

Content Area: Social Studies
Lesson Plan
By Whitney Whitehair

Lesson: *My Great-Grandmother's Gourd* (New/Old Technology & Character Tree)

Length: 30 minutes

Age or Grade Level Intended: 6th grade

Academic Standard(s):

SOCIAL STUDIES

6.3.10 Explain that cultures change in three ways: cultural diffusion, invention and innovation.
(Individuals, Society and Culture)

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

6.3.2 Analyze the effect of the qualities of the character on the plot and the resolution of the conflict.

Performance Objective(s):

After reading the book My Great-Grandmother's Gourd, the student will learn the role of invention that the characters plan in the story by answering 4 out of 6 correctly. (66% accuracy)

Assessment:

Students will be assessed on the worksheet given to them. (Answers provided on teacher copy)

Advance Preparation by Teacher:

- Reserve a copy of the book My Great-Grandmother's Gourd By Cristina Kessler
- Copy page 82 from *Read Around the World With 20 Great Picture and Chapter Books* (Scholastic Teaching Resources) of Character tree
- Globe or map of Sudan
- Post-It Notes
- Pictures of Sudan and people who live from Sudan

Procedure:

Motivation:

Introduce the students to the globe and see who can find the country of Sudan the fastest. Talk about the importance of Sudan and show pictures of people who live there and what the land looks like. Give the students some background information on Sudan. Some facts are listed in the paragraph below.

The Republic of the Sudan is the largest country in Africa. It is located in northeastern Africa and is bordered on the north by Egypt. About forty percent of Sudan's populations are Arabs, who generally live in the northern parts of the country. Traditional African cultures and languages are more prominent in the south. Conflicts arose when Islamic leaders in the north tried to impose Islamic laws on the entire country, resulting in civil war from 1956 to 1972. The current form of government is an Islamic military regime.

Introduction:

Introduce the book My Great-Grandmother's Gourd By Cristina Kessler. This book is set in the Northern Kordofan region of Sudan. Although this desert area has been spared from much of the war and violence in the south, it has been plagued by drought and famine. In recent years it has seen one of the worst droughts in the country's history.

This picture book is narrated by Fatima, a young girl who lives in a village in Sudan. When a new water pump is installed on the well, all of the villagers give up their old ways of storing and collecting water during the rainy season—except Fatima's grandmother. She refuses to change her ways, and Fatima decides to help her.

Step-by-Step Plan:

1. Have the students sit on the floor around the teacher.
2. The teacher will read the book aloud to the students.
3. To check for comprehension while reading, the teacher will ask the following questions:
 - Describe how Fatima and her grandmother use the baobab tree to store water. (*Bloom: Comprehension*)
 - Answer: First they dig a trench around the tree. Then, rain fills the trench with water.
 - How does the pump change the life in Fatima's village?
 - Answer: The villagers no longer have to work hard to get water with camels and buckets; they no longer worry about running water.
 - Why do you think Fatima's grandmother insists on preparing the baobab tree?
 - Answer: She has more faith in her old ways than in the new water pump.
 - The villagers think Grandmother is foolish for filling up her tree. What happens to change their minds? (*Bloom: Analysis*)
 - Answer: the pump breaks down and they need to use the water from the baobab tree.
 - What does Grandmother mean when she says, "Maybe it's wise to mix the old and the new"?
 - Answer: Technology can help improve our lives, but we shouldn't forget the old ways of doing things when new inventions come along.
 - What does the title of the book refer to?
 - Answer: "My great-grandmother's gourd" is the name given to the baobab tree by the women in Fatima's family. The tree is called a gourd because an empty gourd can be used as a container to hold water.
 - Can you think of any examples from your own life when you've mixed the old with the new? (*Bloom: Knowledge*)
 - Are there times when it's good to do something the "old-fashioned" way, even though it might take more time?
 - Does anyone in your family do some things in an old-fashioned way?
4. Have the students return back to their seats.
5. Introduce the Character Tree to the students.
6. Have each student come up and pull a numbered post-it note off the character tree.
7. Orally have the students discuss what each character did in the story. (*Gardner: Verbal-Linguistic*)

8. Each student will write his or her own opinion in the box provided.

- Continue/repeat until each character is represented.

