

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## How A Typical Teen Did Something Not So Typical to Help Street Kids

By Linus Unah  
2017

*In this informational text, Linus Unah, a freelance journalist, discusses one teen's work helping street kids in southern Nigeria. Unah covers the subjects of global health, conflict, agriculture, and development in Nigeria. As you read, take notes on how this teen has improved the lives of street children.*

- [1] Three years ago, he was hanging out on the streets of his hometown of Calabar, a port city in southern Nigeria, on his way to watch a soccer match at a secondary school.

Then something happened that turned Okina into a very untypical teen.

He met a 13-year-old homeless kid named Frederick. The two struck up a conversation. The boy told Okina, then 15, that he was dancing in bars to earn tips to buy food and meet his other basic needs.



*"Students from Atu government school in Calabar, Nigeria receive medicines for NTDs during mass drug administration" by RTI Fights NTDs is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0*

James Okina began to wonder: Why was this kid living on the streets? He spoke good English, he seemed bright. Maybe if he had a place to sleep and could go to school, Okina thought, the kid could one day have a decent life, a life of dignity.<sup>1</sup> And so, Okina says, he "felt compelled to change the lives of street children."

- [5] That's an ambitious<sup>2</sup> goal for anyone, let alone a teenager in Calabar. According to a UNICEF<sup>3</sup> report, children living on the street are a "phenomenon of grave concern in Nigeria." Some are orphans — there are an estimated 8.6 million orphaned children in Nigeria. And some have left "unhappy homes," UNICEF reports. They live under bridges, in railway stations and in markets. They earn money to survive in various ways, including selling plastic bags of water and washing windshields of cars stopped in traffic.

They're likely among the 10.5 million Nigerians of school age who do not attend school. And they're at risk. UNICEF notes: "Those children are more prone to illnesses, malnourishment, drug abuse, crime, accidents, arrest and harassment by law enforcement agents, and are also at risk of being trafficked."<sup>4</sup>

1. **Dignity** (*noun*): the state or quality of being worthy of respect
2. **Ambitious** (*adjective*): not easily done or achieved
3. the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
4. to be illegally transported, typically for forced work

So how could Okina help these kids? His first idea was to use some of his own money — he had a part-time job with La'Shakara Wears and Branding, a clothing designer and manufacturer, so he had money in his pocket. He paid about \$50 to cover the fees for a year of schooling for two children.

Then he had another idea. Maybe he could help the kids earn their own money — off the streets. He invited some of the street children to meet Alemoh Anselm Igemokhai, at the time the general manager of the clothing company. And he asked if they could be hired to sweep and clean the office.

That request made Igemokhai nervous for two reasons. First, he says, "I was worried that having these kids around the office posed some sort of security threat because people say the [street] children are responsible for mayhem<sup>5</sup> and criminal activities."

[10] Igemokhai also wasn't sure James Okina knew what he was doing.

"James was so young and had not showed me any concrete plans for the kids, and I'm not sure he had [any]."

He wasn't the only doubter. Even Okina's mother "struggled to understand the project." She, too, worried about his lack of plans — as well as the fact that he was hanging out with street kids.

But Igemokhai eventually said yes and hired four kids. And Okina was on his way.

"I started from nothing," he now reflects. "Everything came from my pocket money. Then later my friends, who now make up my core team members, joined in and it was as though we were all born into this."

[15] "They gave their pocket monies, too, time and everything. Plus we were mentored by the CEO of La'Shakara, who understood my ambition and gave his support. He was there to encourage and throw in bit of advice."

The teenager started visiting alleyways and notorious<sup>6</sup> neighborhoods in Calabar to spend more time with street kids. And it wasn't hard to start up conversations because of his own background.

Okina himself had turned to a gang for a sense of belonging after his parents separated when he was 8. He went to live with his father, but his dad wasn't around much of the time. Okina stopped paying attention in school and played truant.<sup>7</sup> But he had a change of heart after a cousin came to stay with him, and, says Okina, "I saw that he led a more quiet, dignified life."

After months of talking with the kids, in August 2015, Okina founded Street Priests, a nonprofit that is tackling the problems of street children in Calabar.

"A lot of people say that name Street Priests is too religious, we need to change it," he reflects. "But I explain that we are priests, but our church is on the street. We have a calling, like typical priests — to reach out to children on the streets."

5. **Mayhem** (*noun*): violent or damaging disorder

6. **Notorious** (*adjective*): famous or well-known, usually for something bad

7. a student who stays out of school without permission

- [20] Gradually, Okina began to make bigger plans. He tried to find places for the kids to live, mostly at the church where he worships.

To raise money, he wrote to local charities and visiting charitable individuals so he could get the funds to pay school tuition for more street kids. "Though some still stayed on the streets — we can't find shelter for all of them — we got a place at the Christ Embassy church where we store their school items; there is also bathroom and a room to study," he says. Now, Street Priests is 2 years old and is run by seven volunteers, ages 18 to 22. A child-rights group called Basic Rights Council Initiative provides mentoring and support. And the group has had success raising money via Facebook solicitations, sharing stories about street children, and by staging special events.

"We raised 136,000 naira [\$446] from the fund-raising concert organized at Calabar Mall last year," says Godwin Ovat, 18, head of partnership for the group and a sophomore at the University of Calabar. "With that we paid for the school fees of 68 children." (The fees can range from \$5 to \$35.)

The young volunteers and Okina, now 18 and a sophomore at the University of Calabar, work on the program in between classes and part-time jobs.

Other charities and organizations in the area have noticed Street Priests' work.

- [25] "Okina and his team have been successful in rehabilitating<sup>8</sup> and mentoring street children," says Grace Ihejiamaizu, who teaches sociology at the University of Calabar and manages iKapture Networks, which trains students and out-of-school youths in Nigeria.

Okina has also been honored for his work. In 2015, he received \$10,000 as one of the winners of the Future Africa Leaders Award, sponsored by Nigerian preacher Chris Oyakhilome, founder of the Christ Embassy, one of Nigeria's biggest megachurches. Okina was also named a 2017 Global Teen Leader by Three Dot Dash, a global youth initiative of New York-based We Are Family Foundation.

For Okina, the biggest thrill is seeing how lives are turned around. Daniel, 15, who used to scavenge the streets for metal to sell as scrap, is now enrolled in school thanks to Street Priests. He beams with pride as he talks about his dreams.

"I hope to become an actor one day so I can influence a lot of people and help them to do good things," he says.

As for the boy who inspired Okina — he's a success story, too.

- [30] With help from the Street Priests, the homeless boy is back to school and has been reunited with his mother.

"We met the mother and discussed the challenges that pushed the boy to the streets and explained why she needed to take him back," says Okina, who says the boy's mother now pays his tuition. But he's still dancing during weekends, Okina says, "because he just loves dancing."

8. **Rehabilitate** (*verb*): to restore someone to health or a normal life

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## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which statement identifies the central idea of the article?
  - A. Okina's determination has resulted in many street kids in Nigeria being able to attend school.
  - B. Street kids in southern Nigeria are more vulnerable to illness and trafficking than street kids in other parts of the world.
  - C. Okina's work with street kids has encouraged the leaders in Nigeria to address the overwhelming problem of homelessness.
  - D. Street kids in Nigeria are not given the opportunity to work their way out of poverty, as society rejects and fears them.
  
