

# African American Voices Lesson Plans

**Lesson Plan:** Reading and Writing Folktales in Gullah

**Subject:** Social Studies,  
Language Arts

**Grade level:** 3

**NGSSS-SS:** **SS.3.A.1.3:**  
Define terms related to the Social  
Sciences.



**SS.3.G.4.1:**  
Explain how the environment influences settlement patterns in the  
United States, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean.

**SS.3.G.4.4:**  
Identify the contributions from various ethnic groups to the United States.

**Description/  
Abstract of Lesson:** After a brief lesson on the history and culture of the Gullah/Geechee,  
the students will write a brief story using Gullah words.

**Objective(s):** The students will

- Demonstrate appreciation for other cultures and languages
- Develop comprehension of migration patterns (in Florida)

**Materials:** Internet Resources

**Duration:** 1 class period

**Lesson Lead In/  
Opening:**

1. Have the students listen, sing and dance along to the Gullah Song  
“Shake Em, Shake Em.” The song can be played from  
<http://www.knowitall.org/gullahmusic/>
2. Explain to the students that they had just listened to a Gullah song.

**Activity:**

1. Explain to the students that Gullah is much more than a language, it is  
a culture that comes from the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia.

The term Gullah derives from the Native American Nation known as  
Guale. The Spanish used this name to refer to the North American East  
Coast. The Gullah are also known as Geechees, which comes from the  
name for a river that runs through Georgia and South Carolina. It is  
called the Ogeechee River.

The Gullah language itself is a mixture of English and several West

African languages that is spoken by many African Americans today. When spoken it sounds similar to Caribbean and African Creole.

Make sure to emphasize that many Geechees settled in South Florida after a series of hurricanes devastated their crops in the 1890s.

2. Give a brief lesson on the history of the Gullah. You may use any of the following websites as reference guides:

<http://www.knowitall.org/gullahnet/>

<http://yale.edu/glc/gullah/08.htm>

<http://www.islandpacket.com/man/gullah/index.html>

[http://www.africanheritage.com/Resources\\_for\\_Teachers.asp](http://www.africanheritage.com/Resources_for_Teachers.asp)

<http://www.africanamericancharleston.com/gullah.html>

[http://www.africanaheritage.com/Lowcountry\\_Africana.asp](http://www.africanaheritage.com/Lowcountry_Africana.asp)

3. Go over 10 Gullah words and their meaning with the students. Have students recite the words and their meaning.

Use the following website as a reference guide:

<http://www.islandpacket.com/man/gullah/language.html>

4. Present Gullah folktales to the students using the following website:

<http://www.knowitall.org/gullahtales/>

5. Assign the students to use 5 to 7 of the Gullah words to write a 10 sentence folktale of their own.

6. Have the students present their folktales to the rest of the class.

**Extended Lesson:** Organize a cultural expo with the students, featuring music, decorations and food from the Gullah culture.

**Assessment:**

- Evaluate folktales according to proper Gullah word use, grammar and neatness.
- Consider creativity grades for story development.
- Consider presentation grades.

**Suggested Books  
In Lesson:**

Gonzales, A. E. (2002) Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect,  
University of South Carolina Press

Pollitzer, S. P. (2005) The Gullah People And Their African Heritage,

University of Georgia Press

Geraty, V. M. (1998) Gullah Fuh Oonuh/Gullah for You: A Guide to the  
Gullah Language, Sandlapper Publishing