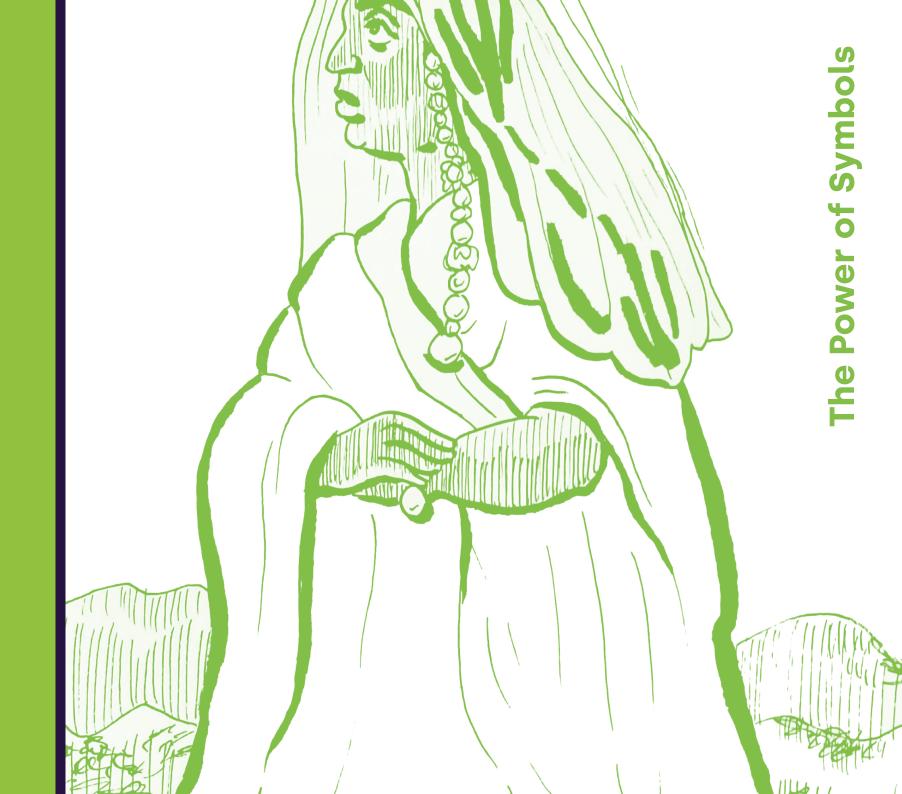
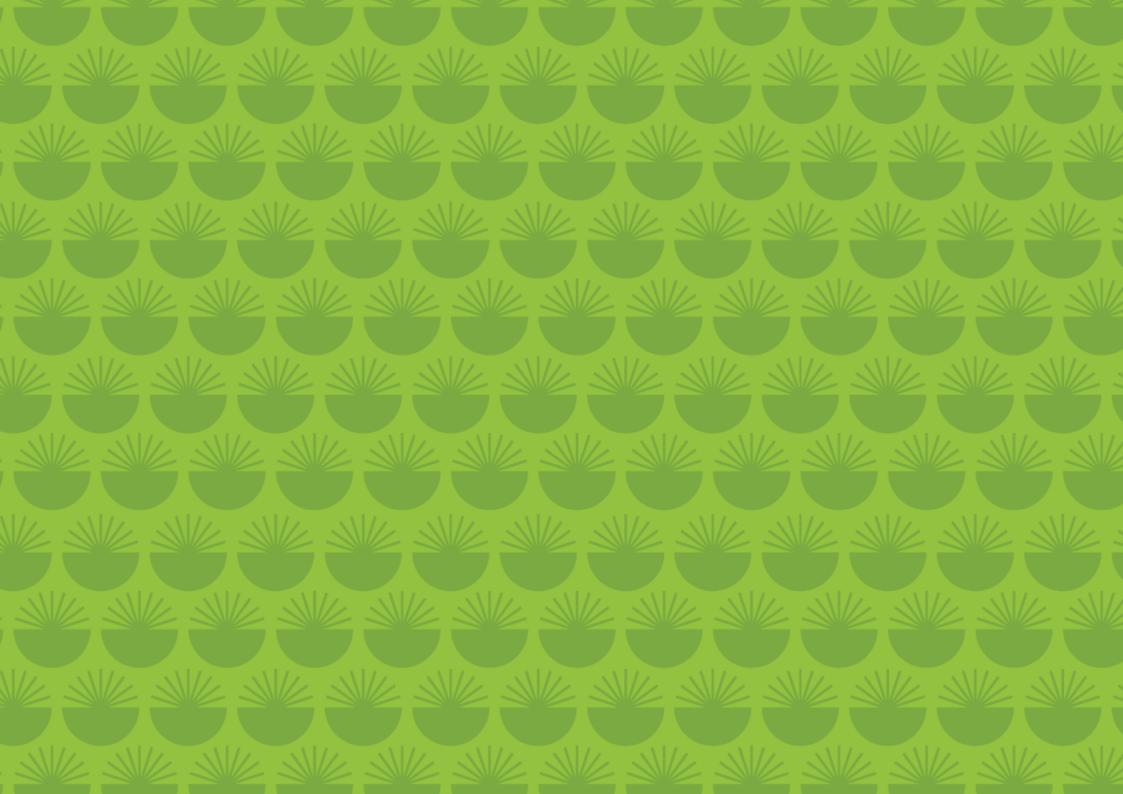
# Mother Africa







