



Kwanzaa

By Herin Kim



What holiday comes to mind when I mention the month, December? Christmas? HANUKKAH (or CHANUKAH)? Kwanzaa? Have you heard of KWANZAA? Kwanzaa is a holiday that celebrates African American culture. You don't have to be African American to celebrate it. Think of the Irish holiday, Saint Patrick's Day. Just like Saint Patrick's is celebrated globally by people who aren't Irish, people who aren't African American can celebrate Kwanzaa also! Let's learn more about Kwanzaa!

Spell holiday Christmas celebrate Irish

In America, what is the season these holidays take place? Winter What is the holiday we are learning about today? Kwanzaa (kwanza) Which culture does Kwanzaa celebrate? African American

Tell me one of the holidays I mentioned that occurs in December. (Hanukkah (Chanukah), Kwanzaa, Christmas)

What is an Irish holiday I mentioned? Saint Patrick's Day

Irish come from which country? Ireland

In America, there was a time of civil unrest where racial DISCRIMINATION and protests prevailed across the country. In an effort to pull the African communities together, a professor of African American studies at the California State University named, MAULANA KARENGA created a holiday called Kwanzaa in 1966. During the festival, community takes the time to gather as family, and reflect on REVERENCE (respect) of the creator and creation, COMMEMORATION of the past

Question Type Key

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lessons from ancestors, and recommitment of cultural ideals for best practices. The celebration lasts seven days where it begins each year on December 26 through the first day in January.

Spell Kwanzaa holiday unity ancestors Which year was Kwanzaa introduced? 1966
How many years ago was 1966? 52 (2018 - 1966)
Who created this holiday? Maulana Karenga

What was the occupation of Maulana Karenga? Professor At which university?
California State university
What department did he teach? African American Studies What month and day does Kwanzaa begin? December 26 What month and day does Kwanzaa end? January 1

How many days is Kwanzaa celebrated? 7 days

Why was this holiday created? (Pull African American community together) Name one example of what people do during the festival. (Gathering as family, and reflect on reverence of the creator and creation, commemoration of the past lessons from ancestors, and recommitment of cultural ideals for best practices)

The name Kwanzaa comes from the SWAHILI (most commonly spoken African language) phrase 'MATUNDA YA KWANZA' which means 'first fruits'. 'First fruits' refer to the first harvest celebration started in Africa since ancient times. During these harvest celebrations, people would pray in thanksgiving for the harvested crops, family, and other thankful things to sustain life.

Spell fruits harvest thanksgiving sustain
What does the name Kwanzaa mean? First fruits
Which language is "matunda ya kwanza"? Swahili
First fruits refer to the first _____ started in Africa. (harvest celebrations)

According to the passage, when was the very first-time harvest celebrations or first fruits took place in Africa? Ancient times
People pray in _____ for crops, family, and things needed to sustain life. Thanksgiving



What are people thankful for? (Harvested crops, family, things to sustain life)



Dr. Karenga took ideas from various African cultures and some new ideas to come up with the neat celebration called Kwanzaa. The meaning of Kwanzaa, the time period it takes place in, and the agricultural celebration of Kwanzaa are taken from that of the South African ZULU tribe. One of the GHANAIAN (which refers to things from Ghana) ASHANTI traditions that Dr. Karenga borrowed is the Day of Meditation and reflection on self and faith. Another tradition one cannot forget in a festival is a feast! During Kwanzaa a big feast called KARAMU is held on the last day of the year with various traditional African dishes such as yam, groundnut stew, pinto beans and rice. One new custom was added where children are given meaningful handmade gifts that remind them of their heritage.

Spell ancient African celebration handmade

Name a country ideas of Kwanzaa are borrowed from. South Africa, Ghana

Zulu tribe is from which country? South Africa

Ashanti tribe is from which country? Ghana

What is a tradition taken from the Ashanti? Day of meditation/reflection What is the big feast called? Karamu

Which day does Karamu take place? December 31

What is a dish I mentioned was served in karamu? Yam, groundnut stew, pinto beans and rice

Which new idea did Dr. Karenga add to Kwanzaa that did not come from an African tradition? Gift giving

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How did Dr. Karenga come up with Kwanzaa? Used various African ideas and some new.



