Trade Book Sheet

**Title of book:** When Africa Was Home

**Author’s Name:** Karen Lynn Williams, pictures by Floyd Cooper

**Publisher:** Orchard Books  
**Copyright year:** 1991

**Reading Level:** Lexile 570, Grade 3-4

**Genre:** Fiction

**Synopsis of Story:**
The book is about a little boy named Peter who grew up in Africa because his American parents worked there. It chronicles his activities as a child in an African village, and there are comparisons to what he will have to do or not do once he is in America. Peter did not want to go to America, but the family went when his dad’s work was done. It was very different from his life in Africa, and he misses his home terribly. Finally, the family is able to go back when his dad finds another job in Africa.

**Standard:** Social Studies 4.5.1: Identify ways that social groups influence individual behavior and responsibilities.

**Activity:** After discussing social groups, socialization, and the influence of culture on behavior with the students, the teacher reads the book to the students. As a class, the students will brainstorm the differences between the expectations and the behavior allowed in Africa and the expectations and behaviors allowed in America. The teacher will list the differences on the board for the students to see. Then the teacher will put the students into small groups and assign each group a behavior or expectation from the list.
The children will create a short skit to demonstrate the difference between the American and the Africa version of the behavior.

**Standard:** Writing Applications 4.5.1: Write narrative stories that: include ideas, observations, or memories of an event or experience, provide a context to allow the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience, and use concrete sensory details.

**Activity:** The teacher reads the book *When Africa Was Home* to the students. The class will discuss how Peter felt when he had to leave his home in Africa and how he felt when he was in America. The students will then brainstorm times when they have wanted to go home: vacations, camp, moved to a new town, etc. They will list their ideas in their journals. They will then pick the two memories that they remember the most. In their journals, the students will list or write ideas of the context of the story, details they remember, and feelings about the experiences. After comparing the lists of memories, they will choose a topic to use for their narrative. The students will compose a narrative story on their memory of being homesick. They will include the context of the story with background information and information about the setting, as well as information on the other people, places, things, and feelings involved in their story. They should also include whether or not they were able to return home and how it felt if they did or did not. Self revision, peer editing, and an editing meeting with the teacher would follow before the students created a final draft to share with the class.