



2008~2009
 HOT SEASON FOR
 YOUNG PEOPLE PRESENTS



TEACHER GUIDEBOOK

MUFARO'S
 BEAUTIFUL
 DAUGHTERS

Dallas Children's Theater



TENNESSEE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
 EDUCATION

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This performance is presented through arrangements made by Holden & Arts Associates Inc.

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Guidebook written and compiled by
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Production photos provided by
Dallas Children's Theater.

DEAR TEACHERS,

Welcome to the Dallas Children's Theater's production of John Steptoe's *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters!*

This exciting production incorporates a great deal of original African music, song, and dance. Both recorded musical underscoring as well as live music by actor/ musicians utilize authentic African instruments. Most of the choreography is based on classic African dance steps, and African masks are used to present special characters.

Though the play is set in Zimbabwe, costumes are drawn from a wide palette of African textile design, with influences from many African countries. The Kente cloth featured in the exploration on pages 11-12 comes from Ghana and is only one of many types of dress featured in the production.

We know your students will enjoy the immersion into another culture as well the engaging wisdom and humor of a universal story.

TPAC EDUCATION

A note from our Sponsor - Regions Bank

For over 125 years Regions has been proud to be a part of the Middle Tennessee community, growing and thriving as our area has. From the opening of our doors on September 1, 1883, we are committed to this community and our customers.

One area that we are strongly committed to is the education of our students. We are proud to support TPAC's Humanities Outreach in Tennessee Program. What an important sponsorship this is - reaching over 25,000 students and teachers - some students would never see a performing arts production without this program. Regions continues to reinforce its commitment to the communities it serves and in addition to supporting programs such as HOT, we have over 43 associates teaching financial literacy in our classrooms this year.

Thank you, teachers, for giving your students this wonderful opportunity. They will certainly enjoy the experience. You are creating memories of a lifetime, and Regions is proud to be able to help make this opportunity possible.



Jim Schmitz
Executive Vice President
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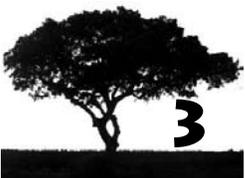
MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS

Based on the Caldecott Award-winning Cinderella tale by John Steptoe, *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* was adapted for the stage by Karen Abbott. It is the story of a great African king who desires a wife, and only the most worthy and beautiful maidens in the land are invited to meet him. Mufaro's pride and joy, his two daughters of very different dispositions, travel across a river and half a day's journey to go before the king. The play is a celebration of goodness, generosity, and love.

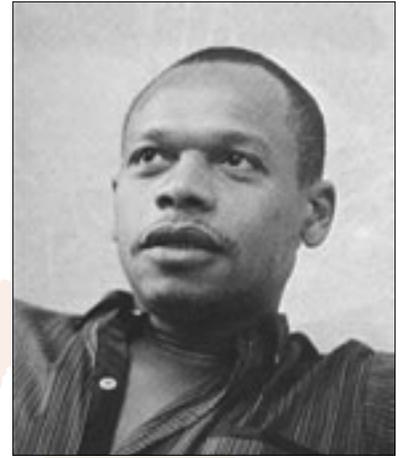


DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER, one of the top five family theaters in the nation, serves over 250,000 young people from 100 zip codes, 40 cities and 12 counties each year through its main stage productions, touring, educational programming and outreach activities. Since its opening in 1984, this award-winning theater has existed to create challenging, inspiring and entertaining theater, which communicates vital messages to our youth. DCT produces literary classics, original scripts, folk tales, myths, fantasies, and contemporary dramas that foster multicultural understanding, confront topical issues, and celebrate the human spirit.

excerpted from Dallas Children's Theatre Teacher Resource Guide



JOHN STEPTOE was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1950. He began working on his first picture book, *Stevie*, when he was just 16 years old. By the time he was 18 it had been printed in Life magazine, and in 1970, it was published as a book. Mr. Steptoe studied art at the High School of Art and Design in Manhattan and was a student in the HARYOU-ACT Art Program. In his 20-year career, John Steptoe illustrated 15 additional picture books, 10 of which he also wrote. His books have won many awards, including the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration, the Caldecott Honor and the Milner Award voted by Atlanta children for their favorite author. While all of his books deal with aspects of the African-American experience, *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* was acknowledged as a breakthrough for bringing together African history and culture. The research he conducted in writing the book awakened Steptoe's pride in his own African ancestry and he hoped his work would encourage children to feel pride in their own heritage. John Steptoe died in 1989, after a long illness.



