



UNIT 8 : AFRICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

Skill: Reading

Source: Far Ahead 1ère

LEAD -IN

- 1- Do you know a rite of initiation?
- 2- Have you ever taken part in a ritual of initiation?
- 3- Share your knowledge with your partner (the name, place, goal etc. of the initiation and if possible how it happens).

LEARNING CONTEXT

In this globalized world it is harder and harder to keep African cultural heritage. In order to involve students in reflecting on the issue, the library of your school has launched an essay competition asking you to discuss what you consider to be the main African cultural legacy.

LESSON CONTENT

| Language function | Grammar / structure | Vocabulary |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Connecting ideas | .however /thereby/ nevertheless / al so/as /after | expectations/ custodians /hazards / /encompasses bind /ordeal |

A- VOCABULARY

- 1-**expectations** (Line 6): hopes
- 2-**custodians** (Line 10): guardians
- 3-**hazards** (Line 12): threats; dangers
- 4-**encompasses** (Line 20): incorporates; contains
- 6-**bind** (Line 25): links
- 7-**ordeal** (Line 29): suffering; painful experience

B-LANGUAGE FUNCTION

- 1-**However:** Education is good, **however** it has become expensive today.
- 2-**After:** **After** my BAC exam, I will go to university.
- 3-**As:** Daddy takes care of the family **as** he is the chief
- 4: **Thereby** : My students listen to English podcasts, **thereby** they learn the native pronunciation.
- 5-**Also:** Angbomon is a teacher and also an educator.
- 6-**Nevertheless:** Peter is the top of the class, nevertheless he continues to make effort.

Activity 1: Complete the sentences below with the correct words or expression following the bank. Number 1 is the example: **hazard**

expectations/ custodians /hazards / /encompasses bind /ordeal

- 1- Covid-19 is a real.....for the world population.
- 2- The term culturepeople's wearing, feeding, language etc..
- 3- Parents have great.....from the children when they invest in their education.
- 4-The elderly are theof our traditions.
- 5- Unemployment is a realfor uneducated people.
- 6- A traditional ceremony.....the community member together.

Activity 2: Complete the sentences below with the correct connector. Example : 1-However

- 1-Peter always studies his lessons,he earns bad marks at exams.
- 2-.....washing myself, I dress up in my uniform to go to school.
- 3-Peter is sent to 2nd Ahe got his best marks in French, English and Spanish
- 4-At 18 years young men go through an initiation and are accepted as adults in the community
- 5-Peter is a polite boy andworks hard at school.
- 6-Africans organised excision to initiate young girls, it is risky.

Activity 3: Read the text in 1 minute and answer the following questions. (Individual work)

1. Who undergoes the rites of passage in traditional Africa?
2. Why are the rites of passage important?

TEXT

African ceremonies: Passages

From ancient times, African societies have marked the transitions of the life cycle, from birth to death with rites of passage. Through these “journeys of the spirit”, as the West African Shaman and teacher Maildoma Patrice Some has called them, people are able to transcend the everyday concerns of life to connect with their own spirits and with the spirit world. Rites of passage have value for both the individual and the community. Ceremonies that mark the passage of life provide clear definitions of society’s expectations of the individual and they give him or her a sense of identity and belonging.

From the moment of birth, an African child is connected to family, community and the ancestors. Many different ceremonies are performed to reinforce these connections, and to prepare children to become the custodians of the culture of their people. Because infant mortality remains high, the people of many African cultures are extremely superstitious during the first few years of a child’s life, and carry out rituals to protect from hazards.

The Himba of Namibia never leave a baby on its own or never put it down, lest the child be stolen away by some malevolent spirit. The Wodaabe of Niger do not name the child before the 12th birthday so that he or she cannot be identified by the spirit of death. For the Massai babies, *however*, names are so important that they are bestowed by village elders soon after birth. In all African societies, childhood is a time for learning responsibilities and skills that enable children to contribute to their communities. It is *nevertheless*, also a time for children to develop creativity through imaginative play. Children are encouraged to take an active part in communal ceremonies and *thereby* begin their first steps on a journey that encompasses all the realms of human experience.

As they enter the adult world during their teenage years, African youngsters undergo a variety of initiation rituals. These rites provide individuals with instruction about what will be expected of them during the next phase of their lives. The common experiences that they undergo during the initiation period *also* bind the individuals together and reinforce the idea of community. In all initiation ceremonies, a select group of elders takes charge of the sequence of ritual events. To begin their training, initiates often enter a special place, a sacred forest or ritually built house. It is there that they lose their childhood identities and gain their adult selves. **After** a period of instruction, the initiates undergo an encounter or ordeal that marks the climax of their initiation and the beginning of their new lives.

Adapted from <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/exhibit/african-ceremonies-passages/QQJgfgg2?hl=en>

Activity 4: Give short answers to the following questions. Justify your answers.

1. What does Maildoma Patrice Some call “journey of the spirit”?
2. What gives the African child a sense of identity and belonging in the society?
3. Give the reason why many African cultures are superstitious about the child’s life.
4. Give two opposite practices regarding babies.
5. Which roles does childhood play?
6. When does an individual become an adult?

7. What are the outcomes of initiation rites?
8. Which period(s) of the Africans' lifespan is(are) **not** mentioned in the text?

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY

The National Coordination of English clubs has launched a writing contest on the following topic: "Rites of initiation are useful in Africans' education". The best five essays writers will be granted a scholarship to study in the field of African culture. In your work:

- define what a rite of initiation is in traditional Africa
- list two or three rites of initiation still practised in your area
- explain in what these rites are useful in Africans education.

Homework:

After having discussed the importance of African traditions in class, your teacher asks you to sensitise your classmates on the importance of African traditions through a presentation.

In your task:

- explain what examples of particular traditions exist in your community
- mention the roles of these traditions in for your community
- list some possible benefits of these for today's teenagers.

Click on that link and read more about the interesting African cultural heritage.

[African Culture – 16 most interesting traditions | Africa Facts \(africa-facts.org\)](https://africa-facts.org/african-culture-16-most-interesting-traditions/)