# **Mother Africa: The Power of Symbols**

Since ancient times, symbols have been used as a way of understanding the world around us. This module will help students to understand African symbols and their impact on the world today. Through looking at symbols and stories of belonging, students will explore their place as citizens of the world.

# **Key Question**

How have art and symbols been used to tell stories of belonging in African culture?

**5 Cs Focus:** Compassion, Curiosity and Critical Thinking.

**Resources included:** Powerpoint, videos from contributors, Print outs of Adinkra Symbols and World Map, glossary and pronunciation guide.





# Compassion

I am able to put myself in someone else's shoes.

# Introduction

Our vision is to have The World Reimagined's Learning Programme be a creative and interactive Journey of Discovery with lasting impact for students. For younger learners, we focus on the theme of Mother Africa to build a new understanding of where this story begins and enable students to understand, honour and celebrate a vivid history of Africa. Each module will be created and brought to life, in the classroom, in collaboration with an artist and a subject matter expert.



The vision of The World Reimagined is really to shape how young people see themselves and each other – inspiring and empowering students to make racial justice a reality. And so every module must contribute towards developing one or more of the 5 Cs:



# Curiosity

I seek additional knowledge through asking thoughtful questions.



# Courage

I step bravely into issues that are difficult to understand and hard to discuss.



### Connection

I can draw the threads between the history I learn and today's reality.



# **Critical thinking**

I use logic to connect the dots. I'm unafraid of reason and challenge.



# **Scheme of Work**

# **Modules**

- Dance, Music and Storytelling
- Icons and Heritage
- Science and Maths
- Society, Education and Food
- The Power of Fashion
- The Power of Symbols

# **THIS MODULE: The Power of Symbols**

This resource pack provides 6 lessons:

**Lesson 1:** Introduction to Symbols **Lesson 2:** What are Adinkra Symbols?

**Lesson 3:** Gallery of Symbols

Lesson 4: African Symbols – Global Impact

**Lesson 5: Coming to England** 

Lesson 6: Design Your Own Symbol

There are learning objectives provided for each lesson to guide teachers' delivery.

The order of activities can be flexible. Lessons that could be linked together are marked.

Please use separate resource listing reflection + extension activities for the end of class.

Universal Skills Builder Framework
Listening: Levels 0-6
Speaking: Levels 0-8
Creativity: Levels 0-11
Teamwork: Levels 0-8

Cross-Curricular Links
English and Literacy
Art and Design
Geography
History



# **Co-Creators:**



# **Baroness Floella Benjamin**

Floella Benjamin was born in Trinidad in 1949 and came to England in 1960 as part of what is now called the Windrush Generation. She left school at 16 with the aim of becoming Britain's first ever black woman bank manager but changed direction and became an actress, presenter, writer, award winning independent producer, politician and an active advocate for the wellbeing, care and education of children throughout the world.

She has won many awards for her work. She was made a Baroness in 2010 and has written several children's books.