SYNOPSIS

MUFARO is a happy man who considers himself fortunate to be the father of the two most beautiful daughters in the land. He considers them both fair in personality as well, and although MANYARA is cruel and arrogant, those are traits she hides from her father.

The younger daughter, NYASHA, is good, gentle, and kind in all things. She works hard and never tattles on her sister's nastiness. Nyasha even manages to befriend a snake whom she calls NYOKA. She sings to Nyoka while she tends to her garden, and in return, he protects her crops from harm.

One day, a MESSENGER arrives from the city. He announces that the great KING wants all of the most worthy and beautiful daughters in the land to come before him that he might choose his queen and bride.

When Manyara cannot convince her father to send her alone, she steals away during the night so that she can beat her sister to the city. During the journey, she is given three tests of kindness, all of which she fails. First, she encounters a YOUNG BOY who is starving. When he asks Manyara for any scraps of food she may have, Manyara refuses to give him any. Next, she encounters an OLD WOMAN who instructs her that she will be approaching a grove of trees that will laugh at her, and she must not laugh back. Manyara does not respect the Old Woman, and laughs back at the trees.

Not surprisingly, the gentle Nyasha, given the same tests on her journey through the forest, is able to pass these three tests without the slightest prompting or instruction. When Nyasha and her father finally arrive in the city, they run into Manyara who is hysterical after seeing a monster snake in the King's chamber. Manyara tries to convince Nyasha not to go to the King, but Nyasha does not listen.

Upon entering the royal room, Nyasha realizes that the snake Manyara was so afraid of was actually Nyasha's old friend, Nyoka. He explains that he is, in fact, the King, as well as the young boy, the old woman, and the grove of trees. Nyasha is chosen to marry the King, and Manyara becomes their servant. Mufaro continues to love and be proud of both his daughters.



LANGUAGE AND NAMES IN THE PLAY

Many of the words and names used in *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* are of the Shona language spoken in Africa.

Nyasha - "mercy"
Manyara - "ashamed"
Mufaro - "happy man"
Nyoka - "snake"



ZIMBABWE

excerpted from *Dallas Children's Theatre
Teacher Resource Guide*

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters is set in the country of Zimbabwe on the continent of Africa. Have students use encyclopedias to research the African continent and Zimbabwe. Invite them to use a map or globe to locate countries in Africa.

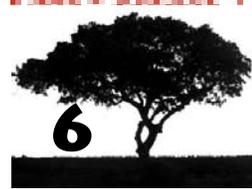
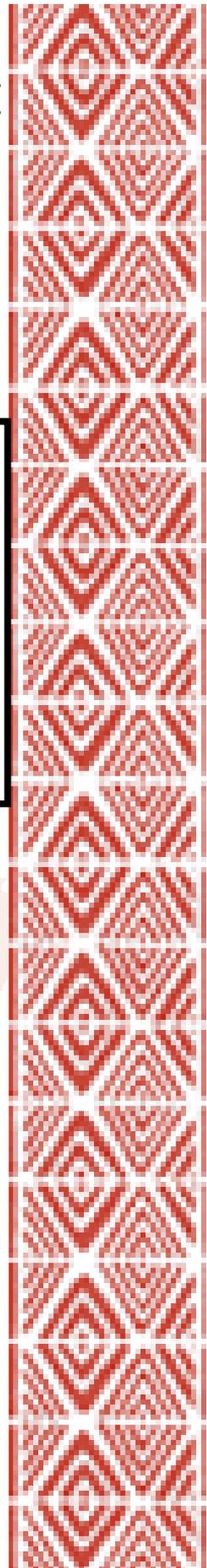
The following questions will encourage students to discover more about Zimbabwe:

- ☐ What kind of climate do you think Zimbabwe has? How does it compare to ours?
- ☐ What sorts of landscape or terrain might you find in Zimbabwe?
- ☐ What animals can be found in Zimbabwe?
- ☐ What is the capital city of Zimbabwe? Describe it.
- ☐ What are some neighboring countries?
- ☐ What is the primary language? What other languages are spoken there?
- ☐ What sorts of products are produced in Zimbabwe?
- ☐ What are the most unique sites to see there?

FOR OLDER STUDENTS:

In *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*, the king is wise and respected, beloved by his people. Research Zimbabwe's current leader, Robert Mugabe. Is he the same kind of leader as the king in John Steptoe's story? Write a few paragraphs about the qualities that make a good ruler.

