

THE WORLD
REIMAGINED
HOME WORKSHEETS

The Power of Symbols



WHAT IS A SYMBOL?



What do these symbols represent?

Why might we use pictures rather than words?

Can you think of any images that have a specific meaning or message for you?

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



THE POWER OF ADINKRA

Adinkra 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.

They are a unique representation of cultural expressions, ideas, values and traditional mythology of the Akan of Ghana and Gyaman people of Ivory Coast.

The Adinkra symbols represent popular proverbs, record historical events, express particular attitudes or behaviour related to depicted figures, or concepts uniquely related to abstract shapes.

Adinkra symbols are used extensively in design to give meaning to art, architecture and, above all, fabrics. Adinkra cloth used to originally be worn by royalty. One of those cloths produced in the region is called Kente cloth.



ACTIVITY

Research Adinkra symbols and kente cloths on our Journey of Discovery collection (jod.theworldreimagined.org) in the Mother Africa and Expanding Soul sections. You can also use the links included in the appendix.



THE POWER OF ADINKRA



AKOMA NTOSO

"linked hearts" - understanding and agreement



OSRAM NE NSORAMMA

"the moon and the star" - love, faithfulness & harmony



SANKOFA

"return and get it" - the importance of learning from the past



BOA ME NA ME MMOA WO

"help me and let me help you" - cooperation & interdependence

ACTIVITY

Choose one of these symbols - or one that you have found - and write a poem about the theme, idea and meaning that the symbol speaks to. Perhaps this could be about their meaning in your life or as a broader concept.



DESIGN YOUR SYMBOL

It's time to design your own symbol! Some things it might be helpful for you to think about as you design your symbol:

- What is the idea, concept, meaning, value, advice that you want the symbol to speak to?
- What could visually speak to that idea? How do you make it as simple as possible? What shapes represent that idea to you now that you could incorporate?

YOUR SYMBOL

THE MEANING

What does your symbol mean? Why is it important?