Twitter: @FloellaBenjamin

Instagram: baronessfloellabenjamin

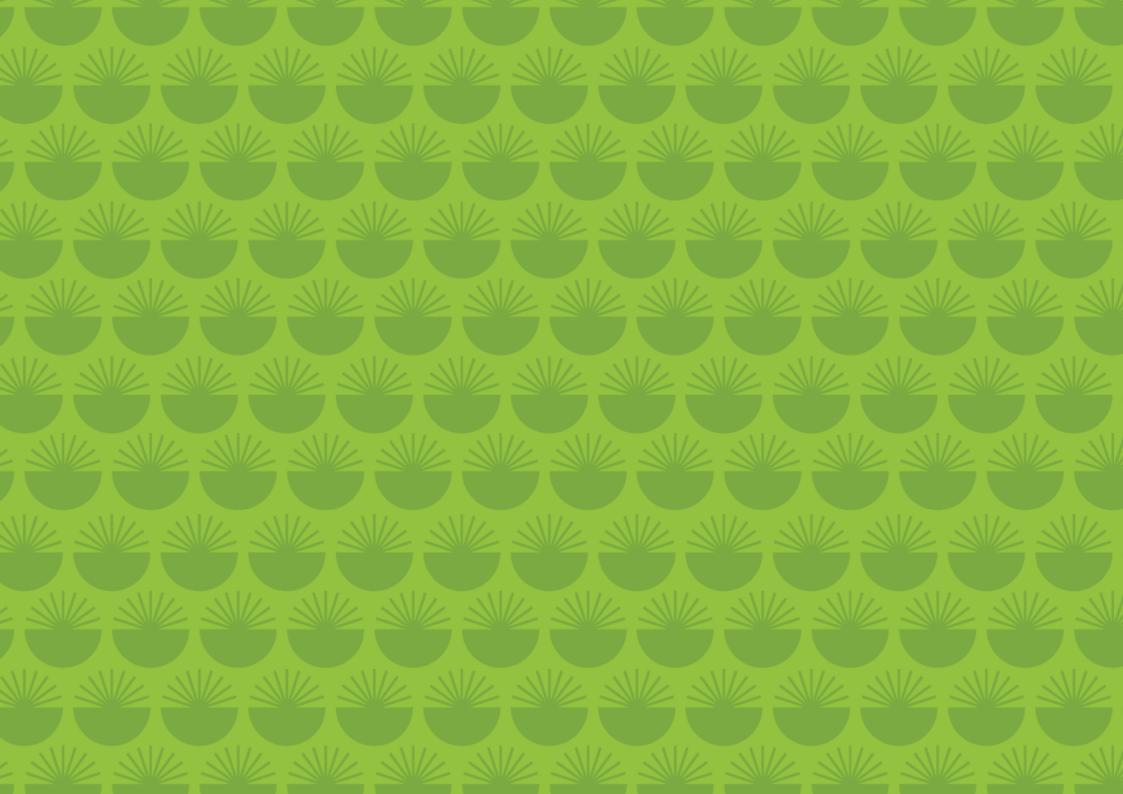


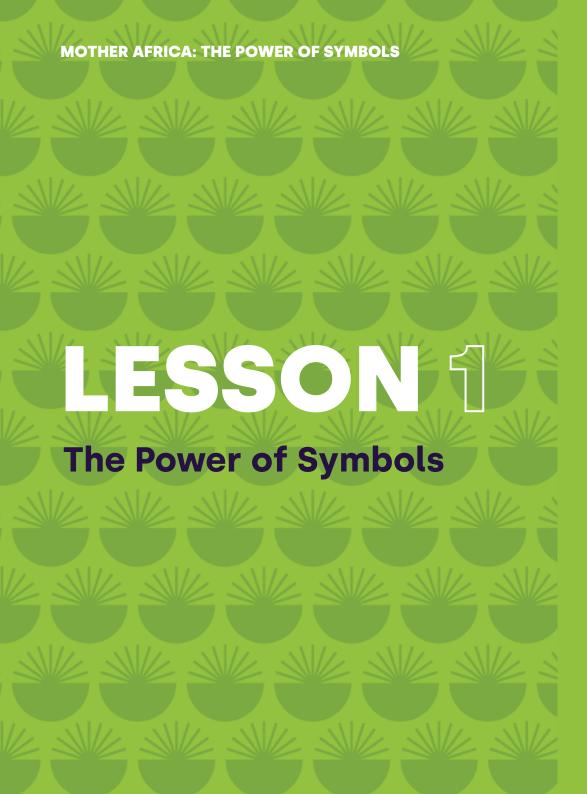
# **Merissa Hylton**

Merissa Hylton is an artist and educator who focuses on painting, designing buildings, fabrics and sculpture. She explores ancestry and symbolism and is heavily inspired by African symbols and spirituality.

Website: www.merissahylton.com







In this lesson learners will start to think about what symbols mean to prepare for future lessons on Adinkra symbols leading up to making their own art together. This is a good point to gauge how familiar your students are with Africa as a continent.