2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
  - A. "They're likely among the 10.5 million Nigerians of school age who do not attend school. And they're at risk." (Paragraph 6)
  - B. "She, too, worried about his lack of plans — as well as the fact that he was hanging out with street kids." (Paragraph 12)
  - C. "To raise money, he wrote to local charities and visiting charitable individuals so he could get the funds to pay school tuition for more street kids." (Paragraph 21)
  - D. "'I hope to become an actor one day so I can influence a lot of people and help them to do good things,' he says." (Paragraph 28)
  
3. How do paragraphs 5-6 contribute to the development of ideas in the text?
  - A. They emphasize how important education is for street kids.
  - B. They emphasize how big of an issue Okina has decided to take on.
  - C. They show how dangerous it can be to work with street kids in Nigeria.
  - D. They reveal what is currently being done to address kids living on the streets.
  
4. What is the author's main purpose in the article?
  - A. to describe the issue of children living on the street in Nigeria
  - B. to provide information about how to start a nonprofit
  - C. to show how Okina has been able to change kids' lives
  - D. to encourage readers to send money to Okina

5. How does the author's discussion of the first street boy that Okina helped at the beginning and end of the text help us understand Okina's impact?

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## Discussion Questions

**Directions:** Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. James Okina helps street kids by paying for their schooling and helping them find a place to live. What do you think is more important: an education or a place to live? Why?
2. James Okina helps street kids in Calabar attend school. Do you think that this makes him a hero? Why or why not? What traits do you typically associate with a hero?
3. In the text, the author describes James Okina as believing that attending school can help change the lives of street kids in Nigeria. Do you agree with this? Why or why not? What effect do you think attending school can have on a child?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Gene editing wiped out a population of mosquitoes in lab tests

*Success with the genetic engineering tool raises hopes of eliminating this carrier of malaria*

By Tina Hesman Saey  
2018

*Mosquitoes are more than just pests; some of them are deadly. Today, scientists are working to protect people from mosquitoes by editing mosquitoes' genes. As you read, take notes on what exactly scientists are changing about mosquitoes.*

- [1] Gene editing may push a species of malaria-carrying mosquito to extinction.

These new results come from a small-scale laboratory study. Researchers used a genetic engineering tool to make changes to species called *Anopheles gambiae* (Ah-NOF-eh-lees GAM-bee-aye). As a result, the mosquitoes stopped producing offspring in eight to 12 generations. The researchers reported this September 24 in *Nature Biotechnology*. If the finding holds up in larger studies, this tool could be the first capable of wiping out a disease-carrying mosquito species.



"Untitled" by Егор Камелев is licensed under CC0

"This is a great day," says James Bull. He's an evolutionary biologist at the University of Texas at Austin. He was not involved in the study. "Here we are with a technology that could radically<sup>1</sup> change public health for the whole world." That's because *A. gambiae* is the main mosquito spreading malaria in Africa. The disease kills more than 400,000 people each year worldwide, according to the World Health Organization. Many of those who die are children.

The researchers changed the mosquitoes' genes with a gene drive. Gene drives use the molecular "scissors" known as CRISPR/Cas9 to copy and paste themselves into an organism's DNA at precise locations. They're designed to break the rules of inheritance.<sup>2</sup> They can quickly spread a genetic tweak to all offspring.

- [5] The new gene drive breaks a mosquito gene called *doublesex*. Female mosquitoes that inherit two copies of the broken gene develop like males. They are unable to bite or lay eggs. Being unable to bite means they can't spread the malaria parasite. Males and females that inherit only one copy of the disrupted gene develop normally and are fertile.<sup>3</sup> Males don't bite, whether they have the gene drive or not.

1. completely  
2. receiving genetic qualities from a parent  
3. able to produce offspring



## Changing genes

In each of two cages, researchers placed 300 female and 150 male normal *A. gambiae* mosquitoes. Then they added 150 males carrying the gene drive. In each generation, 95 percent to more than 99 percent of offspring inherited the gene drive. Normally, only 50 percent of offspring inherit a gene.

Within seven generations, all of the mosquitoes in one cage carried the gene drive. No eggs were produced in the next generation. The population died out. In the other cage, it took 11 generations for the gene drive to spread to all of the mosquitoes and crash the population. The insects in that cage made no offspring in generation 12.

Other gene-drive studies have done computer simulations<sup>4</sup> to predict how long it would take for the drives to spread through a population. This is the first time the approach has succeeded in actual mosquitoes.

Other types of gene drives also have been passed to offspring at high rates. But in those experiments, DNA changes, or mutations, that destroy the cutting site for CRISPR/Cas9 popped up. That allowed the mosquitoes that carry the mutation to resist the drive.

- [10] A few mosquitoes in the new study also developed mutations.<sup>5</sup> However, “no resistance was observed,” says study coauthor Andrea Crisanti. He’s a medical geneticist in England at Imperial College London. Those mutations broke the *doublesex* gene. Females with these broken genes were sterile and couldn’t pass the mutations on to the next generation.

All insects have some version of *doublesex*. “We believe that this gene may represent [a vulnerability]<sup>6</sup> for developing new pest-control measures,” Crisanti says.

*A. gambiae* likes to bite people. That makes it good at spreading malaria from person to person. The gene drive now raises the prospect of deliberately causing the extinction of this species.

“If you have a technology that could eradicate that [mosquito], it would be unethical not to use it,” says Omar Akbari. He is a geneticist at the University of California, San Diego. He was not involved in the work. But Akbari thinks it is unlikely that the gene drive would work as well in the wild as it did in the lab. That’s because resistance is bound to pop up at some point.

No one knows what will happen to the environment if all the mosquitoes die, either. There could be problems for species that eat mosquitoes, for instance. Also unknown is whether the gene drive could be passed on to other species. What if a “James Bond-style villain” used a similar gene drive to attack honeybees or other beneficial insects, says Philipp Messer. He is a population geneticist at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. “Humans will always come up with ways to abuse [technology]. And in this case, it’s just so easy. That’s what worries me.”

4. computer model

5. a distinct form resulting from a change in the structure of a gene

6. the quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally

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## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which statement identifies the central idea of the text?
  - A. Changing mosquitoes' genes could prevent them from spreading malaria to humans.
  - B. Changing mosquitoes' genes has caused unforeseen damage to ecosystems.
  - C. Changing insects' genes will take too long to protect people from malaria.
  - D. Changing insects' genes will prevent all insects from biting humans.
  
2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
  - A. "They are unable to bite or lay eggs. Being unable to bite means they can't spread the malaria parasite." (Paragraph 5)
  - B. "In the other cage, it took 11 generations for the gene drive to spread to all of the mosquitoes and crash the population." (Paragraph 7)
  - C. "'We believe that this gene may represent [a vulnerability] for developing new pest-control measures'" (Paragraph 11)
  - D. "No one knows what will happen to the environment if all the mosquitoes die, either." (Paragraph 14)
  
3. How do paragraphs 4-5 contribute to the development of ideas in the text?
  - A. They highlight the dangers of altering mosquitoes' DNA.
  - B. They explain how the gene drive changes mosquitoes' DNA.
  - C. They show why the gene drive only works on mosquitoes' DNA.
  - D. They show how painful it is for a mosquito to have its DNA changed.
  
