


DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATRE: JOHN STEPTOE'S

MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS



TEACHER'S GUIDE

 KRANNERT CENTER
2008-09 YOUTH SERIES

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DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATRE: JOHN STEPTOE'S MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS

GRADES: **1+6**

TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY, MAY 5-6

10AM & 12:30PM

COLWELL PLAYHOUSE

APPROXIMATELY 60 MINUTES

CAMPAIGN FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

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KRANNERT CENTER THANKS

MARCI DODDS AND CODY SOKOLSKI

FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT

YOUTH SERIES PRODUCTIONS.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

ABOUT DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATRE: JOHN STEPTOE'S MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS

The majestic and colorful Zimbabwean terrain is transplanted to the stage through swaying giant flowers, moving trees, and sculpted poles inspired by African masks in this spectacular play. Exquisite costumes, traditional chanting, upbeat choreography, and spirited drumming help convey the simple virtues of goodness, generosity, and love in this adaptation of John Steptoe's Caldecott Honor Book.

When his two daughters are chosen among the most worthy young women to meet the king and perhaps become queen, Mufaro is overjoyed. Manyara, the beautiful but selfish daughter, treks off secretly so that the king will meet her first, but she encounters obstacles in a mysterious forest. Nyasha, the beautiful and generous daughter, instead befriends the wood's inhabitants as she passes through.

In true fairy tale style, the king disguises himself and witnesses how Manyara and Nyasha behave as they meet the strange denizens of the forest. Because she is beautiful inside, he chooses Nyasha to be his queen, and the self-centered Manyara becomes her servant. The universal themes of *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* are enlivened by the authentic sights and sounds of Zimbabwe, a tapestry of multicolored fabric and textures, and an infusion of rhythm.

ABOUT THE DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATRE

The Dallas Children's Theatre (DCT), one of the top five family theatres in the nation, serves over 250,000 people each year through its main stage productions, touring shows, educational programming, and outreach activities. Since its inception in 1984, this award-winning group has created challenging, inspiring, and entertaining works that promote an early appreciation for literature and the performing arts as they communicate vital social messages to youth. DCT produces literary classics, original scripts, folk tales, myths, fantasies, and contemporary dramas that foster multicultural understanding, confront topical issues, and celebrate the human spirit.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The suggested activities can easily be modified and adapted for your classroom and the differing abilities of your students. Please feel free to copy or adapt materials in this guide for classroom use. We have included a StagePage folder for each student attending the performance. If you find that you need additional materials, simply call the Engagement Office at Krannert Center (217.333.9727), and we'll get them out to you as quickly as possible.

StagePage activities and materials in this Teacher's Guide have been written with the state goals for learning in mind. These activities help students reach one or more of the goals in the arts and other curricular areas. While the performance experience itself is a primary way for students to achieve the state goals in the arts, both pre- and post-performance activities in the classroom can significantly enrich a student's encounter with this production.

STAGEPAGE MATERIALS & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATRE: JOHN STEPTOE'S MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS

THE STUDENTS' STAGEPAGE SAYS:

Hear the pounding drums, see the bright costumes, and watch the swaying trees and flowers on this exciting trip to Zimbabwe. In a small village live Mufaro and his daughters Manyara and Nyasha, who are both beautiful but not at all alike. When the king requests that the most worthy and attractive daughters in the land come to the city, where one will become his queen, each daughter makes a different choice and takes a strange journey. Come along to see who gets to be queen . . .

The play *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* is based on John Steptoe's 1987 book *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale*. A librarian may be able to help you locate the big book adaptation *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters Big Book* (Mulberry Big Book, 1993)—or you can find it through various online retailers—as well the audio book read by Robin Miles (Live Oak Media, 2003) and the Spanish version, *Las bellas hijas de Mufaro*, translated by Clarita Kohen (Rayo, 1997).

In addition to Steptoe's tale, the video recording *Stories from the Black Tradition* (Children's Circle Studios, 1992; distributed by Weston Woods) includes *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* retold by Verna Aardema, *The Village of Round and Square Houses* by Ann Grifalconi, *Goggles!* by Ezra Jack Keats, and *A Story, A Story* by Gail E. Haley.

