

Kwame Crashes the Underworld

Craig Kofi Farmer

Developed by Adam Raducha, Eleanor Waring, and Anna Wheeler 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



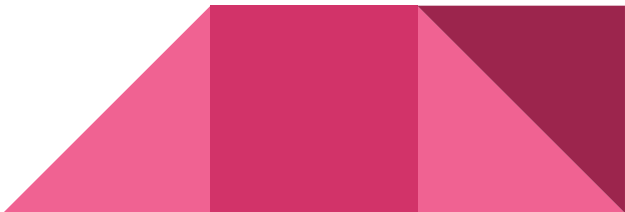
- ★ **Grade Level:** 8th grade
- ★ **Content Area:** Reading, Writing, and Communicating
- ★ **Colorado Academic Standards Information**
 - **Standards Category**
 - Reading for all Purposes
 - **Grade Level Expectation**
 - Analyze and evaluate literary elements and an author's choices to understand literary text.
 - **Evidence Outcome**
 - Use Integration of Knowledge and Ideas to: Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.

“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>

Contextualizing and Introducing the Book

Kwame Crashes the Underworld is a love letter to Ghanaian culture, mythos, and values, centering complex and nuanced Black characters as they dive headfirst into a quest to save the mortal world, find connection, and learn how to say goodbye. They're plunged into a world they had only ever thought was a story, battling angry nature gods alongside a previously dead Queen Mother grandma, discovering dormant powers, encountering awe-inspiring creatures, and meeting heroes straight out of myths.



Activity Overview

- ★ Ghanaian mythology is central to the storyline of *Kwame Crashes the Underworld*. It's grounded in it.
- ★ Students will explore how characters, settings, or objects in the book are based on traditional Ghanaian myths by researching their original forms and comparing them to their modern versions.
- ★ This comparison will help them understand how ancient stories are adapted to reflect contemporary themes and introduce Ghanaian culture in a new way.

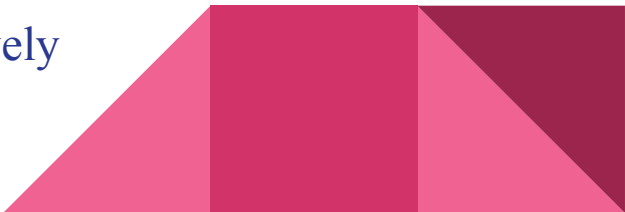


Materials

- ★ Laptop for research
- ★ Kwame Crashes the Underworld!
- ★ Annotation materials *optional* (post-it notes, highlighter)



Directions

1. Before reading Kwame Crashes the Underworld, introduce the project and optionally assign groups a character, setting, or object from the provided list so they can be more attentive to what they need to take note of.
 2. While reading the book, students should take notes or annotate to gather information about their assigned topic.
 3. Once finished with the book, groups will spend time researching the historical and mythological origins of their character, setting or object with a specific focus on the significance to Ghanaian culture.
 4. Groups will then compare the historical/mythological source of their topic to the modern adaptation in Kwame Crashes the Underworld.
 5. To finish they can present their findings to the class creatively as a slideshow, Venn diagram, poster, etc.
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Characters, Settings, & Objects Examples

Akrafena (Ch. 6 and 7)

Asamando*

Asase Yaa (Ch. 5-7, 17, 20)

Nyame (Ch. 13, 20)

Obayifo (Ch. 16)

Sunsum (Ch. 5, 6, 9, 10, 14)

Nansi & Tano (Ch 6-13, 17-20)

Benefo and his wives (Ch. 10-12)

And more!

*The underworld is the main setting of the book and there is information on it in most chapters, hence the title!



Possible Guiding Questions



- What is this location like in the original mythology?
- How has the author adapted it to fit into the world of this book and a more modern setting?
- Are there any significant changes (landscape, occupants, vibes), and if so, why do you think these choices were made?
- What are the key traits, powers, or responsibilities of this character in the original myth?
- How are they similar or different in the book?
- In what ways have they been modernized?
- What significance has this object had historically and within mythological context, and in what ways has that been preserved or adapted to the modern setting/world of the book?

Additional Suggestions

- Ideally, the groups should have about 3-4 students but can be adjusted accordingly.
- Students could also do additional research on non-mythological topics from the book, such as dashikis, fufu, and other persisting components of Ghanaian culture.
- Another topic of research could be the queen mothers, who continue to remain an integral part of Ghanaian culture and play an important role in the story.



*Resources

- **Akrafena**
 - [Akrafena Sword: Unveiling the Mystique of Ghana's Sacred Warrior Blade](#)
 - [State Sword: Akrafena](#)
- **Asamando**
 - [Asamando Britannica](#)
- **Asase Yaa**
 - [Asase Yaa: The Earth Goddess](#)
 - [Asase Yaa Britannica](#)
 - [Asase Yaa: Ashanti Earth Goddess](#)
- **Nyame**
 - [Nyame: The Sky God](#)
 - [Nyame \(Nyankopon\)- Head god Of The Ashanti Kingdom Of Ghana](#)
- **Nansi & Tano**
 - [Anansi: The Trickster God](#)
- **Obayifo**
 - [Obayifo: The African Vampire](#)
- **Sunsum**
 - [Description of Sunsum](#)
- **Benefo and his wives**
 - [The Hero with an African Face](#)

***Many of the listed gods' names have different variations and spellings. Additionally, these are just a few resources and not meant to replace further research.**

Thank you so much for your interest in this amazing book!

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.

Support provided by the CU Boulder Office for Public and Community Engaged Scholarship



Learn more and register at [colorado.edu/event/bookfest](https://www.colorado.edu/event/bookfest)

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