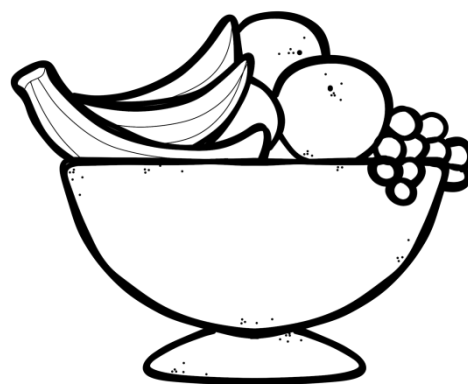


Traditions of Kwanzaa



Kinara

A holder filled with seven candles that is lit during the celebration of Kwanzaa.

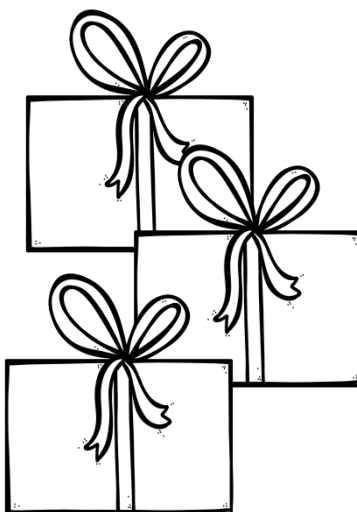


Karamu

The special feast of Kwanzaa that is celebrated with family and close friends.

Zawadi

The gifts that are given on the last day of Kwanzaa. These are meant to be based on the principle of Kumbaa...creativity.



Kikombe Cha Umoja

The cup of unity or togetherness. This is filled with juice or water and is meant to be passed around and shared during the *kutoa majina*, or the calling and remembering of ancestors and heroes.



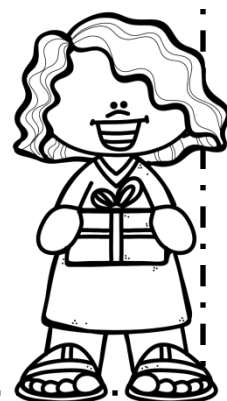
What are some other
traditions of Kwanzaa?



Gifts from the Hand and the Heart

Zawadi gifts are based on the Kwanzaa principle of Kumbaa. Zawadi is not meant to cost a lot of money. It is more important that these gifts be given in the spirit of creativity. What is something that you would create as a gift for a family member or close friend?

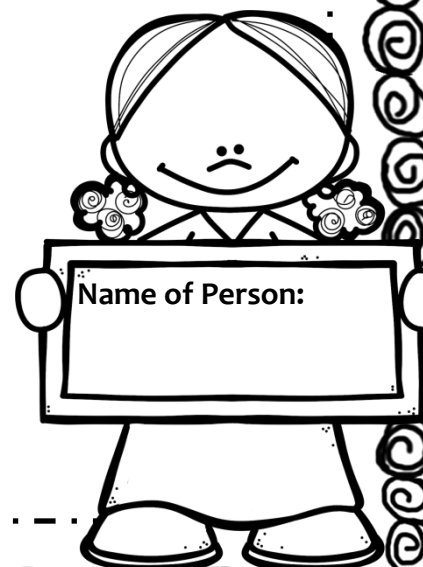
Draw a picture in the box below.



A Time to Remember...

Kwanzaa is also an important time to remember the people who worked so hard to make lives better for all African American people. Can you think of an African American person or hero who could be celebrated during Kwanzaa and other times? Draw a picture of the person below and explain why he/she should be remembered.

A large rectangular area defined by a dashed line, intended for drawing a picture of a person and writing an explanation.



Kwanzaa Words to Know

There are other words and phrases from the Swahili language that are commonly associated with Kwanzaa. Can you find the meanings of these?

Kwanzaa Word	What it means...
Harambee!	
Kukumbuka	
Mazao	
Mkeka	
Tambiko	
Tamshi la Tutaonana	