Students can make deeper connections with the performance by looking for these other books written and illustrated by John Steptoe:

Stevie (Harper & Row, 1969)
Uptown (Harper & Row, 1970)
Train Ride (Harper & Row, 1971)
Birthday (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972)
My Special Best Words (Viking, 1974)
Marcia (Viking, 1976)
Daddy Is a Monster . . . Sometimes (Lippincott, 1980)
Jeffrey Bear Cleans Up His Act (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1983)

The Story of Jumping Mouse: A Native American Legend (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1984)
Baby Says (HarperCollins, 1988)

Biographical information about him is available at:
<http://www.harpercollinschildrens.com/HarperChildrens/Kids/AuthorsAndIllustrators/ContributorDetail.aspx?Cid=12770>.

DO YOU KNOW THIS STORY?

THE STUDENTS' STAGEPAGE SAYS:

Cinder Edna is poor but happy, and she makes the most of what she has. Instead of crying because she can't afford to eat in an expensive restaurant, she learns how to make tuna casserole 17 different ways. Instead of moaning because she can't go to fancy parties, she teaches herself to tell jokes. Instead of feeling sorry for herself because she can't buy fashionable clothes, she mows the lawn or rakes leaves for her neighbors to save up for a pretty dress. Sure, she'd never been to a fancy party . . . but you never know what your future holds. And then one day two princes announce that they're having a huge ball, and all of the women in the area are invited.

Cinder Edna takes out her new dress, but she doesn't have any high heels to wear with it. She decides that the shoes don't really matter, since her toes would hurt in those things anyway. She grabs her loafers and takes the bus to the ball. Inside the ballroom, she first sees the handsome prince. He seems really full of himself—always talking about his huge palace and how beautiful his future wife must be and how he's so good looking. He seems so boring that Cinder Edna walks away. She then meets his brother, Rupert, who isn't handsome at all but is interested in the environment, rescues orphaned kittens, and likes to tell jokes. She tells him a few herself, and they dance together all night.

Just as midnight chimes, Cinder Edna realizes that she has to leave so that she can catch the last bus home. She runs out without telling Rupert her name, and when she gets outside, she realizes that she's somehow lost her shoe . . .

Does this story sound familiar? What does it remind you of?

What do you think happens to Cinder Edna at the end of the story?

This brief plot is part of *Cinder Edna* by Ellen Jackson and illustrated by Kevin O'Malley (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1994). In that book, the typical Cinderella story is contrasted directly with Cinder Edna's story. As you'd expect, at the end, Rupert comes looking for Cinder Edna with her loafer in hand, and they end up together in a solar-heated cottage.

Here are some questions to more pointedly direct your class in a discussion comparing *Cinder Edna* to *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* and other Cinderella stories:

- What happens in this story that is like what happens in *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*?
- What happens in this story that is like what happens in the other Cinderella stories you know?
- How is Cinder Edna like characters in the other Cinderella stories you know?
- How is Cinder Edna like Nyasha?
- How is Cinder Edna like Manyara?
- Why do you think Cinder Edna likes Rupert better than his brother?

For a deeper exploration of the universal aspects of the Cinderella tale, students can connect with the more than 1,000 other versions of this story that has been told for centuries and in many cultures, such as the updated *Prince Cinders* by Babette Cole and *The Paper Bag Princess* by Robert N. Munsch and illustrated by Michael Martchenko; the classic *Yeh-Shen* from China, which is thought to be the original tale; *The Rough-Face Girl* from Rafe Martin and David Shannon, which sets the story in an Algonquin village; and, of course, *The Frog Bride*, which you may have seen when David Gonzalez brought it to Krannert Center in November.

Mallory Hausman has gathered some fairly contemporary takes on Cinderella stories for the Center for Children's Books at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois: http://ccb.lis.uiuc.edu/bibliographies/cinderella_apr2007.html.

Russell Peck has compiled an extensive annotated bibliography of Cinderella stories from across the centuries and in various formats. The menus make it easy to find the type of work you want (a movie or a modern poetic retelling), and its helpful synopses allow you to more easily select versions that may be appropriate for your students: <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/cinder/cinintr.htm>.

Mary Northrup wrote "Multicultural Cinderella Stories" for the American Library Association's publication *Book Links*. This informative collection of Cinderella stories from around the world is available in the May 2000 issue (vol. 9, no. 5).