Although this lesson doesn't go into as much detail about the Adinkra symbols (lesson 2) it is worth knowing that Adinkra symbols originated in West Africa (Ivory Coast and Ghana) and they have moral teachings and have travelled all over the world (lesson 4). This region of Africa was a major source for African Peoples who were captured to be sold as enslaved people in The Transatlantic Slave Trade.

While this module centres on pre-slavery, this is useful background material for some of the subject matter - for example when we talk about the Adinkra symbols travelling across the globe in Lesson 4 - the widespread influence of Adinkra symbols is partially because so many African Peoples were forcibly moved across the globe. This lesson also introduces Floella Benjamin and Merissa Hylton you can read more about them in the contributor's bio section.



# **The Power of Symbols**

# **Learning Objectives:**



- To be introduced to what a symbol is and why we might use them.
- To be introduced to some Adinkra symbols and think about how we can use their meaning.
- To think about how we can use symbols to agree on our behaviour as a class.





- To know what a symbol is and where and when we use them.
- To be curious about Adinkra symbols and Floella and Merissa's work.
- To think about others when participating in class.



### **Resources Needed:**

• Powerpoint Slides 1-18.



### **Additional Resources & Links:**

Print out of Adinkra symbols.





- Symbols
- Africa
- Adinkra
- Patience
- Understanding



# **Misconceptions:**

- We don't use symbols any more.
- Remind the learners of images around the classroom, of emojis and other very popular symbols.
- Africa is all the same country.
- Continue to be specific about the country's of origin of different cultures in Africa, point out the different countries on the map.



# Introduction:

Steps		Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
1	Share the 3 Cs most relevant to this module.	<b>Slide 2</b> contains the 3 Cs most relevant to this activity.	Ask learners to give examples of when they have been able to be compassionate, curious and connected
2	Explain that we will be exploring symbols today as part of a bigger project about African art and that we are building up to creating a piece of art together.	<b>Slides 3-4</b> contains the learning objectives and main question for the lesson.	You might want to use the glossary to make sure learners are aware of where Africa is and that it is a continent not a country.
3	Introduce Merissa and Floella, explain that Merissa is inspired by African symbols in her art.	Slides 5-7 contains intro and images of Floella and Merissa and video from Merissa about Adinkra symbols.	What do you like about art? What are your favourite things to draw?
4	Ask learners to try describing the image.	Slide 8 contains an image of one of Merissa's sculptures.	Let the learners know they will find out more soon. What questions do they have?



# **Learning Activities:**

Step	)S	Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
5	Explain that these symbols are a way of explaining an idea or a thought without using words. A way we often do this now is through emojis. Ask the learners to attempt to use their faces to recreate the emojis.	Slide 9-10 contain common images of emojis.	When have you seen emojis used?
6	Ask learners to think about why sometimes we use pictures instead of words.	<b>Slide 11</b> contains the question for learners to respond to.	Possible answers: not everyone can read! They look nice. They are fun! You can use images that are special to you without too many extra words!
7	Together we're going to look at some images to show how symbols can give advice. As they will be working with each other, introduce some symbols and what you can learn from them. You can call this your 'group agreement'. Add that this is a safe and brave space to talk and ask questions.	Slide 12-16 contain some Adinkra symbols and their meaning to help class think.	'What skills do we need to work together?' Feel free to add useful symbols from the resource pack to your slides if they feel really relevant to your class. In what ways as a class make sure we are patient, understanding, working together, learning something? Can you give an example of a time you were able to be one of these things?



# **Review Learning:**

Step	)S	Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
8	Ask learners to draw their favourite of the symbols and write the meaning next to it. What is something they can do in the next week to remember this symbol?	<b>Slide 17</b> contains this question for the learners.	You can return to symbols from earlier in the lesson.



This lesson goes into detail of the origins of Adinkra symbols and supports learners to understand the importance of symbols across history. These symbols originated in the West Coast of Africa (Ivory Coast and Ghana) long before that area was colonised by the English and French, and before the partition of Africa (see Glossary).

During the colonisation of West Africa, African people were kidnapped and placed on ships to be sold into slavery. In lesson 4 you will discuss how these symbols moved around the world. While Merissa was born in the UK these symbols are important to her, to help her connect with her ancestors. We use the word diaspora for people who live elsewhere but feel a strong connection to another homeland e.g. the African Diaspora.



