

Distance Learning at the Cleveland Museum of Art
African Art: The Secular and the Supernatural
Grades 7-12

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Teacher note:

Please copy the Study Guides and pens or pencils to take notes and aid discussion during the videoconference.

How to Prepare Your Class for the Distance Learning Presentation

Teacher Information will be sent or made available to you prior to the program.

Please familiarize yourself with the materials and discuss them with your class.

Have the Teacher Information Packet (T.I.P.) materials on hand in the classroom, ready for the program. These materials may be used during the videoconference.

Be prepared to facilitate by calling on students yourself during the lesson. Students are sometimes initially shy about responding to questions during a distance learning lesson.

Explain to students that this is an interactive medium and encourage them to ask questions.

Reinforce topics discussed in the program by asking students to complete some of the suggested pre- and post-conference activities in the Teacher Information Packet.

We ask teachers, after the program, to please fill out the Evaluation Form and return it to:

Dale Hilton/Distance Learning
The Cleveland Museum of Art
11150 East Boulevard
Cleveland, OH 44106

Thank You!

Teacher Information Guide

Distance Learning at the Cleveland Museum of Art
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Grades 7-12

CMA Program Objectives:

1. Students will learn the similarities as well as differences among the Yoruba and Benin peoples—particularly in regards to attaining political power—which are reflected in their works of art.
2. Students will understand that secular power in both the Yoruba and Benin cultures is acquired and maintained through access to supernatural power.
3. Students will create a chart during the program which illustrates how Yoruba and Benin art relate in terms of politics and religion, as well as representations of ancestry.

Common Core Standards:

7th Grade

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on *grade 7 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.4

Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.7.2

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.4

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.7.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCAA.ELA-Literacy.W.7.6

CCAA.ELA-Literacy.WHST.7.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.7

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.7.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

8th Grade

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on *grade 8 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.4

Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.8.2

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.4

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.8.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCAA.ELA-Literacy.W.8.6

CCAA.ELA-Literacy.WHST.8.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.7

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.8.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

Grades 9-10

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.7

Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.2

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.4

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCAA.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.6

CCAA.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.7

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Grades 11-12

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.2

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.4

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCAA.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.6

CCAA.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.7

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

National Education Standards:

For Fine Arts - Visual Arts (grades 5-8, 9-12):

- Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.
- Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.
- Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

For Language Arts - English (grades K-12):

- Evaluation Strategies
- Communication Skills
- Applying Knowledge
- Multicultural Understanding

For Social Sciences - Geography (grades K-12):

- The World in Spatial Terms
- Places and Regions
- Human Systems
- Environment and Society

Description:

This program compares ritual and royal objects from the Yoruba and Edo peoples of Nigeria to learn how their rulers maintain worldly authority with the assistance of supernatural forces. Students will delight in examining a colorful beaded crown which empowers a Yoruba ruler and a three-hundred-year-old bronze sculpture which establishes legitimacy for an Edo king. These and other stunning objects introduce divination, mythology, and communication with ancestors to your class.

Prior to the Program:

1. Students should be familiar with the geographical locations of the Yoruba and Benin peoples.
2. Each student should have a copy of the Study Guide and a pen or pencil to take notes.
3. Read about the rituals of Divination. Write down all of the activities associated with the ritual. (i.e. objects, tools, materials, chants)

Selected Vocabulary:

Supernatural: Powers or experiences that are beyond our knowledge of human beings and nature.

Secular: People, objects, institutions, or actions encountered in common daily experiences that are not connected to religious, spiritual, or sacred associations.

Yoruba: An African ethnic group with a population of 20-25 million, composed of more than sixteen kingdoms.

Benin: An African kingdom whose population is approximately 1-2 million. They're also called the Edo.

Oba: The title of an African king.

Divination: A sacred ritual in which priests try to help people solve their problems through prayer, sacrifice, and the interpretation of divine messages.

Eben: A ceremonial sword that has no cutting edge and is given to all Benin chiefs. Ebens are used in all ceremonies and carried and tossed into the air by chiefs during the processional dance. At home, ebens are often kept on an altar.

Casting: A method of creating and molding objects made of metal, such as bronze or gold.

Medicine: This term has two meanings for the Yoruba and Benin cultures. The first meaning is related to physical healing, a definition with which we are familiar. The second meaning relates to supernatural powers, acquired and wielded primarily by kings and priests, and others who use them to protect themselves or act aggressively toward enemies.

Teaching Extensions (Language Arts/Social Studies/Visual Arts):

1. In this lesson we briefly mention the impact of the British invasion on the art of the Benin (mismatched ancestor heads and tusks). Students could research and write an essay on the consequences of Western invasion on the social, political, and/or cultural traditions of the Yoruba and/or Benin cultures and how these consequences affect our understanding of their history.
2. The DL lesson presented the meanings and functions of works of art within Yoruba and Benin cultures. Follow up the lesson with a discussion of the impact of trade materials on artistic production and/or economic progress (i.e. bronze, beads, ivory, etc.) How does the material chosen for a work of art affect its longevity, form, heritage and meaning?
3. Talk about masks in 20th century Western society – both figuratively and literally – where do you see them? Who wears them? Why are they worn? How do they function? Compare the answers to the use of masks by the Yoruba culture.

