

ETHIOPIA

Mark It on the Map

Have students locate Africa and then Ethiopia on a world map. Have students turn to page 4, and ask them to name the countries that border Ethiopia. Then have them locate these countries on the world map. As you work with the issue, have students refer to the map on page 4 to locate the sites mentioned.

Vocabulary

Dinknesh	parchment
stele	icon
filigree	triotyech
annexing	calligraphy
orthodox	

Introduction

Bring several Sunday newspapers to class. Divide the class into groups and give each group a paper. Ask the students to look for articles that relate to Ethiopia. Have each group cut out the articles that they find and then present a brief overview of the articles. Discuss the impressions the articles have given them of Ethiopia.

Questions for Discussion

- Who was responsible for bringing Islam to Ethiopia? Explain your answer.
- What are the principal religions practiced in Ethiopia?
- Who was Menilek? How did his rule affect the history and geographical boundaries of Ethiopia?
- Explain the custom of annual pilgrimages. In what way do they reflect the diversity of the Ethiopian culture? Give specific examples.
- Which two tasks involving crafts in Ethiopian communities are most commonly performed by men? By women? How do they learn these crafts?
- The cross and other Christian symbols are important motifs in Ethiopian religious art. How is this fact reflected in the lifestyles of Christian Ethiopians? (They often wear a necklace with a cross pendant; some carry strips of parchment painted with pictures of holy figures.)
- What are the main themes of Ethiopian Christian art? Who were the artists? Their patrons? Where was most of the artwork located?
- What is a triotych? Where are they usually found? Why were triotychs and similar paintings so important to the spread of Christianity in Ethiopia?
- In what ways has the custom of basket making among the Harari changed?

Writing Workout

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Write an essay explaining why and how many of the current national borders in Africa were determined.
- Write an essay explaining why Ethiopia is often called “a museum of peoples.”
- Choose the artist/artisan/object in the article “Artists and Artisans” on pages 17–25 that you like best. Describe your choice and then explain why you chose it.
- Explain how Haile Alemseged makes his artistic works look “old.”
- Make a list of the various ways the people of Harar use the baskets made by the Harari women. Next to each, write whether the use was in the past or present, or both past and present.
- What is your favorite illustration in this issue? Why? Be specific with your reasons.

Think About It

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Archaeologists have uncovered gold, silver, and copper coins in Aksum to help tell the history of the area. What clues to the past do you think coins can provide?

- Why do you think the Christians in Lalibela carved their churches out of rock? (Possible answers: Stone was readily available; there were large areas of solid stone in the highlands where Lalibela is located; stone was durable and required little maintenance.)
- Read the tale on pages 10–12. What is the moral of the story? Be specific with your answer and give examples that explain your answer.
- Why do you think the stomach was the “clever” body part and not the brain? Be specific with your answer.
- Locate Harar on the map on page 4. How and why do you think its geographic location contributed to its becoming a major urban trade center? Follow-up: Do the reasons you listed apply to all, or at least most, urban trade centers? Explain your answer.
- Why do you think young girls in Harar today have no time to make baskets? Follow-up: Are there skills that were once practiced in this country that are no longer practiced? Explain your answer and compare with basket making in Harar.

Business Techniques

What do you think about Haile Alemseged’s comment, “It is what the tourists want” (page 31)? Think of similar situations in your own community. List at least two and explain in what ways each follows the same business policy Haile does.

Get Into Art

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Read the article “Different Landscapes, Different Lives” on pages 13–16. Make a collage that clearly illustrates the title’s meaning. Label each image in the collage. Idea: Have an outline of Ethiopia as the background for the collage and then place the images and illustrations in the proper geographical locations.
- Read about parchment strips with religious figures on pages 29–31. Design your own parchment strip using the material and images in the article on pages 26–31 as a guide. Explain your designs and the purpose of the strip in an accompanying paragraph. Suggestion: This may be done in groups with a spokesperson from each group describing the group’s strip to the rest of the class. Or hang the individual strips with the explanations attached around the room.
- Read about Haile Alemseged’s work on pages 30–31 and then follow his technique to design an “old” icon.

Working With Words

Let students use dictionaries to find out the difference between a “diptych” and a “triptych.” Then have them find other words that use the prefixes “di” and “tri.” Follow-up: Ask each student to write one or two sentences that include a word that begins with the prefix “di” and a word that begins with the prefix “tri.” After each explains his or her choices and their meaning, hang their sentences around the room.

Play the Part

Read the tale on pages 10–12. Divide the class into nine groups. Assign each of eight groups one of the body parts mentioned in the tale, and have them design an appropriate prop. Assign the ninth group the tasks of narrating the tale and designing a prop that shows a body with all eight parts working well together and not working well together. Have the students act out the tale, using the props, for another class. (Note: The narrating group should also prepare an introduction that explains that the tale is an Oromo tale, who the Oromo are, and where they live.)

Mark It on a Time Line

Read the article about Ethiopia on pages 4–9 with the class. Divide the class into six groups and assign each group the task of briefly outlining the events of one of the time periods in the article (prehistoric/fossil remains, Aksum/Lalibela, Ahmad Gragh/Islam/Oromo people, Menilek I/European influx, Haile Selassie I, Mengistu/EPRDF/Transitional Government of Ethiopia). Have the students post their papers in chronological order on a classroom wall.

Class Project

There are ten images of people crafting works of art in the article “Artists and Artisans” on pages 17–25. Assign each student (or group) one of the images and ask them to read the caption, prepare a description of the person and artifact described, and present it to the class. Follow-up: 1) Bring books with color images of Ethiopia and its artists and artisans to class. Have students find color images that complement the one they are describing and use them in the presentation. 2) Bring books to class that show artists and artisans in the United States. Have students find images that complement the one they are describing and use them in the presentation. Explain the similarities/dissimilarities between the two.

Research Projects

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Divide the class into four groups. Assign one group the task of finding out how far Ethiopia is from their home state; another the task of finding out the size of Ethiopia in comparison with the United States; another the population of Ethiopia and that of the United States; another the form of government and who the present leader is. Let each group present its findings.
- Have students check out the various names by which Ethiopia has been known. Divide the class into groups and have each group research the origin and history of one of the names. Then have a spokesperson from each group report the group’s findings to the class.
- Have students research the lifestyles and customs of the Oromo.
- Have students research Aksum and the Christian Church in Ethiopia. Have them report on the circumstances surrounding King Ezana’s conversion to Christianity. Also have them find out what religion the king followed before becoming a Christian.

Mapping It Out

Hang a map of Africa on the wall that shows the lakes, rivers, and other physical features. As the students read each site location in an article, have them mark it on the map and note the physical geographical setting.

Guest Lecturer

Check the yellow pages for an Eastern Orthodox Church in your area. Call and ask if someone from the church might come and talk to the class about the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, or patriarchs.

Just for Fun

Try making the Ethiopian specialties found on pages 32–33. Invite another class to sample them. Before you partake of the feast, explain what each dish is.

Follow These Footsteps

Ahmad Gragh
Emperor Menilek II
Haile Selassie I

Mengistu Haile Mariam
Haile Alemseged