4. According to paragraph 5, why are female mosquitoes given the gene drive over males?
  - A. Female mosquitoes carry a worse version of the disease.
  - B. Male mosquitoes do not carry the disease.
  - C. Male mosquitoes only bite animals.
  - D. Female mosquitoes bite.
  
5. Which statement describes the progression of the experiment described in paragraphs 6-7?
  - A. All the mosquitoes eventually inherited the gene drive and starved, as they could no longer bite or feed.
  - B. More mosquitoes inherited the gene drive with each generation, and eventually, none of them could reproduce.
  - C. Mosquitoes that had their DNA altered eventually died because their bodies rejected the new genes introduced.
  - D. Mosquitoes with the gene drive infected other mosquitoes by biting them, taking away their ability to reproduce.

6. What is the meaning of "eradicate" in paragraph 13?

- A. exile
- B. destroy
- C. tame
- D. weaken

7. What is the author's purpose in paragraphs 13-14?

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## Discussion Questions

**Directions:** Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. In the text, the author discusses how some scientists want to get rid of the mosquitoes that spread malaria. Do you think that this is the right decision? Should humans be able to choose which species live or die? Why or why not?
2. In the text, scientists propose using gene editing to save lives. How might gene editing have negative effects? Ask students to consider what would happen if someone used gene editing to cause other species to go extinct like the honeybee. Do students think the rewards of gene editing are worth the risks? Why or why not?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Etiquette**

By Hayes Davis  
2016

*Hayes Davis is a writer whose first book of poetry Let Our Eyes Linger, explores themes of family. In this poem, a speaker describes their struggle with asking to be excused from the table. As you read, takes notes on the speaker's feelings as they struggle to communicate with others.*

[1] I am eight, sitting at my grandmother's  
kitchen table, trying to ask to be excused.  
My cousins Jennifer and Danielle watch

my open mouth, keep sounding out  
[5] "Can...I...be excused" like I don't understand  
what I'm supposed to say. They don't know

that "can" is a word I sometimes can't say,  
like "hello" when I answer the phone, "goodnight"  
when my dad leaves my room, my name



*"Silence" by Henry Burrows is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0*

[10] when people ask it. They don't know  
that when my teachers' eyes search the class  
for an answer, even if I know it I look down.

They don't know that my consonants fly away  
sometimes, like birds when it gets too cold.

[15] I stare back at Danielle's mouth, Jennifer's mouth,

Oma's mouth, trying to figure out what makes  
talking so easy for them. Maybe my stutter  
will go away when I get older.

People on the bus, at the supermarket,  
[20] in the candy store always tell me about their  
cousins and sisters and brothers, older than me,

who once stuttered like me. They've out-grown theirs,  
and I hope mine will disappear one day too, so I won't  
miss so many cartoons after lunch.

*"Etiquette" from Let Our Eyes Linger by Hayes Davis. Copyright © 2016 by Hayes Davis. Used by permission of Poetry Mutual Press. All rights reserved.*

## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which statement expresses the main theme of the poem?
  - A. It can be reassuring to know that you are not the only one to struggle with something.
  - B. People should embrace what makes them different, rather than reject it.
  - C. Our personal struggles and insecurities can sometimes hold us back.
  - D. Being unable to communicate with others can leave a person feeling isolated.
  
2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
  - A. "They don't know / that 'can' is a word I sometimes can't say" (Lines 6-7)
  - B. "that when my teachers' eyes search the class / for an answer, even if I know it I look down." (Lines 11-12)
  - C. "They don't know that my consonants fly away / sometimes, like birds when it gets too cold." (Lines 13-14)
  - D. "They've out-grown theirs, / and I hope mine will disappear one day too" (Lines 22-23)
  
3. What is the meaning of "my consonants fly away / sometimes, like birds when it gets too cold" as it is used in lines 13-14?
  - A. The speaker never knows when their stutter will cause them to struggle.
  - B. The speaker's words sometimes won't come out when they try to use them.
  - C. The speaker doesn't seem to notice when they start to stutter.
  - D. The speaker feels embarrassed and sad when they start to stutter.
  
4. How does stanza 4 contribute to readers' understanding of the speaker (Lines 10-12)?
  - A. It reveals that the speaker is shy and that's why they developed a stutter.
  - B. It shows how the speaker has kept their stutter a secret from their teacher and peers.
  - C. It reveals that the speaker uses their stutter as an excuse to not participate in class.
  - D. It shows how the speaker is embarrassed by their stutter and doesn't speak up.

5. How does the speaker's discussion of the words they struggle with contribute to the theme of poem?

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## Discussion Questions

**Directions:** Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. In the context of the poem, what does it mean to grow up? How does the speaker hope they will change as they age? As the speaker grows up, do you think they will be more accepting of their stutter? Why or why not? Describe something that you were insecure about that you grew to accept.
2. In the poem, the speaker explains that their stutter is something many people don't understand. What specific things does the speaker wish people knew about their stutter? Do you think the speaker would feel more confident if others knew more about the speaker's specific struggles? Have you ever wished that you could explain more about yourself so that people would think differently about you?
3. In the context of the poem, in what ways is the speaker's stutter a part of their identity? Is this something that they can change or need to learn to accept? Is there something that you are insecure about that is an important part of your identity?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Concussion Prescription: A Year On The Bench For Youngsters?

By Nancy Shute  
2013

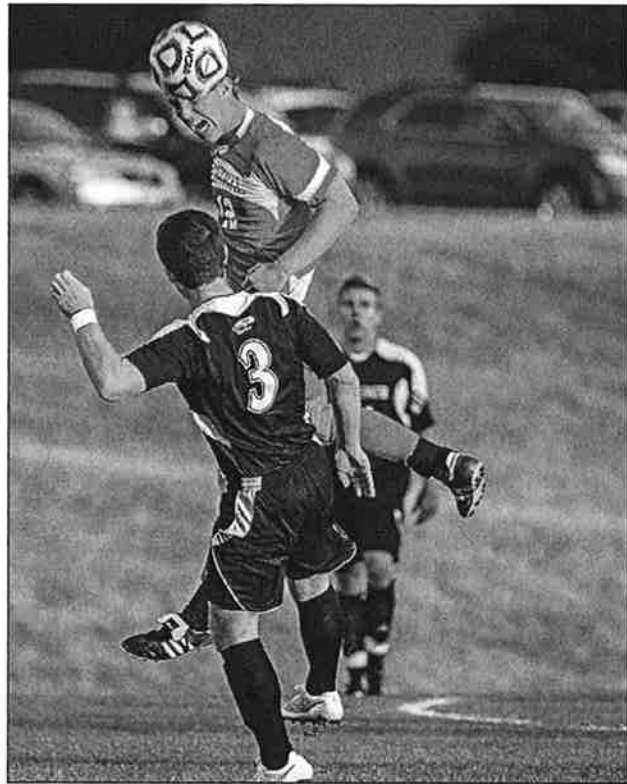
*A concussion is a serious brain injury that can affect your brain function and cause a range of mental and physical symptoms. Concussions are common injuries for those involved in contact sports, such as football, hockey, and soccer. In this informational text, Nancy Shute discusses a new study that examines how long it takes for someone to recover from a concussion. As you read, take notes on how long it takes different patients to recover from concussions.*

- [1] The moms at Saturday's soccer game let out a collective "wow" as a 10-year-old girl headed the ball away from the net.