4. Design a crown, mask, or plaque including objects, symbols, and colors relevant to your life, the life of a famous person, or an important event.
5. The deities of the Yoruba and Benin peoples are often personified by kings. In turn, the events and accomplishments of these deities and/or kings are memorialized in public celebrations. Research the history of the Benin king named Asigye. What was his relationship to deities? Compare how events from his life relate to public ceremonies. Discuss: What events from U.S. history have been turned into celebrations? How are they enacted?
6. Students can devise and organize their own procession by choosing an event or legend and determining which costumes, actions, etc. would best physically recreate it.

Additional Resources:

Websites:

- The African Art Museum of Maryland – <http://www.africanartmuseum.org/>
- Art and Life in Africa Online - includes lesson plans, overviews of African countries and peoples. Go to “Peoples of Africa” then “Yoruba.” <http://africa.uima.uiowa.edu/>
- Looking at African Art and Culture - <http://csuimages.sjsu.edu/gallery/exhibits/african/africaexhibit/imageswitharrows/Introduction.html>
- Smithsonian National Museum of African Art - <https://africa.si.edu/>

Print material:

Ajayi, J. and M. Crowder. *History of West Africa*. New York: Longmans Group, 1974.

Bascom, William. *Ifa Divination: Communication Between Gods and Man*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969. – an eBook that can be accessed through netLibraries.

Drewal, Henry John and John Pemberton III. *Yoruba: Nine Centuries of African Art and Thought*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989.

Ben-Amos, Paula Girshick. *The Art of Benin*. Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995.

Audio/Visual material:

Drewal, Margaret Thompson. *Yoruba Ritual Performers, Play, Agency*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Writing about Art

Learning to write about art is a helpful tool in understanding it. Once the observer knows what to look for in a piece of artwork, it becomes easier to both write about and understand the work. Art critics use a process known as DAIE (Describe, Analyze, Interpret, and Evaluate) to critique an artwork. Listed below is a guideline that will help you engage in this process.

DESCRIBE:

1. *What do you see? What is this picture about?*

People

Objects

Scene – time and place

Action – what is going on?

2. *How is the work made? What materials, tools, or process are used? What elements has the artist manipulated? The following list may be helpful.*

Oil, watercolor, pastel, ink, clay

Palette knife, brush, pen, chalk, etching, screen printing

Color, value, line, shape/form, space, texture

ANALYZE:

3. *How is the artwork organized? Do certain aspects stand out to you? How does your eye move over the piece? Is there any type of pattern or rhythm created in the work? Are elements proportionally correct (right size comparatively)?*

INTERPRET:

4. *How does the work make you feel?*

Happy, sad, anxious, angry, nostalgic, adventurous

Are the brushstrokes rough or smooth, or are they evident at all? Are the colors hot or cool?

Is the subject matter active or quiet? Are the lines flowing, irregular, or discontinuous?

In addition to analyzing the work, it is also important to do a little research about the artist such as when and where the artist lived. What were some of the things the artist was concerned about and how is this apparent in his or her work? Were there things in the artist's life that inspired him or her? In short:

5. *What can you learn about the artist?*
 - What country is the artist from?
 - What can you find out about his or her experiences?
 - What ideas or feelings is the artist suggesting?

EVALUATE:

Finally, play the role of the art critic. Art criticism is based on a number of things. Think, for example, about the style the artist is using. You may want to consider the following approaches the artist may have taken:

Realism: The artist accurately describes the subject matter – the art looks real.

Formalism: The artist has experimented with shape, color, space in an unusual way.

Now put it all together! You decide-

6. *Has the artist succeeded in doing what you think he or she tried to do? Explain your opinion with **why** you feel the way you do about the artwork.*

Distance Learning Study Guide
The Cleveland Museum of Art
African Art: The Secular and the Supernatural

Summary of the Yoruba and Benin People

Secular power is acquired and maintained through access to supernatural power in both the Yoruba and Benin cultures. The two cultures share some beliefs, but their royal power structures are different in inheritance and execution, as are their artistic styles.

Yoruba

- large population: 20-25 million people
- several kingdoms
- kingship is not inherited
- kings must be trained about the power of medicine
- works of art often relate to the power of deities because the king is strongly associated with them
- women are commonly represented in works of art

Benin

- smaller population: 1-2 million people
- one king
- kingship is inherited from father to son
- kings must be trained in the power of medicine
- works of art emphasize the power of the king
- women are rarely represented in works of art

Using the information provided on this page and from your study guides, write short essays that compare and contrast some of the images from the Distance Learning lesson.

- 1) Compare and contrast the Benin *Ancestor Head and Tusk* to the Yoruba *Crown*. How are they made differently? How do they relate to the way each group of people believes in the concept of the head? How do they relate to the attainment of kingship and beliefs about secular and supernatural power?
- 2) Compare and contrast the Yoruba *Divination Cup* to the Benin *Plaque with Warrior Chief*. How were they made? What are their functions? How do they relate to beliefs about secular and supernatural power?