Ask students to design a travel poster for Zimbabwe, with drawings and text highlighting its most appealing features as a place to visit.



EXPLORATION ~ KENTE CLOTH

Kente cloth is one of the most recognized of all African textiles. Though it is not from Zimbabwe, its patterns and colors make it an approachable model to introduce students to the use of meaning and design in African dress.

In this Visual Arts activity, students will practice using geometric shapes to design their own Kente cloth strips and then assemble them into one larger class paper quilt.

Materials and Supplies Needed

- ☐ Sample images of Kente cloth
- ☐ Long strips of white paper, 2-3 inches wide, one or more per student
- ☐ Rulers
- ☐ Pencils, markers and crayons
- ☐ Tape

Discussion

Share with students that Kente cloth originally comes from Ghana. At one time, it was only worn by royals. In some parts of Africa, Kente cloth is still held in high esteem even though it is much more common today. Kente cloth is woven in long strips of bright colors and geometric designs. The individual strips are then attached to one another to make clothing and other articles such as table or bed linen.

Kente cloth's designs traditionally held certain meanings to Africans. However, it is the color meaning that many people associate with kente cloth. Children enjoy learning the meaning of the colors, then creating their own designs and sharing what their meaning is.

Activity

Distribute pre-cut strips of paper to students (an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper will yield three strips). Demonstrate how to divide each strip into small sections by repeatedly folding it in half. The easiest way to do this is to fold the paper in half twice creating four boxes. You can fold again to make eight boxes.

Kente cloth is made of precise geometric designs. To reproduce this effect, children may use a ruler and pencil to draw straight line designs such as stripes, squares, diamonds, triangles, etc. in each section of their paper. (For ideas, see the designs in the photographs on the next page.) After the lines have been created in pencil, children can then trace them with a dark marker. Once these lines have been made bolder, instruct students to use bright crayons to fill in the spaces between the marker lines. Encourage students to refer to the traditional color associations and make choices that give their strip a Kente cloth meaning.

Once all individual strips are completed, gather them together. The Kente cloth design strips can now be taped together to create a Kente paper quilt. Tape each strip to another strip by placing them face down and attaching masking tape along the longest edge. Repeat this process until all the strips are attached. Display the finished paper quilt against a black background to really bring out the geometric lines.

WHAT DO THE COLORS IN KENTE CLOTH REPRESENT?

- Red - Life and blood, sacrifice, struggle
- Blue – the sky, peace, love, harmony
- Green -Planting, harvesting, abundance , health
- Black – People, maturity, ancestors
- Gold or Yellow– Quality, fortune, royalty
- Maroon - Earth, healing
- Purple - close to maroon, worn by women
- Pink - calmness, pleasantness, sweetness

NOTE: The shadow shapes used as decorative elements throughout this guidebook are African *adinkras*. They also have their own set of meanings and are used in some African fabrics.



ABOUT KENTE CLOTH



Above: examples of Kente Cloth geometric designs



The term “kente” has its roots in the word *kenten* which means a basket. The first Kente weavers used raffia fibers to weave cloths that looked like *kenten* (a basket); and thus were referred to as *kenten ntoma*; meaning basket cloth.

Traditionally, the Kente cloth is woven on a narrow horizontal loom in a strip that is about 3-5 inches wide and about 5-6 feet long. Several strips are sewn together to make a wider piece of cloth for both men and women.

Kente cloth designs are given a name and meaning. These names and meanings reflect beliefs, historical events, social and political organization in society, or may represent specific people.

Patterns and motifs generally develop as geometric abstractions of objects associated with their intended meaning. Their actual forms may seem to have no visual representation or similarity with the concepts they symbolize.

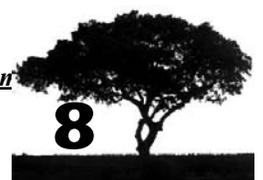
Kente cloth names are often expressed in sentence form. According to the University of South Carolina’s website on Kente, the cloth at left is named *Obaakofo mmu man*. It literally means “one person does not rule a nation.” To wear it as a ruler would be a mark of humility and a statement that the ruler values the community’s contributions in making the country successful.

The Kente stole at right is called *epie akyi* meaning the leopard’s back. It has a saying that accompanies it, “the leopard only gets wet when it falls into water; the water does not wash off its stripes.” Ask older students what they think this expression means.