# What are Adinkra Symbols?

### **Learning Objectives:**



- To learn about specific symbols from West Africa.
- To understand that symbols are important to remembering culture.
- To learn about how symbols have been used in art.

# **Learning Outcomes:**



- To know where Adinkra symbols come from.
- To connect the history of Adinkra symbols to your own class.
- To be able to ask questions about art.



### **Resources Needed:**

- Print out of Adinkra symbols
- Powerpoint Slides 19 27



### **Additional Resources & Links:**

- Map of Africa/ World map
- Coloured stickers





- Adinkra
- Ivory Coast
- Ghana
- Ancient
- Ashanti People
- Sculptures

# **Misconceptions:**



- These symbols from Africa aren't important for us to know.
- Let learners know that these symbols have powerful meanings that are relevant even to us now. It is important to respect the history of other places.



# Introduction:

Step	os estados est	Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
1	Prepare the space for small groups to be able to move around.	<b>Slide 19</b> contains some images of Adinkra symbols and instructions for learners.	This could also take place in a hall or bigger space.
2	Split learners into groups of four and ask each group to create a visual representation of one of these symbols, using their own bodies to create the shapes.	<b>Slide 19</b> contains images for them to try.	You also have a print out of all the shapes that they can use.
3	Have each group demonstrate their shapes to the rest of learners in turn.		What meaning were you able to get across? Which of the symbols did you like the most? Were some easier than others? Do you remember these symbols from last time?



# **Learning Activities:**

Step	os	Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
4	Remind learners of what we learnt in lesson 1 about Adinkra symbols.	<b>Slide 20</b> contains image of Merissa's sculpture.	Before this activity you might want to have some of your school's symbols or symbols around classroom to point out. Does your school have a logo you can draw to the student's attention?  You can refer back to their group agreement.
5	Share that today we'll be talking more about Adinkra symbols, use powerpoint to explain the history of Adinkra symbols.	Slides 21-24 contains information about the origins of Adinkra symbols including maps and images.	Use the African map resource to illustrate where Ivory Coast and Ghana are.
6	Ask learners to spot the difference between Merissa's sculptures and the original symbols. Use the discussion questions to think about the history of people and where they come from and why that might be important to art.	<b>Slide 25</b> contains images of more of Merissa's sculptures.	Can you tell what Merissa was inspired by? What has she changed from the original symbols? What has she kept the same? Why might she do that?



# **Review Learning:**

Steps		)S	Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
	7	Start discussion about your heritage as a group, – you could mark them on the world map with coloured stickers	Slide 26 contains the questions from discussion section.	Where does your family come from? What are some images and symbols that remind you of that place?





MOTHER AFRICA: THE POWER OF SYMBOLS

In this lesson the learners will learn more about how to think about the meaning of art and symbols. They will do this by imagining themselves in a gallery. An important part of this lesson is to take these symbols seriously as both cultural artifacts and art – this might be an important time to challenge existing beliefs young learners might have about art and its meaning as well as what images are valuable to the modern day.



# **Gallery of Symbols**

### **Learning Objectives:**



- To take a look at more Adinkra symbols in depth
- To develop their critical thinking and understanding of these symbols and their meaning
- To feel like confident art critics.

### **Learning Outcomes:**



- To remember the meaning of specific Adinkra Symbols.
- To know how to ask good questions about images.



### **Resources Needed:**

- Powerpoint slides 28 31
- Adinkra Symbols print out

# ?

## **Misconceptions:**

- Art is just for looking at it doesn't have meaning.
- Return to Merissa's work as an example if this comes up





- Gallery
- Art Critic
- Inspiration
- Harmony
- Faithfulness



# Introduction:

Steps		Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
1	Ask the learners what is the role of galleries and what it might be important to pay attention to. Remind learners of Merissa's sculptures and how before she could make her own sculpture she had to look carefully at the meaning of the original symbols that inspired her.	Slides 28-29 contains image of an empty gallery and image and information about Merissa Hylton.	Have you ever been to an art gallery?  Around the classroom stick different Adinkra symbols up. Refer to their group agreement from <b>Lesson 1</b> if you like.
2	Explain that today we will be treating the classroom like an art gallery and trying to ask questions about what images might mean. Try an example together.	<b>Slide 30</b> contains an example of Merissa's work for learners to respond to.	



