

# Africa



## Did you know:

- ✓ Africa, which covers over 30 million square kilometres, is bigger than the USA, Canada and India put together?
- ✓ There are 54 countries in Africa - and 9 territories - with a total of more than 1.1 billion people living on the continent, which is 15% of the world's total population.
- ✓ Sahara desert is the driest hot desert on earth  
The Nile is the world's longest river
- ✓ Tugela Falls in South Africa are Africa's highest waterfalls
- ✓ Blyde River Canyon in South Africa is the world's largest green canyon.

## The Cradle of Human Kind

Africa is the 'cradle of humankind', the place where the first hominids, human beings and their closest relatives the gorilla and chimpanzees, evolved 5 to 10 million years ago. Fossils found in Africa, show that the modern human beings spread from this continent. One of the earliest evidences of human life were found in South Africa. Mrs Ples and the Taung Child are among the most important fossils found. Many powerful kingdoms existed on the African continent in the early history and the Middle Ages. Between the 5th and 15th century, African slaves were traded mainly by Arab traders. In the late 19th century Europeans started conquering Africa which was then colonised in the 19th and 20th century mainly from Britain and France, but also from the Dutch, Italian and Germans.



## Languages in Africa

It is estimated that about 2,000 different languages are spoken on the African continent! Many Africans speak several African languages and also often another 'European' language. In many countries, people speak English, French or Portuguese as an additional language, as these languages are often used in communication and business.

## Religion

Most of the African people are Christians and Muslims. In North Africa and many West African countries, most people follow the Islam. There are also almost 10% of Africans that follow traditional religious rituals which means they have traditional healing rituals such as bone-throwing, herbal medicine and celebrating the spirit of the ancestors.

## Animals

In Africa, you will find some of the largest mammals on this planet. Among them are the largest land mammal, the African elephant, the tallest mammal, the giraffe, and the fastest mammal, the cheetah, which can run with speeds up to 113km/hour or 70 miles/hour! also home to many endangered animals such as the White and Black Rhinoceros.

## African Drumming

Traditional music in most of the continent is passed down orally and is not written. In sub-Saharan African music traditions, it frequently relies on percussion instruments of every variety, including xylophones, djembes, drums, and tone-producing instruments such as the mbira or "thumb piano."



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## Craft

### Create Your Own African Djembe Drum

What you need:

- Two plastic, Styrofoam, or paper cups
- Scissors
- Tape
- Newspaper
- Flour
- Water
- Paint
- Paintbrush
- Punching balloon
- Rubber band
- Yarn (optional)

1. Cover your workspace to stop making too much of a mess. Mix one cup of flour with two cups of water to make your papier mache paste. Tear newspaper into strips.

2. Choose two cups. Try to pick cups with interesting shapes. Cut the bottom out of the cups. You may need an adult to help with this step. Tape the bottoms of the cups together.

3. Cover the outside of the cups with a thin layer of papier mache covered newspaper strips. You don't need to use a lot of the mixture to make the newspaper stick, and the less you use the quicker your cups will dry.



4. When the cups are dry, paint over the newspaper with white paint. This is just meant to cover up the newsprint and make sure it doesn't show through the designs you paint onto your drum later.



5. When the white paint has dried, paint over it with a solid color. I painted the top of my drum brown and the bottom yellow. You can choose any colors you want.

6. Let the paint dry then paint your patterns onto your drum.



7. Choose a balloon and cut it open. It's best if you stick your scissors into the opening and just slit the balloon apart. This leaves it as whole as possible. Stretch the balloon over the top of the cup and wrap your rubber band around it to hold it in place. You want the balloon to be stretched tight.



8. Enjoy your drum!