Left: Paramount chief Nana Akyanfu Akowuah Dateh II wearing a Kente cloth garment in Kumase, Ghana, Photograph by Eliot Elisofon, 1970, Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art

With thanks to www.marshall.edu, pbs.org, and <http://africa.si.edu/exhibits/kente/about.htm>

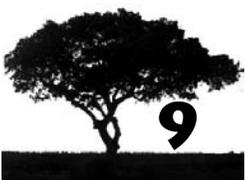


ABOUT FOLKTALES

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters is an African folktale. However, this tale is also considered to be a *Cinderella* tale. The story of Cinderella that we are familiar with in America is usually considered a fairy tale. So, the real question is – What's the difference in a folktale and a fairy tale?

Folktales are the traditional beliefs, practices, lessons, legends, and tales of a culture or of a people passed down from one generation to another by word of mouth and used to teach a moral or impart some piece of wisdom. Folktales are often told to children by their parents to teach them how to behave. These stories are similar all around the world, and though the culture may differ somewhat, the message remains the same. Folktales usually contain exaggeration and often an animal dressed and acting like a human. There are several types of folktales, the most common types being myths, legends, and fairy tales.

Fairy tales are fanciful and imaginary stories usually written for children, involving magic and fantasy. Fairy tales are either created from or strongly inspired by oral traditions. Their plots feature conflicts between good and evil, with magic and luck influencing the usually happy endings. While each culture and geographic region of the world has its own body of folktales and fairy tales that it considers unique, certain themes and motifs tend to be repeated across many cultures and time periods. Fairy tales explore universal human dilemmas and emotions. Love, hate, courage, kindness, and cruelty weave through plots filled with characters taking adventurous journeys, getting lost, living without a parent, making difficult choices, and struggling to overcome all manner of troubles.



EXPLORATION ~ CINDERELLA TALES

Begin by reading or looking at a few versions of Cinderella tales. (For ideas, check out the list of versions on the next page.) Or, if students have already read *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* and are familiar with the basic American version of *Cinderella*, you may choose to use these and not to read additional versions. As a class, quickly review the characters and order of events of the most familiar *Cinderella*.

Point out that *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* is generally thought of as a "Cinderella story". As a class, brainstorm - What makes a "Cinderella story"? What are the similar elements in this type of story? Examples may include a protagonist who is treated poorly (usually a girl, but not always), a mean relative, a test of character, unexpected help, a reward at the end, etc. Write them on the board as you discuss these components.

Once you have created a list of story aspects found in Cinderella tales, ask students to write their own version. To aid their originality, ask students to begin by choosing a unique setting for their story. Students may do this as small groups or individually, depending on the way you wish to set it up in your classroom. You may choose to have students write out their entire stories as a creative writing activity, or to have them create a basic outline of ideas. This will be up to you and the length of time you want to work on this assignment.

Once students have finished creating their stories, ask them to present their stories to the class as a storyboard. A storyboard is a panel, or series of panels with consecutive images of the main events in a story, very similar to a comic strip. To create a storyboard, divide a piece of paper into six squares and have students choose the six most important scenes in their stories. Students should draw a picture of each scene and write a small caption of the action taking place at the bottom of each square.

Storyboard Example of folk tale, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, by first grade students with their teacher writing the action. from the student's description.

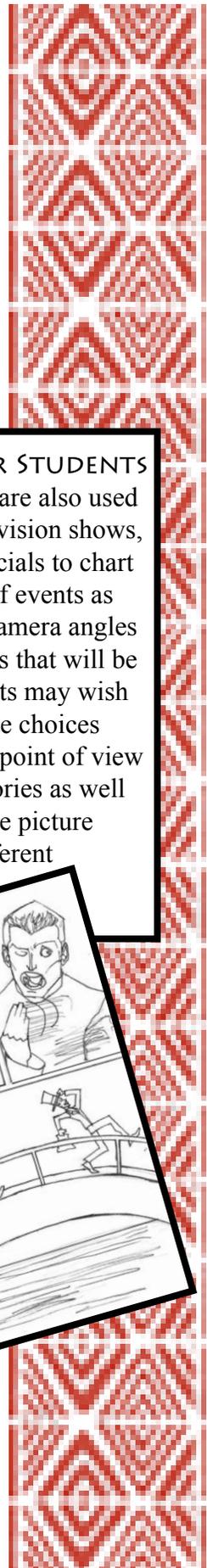


FOR OLDER STUDENTS
Storyboards are also used for film, television shows, and commercials to chart a sequence of events as well as the camera angles and close-ups that will be used. Students may wish to incorporate choices about visual point of view with their stories as well as using more picture boxes of different sizes.