The symbols of Kwanzaa are African harvest symbols, like ears of dried corn, colorfully woven tablecloths, and a wooden candle holder called a KINARA. The kinara holds 7 candles, three red ones on the left, three green ones on the right with a black candle in the center. The center candle is black and signifies unity. Each day a child lights one candle. The black center candle is lit first and then it alternates between the red and green candles starting with the ones on the outside and moving inwards. This is quite similar to the lighting of the MENORAH in the Jewish Festival of Lights, HANUKKAH.

Spell black red green candle

Who lights the candles? A child

What is the wooden candle holder called? Kinara

How many candles does the Kinara hold? 7

What is the color of the candle in the center? Black

After you light the black candle in the center, you _____ lighting between the red and green candles on each side. Alternate

The kinara is similar to the candles of another festival of which religion? Jewish

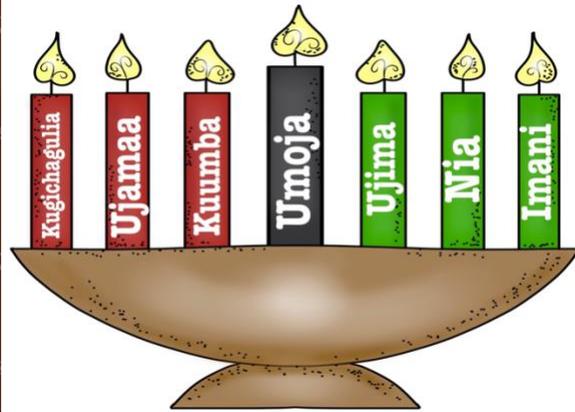
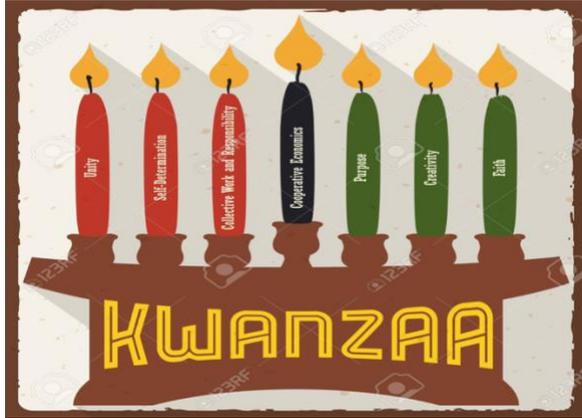
What do Jewish call the candles they light? Menorah

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What is an example of one symbol of Kwanzaa mentioned in the passage? Ears of dried **corn**, colorfully woven **tablecloths**, **candleholder**



Each candle signifies something different. The first candle called KUGICHAGULIA is lit on the first day signifies UNITY, second UJAMAA is SELF DETERMINATION, third KUUMBA is collective work and responsibility, fourth UMOJA is building COOPERATIVE ECONOMICS (building business to profit all together), fifth UJIMA is sharing of purpose, sixth NIA is creativity, seventh IMANI is sharing of a faith. During Kwanzaa, families do activities that reflect the seven values in order each day. Understanding these values and learning about one's origin plays an important factor in understanding oneself.

Spell: Share Reflection Values Origin

Each _____ signifies something different. (candle)

Which language is Kugichagulia, ujamaa, kuumba, etc. in? (SWAHILI)

Understanding these values and learning about one's _____ plays an important factor in understanding _____. (origin, oneself)

What is one of the seven values? (Unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, sharing of purpose, creativity, sharing of faith)

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How are the seven principles celebrated during Kwanzaa? (families reflect different values in order each day)

Creative Writing:

We learned about seven principles of Kwanzaa. Pick one of these principles and share what it means to you.

VAKT

Now that we learned about Kwanzaa and the significance of kinara to African communities, let's all make our own Kwanzaa bracelets.

Directions: Get green, red, and black beads and a string to make Kwanzaa bracelets. You can poke the symbolization of each bead before the kids put their bead on the string to work fine motor! Refer to the picture below for an example.



Herin Kim graduated with a special education degree from Vanderbilt and is currently working with The Growing Place Pediatrics as an S2C Practitioner from Nashville, TN. Herin grew up in several countries. She loves to travel and experience new cultures. She also enjoys making them into lessons.

Resources:

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<http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org/origins1.shtml>

<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/kwanzaa-history>

<https://www.pinterest.com/stevenjebo/indian-corn/>

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