

WebVisit—PBS Kids Go! Africa for Kids

<http://www.pbskids.org/africa>

by Bonnie J. Krueger



Summary

The internet can be a valuable teaching tool in the music classroom. *PBS Kids Go!* has created a fun and interactive Web site to help kids learn all about Africa, from the music and dances to traditional Swahili folk tales. You can also utilize the numerous lesson plans provided by the site to enhance these WebVisits or create additional activities for your students.

Each of the following WebVisits is based around the *Africa for Kids* Web site (see address above). A reproducible map page has been provided at the end of the WebVisits to help your students further understand the geography associated with the lessons.

WebVisit #1

Begin this WebVisit on the main page of the Web site. Introduce your students to Femi, a young Nigerian boy who will serve as their guide through Africa. Explore this homepage so that the students can get an idea of what they will be learning. Read the titles of the four main icons: *My World*, *Thumb Piano Tunes*, *Make a Mask*, and *Swahili Folk Tale*.

Click on the *My World* icon, and have one of the students read Femi's dialogue aloud. Choose one student to select a school's photo album to look through. While the students are looking at the pictures, read the captions next to each one. Talk about the similarities and differences between this school and your school. A few discussion ideas:

- What do the students in the pictures do for fun?
- What do they eat? Where do they get their food?
- What kinds of classes do the students attend?

Ngaka Maseko High in South Africa, Cannon Kituri School in Kenya and Mengo Senior School in Uganda all have pictures highlighting different aspects of music and dance. As you come to these pictures, discuss them with your students. What kind of instruments can you find? What types of music performance can be found at these schools?



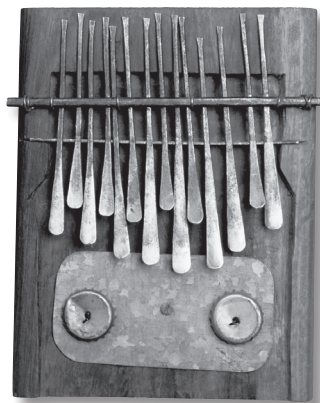
WebVisit #2

For this WebVisit, the free Adobe Flash Player needs to be installed on your computer. If you do not have this, <http://www.pbskids.org/africa> will lead you through the downloading process.

Before the students enter the classroom, go to the Piano Thumb Tunes page, check that Adobe Flash Player has been installed, and click Go. When you are ready to begin the WebVisit, read Femi's instructions to the students. Make sure the volume is turned up loud enough for everyone to hear. Select *listen to some tunes*, and allow the students to choose which song they would like to listen to first. Choose between:

- Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
- Mary Had a Little Lamb
- Bhutsu Mutandiraka
- Chemutengure

While each song is playing, Femi says a few facts about thumb pianos. After each song, have one student read Femi's information to the rest of the class. You can even print the sheet music for each song and have the students follow along.



When all of the songs have been played, click on *make music*. Select one student to control the mouse, and have him/her record a piece of thumb piano music. By clicking on the thumb piano keys with the mouse (or using the computer's keyboard), the student can compose a new piece or play a piece from the sheet music provided on the site. Click *Record* to begin recording, and when the student is finished, click *Stop*. After a song has been recorded, have the student play it back to the class by clicking *Play*. Let the students take turns on the virtual thumb piano.

WebVisit #3

A Swahili folk tale is the basis of the third WebVisit. Before class begins, decide whether you would like the students to take turns reading the folk tale aloud, or if you would like to play the audio book on the computer. If you would like to listen to the recorded story, be sure that you have Real Audio Player downloaded onto your computer. (As in WebVisit #2, if you do not have Real Player, <http://www.pbskids.org/africa> will lead you through the downloading process.) Starting at the homepage, click on the *Swahili Folk Tale* icon and Femi will explain the steps to follow. If you would like the students to read aloud, remain on this page until the students are ready to begin.

