

Young Audiences of Massachusetts

Educational Materials

Please forward to teachers

4/2/10

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

Valerie Tutson: Tales from African Traditions

Grade levels: K-8

Energetic and enthralling international storyteller Valerie Tutson brings to life a combination of tales from Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas. She draws upon her travel experiences to help students discover the rich beauty, humor and enchantment of myths, folktales and historical stories indigenous to these areas. The selection of stories, tailored for each student group, is always age-appropriate.

LEARNING GOALS:

1. To experience the art of storytelling.
2. To get familiarized with African folktales.
3. To learn about Africa and the Caribbean and the traditions associated with these places and to make connections with African American traditions.

PRE-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *African and Caribbean Life*

Begin with a discussion about Africa and the Caribbean asking students to share any words, traditions, or other ideas that relate to these places. Assign small groups a topic (i.e., traditional food, culture, art/architecture, holidays, geography, history, etc.) and ask each group to research the topic. Each group presents their research to the class.

POST-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *Deconstructing Stories*

Students review the stories presented and identify the main characters in the stories. They note the personalities, roles, and other attributes of their characters. Students think up other possible outcomes of the stories, determine how this each would play out on stage and present these possible outcomes to the rest of the class.

CURRICULUM LINKS:

African American Studies, English Language Arts, History and Social Science, Multicultural Studies, Theater

PRE-ACTIVITY: AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN LIFE

LEARNING GOAL:

To learn about traditional food, culture, art/architecture, holidays, geography, and history of Africa and the Caribbean Islands

MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Books about Africa and the Caribbeans

TIME:

Two 45-minute sessions

STEP 1:

Discuss Africa and the Caribbean Islands. Using a bubble chart, ask students to share any words, traditions, or other ideas that relate to these places.

STEP 2:

Divide the class into groups, and assign each group a topic (i.e. traditional food, culture, art/architecture, holidays, geography, history, etc.). Ask each group to research its topic in relation to Africa and the Caribbeans.

STEP 3:

Give students time to use the resources both in and outside the class to research their topics.

STEP 4:

Have each group present its research creatively to the class (i.e. through drawing, maps, crafts, dance and/or music, etc.).

EXTENSIONS:

1) Discuss folktales. Read a folktale to the class and discuss its elements (i.e. characters, setting, problem, conclusion, and moral). Create a story map and model it with the class. Have students read another folktale and create their own story maps. Ask students to share their story maps with the rest of the class.

2) Research places other than Africa and the Caribbean. How are they the same? Different?



POST-ACTIVITY: *DECONSTRUCTING STORIES*

LEARNING GOAL:

To explore the plot and characters in the stories presented by Valerie Tutson

MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Pens and paper

TIME:

45 minutes

STEP 1:

Discuss the plots of the various stories presented. Have students identify the main characters in the stories.

STEP 2:

Assign students to be scribes for each character. Discuss the personalities and roles of each character. Have scribes write down all of the important information discussed about their characters.

STEP 3:

Have students think up other possible outcomes of the stories. Have the scribes write down these outcomes.

STEP 4:

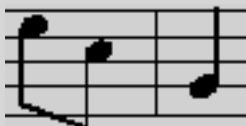
Divide the class into groups. Assign each group one of the alternative outcomes that were brainstormed. Ask the groups to work together to determine how the possible outcomes would change the story.

STEP 5:

Ask groups to present possible outcomes to the rest of the class, either by presentation, acting it out, or storytelling.

EXTENSIONS:

- 1) Have students write their own version of one of the folktales Valerie Tutson told.
- 2) Tell one true story and one fabrication to get students to tell their own stories and use their imaginations. First, the teacher provides two examples as a model. Students then have 30 seconds to tell the story of two specific events that happened to them (30 seconds for each one). Classmates vote which is the true story and which is made up. This activity can also be done in pairs or small groups for more comfort with presentation.



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RESOURCES:

Bauer, Caroline Feller. Read for the Fun of It: Active Programming with Books for Children. H.H. Wilson Company, 1992.

Gregory, Cynde. Childmade: Awakening Children to Creative Writing. New York: Station Hill Press, 1990.

Trelease, Jim. The Read-Aloud Handbook. New York: Penguin Books, 1995.

<http://www.proteacher.com/090062.shtml>

ABOUT THE PERFORMER:

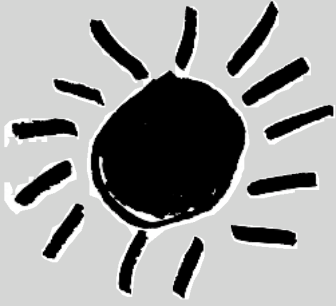
Valerie Tutson graduated from Brown University with a masters degree in Theatre Arts and a degree in a self-designed major, Storytelling As a Communication Art. Valerie has been telling stories in schools, churches, libraries, festivals and conferences since 1991. She draws her stories from around the world, with an emphasis on African traditions. Her repertoire includes stories and songs she learned in her travels to South Africa, her experiences in West Africa, and stories from African American history. In addition, she is gaining quite a reputation for her exciting re-telling of age-old Bible stories. In addition to delighting listeners with her storytelling, she also teaches workshops and classes to students of all ages. She has been hosting Cultural Tapestry, an award-winning show for COX3 celebrating the diverse cultures around us, for 12 years. Valerie has most recently served as the co-director of the National Black Storytelling Festivals in Providence, RI and Tampa, FL. As a founding member of the Rhode Island Black Storytellers (RIBS), Valerie directs the Funda Fest: A Celebration of Black Storytelling, which brings the finest in cultural arts edutainment to the Rhode Island community.

ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES:

Young Audiences/ Arts for Learning (YA), America's largest arts in education nonprofit, transforms the lives and education of our youth through the arts. The organization connects professional artists with schools, libraries, community organizations, and hospitals to provide artistically excellent assembly programs that further develop Creative Learning and Life Skills.

All YA artists are professional artists who have completed a rigorous interview and audition process and are evaluated annually on their work. Through in-school assembly performances, workshops, master classes and artist-in-residence programs, teachers and coordinators integrate the arts in their academic and enrichment programs while directly addressing national and state content standards.

Healing Arts for Kids expands YA's mission to make the arts a part of EVERY child's education. A group of professional artists provide assembly programs, small presentations, and residencies to acutely and chronically ill children, physically and emotionally challenged children, and other special education populations in K-12 schools, hospital schools, hospitals, and homeless shelters.



Young Audiences of Massachusetts

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MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS CONNECTIONS

Valerie Tutson: *Tales from African Traditions*

<i>Arts-Theatre 1</i>	Acting...Students will develop acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes.
<i>Arts-Theatre 5</i>	Critical Response...Students will describe and analyze their own theatrical work and the work of others using appropriate theater vocabulary.
<i>Arts-Theatre 10</i>	Interdisciplinary Connections...Students will apply knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history, and social science, mathematics, and science and technology / engineering, and scripted scenes.
<i>Arts-Connections 6-10</i>	Students will investigate the historical and cultural contexts of the arts, learn about the arts in their communities, and use their knowledge of the arts in the study of other disciplines.
<i>English Language Arts 9</i>	Students will identify the basic facts and essential ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed.
<i>English Language Arts 16</i>	Students will compare and contrast similar myths and narratives from different cultures and geographic regions.
<i>History & Social Science 8</i>	Places and Regions of the World...Students will identify and explain the location and features of places and systems organized over time.