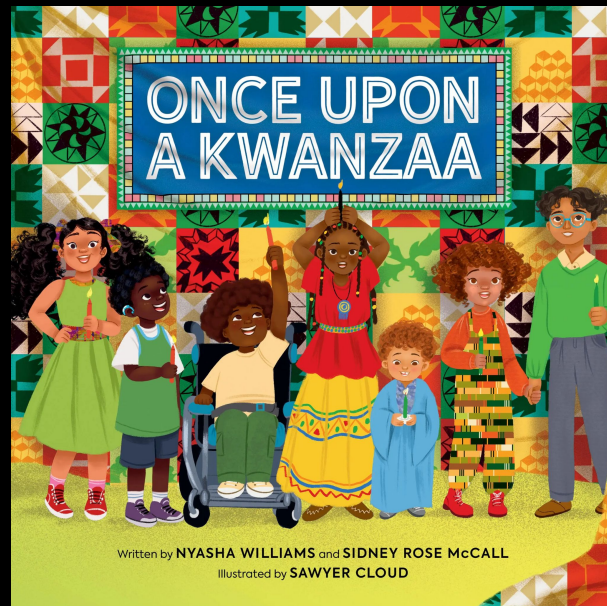


Personal Connections to Nguzo Saba

Developed by Anna Buencamino, Adelaide Mendrys, and Lauren Pike for CU Boulder's Children Book Festival 2025, Open Education Resource, Creative Commons. Available at colorado.edu/event/bookfest



Once Upon a Kwanzaa
Authors: Nyasha
Williams and Sidney Rose
McCall
Illustrator: Sawyer Cloud

Grade and Colorado Academic Standard

Grade Level: 3rd

Content Area: Reading, Writing, and Communicating

Colorado Academic Standards information:

Standard: #2: Reading for All Purposes

Grade level expectation: Apply strategies to fluently read and comprehend various informational texts.

Evidence outcome: Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (for example: comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence).

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>

Activity Overview

This activity ask students to identify the structure that the book uses for each principle of Kwanzaa (principle, meaning, and example). As the teacher reads the book aloud, students will identify the parts of this structure for each principle. At the end, students will share their notes in small groups.



Materials

- One blank sheet of paper for each student
- Three different colored writing utensils for annotation (markers, pens, colored pencils, or crayons, etc.).

Everyone all around has labored with love to craft their zawadi, each handmade and homespun.



Step-By-Step Directions

Review/warm-up

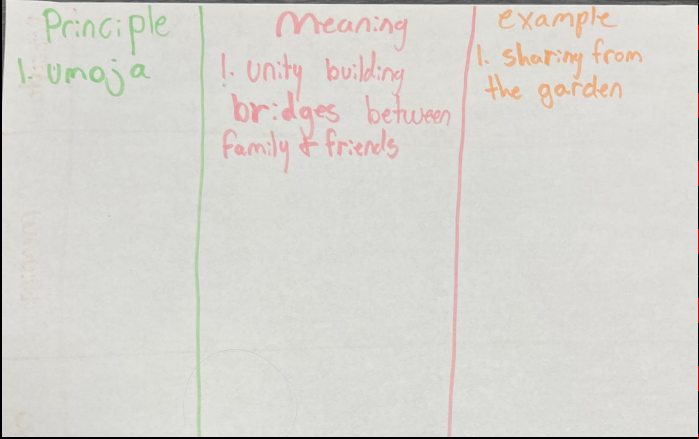
- Write the Nguzo Saba (the seven principles of Kwanzaa) on the board:
 - Umoja
 - Kujichagulia
 - Ujima
 - Ujamaa
 - Nia
 - Kuumba
 - Imani
- The teacher will introduce the concept of text structure as it appears within the story. Each of the seven principles follows the same pattern: the first sentence introduces the principle, the next explains its meaning, and the final sentence provides an example.
- The teacher can guide students with leading questions, such as, “What do you notice about how each principle is presented?” or “What similarities and differences do you see between them?”



Directions - Continued

Activity

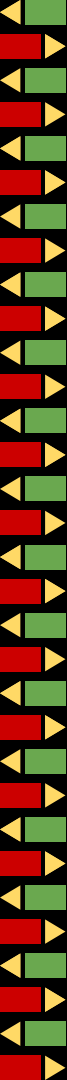
- Each student will receive a piece of paper and divide it into three sections labeled “Principle”, “Meaning”, and “Example”.
- As the teacher rereads the book aloud, the teacher will pause after each principle to allow students time to record their notes in each category (see example on the side for what they should include).



Principle	Meaning	Example
1. Umoja	1. Unity building bridges between family & friends	1. Sharing from the garden

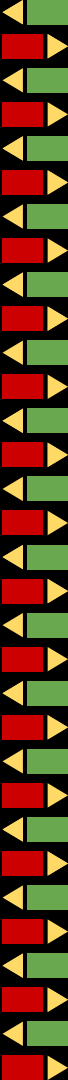
Wrap-up

- Once students have finished, ask them to share their papers in small groups (around four students per group).



Additional Suggestions

Drawing Element:

- Explain that they will choose one of the principles, write it on the paper, and draw a moment in their lives when they felt that principle. Use a moment from your own life as an example.
 - Hand each student a blank piece of paper and provide drawing materials. Allow students time to choose a principle, think of a moment, and complete their drawings.
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2025 Children's Book Festival

Saturday, November 8 | Boulder Public Library



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The CU Children's Book Festival is supported by a grant from the CU Office for Public and Community Engaged Scholarship (PACES)



See the schedule & register:
[colorado.edu/event/bookfest](https://www.colorado.edu/event/bookfest)

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We also hope you can join us on Saturday, November 8 at the Boulder Public Library to meet Nyasha Williams and hear more about *Once Upon a Kwanzaa* in-person...along with other authors and illustrators! For more information, visit

<https://www.colorado.edu/event/bookfest>