



# #9968 GHANA NEWS STORIES

NOODLEHEAD NETWORK, 2002  
Grade Level: 4-10  
25 mins.

## DESCRIPTION

American high school students produce a video news story on location in Ghana, West Africa. After a brief geography lesson, the students report on aspects of Ghanaian life and culture. Covers games, dance, uses of pottery, wildlife, and the importance of kente cloth. Also targets education and health care.

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS

### Subject Area: Geography–Human Systems

- Standard: Understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows the similarities and differences in characteristics of culture in different regions (e.g., in terms of environment and resources, technology, food, shelter, social organization, beliefs and customs, schooling, what girls and boys are allowed to do) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1 and 2.)

### Subject Area: Geography–Places and Regions

- Standard: Understands the physical and human characteristics of place
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows the human characteristics of places (e.g., cultural characteristics such as religion, language, politics, technology, family structure, gender; population characteristics; land uses; levels of development) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1, 2, and 3.)
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows how social, cultural, and economic processes shape the features of places (e.g., resource use, belief systems, modes of transportation and communication; major technological changes such as the agricultural and industrial revolutions; population growth and urbanization) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 3.)
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows the physical characteristics of places (e.g., soils, land forms, vegetation, wildlife, climate, natural hazards) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 4.)

## INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To promote cultural understanding of Ghana.
2. To compare and contrast different ways of life.
3. To describe traditional practices and modern influences in Ghana.
4. To describe the climate, terrain, and wildlife of Ghana.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Ghana borders the Atlantic Ocean on its south and lies between the West African countries of Togo and La Cote D'Ivoire (The Ivory Coast).
2. Ghana is slightly smaller than the state of Oregon, with a population of 20 million.
3. Ghana is located near the equator and has consistently warm temperatures and two seasons: dry and rainy.
4. Ghana was first colonized by the Portuguese in the late 1200s and they held power for nearly a century. Power changed hands often between the Dutch, Portuguese, and British. Ghana gained its independence from Britain in 1957. It is now a democracy with four major political parties.
5. Currently, about 60% of Ghana's work force is involved in agriculture. The minimum wage is roughly 5,500 cedis or 80 cents per day.
6. Sixty percent of Ghana's people are Christian, with Muslims consisting of another twenty percent and tribal religions making up the rest.
7. The literacy rate when Ghana achieved its independence in 1957 was 25 percent and has grown to 65 percent today.
8. English is the official language of Ghana, yet many other languages are spoken. French is widely used, as are over 100 dialects of local Ghanaian languages.

## VOCABULARY

- |                   |               |                 |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. agricultural   | 8. humidity   | 15. savannah    |
| 2. ardi (Mankala) | 9. modern     | 16. spiritual   |
| 3. clinic         | 10. pottery   | 17. strategy    |
| 4. culture        | 11. prominent | 18. traditional |
| 5. cures          | 12. region    | 19. village     |
| 6. generation     | 13. rural     | 20. weave       |
| 7. herbal doctor  | 14. sacrifice |                 |

## BEFORE SHOWING

1. Locate Ghana on a world map or globe and on a map of Africa. Discuss known information about the climate, landscape, animals, people, lifestyle, and culture.
2. Discuss the terms *modern* and *traditional*. How do they apply to life in the United States? How do they apply to life in Ghana?

## DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Pause after each section of the video. Discuss the main similarities and differences between Ghana and the United States for each section. Discuss cultural differences.

## AFTER SHOWING

### Discussion Items and Questions

1. What are some similarities and differences between young Ghanaians and kids from your town? Compare and contrast the schools.
2. What are some of the effects of Colonial rule on the country?
3. Describe some of the games children play in rural Ghana. Why do they play games with bottle caps? Why are sitting strategy games popular? Do they have organized sports?
4. List and discuss different ways history is passed on in Ghana.
5. Describe the Festival of the Thunder Gods.
6. Discuss the power of dance to Ghanaians and its healing potential. Do music and dance have the same role in your community? Are there any other activities with similar effects?
7. Describe the wildlife in agricultural areas, rainforests, and savannah. Where do most of the wild animals live?
8. What is kente cloth, and how has it changed since the colonization of Ghana?
9. Traditionally, ceramics were used for everything from water containers to cooking pans. What has allowed Ghanaians to begin using stronger and lighter iron and steel?
10. The rural villages in the video are just now getting electricity. How will this change their way of life?
11. How and why is sand used in cooking?
12. Think about the last time you visited a doctor. How does your experience compare to the clinic shown in the video?

### Applications and Activities

1. Create a two column chart that represents the differences between Ghana and the U.S.
2. Create travel guides or brochures to encourage people to visit Ghana. Include the seven areas that are presented in the video.
3. Using this video as a model, create a video on another culture, local state, local city, or local school.
4. Investigate foods in Ghana. Cook some typical foods.
5. Research the making of cloth in the U.S. Compare it to the way they make kente cloth in Ghana. Try hand weaving yarn into cloth.
6. Learn more about the game ardi, or Mankala. Create a game board, find objects for playing pieces, print the instructions, and play the game. (See RELATED RESOURCES for a Mankala Web site.)

## C a p t i o n e d M e d i a P r o g r a m

7. Invite someone from Ghana or someone who has visited Ghana to present information to the class.
8. Make a digital slide show of various kinds of land in Ghana and the animals that live in each area.
9. Research the history of Ghana. Describe its process for gaining independence. Explain its current political system.
10. Learn a traditional Ghanaian dance.
11. Research herbal medicine practices in Ghana.
12. Set up a bargaining table with various items, and practice their bargaining skills.
13. Research and compare the use of pottery in Ghana with that of Native American tribes in the southwestern United States.

### SUMMARY

This video describes daily life in Ghana, West Africa from a kid's perspective. The video is divided into seven segments. High school kids reported "on location" in Ghana, helped script the narration and edit the segments that were then broadcast on their local evening news. This format makes it easy to incorporate the tape into your social studies or geography curriculum. You can present an overview of Ghana by playing the video right through, or you can focus on specific topics by fast-forwarding to segments of your choice. The topics in order are: games, dance, ceramics, wildlife, kente cloth, medicine, and schools. There are seven seconds of black separating each segment.

### CMP RELATED RESOURCES

- [China News Stories #3588](#)
- [Families of Ghana #10165](#)
- [Russia News Stories #9969](#)

### World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

#### • GHANAWEB

<http://www.ghanaweb.com/>

Ghanaweb.com is a comprehensive site on every aspect of the West African country. Included are links to photos, politics, quizzes for different grade levels, climates, landforms, and sports, among many more.



- **GHANA LIFE**

<http://www.library.yale.edu/~fboateng/fbhp.htm>

This is a very good site for teachers and students. The site is clearly written with good illustrations and photos. Much of the material is linked to other sources of information.

---

- **KENTE CLOTH**

[http://www.marshall.edu/akanart/kentecloth\\_samples.html](http://www.marshall.edu/akanart/kentecloth_samples.html)

Here is a study of the Akan kente cloth. The site has explanations of the different designs and what they represent in the culture. Related proverbs and character traits are given.

---

- **MANKALA**

<http://www.elf.org/mankala/Mankala.html>

Read the history and rules of this traditional African strategy game, and play an interactive online version of the game.

---

- **AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATIONA**

<http://www.awf.org>

Read about the various regions of African and the animals that live there. Learn about conservation efforts in Africa.

---

- **GLOBAL VILLAGE PROGRAM**

<http://www.habitat.org/gv/>

Read about the Global Village Program that the students in the video traveled with to Ghana.