

Tell Me About It: The Africa I Left Behind
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Abstract:

This unit explores African storytelling traditions. These include the heroic epics of old Mali transmitted over the generations by specialists known as *griots*, as well as the folktales told by storytellers to instruct and entertain African children. Special attention is given to stories from Liberia and Nigeria, the home countries for many of Philadelphia's new African immigrants and refugees. Many of these primary-level students are just beginning to learn to read and write in English. By using African stories in the classroom and encouraging the children to collect folk tales from their families at home, this unit enables African children to make use of their own heritage and share it with their American classmates while involving their parents in the learning process.