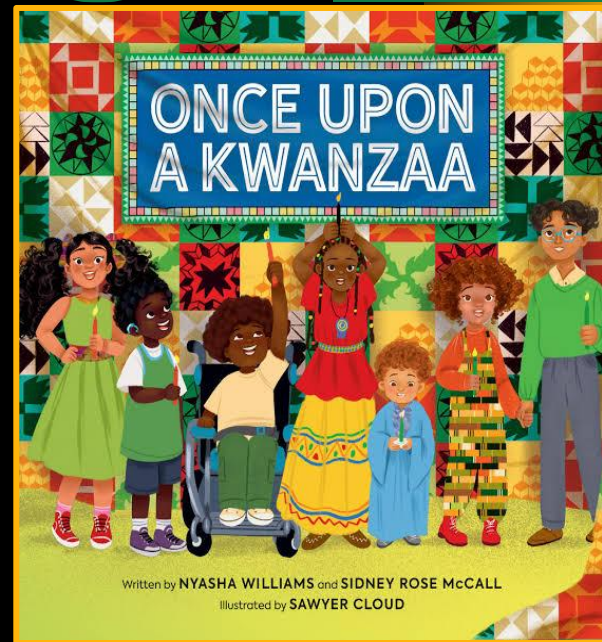


Once Upon a Kwanzaa

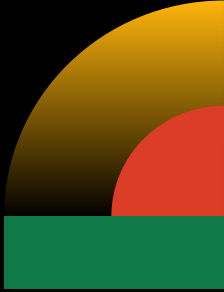
Written by Nyasha Williams and Sidney Rose McCall, Illustrated by Sawyer Cloud

“Illustration Through Different Cultures”

Developed by Alexa McCannell, Abbey Kunz, and Paige LeVecke for CU Boulder’s Children’s Book Festival 2025, Open Education Resource, Creative Commons, Available at colorado.edu/event/bookfest



Grade and Colorado Academic Standard

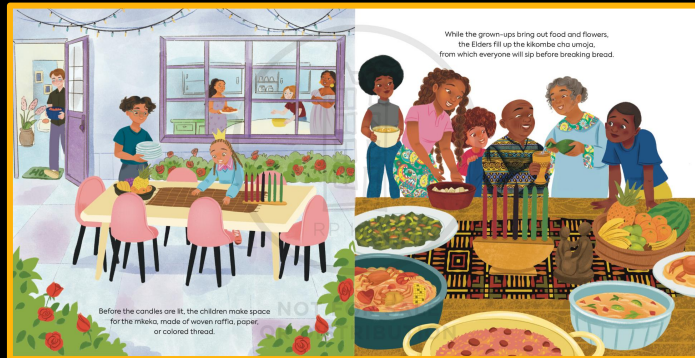


- Grade: 1st
- Content Area: Social Studies
- Colorado Academic Standards information:
 - **Standard: #1: History**
 - **Grade level expectation:** Explain how the diverse perspectives and traditions of families from many cultures have shaped the United States.
 - **Evidence outcome:** Discuss common and unique characteristics of different cultures, including African American, Latino, Asian American, Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, Indigenous Peoples, LGBTQ, and religious minorities, using multiple sources of information.
- 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

- The teacher will read *Once Upon a Kwanzaa* aloud to the entire class. Then, the teacher will discuss some of the traditions they celebrate, including dancing, candles, cooking, etc. Then, divide the students into groups and assign them one of the days of Kwanzaa. Then, each group will get a large piece of poster paper, and they will work together to illustrate the themes and different traditions from their assigned day.



Materials

- *Once Upon a Kwanzaa* book
- White poster paper
- Crayons
- Markers
- Colored pencils



Step-By-Step Directions

Step 1: Read aloud *Once Upon a Kwanzaa*.

Step 2: Discuss the traditions that are typically celebrated during Kwanzaa.

Step 3: Break students into seven groups and assign each group one day of Kwanzaa (Umoja, Kujichagulia, Ujima, Ujamaa, Nia, Kuumba, and Imani).



Step-By-Step Directions

Step 4: Hand out poster paper and drawing materials. Ask students to draw different traditions from their assigned day they saw in the book, research, and explain the significance of each day.

Step 5: Hang up all of the posters and ask students what similarities and differences they see between the different days and what they learned about each day.



Additional Suggestions

- One way to extend the activity further is by incorporating the Kwanzaa candles with the students and practicing the ceremony. Allowing the students to visually see the similarities and differences of each student's culture.
- One way to adapt the activity for bilingual learners is by putting the directions in the languages necessary for the students and including visual aids.



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>

The CU Boulder School of Education and Boulder Bookstore present the
2025 Children's Book Festival

Saturday, November 8 | Boulder Public Library



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WILLIAMS**



**DENISE
VEGA**



**PAM
MUÑOZ RYAN**



**RITA
WILLIAMS-GARCIA**



**SHAREE
MILLER**



Join us on Saturday, November 8, 2025 | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

 **Boulder Public Library (Main Branch) - 1001 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.

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



See the schedule & register:
colorado.edu/event/bookfest

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