Storyboard Example by older students without text.

→
Cinderella tales exploration continued on the next page.



EXPLORATION ~ CINDERELLA TALES

(CONT'D.)

Discuss:

- ☐ What elements remained in one or most of your versions?
- ☐ What was the biggest difference in the variations?
- ☐ Do you think *Cinderella* is more of a folktale or fairy tale, or is it both? Why?
- ☐ Do you know any other stories that have more than one version?
- ☐ Why do you think we have so many versions in the world of some stories?
- ☐ What can the variations of detail in these stories teach us about different cultures they come from?

OTHER CINDERELLA STORIES

1. *The Cinder Maid* (reconstructed from various European sources by Joseph Jacobs)
2. *Cinderella*; or, *The Little Glass Slipper* (from France by Charles Perrault)
3. *Cinderella* (from Germany by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, version of 1812)
4. *Cinderella*; (version of 1857 English translation)
5. *Cinderella*; (German version of 1857, Aschenputtel)
6. *Katie Woodencloak* (from Norway by Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe)
7. *Katie Woodencloak*; (Norwegian original by Kari Trestakk)
8. *Fair, Brown, and Trembling* (Ireland)
9. *Rashin-Coatie* (Scotland)
10. *Cinderella* (Italy)
11. *Conkiajgharuna, the Little Rag Girl* (Georgia)
12. *Pepelyouga* (Serbia)
13. *The Wonderful Birch* (Russia)
14. *The Baba Yaga* (Russia, Aleksandr Afanasyev)
15. *The Wicked Stepmother* (Kashmir)
16. *The Green Knight* (Denmark)
17. *The Story of Tam and Cam* (Vietnam)



WHAT'S THE LESSON?

Folktales are often told to children by their parents to teach them how to behave. These stories have been passed down through generations and are similar all around the world. Though the culture may differ somewhat, the message remains the same.



Consider fairy tales and folktales familiar to students, and discuss the lesson or moral that is taught through them. Examples:

- ☐ *Pinocchio* – telling lies is wrong
- ☐ *The Tortoise and the Hare* – never give up, slow and steady wins the race
- ☐ *The Ugly Duckling* – don't judge by looks

Ask students what lesson they think *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* is trying to teach.

Ask students to consider the following quotations.

- ☐ “Is she as kind as she is fair? For beauty lives with kindness.”
Shakespeare, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*
- ☐ “Many persons have the wrong idea of what constitutes real happiness. It is not obtained through self-gratification, but through fidelity to a worthy purpose.” **Helen Keller**
- ☐ “What a strange illusion it is to suppose that beauty is goodness.” **Leo Tolstoy**
- ☐ “No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” **Aesop**
- ☐ “To practice five things under all circumstances constitutes perfect virtue; these five are gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness.” **Confucius**

Discuss:

- ☐ What do these quotes communicate?
- ☐ Which do you think is more important? Beauty or kindness? Why?
- ☐ How do we usually judge beauty? Is it only external?
- ☐ Is *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* a story about beauty? Why is the title not *Mufaro's Daughters*?
- ☐ Do boys have to worry about being beautiful? How does this debate affect them?
- ☐ Can the word “beautiful” mean different things in different situations? Is it ever a negative word?
- ☐ What does Mufaro feel about his daughters at the end of the story?

SUGGESTED WEBSITES

“Kid Zone” article on Zimbabwe includes a map and quick facts
www.afroam.org/children/discover/zimbabwe/zimbabwe.html

Boston University’s African Studies Outreach Program offers wonderful resources and lesson plans for grades from elementary through high school.
www.bu.edu/africa/outreach/index.html

Includes an indexed resource for African personal names.
www.namesite.com/index.php

A great reference for studying the country and culture of Zimbabwe.
www.geographia.com/zimbabwe

Learn about Kente cloth.
<http://africa.si.edu/exhibits/kente/design2.htm>

Stories in A Nutshell, condensed versions of common stories
www.storyarts.org/library/nutshell/index.html

At press time, the U.S. Department of State has a status report on Zimbabwe. Go to www.state.gov/ and look on the right side under “Dipnote blog.”

Use the diverging behavior of the Goofus and Gallant® characters from *Highlights for Children* magazine as a comparison tool to the actions of Manyara and Nyasha in *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters*.
www.highlightsteachers.com/archives/resources/goofus_and_gallant_lesson_plan.html



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