	Epa Mask	Sacred Crown	Divination Cup	Warrior Plaque	Ancestor Head & Tusk
Origin (Yoruba or Benin?)					
Secular Characteristic(s)					
Supernatural Characteristic(s)					
How does this image represent people and/or their activities?					
How does this image honor family or ancestry?					
What is the function of this image?					
What does this image communicate?					

Content Comprehension Questionnaire - ANSWER KEY

Distance Learning at the Cleveland Museum of Art

African Art: The Secular and the Supernatural

True or False

- 1) **T** **F** Benin kings inherit the throne from their fathers; the Yoruba throne is not inherited.
- 2) **T** **F** Women are never represented in Yoruba and Benin images.
- 3) **T** **F** All works of art made in Africa are created in the same style, so they look the same.
- 4) **T** **F** The carvings on tusks of ancestor heads relate to the history of the oba for whom the tusk was created.

Multiple Choice

- 5) What does the word “medicine” refer to in the Yoruba and Benin cultures?
 - a. physical healing
 - b. supernatural powers
 - c. both a and b
 - d. neither a or b
- 6) What is the significance of the sacred crown and its veil for Yoruba kings?
 - a. The crown contains medicine which enhances the supernatural powers of the king.
 - b. Yoruba kings are never supposed to appear in public with their heads uncovered.
 - c. The king’s subjects are never supposed to look him in the eye because his power could hurt them.
 - d. all of the above
- 7) Which culture has celebrations to the head and strong beliefs in supernatural powers?
 - a. Yoruba
 - b. Benin
 - c. both
 - d. neither
- 8) What is the purpose of the divination process?
 - a. to help people become gods
 - b. to find solutions to earthly problems through supernatural means
 - c. to divide family possessions
 - d. to anoint holy objects
- 9) What did the Epa Mask represent?
 - a. an African community
 - b. a king and his entourage
 - c. a fun costume
 - d. a free standing sculpture

Content Comprehension Questionnaire

Distance Learning at the Cleveland Museum of Art
African Art: The Secular and the Supernatural

Name: _____

True or False

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Multiple Choice

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 - d. a free standing sculpture

Selected Images



Head, mid 1500s or early 1600s
Africa, Nigeria, Benin Kingdom, Edo people
Brass
1938.6



Plaque, possibly 1500s-1600s
Africa, Nigeria, Benin Kingdom, Edo people,
Brass
1953.425



Mother and Child Caryatid Vessel,
mid-late 1800s
Africa, Nigeria, Yoruba people
Wood
1994.200



Orangun Epa Headdress, c. 1925
Bangboye of Odo-Owa (Nigerian, c. 1895 - 1978)
Carved and painted wood
1991.165

The Cleveland Museum of Art Distance Learning Evaluation Form

Your Name _____

Your School _____

School Address (with zip code) _____

E-mail Address _____

Grade/Class of students (e.g. 10th grade French) _____

Program Title _____

Program Date _____

Thank you so much for your participation in our distance learning program. We would appreciate your response to these questions by circling the appropriate answer and returning the survey. Please Mail or Fax to Dale Hilton at 216-707-6679

**5= Strongly Agree 4= Agree 3= Neither Agree nor Disagree
2= Disagree 1= Strongly Disagree**

1. The teacher information packet was helpful for preparing my class and me for the distance learning lesson.

5 4 3 2 1

2. The teaching style of the on-camera instructor was interesting, engaging and fostered interaction.

5 4 3 2 1

3. The Teacher Information Packet was helpful in providing interdisciplinary extension activities that I did use or plan to use.

5 4 3 2 1

4. The distance learning lesson successfully taught its objectives.

5 4 3 2 1

5. The distance learning lesson was not interrupted by technical difficulties.

5 4 3 2 1

6. The pre-requisites the distance learning lesson and extensions are aligned with The National Education standards.

5 4 3 2 1

7. I plan to register for another distance learning lesson.

(circle one)

Yes

No

If no, why? _____

8. I would like more information about The Cleveland Museum of Art's Teacher Resource Center.

(circle one)

Yes

No

9. Why did you choose The Cleveland Museum of Art Distance Learning?
(circle one)

- a.) Price Point
- b.) Quality of lessons
- c.) Selection of lessons
- d.) Ease of working with CMA
- e.) Other

10. How did you hear about The Cleveland Museum of Art Distance Learning program?
(circle all that apply)

- a.) CMA inservice
- b.) CILC
- c.) TWICE
- d.) Conference
- e.) Brochure
- f.) The Cleveland Museum of Art website
- g.) The Teacher Resource Center
- h.) Other

11. Do you have any additional comments about the distance learning lesson?

Please return the completed teacher evaluation form to:

**Dale Hilton/Distance Learning
The Cleveland Museum of Art
11150 East Boulevard
Cleveland, OH 44106**

Or fax to Dale Hilton at 216-707-6679