Closure:

Have the students write about something new that has changed something old in their journals. The students can share their experiences with the class. Use the journals daily to help connect to other lessons. (*Gardner: Intrapersonal*)

Adaptations/Enrichment:

Enrichment:

High Ability Group:

Because it has gnarled, stunted branches and a wide, sprawling root system, the baobab tree is known in Africa as the “upside-down tree.” But this unusual looking tree is very useful. Its large trunk can store water; its bark can be used to make cloth, rope, baskets, and more; its young leaves are a food source; and it provides shelter and food for several animal species.

Have the student draw a picture of a baobab tree on a sheet of paper. (Use page 82 as a guide if needed or use one from the Internet). Ask students to label the tree to describe the process by which Fatima and her grandmother store water or have the students research the tree and label its parts and how they are useful.

(this is what I used when I taught)**

Adaptations:

Student with a learning disability in reading/writing:

Give the student only three of the six characters to write about in each sitting; Fatima, Grandmother, and Ibrahim. Allow the student to list characteristics and 50% more time on the assignment.

Self-Reflection:

SELF REFLECTION:

Was the lesson engaging? Was the Book appropriate? Did the worksheet supplement the book/standard? Did the students enjoy the lesson? What could you add or remove?

The students really enjoyed listening to the story on the floor. Even though they are 6th graders, it gave them a more comfortable setting to listen to the story being read. The question about “new and old technology” really gave the students a way to connect with the book and their families. I think it would be very beneficial next time to ask a question on at least every page, if not more to keep the students engaged. The story has a higher vocabulary, so it is very

important that next time when reading the story I read a lot slower and ask more review questions.

For the transitions from the story to the activity, it was very important to set clear expectations of what I wanted the students to do that were also very quick from the floor to the chairs. As for the activity, I decided to put one of the worksheets on the board that had sticky notes attached to them with numbers. I went around the room and had each student come up to the board and pull off a sticky note. The character that was underneath that sticky note was the character that as a class was going to be discussed. The students did a good job of working together and the chemistry of the students fed off one another's answers. I found this activity of getting up to the board very engaging and the students really liked the idea that they all got a turn.

I was overall impressed with the responses from the students' assessment trees. I guided them through the assessment without directly giving them the correct answer. Each student correctly identified the characters from the book with their own individual answers. If I were to do this lesson again, I would like to have a copy of the book for each of the students so that they could take turns reading. Another activity I would of liked to add would be letting the students carry buckets of water back and forth just to see how hard it really was. If more time permits next time, this would be something hands-on that would relate to the characters of the story.

adapted

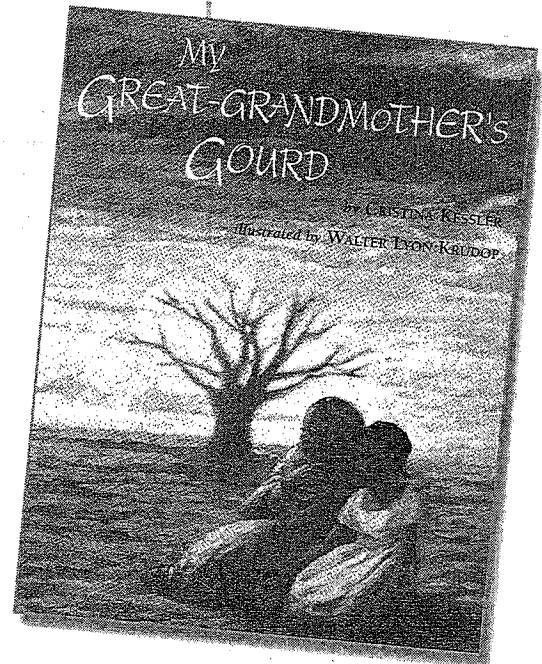
My Great-Grandmother's Gourd

BY CRISTINA KESSLER
(ORCHARD BOOKS, 2000)

taught
Tues Nov. 10

The Republic of the Sudan is the largest country in Africa. It is located in northeastern Africa and is bordered on the north by Egypt. About forty percent of Sudan's population are Arabs, who generally live in the northern parts of the country. Traditional African cultures and languages are more prominent in the south. Conflicts arose when Islamic leaders in the north tried to impose Islamic laws on the entire country, resulting in a civil war from 1956 to 1972. The current form of government is an Islamic military regime.