# **Learning Activities:**

Step	os	Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
3	Ask the learners to take some time to walk around the room. What can they see?		You could ask them to make notes on post it notes, or call out what they can see
4	On their second walk around the room, change the focus to what could they mean. Remind them that they already know how to think about the meaning of symbols – think about 'the green man' etc	Slide 29 contains image of art critic and of Merissa.	What are some of the patterns and shapes that are common? What do they remind you of?
5	Share answers together and then reveal each answer, is it what they thought?		Why might your answer be different from someone else's?



# **Review Learning:**

Step	)S	Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
6	Ask learners to consider which was their favourite symbol and its meaning, why was that their favourite one?	<b>Slide 31</b> contains this question for the learners.	What is something you can do this week to try to reflect that meaning? i.e. I'll try to be more patient with my brother



In this lesson learners will learn about a specific Adinkra symbol Denkyem as a way of understanding how cultural symbols also have proverbs. The Adinkra symbol Denkyem originated in West Africa and depicts a crocodile.

They will also look at how Adinkra symbols travelled over the world — these symbols have a global impact influenced by the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism — many African Peoples were forcibly moved to USA and Caribbean, Adinkra symbols were are important part of a cultural heritage of the diaspora.



# **African Symbols - Global Impact**

### **Learning Objectives:**



- To understand the impacts of stories on how we understand the world.
- To understand why symbols for the same thing might be different in different places.
- To introduce the idea of how cultures and stories might travel.

### **Learning Outcomes:**



- To know what a proverb is.
- To know how to imagine the meaning of a proverb.
- To be curious about how knowledge and people travel around the world.



### **Resources Needed:**

Powerpoint slides 33-44





- Everyone has the same symbols for everything.
- Cultures from different places might have different symbols for the same, because their environment is different.
- Symbols we see every day don't have a history.
- Every symbol had to be decided and designed by someone or a group for a reason. The history of symbols can tell us lots about the world.

### **Key Vocabulary:**



- Proverb
- Adaptability
- Advice
- Denkyem Wafa Aba
- Hye Won Hye
- Global
- Impact



# Introduction:

Steps		Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
1	Remind learners that we've been talking about Adinkra symbols. today we will approaching 'learning about the past'. You can use the Sankofa symbol to demonstrate this.	<b>Slide 33</b> contains the Sankofa symbol about learning from the past.	
2	Share the meaning of the word proverb.	Slide 34 definition of proverb.	Can you think of any proverbs from your family?
3	Ask learners to guess the meaning of the english proverbs.	<b>Slide 36-38</b> includes several English proverbs with images.	Do you find these proverbs easy to understand? How would you use them to make choices?



# **Learning Activities:**

Steps		Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
4	Share the Denkyem proverb. Split class into pairs to work out the meaning of the proverb.	<b>Slide 38</b> contains the image of Denkyem and its meaning.	This proverb is about adaptability and cleverness, the crocodile uses all of its surroundings and has adapted to live in water! You can help learners understand this by asking them about how they might have adapted to their surroundings - like learning their way around the school!
5	Ask learners to draw an animal that they would use to represent adaptability in the UK.	Slide 39 + 40 contains definition of adaptability and prompt to draw their animal.	What animals do you see every day? What animals do you think of when you think of being able to survive?
6	Explain that they will be thinking a bit more about symbols and where they are from. Ask learners to guess the origins of these symbols they should recognise.	Slide 41 includes images of several symbols learners should recognise.	Recycling logo: A student won a competition in the 1970s to design a symbol of environmental awareness and now it's used everywhere!  Skull and crossbones: most used by English pirates on their flags! often used as a symbol of danger or death on things that are poisonous!  The Save Button: the save symbol is a drawing of a floppy disk! A floppy disk was how we used to save all of our information on computers! before there was the internet!



7

Explain that the Adinkra symbols have had such a large impact they've been used all the way across the world – including the Caribbean.

**Slides 42 -43** contains images of Adinkra symbols around the world and what their meanings are.

What patterns do you see a lot of on buildings in the UK? Do you know what they mean?

# **Review Learning:**

Steps		Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
8	Use a map to illustrate where the Caribbean and New Orleans are, maybe get learners to draw lines between the places. Ask the class to imagine how symbols might have travelled that far.	<b>Slide 45</b> contains the question for learners to answer.	Answers could include: people travelled and took their culture with them.  If you plan to do <b>Lesson 5</b> next let learners know that next lesson they'll be hearing from a special person who travelled all the way from Trinidad to England.





