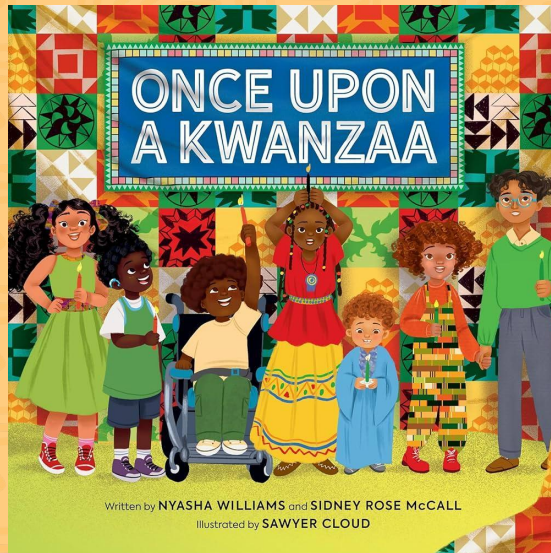


Activity:
My Kwanzaa Journal



Once Upon A Kwanzaa

Author: Nyasha Williams and Sidney Rose McCall

Illustrator: Sawyer Cloud

Developed by Caroline Bartlett and Natalia Lacayo 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 Level: Fourth Grade

Content Area: Reading, Writing, and Communicating

Standard: #2 Reading for All Purposes

Grade Level Expectations: Apply strategies to comprehend and interpret informational texts.

Evidence outcome:

Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.

"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: My Kwanzaa Journal

In this activity, students will create a personal Kwanzaa journal with one page dedicated to each of the seven nights of Kwanzaa. Each page highlights one of the Nguzo Saba (Seven Principles), prompting students to reflect through writing, drawing, or short creative tasks. This allows students to make personal connections to the values of Kwanzaa while reinforcing comprehension of the cultural celebration. The completed journal becomes a meaningful keepsake and can be shared during class or displayed.

In this book there is a lot of new vocabulary that they may have never heard. This activity helps students connect these words into their own lives.





Materials for activity:

- Journal
- Pen / Pencil

Prompts for Each Night:

Night one: Umoja (Unity) - Who are the people in your family or community that make you feel connected? Write about a time you all came together.

Night two: Kujichagulia (Self-Determination) - What makes you special? Write about something you are proud of about yourself.

Night three: Ujima (Collective Work & Responsibility) - Write about a time you worked with friends, classmates, or family to solve a problem or help someone.

Night four: Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics) - Imagine you and your friends opened a store. What would you sell, and how would you help each other run it?

Night five: Nia (Purpose) - What is one big dream you have for your future? How do you think it can help your family or community?

Night six: Kuumba (Creativity) - Write about a creative idea you have—like a song, story, invention, or art project—that could make the world a better place.

Night seven: Imani (Faith) - Write about someone you believe in, or something you believe you can do, even when it feels hard.

Step by step directions

1: After reading the book, discuss each day of Kwanzaa and the principle for that day

2: Hand out materials and the Kwanzaa Journal Template (or have students fold 4 sheets of blank paper in half and staple them into a booklet).

3: Introduce that each day students will answer a prompt on that specific Kwanzaa principle. (For example: The Day 1 unity prompt could be: "What is one way you help bring people together at home, at school, or in your neighborhood?") The students can write or draw their answers.

Step by step instructions continued

Repeat Steps for All Seven Principles:

Umoja (Unity)
Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)
Ujima (Collective Work & Responsibility)
Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)
Nia (Purpose)
Kuumba (Creativity)
Imani (Faith)



Have students choose one favorite journal page to share with a partner or small group.

Ask: “Which Kwanzaa principle do you think is most important in your life right now?”

Ways to Extend the Activity Further!

Have a lesson of each night

By teaching the children about what each day is about, they are able to connect it to their lives more when they begin writing in their journals.

Have a Spanish version of the book

By having the book readily available for children who are bilingual, it can help them to feel more seen in the classroom and activities.

Bring in coloring sheets

Bringing coloring sheets that are related to Kwanzaa can help the students better connect to it if they weren't raised with these traditions.

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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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Thank you!!

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>