Make sure the students understand that it is very important to listen to the beginning of the story, as they will need to help Prince Sadaka, the main character, make several important decisions later on. Read (or listen) through the story. When it comes time to answer questions, have the students decide as a class what Prince Sadaka should do during his three tests. You as the teacher will choose the final answer and see if Sadaka passes each test. Even if the answer is incorrect, continue moving through the story—even wrong answers will affect the outcome.

This activity presents a great opportunity for learning about orchestration. The sounds made by the birds, crickets, and djinns (mysterious spirits) in the story can be created on classroom instruments. Discuss the instruments that could be used and how they should be played—loud or soft, fast or slow, etc. Divide the class into three groups, assign each group a part (bird, cricket, or djinn), and have them create an orchestration for their part. When the students are ready, read the story again, but this time add the new orchestration. (Refer to Patricia Bourne's lesson for *The Rough-Face Girl* on pages 48–49 for additional ideas.)



A New Revolution

by Mark Burrows

Suggested Grades 3-6

Perf.



Acc.



© Olivier Blondeau

This upbeat, catchy tune is the perfect way to mark Earth Day, April 22. It is also a good option for year-end performances, sending students home for the summer conscious of being good stewards of their planet.

The reproducible fact sheet, *Recycling*, found on page 28 is a great tool for imparting more information to students. And the activity that follows is a great way to bring “reusing” alive in a musical way.

Post-Consumer Pandemonium

In this activity, students will create musical instruments from various recyclables.

Materials

- Assorted recyclable materials such as plastic soda bottles, coffee cans, oatmeal containers, cardboard boxes, cardboard tubes, rubber bands, wax paper, and paper*
- Several pairs of scissors
- A few rolls of tape
- Assorted crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- A few unsharpened pencils

Process

1. Have the students sit in a circle on the floor. Spread the recyclable materials on the floor in the center of the circle. Invite the students to sit quietly and look at all the materials, envisioning what possible musical instruments could be made.
2. After a minute or two allow the students to choose materials and construct their own instruments.
3. You may need to be available to settle any disputes should more than one student wish to work with the same item. (Oh yes, it will happen, which is why it's a good idea to have several samples of each item available.) If time allows, the students may wish to decorate their instruments using the assorted crayons and markers.
4. Once each student has made an instrument, allow time for the students to show and demonstrate their instruments to the others. Finally, you can have the students play along as they sing *A New Revolution*.

* Make sure all recyclable materials are clean and free of sharp edges. If old newspapers and/or magazines are made available, make sure there aren't any images which may be age-inappropriate.

© Eric Michand



A New Revolution

by Mark Burrows

This is a new revolution.
Science can lead the way.
It's time to end world pollution.
With trash lying on the ground all around,
We must save the earth from decay.
Let's start today!

There is so much we can recycle.
Paper and plastics, metals too.
And when you have an empty can or cardboard box,
Don't throw it out, but make it something new.

This is a new revolution.
Science can lead the way.
It's time to end world pollution.
With trash lying on the ground all around,
We must save the earth from decay.
Let's start today!

Our ozone layer's getting thinner.
We've got to burn less fossil fuel.
Let's ride our bikes or take the bus as science finds
New energies that keep our planet cool.

This is a new revolution.
Science can lead the way.
It's time to end world pollution.
With trash lying on the ground all around,
We must save the earth from decay.
Let's start today!

We must respect the world around us;
Protecting ev'ry tree and flow'r.
Then we can put our planet back the way it was.
It's up to us! We know we have the pow'r.

This is a new revolution.
Science can lead the way.
It's time to end world pollution.
With trash lying on the ground all around,
We must save the earth from decay.
Let's start today!
This is a new revolution!



© Sharon Dominick

The original subscriber of *Activate!* has permission to reproduce this song or activity for use in his or her classroom.

© 2008 Heritage Music Press, a division of The Lorenz Corporation. All rights reserved.