And more advanced students may be interested in tracking down their own tales. This link is updated regularly with descriptions written just for kids: <http://www.webrary.org/kids/jbibcinderellavariations.html>.

Naturally, your local librarian will be able to direct you to the resources available close to you or to tales that might best fit your needs. Be sure to check out the information on the Urbana Free Library later in this guide as well.

If you'd like to open up this activity to include a more general discussion of fairy tale elements that range beyond those used in Cinderella stories, see this lesson plan designed for grades 3-5 from ReadWriteThink, which also includes an activity to write new fairy tales based on established ones (and see the later StagePage activity too): http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=853.



ON SAFARI

THE STUDENTS' STAGEPAGE SAYS:

Let's take a trip to Zimbabwe with Mufaro, Nyasha, and Manyara and then write home about the colorful animals and birds we've seen. An easy way to travel is to imagine that you are living inside the play—or by looking at the book.

Start by thinking about the scenery and characters in the play—how many different animals and birds do you remember seeing? You can also examine the covers of the book and then look at every page. How many different animals and birds can you find?

Pick out five animals or birds—or both!—that you want to tell your friends back home about. Maybe you like the pink flamingoes or the horns on the impala or the funny feathers on the head of the crowned crane. You can also use books and magazines in your class or a computer to get more information about the other animals, birds, fish, and insects that live in Zimbabwe.

Your friends will love to get postcards with pictures of your animals and fun facts about them. You can either draw your birds and animals—be sure to look carefully at the pictures so that you get the colors of the fur and the shapes of the bodies just right—cut pictures out of magazines, or download photos and print them out. On your postcards, be sure to include what your animal or bird eats, how big each one grows, how long it lives, and where it likes to sleep. You can also write down anything unusual you uncover—like how the squirrel-sized bush baby can leap 20 feet or that warthogs live in other animals' shelters. Amaze your family and friends with your expert safari skills!

For a gallery of animals, head to: <http://www.awf.org/section/wildlife/gallery>.

For an even bigger list, click on http://www.krugerpark.co.za/Kruger_Park_Reference_Guide-travel/african-mammals-guide.html.

For sites appropriate for kids, try these: http://www.worldalmanacforkids.com/WAKI-Chapter.aspx?chapter_id=1
<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/Animals/CreatureFeature>
<http://www.mccsc.edu/~jcmlib/jaguar/zimbabwe2/animals.htm>.

And if you'd like to give your students a look at what some children posted about their own real safari, direct them to this site: <http://kidsblogs.nationalgeographic.com/globalbros/africa>.

Even if your school won't be visiting Chicago's Field Museum this year, you may want to use its *Educator Guide to African Biodiversity* (available for grades 3-5 and 6-8) to help you structure an activity similar to this one that is more tailored to your students (scroll down to the "Biodiversity" section to find it): http://www.fieldmuseum.org/education/edu_guides.htm#2.

You can explore the Field Museum's online exhibit on Africa at: http://www.fieldmuseum.org/exhibits/exhibit_sites/africa.

WHAT'S YOUR WISH?

THE STUDENTS' STAGEPAGE SAYS:

What other fairy tales do you know? These can be stories you've read (like *Cinderella* and *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*), movies you've seen (like *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* or *Shrek*), or how about a play or ballet (*The Frog Bride* or *Sleeping Beauty*). Write down a few.

What do all of these stories have in common? Think about the following things:

- When do they take place?
- What kinds of characters are in them?
- What kinds of things happen in them?
- How many times does the same kind of thing happen?
- How do they end?
- What kinds of things do you learn from them?

Now if you had to write your own fairy tale, what would it be like? If you set it in your own town, what would the people be wearing? Where would they go and what would they do? What if you were Cinderella—would you go to a ball or somewhere else, like the movies or a soccer game?

Use your imagination to travel to a new place or a different time or just tell an old tale in a new way.

Students may benefit from some additional inspiration points when they're thinking about what their own fairy tales might be like. Here are a few possible avenues:

What if Little Red Riding Hood didn't live in the forest but instead lived in the desert? What might greet her instead of the Wolf? What if Goldilocks lived in Japan 200 years ago? Would she meet up with bears who eat her porridge?

