

Kwame Crashes The Underworld

By: Craig Kofi Farmer

Activity: “Summary Step Up!”



Developed by Joey Ern and Sierra Conrad for CU Boulder's Children's Book Festival 2024, Open Education Resource, Creative Commons, Available at colorado.edu/event/bookfest

Grade and Colorado Academic Standard

Grade: 5th

Content Area: Reading, Writing, and Communicating

Standard Category: Reading for All Purposes

Grade Level Expectation: Apply strategies to interpret and analyze various types of literary texts.

Evidence Outcome:

Use Key Ideas and Details to:

- Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

Colorado Academic Standard information retrieved from: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/apps/standards>.

View the full standards at <https://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/standards>

Summary of book

Kwame Crashes The Underworld by Craig Kofi Farmer is about a young boy named Kwame who finds himself in a mysterious Ghanaian underworld on a quest to save humanity from the gods. As he grieves the loss of his Grandmother, he refuses to go to her celebration of life back in Ghana. However, a monkey named Woo steals his grandmother's dashiki (Ghanaian traditional clothing) and lures Kwame into a whirlpool that leads him into Asamando, the Ghanaian underworld. He then finds his grandmother in the underworld, as a young girl, and she offers to help him and his friend return to the living world. In order to make it home, Kwame must work with his friend Autumn and his grandmother to fight the gods and escape the underworld to save the land of the living, no matter what.



Activity Overview: Summary Step Up

The activity corresponding to the *Kwame Crashes the Underworld* reading is a type of infographic called a “Summary Step Up”. Students will be given a graphic organizer with a variety of questions to test reading comprehension and understanding of themes and conflict resolution in literary texts. This activity can be done individually, or students can be placed in small groups (2-4 students) to fill the worksheet out together while reading the book. The worksheet includes identification of characters, the connection between problem and solution, and themes, which can be used to expand student knowledge of writing conventions. This activity works well with this book because it helps clarify relationships and the plot due to the many characters and fast pace change of setting.

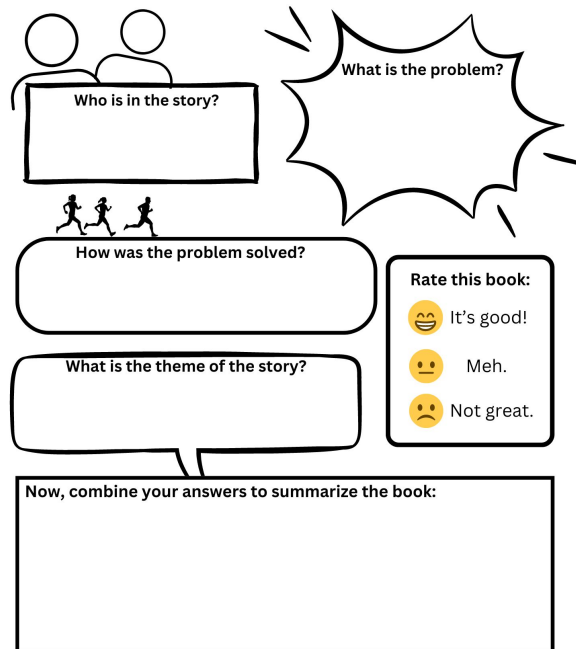
Activity adapted from Florida Center for Reading Research. Available via [this link](#).

Materials Needed

Physical Materials:

- Pens/Markers for students to fill out graphic organizers.
- Printed copy of Summary Step Up worksheets from [Florida Center for Reading Research](#) or the [Student-Made copy](#) (shown on the right).
- Copy of the novel *Kwame Crashes the Underworld*.

Book Title: _____ Name: _____



Who is in the story?

What is the problem?

How was the problem solved?

What is the theme of the story?

Rate this book:

😊 It's good!

😐 Meh.

😞 Not great.