In this lesson learners will hear from Baroness Floella Benjamin who moved to the UK as a child in the 1950s. The learners will read some extracts of Floella's book about coming to England and use this to think about belonging. It is important to highlight that people who immigrated to the UK at that time were invited to work and that it is important to be welcoming and open to people who travel to live in the UK; the below explanation is useful for learners who may have heard of the Windrush Generation or have existing beliefs about immigrants to the UK.

Floella was part of the Windrush Generation (who were in the news a few years ago when the UK government threatened to deport members of the Windrush Generation). The Windrush Generation is made up of 1000s of Commonwealth citizens (54 states who were formally colonised by England) who were invited to come work in the UK after the war and travelled via the Windrush ship between 1949 and 1971. The Windrush Generation were given indefinite leave to remain in 1971 however the government did not keep record of those who were given leave to remain. Therefore the Windrush Generation was apologised to and a compensation scheme was put in place in 2018.



# **Coming to England**



### **Learning Objectives:**

- To explore the concept of belonging and understand one's place in the world.
- To be curious about what we can learn from stories of coming to England.



### **Learning Outcomes:**

- To know more about the Windrush Generation.
- To have empathy for people travelling to the UK, and imagine what might it be like.

### **Resources Needed:**



• Powerpoint Slides 46 - 55



### **Additional Resources & Links:**

- Coming to England Baroness Floella Benjamin
- you can learn more about the Windrush Generation here - https://www.bbc.co.uk/ newsround/43793769.
- You can find more resources on child migration here: https://childmigrantstories. com/learning-resources/schools/

### **Key Vocabulary:**



- Belonging
- Windrush Generation
- Travelling
- Trinidad



### **Misconceptions:**

- England didn't ask people to come from different countries. People who aren't born in the UK don't work hard.
- Be prepared for the possibility that learners might have heard language around immigration in the UK that they don't understand. Focus on how we can make people feel welcome, and how difference is good.



# Introduction:

Steps		Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
1	Explain that you are going to be thinking more about 'belonging' and what it means to belong.	Slide 47 contains the question for the learners and an image of Floella.	When is a time you felt like you belonged?
2	Introduce Floella and The Windrush Generation.	Slides 49-51 contains information about the Windrush and Floella's family.	Watch Floella video to introduce Floella to the class on Slide 50.



# **Learning Activities:**

Steps		Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
3	3. Share extracts of the book. Use discussion questions to get learners' responses to the book.	<b>Slides 52-54</b> contains four pages from the book Coming to England.	You might also want to read the book together as a class.  Have you ever travelled somewhere by ship? How far did you go?  Have you ever moved country? What was it like?  What might you find strange about England if you were arriving for the first time?



# **Review Learning:**

Steps		Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
4	Ask learners to reflect on what Floella's book has taught us about what it's like coming to England, ask learners to make a collective list of things that make them feel welcome somewhere new.	Slide 55 contains the question 'what makes you feel welcome when you are somewhere new?'	If they need a little help you could return to your group agreement and use the wording of Adinkra symbols. (they could write it down or you could for a display)



In this lesson the learners will be asked to design their own symbol of belonging and make a tapestry of all their ideas, inspired by all they have learnt about the power of symbols. You might want to use images and prompt questions from the other lessons to support the learners to do this.

Most important for this module is that the learners understand that difference is good and that you can be inspired by art from all over the world. If students are struggling you can remind them that Merissa also was inspired by the Adinkra symbols and still made art that was her interpretation.



# **Design Your Own Symbol**

# **Learning Objectives:**



- To use everything we have learnt to create a piece of art.
- To put what we know about symbols into practice.
- To imagine together what belonging means for us.



# **Learning Outcomes:**

- To feel more confident communicating complicated ideas like belonging.
- To work together, and respect each other's differences.
- To have a piece of art made together that you are proud of as a group.

### **Resources Needed:**



• Powerpoint Slides 56 - 63



### **Additional Resources & Links:**

- A large piece of cloth
- Colouring pencils
- Fabric pens
- Paints for class to share
- Coloured stickers
- Wall tacks

### **Key Vocabulary:**



- Culture
- Community
- Belonging
- Tapestry



### **Misconceptions:**

- We all have to think the same to be able to work together.
- This is an exercise in difference remind the learners that if they all chose the same image the tapestry would not be so exciting.



# Introduction:

Steps		Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
1	Remind the learners of their group agreement from Lesson 1.		You could test their memory of different symbols.
2	Explain that similar to the original use of the Adinkra Symbols, they will be using cloth and designing their own symbol. Get learners to think about what makes a good symbol.	<b>Slide 56</b> contains a definition of a powerful symbol for learners to respond to.	