Then one next to me said, "Should they be doing that?" Another said, "I don't think so." But none of us yelled: "Hey, kids, no heading the ball!"

Head injuries are a big problem for young athletes, who may be more vulnerable for a year after having a concussion, according to research published Monday. That means students and their parents may have to think hard about when it's safe to return to play.

"I'm going to guess that lots of parents (perhaps most of them) wouldn't keep their kids out of hockey (or football or lacrosse or other high-risk sport) for a year after a concussion," Dr. Claire McCarthy, a pediatrician at Boston Children's Hospital who wasn't involved in the research, writes on her blog. "They would take the risk."



*"2014.09.20 Central vs Wisconsin Whitewater-0129" by Mike Gatzke is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0*

- [5] But we still don't know if one year is what it takes to protect kids' brains, says Dr. Matthew Eisenberg, the lead author of the study, who is an emergency room physician at Boston Children's.

"We didn't have enough patients to pinpoint the window of vulnerability," Eisenberg tells Shots. "We were nervous about this before, and now we see even more reason to be nervous. But we're not able to say when is the right time to return to activity."

The patients who had had a concussion in the year before being injured again had symptoms for almost three times as long as those with their first concussion, 35 days compared to 12 days, according to Eisenberg and his colleagues. The study appears in the journal, *Pediatrics*.

They tracked 235 patients, ages 11 to 22, who came to the emergency room at Boston Children's with a concussion. Two-thirds of them were injured playing a sport, with hockey, soccer, football, and basketball the most common. Researchers then followed the patients to see how long it took them to recover.

Headache and other concussion symptoms can make it impossible for students to do schoolwork. Patients are often told not to read, use computers, or watch TV.

- [10] In the study, those age 13 and over were more likely to have a long recovery time. That could be either because neurobiology<sup>1</sup> changes as children mature, the researchers theorized, or that they are playing harder, with more contact and higher-force impacts.

Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be removed from play immediately, according to guidelines issued earlier this year by the American Academy of Neurology. The goal is to reduce a second hit to a recovering brain.

Despite his findings, Eisenberg says he would never tell a parent to keep a child out of sports for a year. "For every family, for every child, the situation is going to be different," he says. "It's really important that they get close follow-up care and make decisions based on what's best for the child."

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1. the biology of the nerve cells that send signals through the body

## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which statement identifies the central idea of the text?
  - A. Many parents put their children at risk by allowing them to return to sports too early after a concussion.
  - B. People who experience a second concussion not long after the first experience more extensive damage.
  - C. Younger children are particularly vulnerable to concussions because of the state of their developing brain.
  - D. Doctors still don't know enough about concussions to prescribe any suggested form of treatment or rehabilitation.
  
2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
  - A. "'Should they be doing that?' Another said, 'I don't think so.' But none of us yelled: 'Hey, kids, no heading the ball!'" (Paragraph 2)
  - B. "But we still don't know if one year is what it takes to protect kids' brains, says Dr. Matthew Eisenberg" (Paragraph 5)
  - C. "The patients who had had a concussion in the year before being injured again had symptoms for almost three times as long as those with a first concussion" (Paragraph 7)
  - D. "Two-thirds of them were injured playing a sport, with hockey, soccer, football and basketball the most common." (Paragraph 8)
  
3. What is the author's main purpose in the text?
  - A. to encourage parents to keep their kids out of sports for a full year after a concussion
  - B. to provide readers with a study that sheds new light on the dangers of concussions
  - C. to show readers how to avoid concussion while playing sports
  - D. to emphasize how little doctors know about concussions and rehabilitation
  
4. How do paragraphs 5-6 contribute to the development of ideas in the text?
  - A. They emphasize the importance of taking a year off of sports after a concussion.
  - B. They expose the problems of the study that make it incorrect.
  - C. They stress the remaining questions and mysteries around concussions.
  - D. They show that doctors will never fully understand the effects of concussions.

5. How does the study help readers understand how to treat a concussion?

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## Discussion Questions

**Directions:** Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. In the text, the doctor describes the dangers of experiencing a second concussion shortly after the first. What do you think coaches, parents, and players can do to prevent players from experiencing multiple concussions?
2. In the text, it says that the effects of concussions can last as long as a year. Have you ever experienced a concussion or been around someone who has? What happened? How did you feel? How long did it take before you felt better?
3. People have been getting concussions for all of human history. Why do you think doctors are just now starting to study concussions in depth?

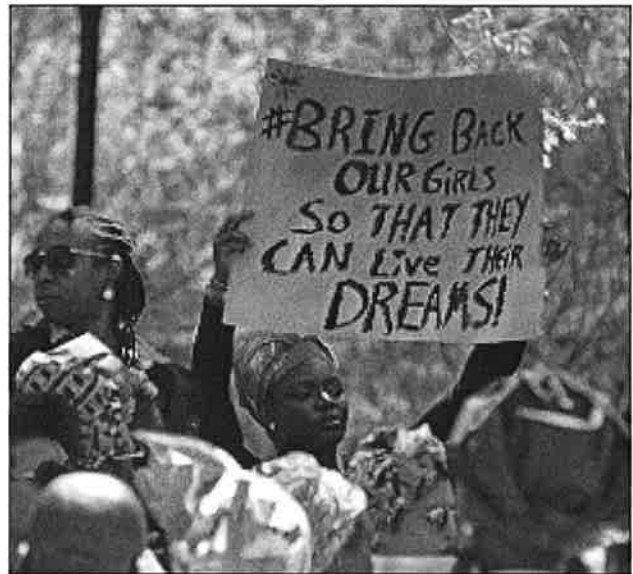
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Boko Haram & The Chibok Schoolgirls Kidnapping**

By Barrett Smith  
2017

*On April 14th, 2012, a terrorist organization that goes by the name Boko Haram kidnapped 276 Chibok girls from their school. In this informational text, Barrett Smith details the girls' kidnapping, the world's response, and where the girls are today. As you read, take notes on how people responded to the Chibok schoolgirls' kidnapping.*

- [1] On the evening of April 14th, 2014, the village of Chibok, in northeast Nigeria, was invaded by a large group of men. They rushed in on motorcycles and bicycles and began to open fire on the village residents. They burned down the houses in the village and kidnapped 276 girls from a boarding school dormitory. The men loaded the girls into trucks bound for the northeast region of the country. Fifty-seven girls managed to escape. The rest would be forced into marriage and, if Christian, forced to convert to Islam.



