

## Elementary Lessons Starter Kit Grades 3 - 6

### 1. What is A Griot?

### 2. Researching a Modern Day Griot

#### Understanding Griots for Grades 3-6

Objective: Students will learn about the role and significance of griots in West African culture through storytelling, music, and discussion.

Grade Level: 3rd to 6th Grade

Duration: 1 class period (approximately 45-60 minutes)

Materials Needed:

- Whiteboard and markers
- Picture book about griots or West African culture
- Audio samples of griot music use [www.afroheritage.ca](http://www.afroheritage.ca)
- Handouts with information on griots [www.afroheritage.ca](http://www.afroheritage.ca)
- Map of West Africa

Lesson Outline:

Introduction (10 minutes)

Hook Activity:

1. Storytelling Session: Start with an engaging story from a picture book about a griot or a story from West Africa. Select a story that is age-appropriate but also offers deeper insights into the role of griots.
2. Discussion: Ask the students what they enjoyed about the story and why. Use this as a segue to introduce the concept of griots.

Objective Presentation:

1. Definition and Introduction: Introduce the term "griot." Explain that griots are historians, storytellers, poets, and musicians who play a vital role in West African culture.
2. Visual Aid: Show a map of West Africa to give students geographical context. Highlight countries where griots are traditionally found.
3. Brief Overview: Explain that griots are responsible for preserving the oral history of their people, often memorizing and reciting genealogies, historical narratives, and cultural traditions.

Direct Instruction (15 minutes)

Definition and Roles:

1. Detailed Explanation: Provide a more detailed explanation of what griots do. Discuss their

- roles as oral historians, praise singers, and cultural custodians.
2. Visuals: Show pictures of griots in traditional clothing, playing instruments, and performing. Use a whiteboard to write down key terms and their meanings.
  3. Handouts: Distribute handouts with concise information about griots, including their roles and significance in society.

#### Cultural Significance:

1. Historical Context: Explain how griots have been crucial in societies without written languages, serving as the living archives of their communities.
2. Discussion: Engage students in a discussion about the importance of oral traditions and how they compare to written history.

#### Interactive Activity (15 minutes)

##### Listening to Griot Music:

1. Audio Clip: Play a short, age-appropriate audio clip of griot music.
2. Discussion: Ask students to listen carefully and share their thoughts on how the music makes them feel. Discuss the instruments used and the style of music.

##### Making Music:

1. Hands-On Activity: Provide simple instruments like drums or tambourines. Let the students experiment with creating their own music.
2. Group Activity: Divide the class into small groups and encourage them to create a short "story" with music, emulating the griots.

#### Art Activity (10 minutes)

##### Coloring Activity:

1. Coloring Sheets: Provide coloring sheets with images of griots, drums, and West African patterns.
2. Interactive Discussion: As they color, walk around and talk to them about what they've learned about griots. Encourage them to share their thoughts and ask questions.

#### Conclusion (10 minutes)

##### Recap Key Points:

1. Review Session: Gather the students and briefly review the key points about griots. Emphasize their role in storytelling, music, and preserving history.
2. Student Participation: Ask a few students to share one thing they remember about griots and why it is important.

##### Closure:

1. Song or Dance: End the lesson with a fun griot-related song or dance that the students can join in. This helps reinforce the cultural aspect of the lesson in an enjoyable way.

**Additional Resources:**

- Books:
  - "The Story of the Drum" by Lloyd Moss
  - "Mama Panya's Pancakes: A Village Tale from Kenya" by Mary and Rich Chamberlin
- Music: Traditional griot music samples available on platforms like YouTube.

**Evaluation:**

- Participation: Observe student participation in the music and coloring activities.
- Knowledge Check: Assess their ability to share what a griot is and why they are important during the recap.

By the end of the lesson, students should have a comprehensive understanding of who griots are, their role in storytelling and music, and their significance in preserving history and culture in West Africa.

## **Lesson Plan: Researching a Modern Day Griot for Kindergarten to Grade 2**

**Objective:**

Students will learn about the role of modern-day griots, their contributions to culture and society, and how to conduct simple research.

**Grade Level:**

Kindergarten to Grade 2

**Duration:**

1 class period (approximately 30-40 minutes)

**Materials Needed:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Picture book about a modern-day griot or relevant cultural figure
- Computer or tablet for showing video clips
- Short, age-appropriate videos about modern griots
- Simple research worksheets
- Coloring sheets with images related to griots and West African culture
- Crayons and pencils

**Lesson Outline:**

### Introduction (5 minutes)

1. **Hook Activity:**
  - Start by asking the children if they remember what a griot is. Provide a brief recap if needed.
  - Show a picture of a modern-day griot who tells stories
2. **Objective Presentation:**
  - Explain that today they will learn about modern griots who are similar to traditional griots but live and work in today's world.

### Direct Instruction (10 minutes)

1. **Introduction to Modern-Day Griots:**
  - Read a short story or show a picture book about a modern-day griot. Example: a book about Youssou N'Dour or another contemporary artist from West Africa who continues the tradition of storytelling through music.
  - Discuss how these modern griots use music and stories to share important messages and keep traditions alive.
2. **Simple Explanation of Research:**
  - Explain that they will do some "research" to learn more about a modern griot. Simplify the concept of research by explaining it as finding out more about someone or something by looking, listening, and asking questions.

### Interactive Activity (10 minutes)

1. **Video Viewing:**
  - Show a short, age-appropriate video clip of a modern griot. Discuss what the children saw and heard.
  - Ask questions like:
    - What instruments did they see?
    - What kinds of stories or messages were in the music?
2. **Class Discussion:**
  - Lead a discussion about the video. What did the children like about the story? What did they learn?

### Guided Research Activity (10 minutes)

1. **Research Worksheet:**
  - Provide a simple worksheet with prompts such as:
    - Draw a picture of the griot.
    - What is the griot's name?
    - What stories do they tell?
2. **Research in Pairs:**
  - Pair up the children and let them work together to complete their worksheets. Assist them by providing information and showing more pictures or clips if necessary.

### Art Activity (5 minutes)

1. **Colouring Activity:**
  - Give out colouring sheets related to modern griots and West African culture.
  - Encourage children to add details from what they've learned about modern griots.

### Conclusion (5 minutes)

1. **Sharing and Recap:**
  - Have a few children share their drawings and one thing they learned about the modern griot they researched.

- Recap the importance of griots and how even today, people continue to share stories and music in similar ways.

**2. Closure:**

- End with a fun song or dance inspired by the griot's performance to engage the children and reinforce the day's lesson.

**Additional Resources:Videos:**

- Age-appropriate clips of modern griots performing, available on YouTube.

**Evaluation:**

- Participation in the discussion and activities.
- Completion and understanding demonstrated in the research worksheets.
- Engagement in sharing and art activities.

By the end of the lesson, students should have an understanding of what modern-day griots do, how they are similar to traditional griots, and why their work is important in preserving and sharing culture.