Or think about the moral of *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*. If you had to write a story with the same moral, what would it be like?

An alternative entry into this activity would be for you to sketch the beginnings of a tale already published. You could choose a tale based in another culture, set in another time period, or featuring a decidedly different protagonist.

This activity is adapted from a lengthier lesson plan from ReadWriteThink that includes many fairy tale resources as well as a focused activity on identifying typical fairy tale characteristics: http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=42.

MAKE A THUMB PIANO

THE STUDENTS' STAGEPAGE SAYS:

Many people in Zimbabwe love to play on the mbira—often called a thumb piano because guess what you play the keys with?—and most of these instruments are homemade from gourds, pieces of scrap wood, and leftover bits of metal. You can make your own!

You'll need:

- 1 small square piece of wood
- 4 large popsicle sticks
- 2 large bobby pins (you can use more if you want more keys on your piano)
- 2 large rubber bands
- Glue
- Tape
- Push pins or nails

1. Glue two popsicle sticks next to each other on top of the wood.
2. Wrap one rubber band around the ends of the popsicle sticks and then around the wood, so that the sticks will stay in place.
3. While the glue dries, paint the wood, add stickers, or wrap colored masking tape around the wood for decorations. Make it look like other mbiras or make it look like something you've never seen before.
4. Have an adult break the bobby pins so that they are slightly different lengths. Each bobby pin should be broken into two pieces.
5. Tape one end of each bobby pin onto the popsicle sticks so that it hangs over the piece of wood. Bobby pin pieces will be the keys of your mbira. Organize them however you want but make sure they're not too close together so that you can pluck them to make sounds.
6. Glue the other two popsicle sticks on top of the bobby pins. They should fit right over the first two popsicle sticks.
7. Wrap the other rubber band around the sticks to hold them in place.
8. With the help of an adult, take the push pins and stick them through the popsicle sticks and down into the wood. If the bobby pins are held down tightly, you'll get a clear sound.
9. After the glue has dried, carefully bend the bobby pins up so that you can push down on the keys to make sounds.

Experiment with holding the thumb piano in your lap, setting it on a table, or putting it down on a hard floor to see what makes the best sound—or maybe your desk will work great. Try attaching the metal tabs from soda cans with other push pins so that you can spin them. Many mbira makers add bottle caps or other small pieces of metal that will rattle or buzz. You can try playing songs you already know or make up your own. If your class gets together, you can jam during your own Zimbabwean music concert.

If you have access to the Internet, you can play a mbira online, listen to some songs, or even record your own music. Just type the following link into your browser and get ready to become a mbira master: <http://pbskids.org/africa/piano>.



TIPS FOR ASSISTING STUDENTS

Students will require adult assistance when constructing a thumb piano, although many of the tasks can be completed by them independently.

This construction project can be spread across a few sessions to allow for the glue to dry between steps 2 and 8. To prevent the mbira from buckling, you can add a heavy weight on top of the popsicle sticks after you glue on each set. The pressure from the rubber bands can make the mbira bend out of shape otherwise.

Adult assistance will be needed to press the push pins through the popsicle sticks and into the wood. Depending on the density of the wood, a hammer might be required to complete this step. If you're using a particularly dense wood, try short nails with wide heads instead of push pins, since those are too delicate to withstand much hammering. To make this part of the process easier, substitute MDF (medium-density fiberboard) or dense Styrofoam such as the blue and pink variety often seen at construction sites called extruded polystyrene. The sound from the finished mbira won't be as vibrant, but your students might enjoy being able to make the entire instrument on their own.

The bobby pins will come apart easily after they're bent back and forth a few times—and some students may be able to make their own keys without difficulty. Be sure to use either large bobby pins only or a mixture of large and small ones so that you'll get a variety of sounds from the keys.

At craft stores and some home improvement stores, you can purchase precolored blocks of wood, colored popsicle sticks, and even small painted pieces of balsa wood cut into shapes—like the ones you see in the StagePage photos and the [photos here](#)—that can be used for the kids' instruments. With so many choices, the possibilities for self-expression are practically endless.

You could also turn this project into a wider-ranging art activity by focusing on an authentic color palette or traditional African designs that stretch beyond the borders of Zimbabwe. For a quick guide to some basic color associations within the boldly geometric kente cloth tradition of Ghana, see this resource related to the PBS series *Africa*: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/africa/tools/music/activities3.html#5>.