"BBOG3MAYNYC\_DSC\_0291" by Michael Fleshman is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

The attack brought worldwide attention to Boko Haram, a terrorist group that controls northeast Nigeria. Up until the kidnapping, they had been well known in Nigeria for their terrorist acts, but less known internationally. According to a CNN news report, Boko Haram's leader at the time, Abubakar Shekau, admitted to the kidnappings. He claimed that it was in response to the Nigerian government imprisoning Boko Haram members and their families. The news report quoted him as stating that Allah<sup>1</sup> told him to sell the girls in the market as brides. According to a report written from interviews with Boko Haram survivors, the group believes that no girl is too young for marriage.

1. the common name for "God" in Islam

This was not the first time Boko Haram kidnapped children. In fact, thousands of Nigerians have died or been taken away from their homes at the hands of the group. Boko Haram was founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf, a leader of a Muslim sect.<sup>2</sup> Their first known attack was in 2003, when they attacked multiple police stations, killing police officers and stealing weapons. The name Boko Haram is a mix of Arabic and the Nigerian Hausa dialect. It translates to “western education is forbidden.” Boko Haram is fighting to turn Nigeria into an Islamic state and purge<sup>3</sup> the country of anything they consider to be of Western influence, such as schools and churches. They claim to have ties with ISIS (The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), a terrorist group with the same goal in Iraq and Syria. On the heels of a Boko Haram uprising, in 2009, Yusuf was captured and killed by the Nigerian military. Since his death, the group has grown more violent and have made attempts to try and overthrow the government. As Boko Haram grew, it started controlling more and more land in Northeast Nigeria. At its peak, the land they controlled was almost as large as the state of Maryland.

The Nigerian government initially denied that the 2014 kidnapping happened. They stated that it was staged in an attempt to embarrass the government. Parents of the missing girls claimed that the government said this because the Chibok village had voted against the President in the election. These parents set out to look for their children themselves when the government wouldn't. They went into forests controlled by Boko Haram that the military refused to go into. They also held marches and protests, and told the world about how distraught they were about the ordeal.

- [5] International uproar and support was generated around the rallying cry “bring back our girls” — a quote taken from a speech that a former government minister, Obiageli Ezekwesili, made on TV. It turned into a powerful term, traveling around the world as a hashtag on social media. It became a movement to bring attention to the kidnapping, and demand the return of the girls. People all over the world supported the campaign. Former First Lady, Michelle Obama, recorded a video clip informing people about the kidnapping and promising that the U.S. government would help to find the missing girls. Former Prime Minister of Britain, David Cameron, activist Malala Yousafzai, and many others around the world also showed their support.

In 2015, the new Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari, promised to rescue the hostages from Boko Haram. Buhari reclaimed a lot of land that Boko Haram had captured in the previous years. In 2016, one of the girls escaped and was found in the forest with her baby. She said that most of the other girls were still alive. The Swiss government and the International Committee of the Red Cross helped with negotiations between the Nigerian government and Boko Haram. In October 2016, 21 of the girls from Chibok were released and in May 2017, another 82 were released in exchange for 5 Boko Haram suspects.

However, 113 girls from Chibok remain missing, as well as hundreds of other children that Boko Haram have been suspected of kidnapping. But those that have been released or escaped remain a symbol of hope. The government is assisting the kidnapped victims with medical treatment, and many of them are returning home to their families.

*“Boko Haram & The Chibok Schoolgirls Kidnapping” by Barrett Smith. Copyright © 2018 by CommonLit, Inc. This text is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.*

2. a group of people with somewhat different religious beliefs from the larger group to which they belong  
3. to get rid of something unwanted



## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. Which statement best summarizes the text?
  - A. The Nigerian government has been unable to recover the Chibok schoolgirls because they don't know where they are despite their efforts to work with international organizations and generate awareness through social media campaigns.
  - B. The Nigerian government didn't respond appropriately when the Chibok schoolgirls were kidnapped by Boko Haram, a terrorist group that wishes to end Western influence in Nigeria, until a social media campaign gained international attention.
  - C. The Chibok schoolgirls were stripped of their freedom when they were kidnapped by Boko Haram, a terrorist group that often targets women and children in their kidnappings because they think they should serve the state as brides.
  - D. Social media forced Boko Haram to respond to demands that some of the Chibok schoolgirls be released and the group promised to return the Chibok schoolgirls if the government returns members of their group.
  
2. How does paragraph 3 contribute to the development of ideas in the text?
  - A. It offers an insider's perspective to daily life in Nigeria under the influence of Boko Haram.
  - B. It gives an example of an earlier occurrence of schoolgirl kidnappings by a similar group in Nigeria.
  - C. It presents information about government actions in Nigeria that led to the rise of Boko Haram.
  - D. It provides insight about Boko Haram's beliefs and history, including why they target schoolgirls.
  
3. PART A: Which statement best describes the relationship between social media and action taken to help the kidnapped Chibok schoolgirls?
  - A. Social media helped parents and law enforcement to communicate with Boko Haram and negotiate the girls' release.
  - B. Social media helped provide the Nigerian government with information on the Chibok schoolgirls so that they could act.
  - C. Social media helped spread the Chibok schoolgirls' story and encourage others to take action in helping them.
  - D. Social media helped confirm that the Chibok schoolgirls were alive, encouraging the Nigerian government to take action.

4. PART B: Which detail from the text best support the answers to Part A?
- A. "It became a movement to bring attention to the kidnapping, and demand the return of the girls. People all over the world supported the campaign." (Paragraph 5)
  - B. "Former Prime Minister of Britain, David Cameron, activist Malala Yousafzai, and many others around the world also showed their support." (Paragraph 5)
  - C. "In 2015, the new Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari, promised to rescue the hostages from Boko Haram." (Paragraph 6)
  - D. "In October 2016, 21 of the girls from Chibok were released and in May 2017, another 82 were released in exchange for 5 Boko Haram suspects." (Paragraph 6)

5. How did the Nigerian government respond to the kidnapping as the crisis unfolded? Cite evidence from the text in your response.

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## Discussion Questions

**Directions:** Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. When the Chibok government initially refused to help find the missing schoolgirls, the community came together to find the girls themselves. How did this contribute to the progress that has been made to free some of the Chibok schoolgirls from Boko Haram? What are other situations in which communities have been able to band together and help others?
2. Social media was a force for good in raising awareness about the missing schoolgirls. How did activists use the Internet to encourage others to take action and create change? How do you think this contributed to the Nigerian governments' decision to help free the Chibok schoolgirls in 2015? Has social media been able to raise awareness and create change in other areas of the world?
3. Boko Haram stands against western education and has specific beliefs about the role of girls and women in society. How might the Chibok schoolgirls have conflicted with Boko Haram's extreme beliefs?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Lasting Contributions

By Diana Childress  
2018

*The Atlantic slave trade lasted from the 16th to the 19th century. This was a time when Africans were forcibly brought to the Americas to work as slaves. In this informational text, Diana Childress discusses the lasting impact that Africans had on these nations. As you read, take notes on the traditions and practices that Africans brought from their homeland.*

- [1] People who move to a new country bring with them customs and traditions from their homelands. The millions of African people who survived forced transport via the Middle Passage<sup>1</sup> across the Atlantic were no exception. Although they came from many different ethnic and language groups, their shared experience of violent oppression served to form strong bonds among them. Adapting and preserving African culture was a survival strategy that helped them retain<sup>2</sup> pride in their identities. The result was a unique legacy<sup>3</sup> that greatly enriched<sup>4</sup> cultural life throughout the Americas and around the world.