This book is set in the Northern Kordofan region of Sudan. Although this desert area has been spared from much of the war and violence in the south, it has been plagued by drought and famine. In recent years it has seen one of the worst droughts in the country's history.



About the Book

This picture book is narrated by Fatima, a young girl who lives in a village in Sudan. When a new water pump is installed on the well, all of the villagers give up their old ways of storing and collecting water during the rainy season—except Fatima's grandmother. She refuses to change her ways, and Fatima decides to help her.

Objectives

Students discover how people living in a desert in Sudan obtain water.

Comprehension Questions

- ② 1. How does the water pump change life in Fatima's village? (The villagers no longer have to work hard to get water with camels and buckets; they no longer worry about running out of water.)
- ④ 2. Describe how Fatima and her grandmother use the baobab tree to store water. (First they dig a trench around the tree. Then rain fills the trench with

Additional Resources

Sudan (Cultures of the World) by Patricia Marjorie Levy (Benchmark Books, 1997)

Colorful photos illustrate sections on geography, history, arts, and more.

water. Fatima climbs up the tree and uses a bucket to pour the water into a hole in the trunk. The tree acts like a large container that holds the water.)

- ③ 3. Why do you think Fatima's grandmother insists on preparing the baobab tree? (She has more faith in her old ways than in the new water pump.)
- ⑤ 4. The villagers think Grandmother is foolish for filling up her tree. What happens to change their minds? (The pump breaks down and they need to use the water from the baobab tree.)
- ⑥ 5. What does Grandmother mean when she says, "Maybe it's wise to mix the old and the new"? (Technology can help improve our lives, but we shouldn't forget the old ways of doing things when new inventions come along.)
- ① 6. What does the title of the book refer to? ("My great-grandmother's gourd" is the name given to the baobab tree by the women in Fatima's family. The tree is called a gourd because an empty gourd can be used as a container to hold water.)

Writing Prompt:

Can you think of any examples from your own life when you've mixed the old with the new? Are there times when it's good to do something the "old-fashioned" way, even though it might take more time? Does anyone in your family do some things in an old-fashioned way?

The Baobab Tree (SCIENCE)

Because it has gnarled, stunted branches and a wide, sprawling root system, the baobab tree is known in Africa as "the upside-down tree." But this unusual-looking tree is very useful. Its large trunk can store water; its bark can be used to make cloth, rope, baskets, and more; its young leaves are a food source; and it provides shelter and food for several animal species.

Have each student draw a picture of a baobab tree on a sheet of paper. (Use the reproducible on page 82 to guide you, or locate a picture on the Internet or in a book.) Ask students to label the tree to describe the process by which Fatima and her grandmother store water. Or, have students research the tree and label its parts and how they are useful.

enrichment

Finding Water (SCIENCE)

The people in Fatima's village get their water from a well. From where do you get water in your community? Ask students how much they know about where their water comes from. How far away is the nearest source of drinking water? Is it cleaned in any way? Take a trip to a local reservoir, or invite a representative from the water utility to come speak to your class.

Water Conservation Posters (SCIENCE)

Conserving water is important no matter what country or climate we live in. Have students research water conservation tips. They can visit a Web site such as www.waterinfo.org, or you can request information from your local water utility. Have each student pick one tip and create a colorful poster highlighting that conservation idea. Hold a "Water Savers Week" and challenge students to pick one activity (such as turning off the running water while brushing their teeth) and try doing it for a week.

Character Tree (LANGUAGE ARTS)

Objective: Students learn the role that the characters play in the story.

Using the Page: If you read the book aloud to the class, you may wish to go back through the pages together to find the names of some of the characters.

Answers: Grandmother saves water in the baobab tree; Fatima helps Grandmother; Ibrahim is the village chief; Nagla makes fun of Grandmother; Ahmed the barber thinks Grandmother is foolish to stick to the old ways; Boubacar the cart maker fixes the water pump.



Where the People Are (GEOGRAPHY, MAPPING)

Objective: Students learn about the pattern and causes of human settlement in Sudan.

Using the Page: Review the map key with students. Explain that the different shaded areas show how many people live in one square mile.