# **Learning Activities:**

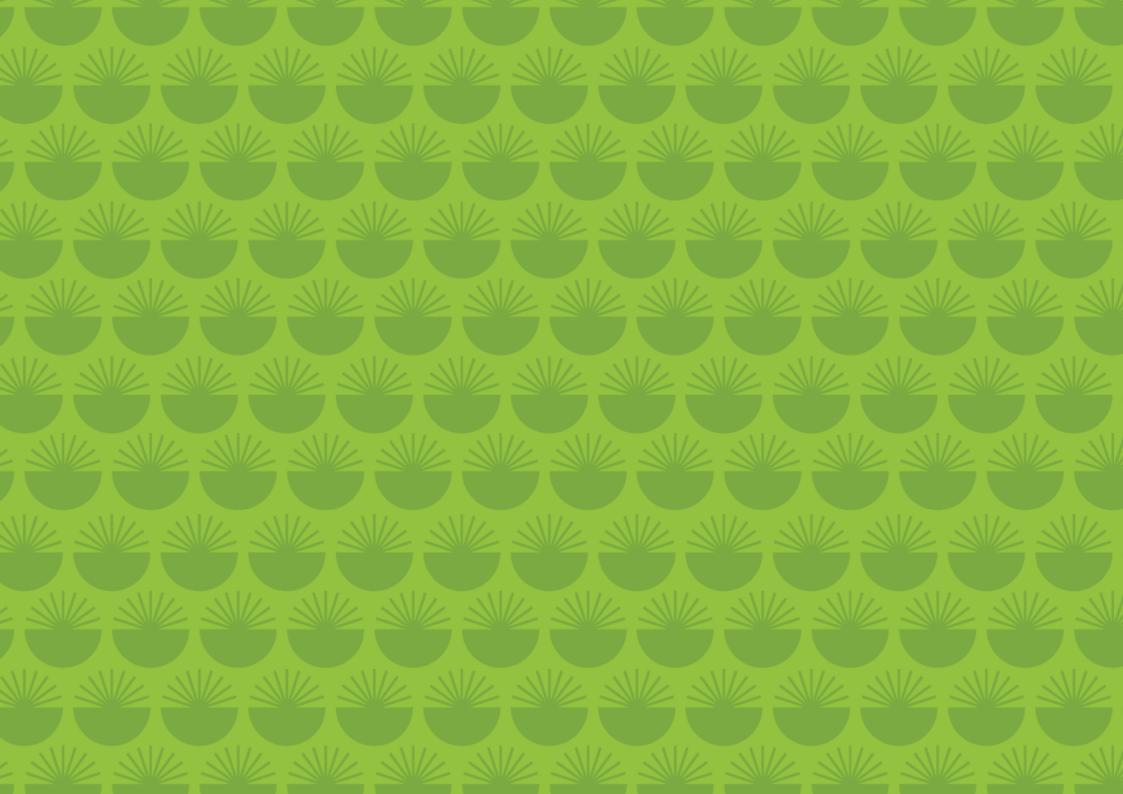
Steps		Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
3	Create a mindmap of words and images that relate to the topic belonging.	Slide 57-59 contains prompts and ideas about belonging including a word bank and images.	You could return to <b>Lesson 4</b> and get learners to think about why Denkyem is so successful as a symbol.
4	Hand out paper and pens. Get learners to sketch out some simplified images that represent belonging, choose their favourite of the images.	<b>Slide 61 - 62</b> contains reminders of what skills the learners already have.	Encourage learners to try a different image from their peers, remind them that differenc-e is good and will make a more exciting tapestry.
5	Introduce the cloth/tapestry and ask young people to all draw/paint their chosen symbol that represents belonging on the tapestry in the style of the Adinkra symbols.	<b>Slide 63</b> contains a prompt to get learners excited about the tapestry.	Do we place images together with similar shapes or colours? What's similar and what is different about the images we have chosen?



# **Review Learning:**

Steps		Powerpoint	Notes and Questions
6	Look at the tapestry together. Together do the images tell a story? Can you reflect on what you learnt in Lesson 3 and look at your tapestry like you are art critics, what can you learn? What do you think it means?		What does this tell us about us as a class?





# **Our Partners**

**Official Presenting Partner:** 



### **Supported by:**













**Mother Africa: The Power of Symbols** 

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