*"Frenchmen Street, New Orleans, United States" by Robson Hatsukami Morgan is licensed under CC0*

## Language and Literature

To communicate with fellow captives who spoke different languages, slaves developed simplified versions of their owners' languages. Known as pidgin dialects, they soon colored the pronunciation, vocabulary, and idioms used by the free people around them. This was especially true in the American South. In some places, these dialects developed into new languages. One is Gullah, which is still spoken in the coastal regions of South Carolina, Georgia, and northeast Florida. Others include Creole languages that are based on French, English, and Portuguese. These are spoken throughout the Caribbean islands and along the east coast of South America.

Because many communities made it illegal for enslaved people to learn to read, Africans would pass along the history and social values of their homelands through storytelling. In West Africa, musicians and storytellers, known as griots, had been doing this for generations. Many of the folktales that were handed down orally by enslaved people became part of mainstream American culture. Among them are the Uncle Remus stories, which the African-American poet James Weldon Johnson called "the greatest body of folklore<sup>5</sup> America has produced."

1. the sea journey from West Africa to the West Indies by which enslaved people were brought to the Americas
2. **Retain (verb):** to continue to have something
3. a lasting impact
4. **Enrich (verb):** to improve or enhance something
5. the traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community passed through the generations by word of mouth

## Rhythm and Blues

Enslaved people also kept alive the polyrhythmic<sup>6</sup> music of their native homelands. They did so using homemade banjos, marimbas, gourd fiddles, hand drums, and other instruments that they based on the ones they had left behind. Without musical notation, their complex music was passed down by example, study, and repetition.

- [5] Music was more than social entertainment. It was a means of self-expression and part of religious rituals. All members of an enslaved community joined in the music-making by dancing, singing, clapping, or foot stomping. These music and dance forms lived on long after slavery ended. For example, African music inspired jazz, blues, ragtime, and hip hop. Afro-Cuban mambo, Afro-Brazilian samba, Argentine tango, and many other musical forms and dances that are referred to as “Latin” have their roots in the rhythms and instruments introduced to the Americas by Africans.

African music’s layered rhythms and distinctive choreography are also important elements of modern classical music and modern dance. Even new forms of worship and belief arose from the religious rituals, music, and dancing of enslaved communities. African rites<sup>7</sup> with added elements of Catholic or Protestant Christianity evolved into new religions. One is Voodoo, which is practiced in Haiti and Louisiana. Another is Santeria, which is observed in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Still another is Candomble, with members along the east coast of Brazil. Some of these African-based American religions have millions of followers today.

Using traditional African features of percussion,<sup>8</sup> syncopation,<sup>9</sup> and improvisation,<sup>10</sup> enslaved people also composed new music. Songs of suffering led to their descendants creating what we now call the blues. Christian hymns and Bible passages inspired heartfelt spirituals.<sup>11</sup>

## Soul Food

The slave trade also introduced new foods to the Americas. Slave ships arriving in Africa from Europe or North America needed to bring on board for the Middle Passage enough food to keep their human cargoes healthy. When the ships arrived in the Americas, any food that had not been eaten would be unloaded with the captives. As plantation owners were focused on cash crops such as sugar and cotton, they took little interest in the “leftover” African foods. However, they often allowed enslaved people to grow these foods for themselves.

These “leftovers” usually arrived in areas with tropical or subtropical climates that were similar to those of West Africa. They also arrived with people who knew how to cultivate<sup>12</sup> the plants from seeds and cuttings. Thus, African foods took root in many parts of the Western Hemisphere. Enslaved people used them to cook “memory dishes” to remind them of their lost homes.

6. the use of two or more conflicting rhythms

7. religious ceremonies or acts

8. musical instruments that involve hitting an object or shaking it, such as drums and rattles

9. an off-beat rhythm

10. musical elements that are created without preparation or planning

11. religious songs

12. **Cultivate** (*verb*): to grow

- [10] Today, many African dishes are popular in the Americas. Akaraje, which are fritters made of black-eyed peas and filled with spicy shrimp, are a popular street food in Brazil. West African fufu, made of mashed yams or other tubers topped with boiled vegetables, is made with plantains in the Caribbean. The same dish is called mofongo in Puerto Rico, mangu in the Dominican Republic, and fufu de platanos in Cuba. Louisiana is famous for gumbo, a stew with meats or fish and okra. It is also known for jambalaya, which is made with rice, vegetables, and shrimp.

Throughout the southern United States, a casserole of black-eyed peas and rice called Hopping John is eaten on January 1 to bring good luck in the new year. Other African foods — bananas, watermelons, sesame seeds, yams, and eggplants, for example — are so familiar that it is easy to forget that they were transplanted to the Americas by Africans brought here in slavery.

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## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. What is the central idea of the text?
  - A. Africans secretly developed many of the traditions that would become important to the Americas.
  - B. Africans struggled to pass their traditions down because they were forbidden from writing or reading.
  - C. When Africans were brought to the Americas, their culture became an important part of many countries' cultures.
  - D. When Africans left their homeland, they forgot the cultural traditions that were important to their identity.
  
2. Which quote from the text highlights the influence that African cultures had on the Americas?
  - A. "communities made it illegal for enslaved people to learn to read" (Paragraph 3)
  - B. "Music was more than social entertainment." (Paragraph 5)
  - C. "they took little interest in the 'leftover' African foods." (Paragraph 8)
  - D. "Today, many African dishes are popular in the Americas." (Paragraph 10)
  
3. How does the section "Language and Literature" contribute to the development of ideas in the text? (Paragraphs 2-3)
  - A. It shows how language and literature have changed in Africa.
  - B. It shows how Africans contributed to language and literature in the Americas.
  - C. It shows how Africans were excluded from participating in language and literature in the Americas.
  - D. It shows how African languages and literature were lost when Africans were brought to the Americas.
  
4. What is the effect of the author comparing humans to "cargoes" in paragraph 8?
  - A. It suggests that enslaved people were expensive.
  - B. It emphasizes how valuable enslaved people were.
  - C. It emphasizes that enslaved people were viewed as goods.
  - D. It suggests that enslaved people were difficult to transport.
  
5. What is the most likely meaning of "transplanted" in paragraph 11?
  - A. brought
  - B. gifted
  - C. left
  - D. lost

6. Which statement describes how the author organizes information in the text?
- A. She describes how Africa's culture was changed by the loss of so many people.
  - B. She compares America's culture today to its culture when Africans first arrived.
  - C. She describes the different ways Africans contributed to culture in the Americas.
  - D. She compares how slaves from different areas of the world affected America's culture.