Answers: 1. b. the northeast; 2. b. the Nubian Desert; 3. a. the Nile; 4. Most people in Sudan live near rivers or bodies of water. It is easier to live and survive when water is nearby.



Animal Watch

enrichment

Camels play a role in the story.

Students can research camels and add a page to their Animal Watch books (page 7).



Name _____

Date _____

Character Tree

This baobab tree is sprouting the names of characters in *My Great-Grandmother's Gourd*.
Under each character's name, write a sentence describing his or her role in the story.

2

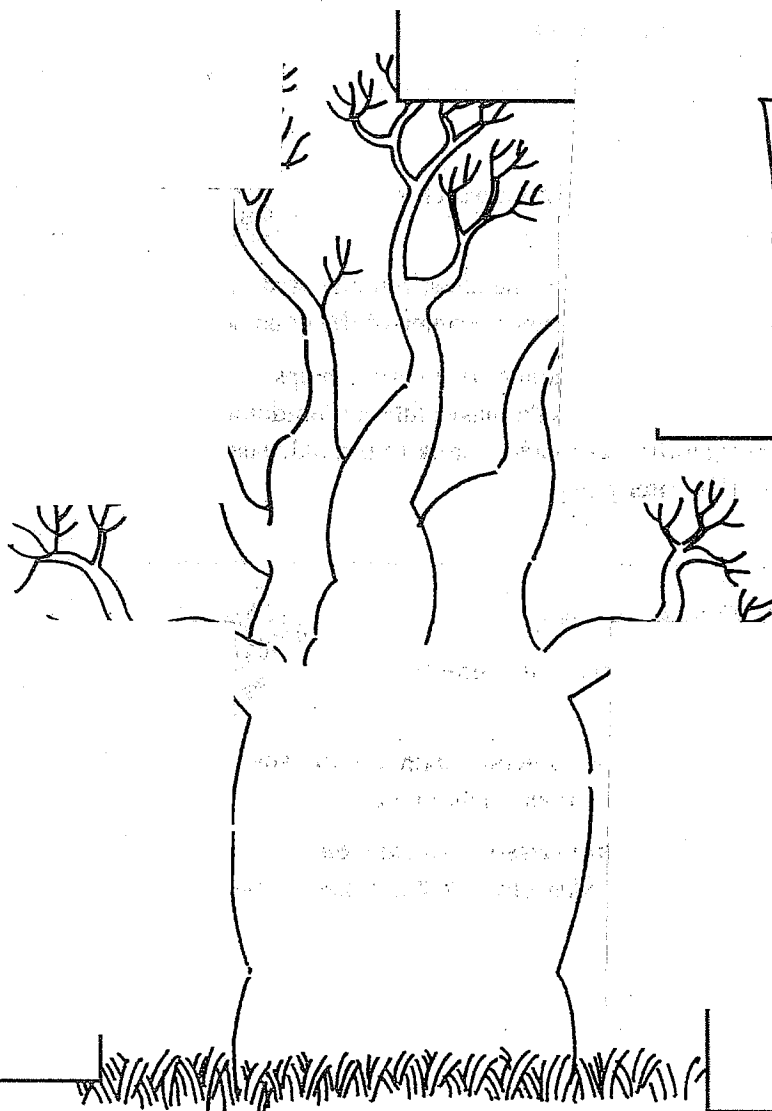
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3

4

5

6



Name _____

Date _____

Character Tree

This baobab tree is sprouting the names of characters in *My Great-Grandmother's Gourd*.
Under each character's name, write a sentence describing his or her role in the story.

Fatima

Grandmother

Ibrahim

Nagla

Ahmed

Boubacar

Name _____

Date _____

Character Tree

This baobab tree is sprouting the names of characters in *My Great-Grandmother's Gourd*.
Under each character's name, write a sentence describing his or her role in the story.

main character
Fatima
grand-daughter
helps village
mix old w/ new

Grandmother
stubborn
old-fashioned
uses baobab
tree to All water

Ibrahim
village chief

Nagla
the neighbor
"always has something
to say"
makes fun of her

Ahmed
the barber
"laughed, never sink in"
"some people like
extra work"
foolish

Boubacar
cart builder
make a missing /
broken part from
pump, days / fixes

used as giant
water gourds

old baobab tree
shade in day
shelter in the rain
water in the dry season
"tree of life"