Now, combine your answers to summarize the book:

Directions- Starting Activity

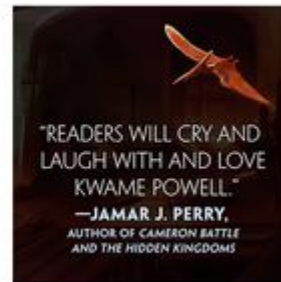
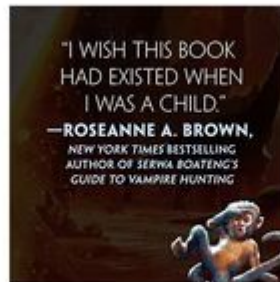
Note: This activity can be done over the course of the entire book. It may take several days to complete. This activity follows the [Student-Made copy](#) of the Summary Step Up worksheet.

- Beginning the activity: Have a whole class discussion about what a *theme* is, and some examples of themes found in other literature. Increase student participation by having students share their favorite novels and connect the theme back to each. This class discussion will serve as the foundation for the summary later on.
- Group students into small groups (2-4 students) or have them work individually. Once students are prepared in groups, you can begin the activity.



Directions- While Reading

- As students read, occasionally pause for students to write down answers when:
 - New characters are introduced.
 - The main problem of the story is introduced: Kwame is stuck in the underworld and isn't supposed to be there (Page 72 and beyond).
 - The problem is resolved: Kwame gets to go home after braving all the layers of Asmando and saying goodbye to his grandmother (Pages 310-320).



Directions- After Reading

- After students read, have students have independent, small group discussions about the book: what they liked, didn't like, and what they thought of the characters. This should take 5-10 minutes.
- Once students are done discussing, go over what a theme is a second time, and have the students decide which theme they think most closely aligns with the story.
- The final step is to have students rate the book and write a short summary (Approximately 2 sentences).
- *Ending the activity: Have a whole class discussion about students' favorite parts of the book and what they thought of the different characters. Connect this discussion back to how each piece contributes to the theme (i.e. How Kwame and Ama's relationship contributes to the "family" theme).

Additional Suggestions

Additional ways to extend this activity:


- Have students discuss which character they relate to most. Use traits such as “courageous, funny, humble, etc” to make the connection. [List of character traits can be found here.](#)
- Create a class flow chart of the events in the book and how they connect the problem and solution together. Have students take turns writing and providing answers.

Ways to adapt this activity for different learners:


- Instead of filling out a single activity sheet for each student, have the class fill out the activity sheet as a group.
- Have students draw pictures instead of writing answers in the designated boxes.

Completed student example on the right.

Book Title: Kwame Crashes the Underworld **Name:** Example



Who is in the story?
Kwame, Autumn, and Ama.





How was the problem solved?
Kwame accepts his grandma's passing and manages to convince the Sky God to let go of his wife. Because of his kindness, they get to go home.


What is the theme of the story?
Courage and kindness.

What is the problem?
Kwame is stuck int he underworld with a bunch of gods chasing him.

Rate this book:

 It's good!

 Meh.

 Not great.

Now, combine your answers to summarize the book:

In the book, *Kwame Crashes the Underworld*, a young boy goes to the underworld to try and save the dashiki his grandma made him. In the process, he has to face multiple gods and find the courage to save his friends and family. In the end, Kwame shows kindness to the grieving Sky God, and finally comes to terms with his grandma's death, who lets them finally return home.

2024 Book Festival!

We also hope you can join us on Saturday, November 9 at the Boulder Public Library to meet **Craig Kofi Farmer** and hear more about **Kwame Crashes The Underworld** in-person...along with other authors and illustrators! For more information, visit <https://www.colorado.edu/event/bookfest>

The CU Boulder School of Education and Boulder Bookstore present

2024 Children's Book Festival

Saturday, November 9 | Boulder Public Library



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Join us on Saturday, November 9, 2024 | 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

 Boulder Public Library (Main Branch) - 1101 Arapahoe Ave.
Free parking available

This free event includes author talks, a panel for educators, book sales and signing, children's activities and more. Come for part of the event, or stay for the day!

Free educational resources available on our website. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) available for teachers and librarians.

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Learn more and register at colorado.edu/event/bookfest