7. What is the connection between African oral storytelling and the preservation of African culture in the Americas? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

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## Discussion Questions

**Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.**

1. In the text, the author describes literature, music, and food that originated in Africa and were brought to America by enslaved Africans. How many of these examples are you familiar with? Would you consider many of these examples to be a core part of American culture? Why or why not?
2. In the text, the author describes how Africans kept their culture alive in America. How do different groups of people keep cultural traditions from the past alive in America today? How is this unique to America?
3. In the text, the author describes aspects of African culture that were passed down for generations. What is something that is important to your culture that you plan to pass down?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Late Troubles at Salem

By Marjorie Rackliffe  
2005

*The Salem witch trials were a series of trials of people accused of witchcraft that took place in Massachusetts between February 1692 and May 1693. While the trials occurred in several towns, the most well-known trials took place in Salem and were conducted by the Court of Oyer and Terminer. In this informational text, Marjorie Rackliffe discusses the unjust nature of the trials. As you read, take notes on how people outside of Salem reacted to the trials.*

- [1] By the end of September 1692, 20 people in Massachusetts Bay were dead by order of the Court of Oyer and Terminer. While Chief Justice William Stoughton had no regrets and appeared determined to continue the witch-hunts, other men had grown uneasy. A few prominent<sup>1</sup> people began to express their concerns publicly.



*"Salem witch2" by Baker, Joseph E. is in the public domain.*

The Reverend Increase Mather, a well-respected and influential Boston minister, became alarmed at the court's process. While Mather did not question the existence of witches, he wondered if innocent people were being put to death. On October 3, an essay he had recently completed, *Cases of Conscience*, was shared with other Boston ministers. It questioned relying exclusively on spectral<sup>2</sup> evidence to convict a person of witchcraft. He cautioned, "[I]t were better that ten suspected witches should escape than one innocent person should be condemned<sup>3</sup>."

The Reverend Samuel Willard, another influential Boston minister, also tried to silence the witchcraft hysteria.<sup>4</sup> He had spoken publicly against the unjust trials. He wrote a fictitious argument between two men, one from Boston and one from Salem. In it, he pointed out the irony of the situation in Salem: If a person confessed to being a witch, he or she survived, but if a person claimed innocence and denied being a witch, he or she was tried, found guilty, and executed.

Also in early October, Thomas Brattle, a well-known scientist and Boston merchant, wrote a letter that offered a description of what was taking place in Massachusetts Bay. The letter was copied and shared in Boston. In it, Brattle condemned the methods that the court had been using in the trials. He too believed that spectral evidence should not have been allowed, and he was scornful of how the "bewitched" girls had been treated as visionaries. Pointing out how families had been ruined by the court's irresponsible pursuit of witches, he wondered if people would someday "not look upon these things without the greatest of sorrow and grief imaginable."

1. **Prominent** (*adjective*): important; well-known

2. supernatural

3. found guilty and sentenced to death

4. **Hysteria** (*noun*): when a group becomes extremely fearful because of rumors of danger

[5] The growing public unease pushed Governor William Phips to take action. He dissolved<sup>5</sup> the Court of Oyer and Terminer on October 29, 1692. More than 100 people accused of witchcraft remained in jail, however. Phips ordered a new court — the Superior Court of Judicature — to conduct the remaining trials. Spectral evidence was not allowed in those proceedings. All but three people were acquitted,<sup>6</sup> and Phips eventually pardoned those three people in May 1693. But while some people seemed to wrestle with feelings of guilt and remorse, there remained a general refusal to acknowledge what had taken place.

Thomas Maule was a Quaker<sup>7</sup> and a Salem Town resident who took issue with the Puritans' handling of the trials. He compared it to their persecution<sup>8</sup> of Quakers. In 1695, he wrote *Truth Held Forth and Maintained*. It claimed that God would condemn the leaders of the Court of Oyer and Terminer for putting innocent people to death. Maule was arrested for slander<sup>9</sup> and blasphemy.<sup>10</sup> He spent a year in jail before being tried, but the jury refused to find him guilty.

On January 14, 1697, Massachusetts declared a day of fasting and prayer as a public acknowledgement and apology before God and the community of the great wrong that had been committed. Samuel Sewall alone publicly apologized for his part in the trials as a justice in the Court of Oyer and Terminer. Sewall stood up in front of the Boston congregation as his minister read his note of apology. Sewall accepted "the blame and shame" of the witch trials court. Guilt also seemed to motivate about a dozen jurors from the trials, who also came forward to ask God's forgiveness.

Only one of the "bewitched" girls ever publicly apologized. Twelve-year-old Ann Putnam Jr. had testified against all but two of the people who were hanged. In August 1706, as she prepared to formally join a Puritan congregation, she asked for forgiveness for her role in taking the lives of innocent people, blaming the Devil for her actions.

Although some restitution<sup>11</sup> was eventually made to the families of the executed and accused, the damage to lives was far reaching. Most of the accused people discovered that their personal property had been confiscated<sup>12</sup> while they waited in prison for a trial. Once they were freed, they went back to living with neighbors, or in some cases with family members, who had accused them of being witches.

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5. removing the judges and stopping them from holding trials
6. **Acquit (verb):** to find someone not guilty of a crime
7. a religion that tries to make the world peaceful
8. unfair treatment
9. **Slander (noun):** a false comment about someone
10. **Blasphemy (noun):** the act of speaking disrespectfully about God
11. payment for an injury or loss
12. taken away

## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which statement identifies the main idea of the text?
  - A. The only thing that prompted Salem to stop its witch hunts was a fear that God would punish them for their actions.
  - B. It took outside influence for the people of Salem to realize that there were no, nor had there ever been, any witches in Salem.
  - C. People eventually realized that witch trials were unfair and had punished innocent people.
  - D. Despite the deaths and damages that took place because of the witch trials, the courts of Salem stood by their actions.
  
2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
  - A. "By the end of September 1692, 20 people in Massachusetts Bay were dead by order of the Court of Oyer and Terminer." (Paragraph 1)
  - B. "Pointing out how families had been ruined by the court's irresponsible pursuit of witches, he wondered if people would someday 'not look upon these things without the greatest of sorrow and grief imaginable.'" (Paragraph 4)
  - C. "Although some restitution was eventually made to the families of the executed and accused, the damage to lives was far reaching." (Paragraph 9)
  - D. "Once they were freed, they went back to living with neighbors, or in some cases with family members, who had accused them of being witches." (Paragraph 9)
  
3. Which of the following describes the author's main purpose in the text?
  - A. to point out the courage of the people who had been accused of being witches
  - B. to provide information about what caused the witch trials to take place
  - C. to show what eventually brought the witch trials to an end and what happened afterward
  - D. to reveal how the town of Salem was able to recover from the witch trials
  
4. How does Reverend Samuel Willard's fictitious argument contribute to the development of ideas in the text (Paragraph 3)?
  - A. It emphasizes how unjust and backwards the witch trials were in Salem.
  - B. It reveals how it was impossible not to be put to death as a witch in Salem.
  - C. It proves that the courts were never actually looking for witches in Salem.
  - D. It shows how Salem was one of the few towns that believed in supernatural forces.

5. What is the relationship between the people of Salem's religion and their eventual feelings of regret over the trials?

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## Discussion Questions

**Directions:** Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. The Salem witch trials were unfair. Can you think of any modern examples of unfairness with the justice system? What are the consequences of having an unfair justice system in a society?
2. Have you ever been unfairly accused of doing something wrong? What happened? Or have you ever unfairly accused someone of doing something wrong? What happened?
3. According to the text, who had the power to accuse and convict people of witchcraft in Salem? How do you think this power affected them? Describe a time when you saw a powerful person acting unfairly.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Lasting Contributions

By Diana Childress  
2018

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- [1] People who move to a new country bring with them customs and traditions from their homelands. The millions of African people who survived forced transport via the Middle Passage<sup>1</sup> across the Atlantic were no exception. Although they came from many different ethnic and language groups, their shared experience of violent oppression served to form strong bonds among them. Adapting and preserving African culture was a survival strategy that helped them retain<sup>2</sup> pride in their identities. The result was a unique legacy<sup>3</sup> that greatly enriched<sup>4</sup> cultural life throughout the Americas and around the world.



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## Language and Literature

To communicate with fellow captives who spoke different languages, slaves developed simplified versions of their owners' languages. Known as pidgin dialects, they soon colored the pronunciation, vocabulary, and idioms used by the free people around them. This was especially true in the American South. In some places, these dialects developed into new languages. One is Gullah, which is still spoken in the coastal regions of South Carolina, Georgia, and northeast Florida. Others include Creole languages that are based on French, English, and Portuguese. These are spoken throughout the Caribbean islands and along the east coast of South America.

Because many communities made it illegal for enslaved people to learn to read, Africans would pass along the history and social values of their homelands through storytelling. In West Africa, musicians and storytellers, known as griots, had been doing this for generations. Many of the folktales that were handed down orally by enslaved people became part of mainstream American culture. Among them are the Uncle Remus stories, which the African-American poet James Weldon Johnson called "the greatest body of folklore<sup>5</sup> America has produced."

1. the sea journey from West Africa to the West Indies by which enslaved people were brought to the Americas
2. **Retain (verb):** to continue to have something
3. a lasting impact
4. **Enrich (verb):** to improve or enhance something
5. the traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community passed through the generations by word of mouth

## Rhythm and Blues

Enslaved people also kept alive the polyrhythmic<sup>6</sup> music of their native homelands. They did so using homemade banjos, marimbas, gourd fiddles, hand drums, and other instruments that they based on the ones they had left behind. Without musical notation, their complex music was passed down by example, study, and repetition.

- [5] Music was more than social entertainment. It was a means of self-expression and part of religious rituals. All members of an enslaved community joined in the music-making by dancing, singing, clapping, or foot stomping. These music and dance forms lived on long after slavery ended. For example, African music inspired jazz, blues, ragtime, and hip hop. Afro-Cuban mambo, Afro-Brazilian samba, Argentine tango, and many other musical forms and dances that are referred to as “Latin” have their roots in the rhythms and instruments introduced to the Americas by Africans.

African music’s layered rhythms and distinctive choreography are also important elements of modern classical music and modern dance. Even new forms of worship and belief arose from the religious rituals, music, and dancing of enslaved communities. African rites<sup>7</sup> with added elements of Catholic or Protestant Christianity evolved into new religions. One is Voodoo, which is practiced in Haiti and Louisiana. Another is Santeria, which is observed in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Still another is Candomble, with members along the east coast of Brazil. Some of these African-based American religions have millions of followers today.

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## Soul Food

The slave trade also introduced new foods to the Americas. Slave ships arriving in Africa from Europe or North America needed to bring on board for the Middle Passage enough food to keep their human cargoes healthy. When the ships arrived in the Americas, any food that had not been eaten would be unloaded with the captives. As plantation owners were focused on cash crops such as sugar and cotton, they took little interest in the “leftover” African foods. However, they often allowed enslaved people to grow these foods for themselves.

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6. the use of two or more conflicting rhythms

7. religious ceremonies or acts

8. musical instruments that involve hitting an object or shaking it, such as drums and rattles

9. an off-beat rhythm

10. musical elements that are created without preparation or planning

11. religious songs

12. **Cultivate** (*verb*): to grow



- [10] Today, many African dishes are popular in the Americas. Akaraje, which are fritters made of black-eyed peas and filled with spicy shrimp, are a popular street food in Brazil. West African fufu, made of mashed yams or other tubers topped with boiled vegetables, is made with plantains in the Caribbean. The same dish is called mofongo in Puerto Rico, mangu in the Dominican Republic, and fufu de platanos in Cuba. Louisiana is famous for gumbo, a stew with meats or fish and okra. It is also known for jambalaya, which is made with rice, vegetables, and shrimp.

Throughout the southern United States, a casserole of black-eyed peas and rice called Hopping John is eaten on January 1 to bring good luck in the new year. Other African foods — bananas, watermelons, sesame seeds, yams, and eggplants, for example — are so familiar that it is easy to forget that they were transplanted to the Americas by Africans brought here in slavery.

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## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. What is the central idea of the text?
  - A. Africans secretly developed many of the traditions that would become important to the Americas.
  - B. Africans struggled to pass their traditions down because they were forbidden from writing or reading.
  - C. When Africans were brought to the Americas, their culture became an important part of many countries' cultures.
  - D. When Africans left their homeland, they forgot the cultural traditions that were important to their identity.
  
2. Which quote from the text highlights the influence that African cultures had on the Americas?
  - A. "communities made it illegal for enslaved people to learn to read" (Paragraph 3)
  - B. "Music was more than social entertainment." (Paragraph 5)
  - C. "they took little interest in the 'leftover' African foods." (Paragraph 8)
  - D. "Today, many African dishes are popular in the Americas." (Paragraph 10)
  
3. How does the section "Language and Literature" contribute to the development of ideas in the text? (Paragraphs 2-3)
  - A. It shows how language and literature have changed in Africa.
  - B. It shows how Africans contributed to language and literature in the Americas.
  - C. It shows how Africans were excluded from participating in language and literature in the Americas.
  - D. It shows how African languages and literature were lost when Africans were brought to the Americas.
  
4. What is the effect of the author comparing humans to "cargoes" in paragraph 8?
  - A. It suggests that enslaved people were expensive.
  - B. It emphasizes how valuable enslaved people were.
  - C. It emphasizes that enslaved people were viewed as goods.
  - D. It suggests that enslaved people were difficult to transport.
  
5. What is the most likely meaning of "transplanted" in paragraph 11?
  - A. brought
  - B. gifted
  - C. left
  - D. lost

6. Which statement describes how the author organizes information in the text?
- A. She describes how Africa's culture was changed by the loss of so many people.
  - B. She compares America's culture today to its culture when Africans first arrived.
  - C. She describes the different ways Africans contributed to culture in the Americas.
  - D. She compares how slaves from different areas of the world affected America's culture.

7. What is the connection between African oral storytelling and the preservation of African culture in the Americas? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

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## Discussion Questions

**Directions:** Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. In the text, the author describes literature, music, and food that originated in Africa and were brought to America by enslaved Africans. How many of these examples are you familiar with? Would you consider many of these examples to be a core part of American culture? Why or why not?
2. In the text, the author describes how Africans kept their culture alive in America. How do different groups of people keep cultural traditions from the past alive in America today? How is this unique to America?
3. In the text, the author describes aspects of African culture that were passed down for generations. What is something that is important to your culture that you plan to pass down?