MBIRA/THUMB PIANO CONNECTIONS

Around the globe, the Shona people of Zimbabwe are honored for their mbira music. Your students may know the mbira as the kalimba or the marimba (not to be confused with the instrument that resembles a xylophone)—and they may at least recognize the sound. A local source for authentic African thumb pianos is Ten Thousand Villages (105 N. Walnut Street, Champaign).

Useful background information is offered by MBIRA, a nonprofit organization devoted to preserving and promoting the music of the Shona people. The information on its web site ranges from fairly basic ("Pointers for Mbira Students") to quite advanced ("On Teaching Americans to Play Mbira like Zimbabweans" reprinted from the *Journal of African Music*): <http://www.mbira.org>.

For historical recordings of Zimbabwean music, including those of mbira artists (as well as many other African musicians), visit the International Library of African Music, which has a wide-ranging collection of recordings for purchase, audio clips, and photographs that can be searched by country, language, artist, title, and even description: <http://ilam.ru.ac.za/index.php>.

For an overview of Zimbabwe's music (including that of the mbira), head to *National Geographic's* site, which zeroes in on the eradication of indigenous sounds in the region and their reintegration in the 1970s, an overview of the current popular music scene, and links to bios of professional artists: http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com/worldmusic/view/page.basic/country/content.country/zimbabwe_28.

And for inspiration, your students might enjoy seeing this nimble-fingered mbira master in action on a tune they may recognize from cartoons: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLhnXpznyBE&feature=related>.

LOCAL CONNECTION

The mbira is generally played in a communal or ceremonial setting, but a group of students from the U of I Mbira Ensemble held a public performance in February 2009 at The Urbana Free Library as part of The Prairie Breezes series for young children. For more information about this ensemble, contact the School of Music at (217) 333.2620.

HOSHO

If constructing a thumb piano feels a little daunting (for you too), students can make a hosho instead. Music featuring the mbira in Zimbabwe almost always includes singing, hand clapping, and hosho playing. Traditionally, the hosho is simply a seed- or gravel-filled gourd, but any round, enclosed container can approximate the sound. Try putting popcorn kernels, sand (for more of a rainstick approach to the project), or tiny pebbles inside an empty soft drink bottle. Different sounds can be made with an oatmeal container, a tin from a box of mints, or an empty margarine container as the base of the instrument. Students can use markers, crayons, paint, stickers, yarn, beads, sequins, colored paper, aluminum foil, or whatever they take inspiration from to decorate their hoshos.

If you don't mind a mess, you could also go the old-fashioned route with papier-mâché and a balloon: <http://www.greenville.k12.sc.us/stone/staff/lessons/szymansk/rattles.asp>.

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE?

THE STUDENTS' STAGEPAGE SAYS:

If someone from another country came to your town, what would they learn about you just by looking around? Do you wear bulky jackets and gloves? Then the weather must get cold during the winter. Do you have kneepads in your backpack—or how about a flute case? Then you're probably on a soccer team or in a band. Do you have a recycling bin at your house? Then you must be interested in saving resources and protecting the environment.

We can tell a lot about the history of Zimbabwe just by looking carefully at the scenery and costumes (or the illustrations in the book) for *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*.

- How are your clothes different from the ones that Mufaro, Nyasha, and Manyara wear?
- What food do you think you would eat if you lived in Mufaro's village?
- How are the animals you see every day different from the ones in *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*?
- Think about where Mufaro lives with his daughters. How is your house or apartment the same?

Write a few sentences about what a day in Mufaro's village would be like.



If you students need help getting started on identifying the commonalities and differences, here are a few pointed questions you could ask:

- Do the characters in *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* wear gloves or big boots? How about jeans?
- Why do you think the clothes are so different from yours? (This one could lead into a discussion of the natural resources, industries, and cultural traditions in Zimbabwe.)
- Did you see any restaurants where Mufaro and his family live?
- What did Nyasha grow in her garden?
- Why do you think you would eat that food instead of the food you usually eat at home? (This question and the following one could lead into a discussion of the climate and geographic features of the region.)
- Why couldn't a gazelle or a flamingo live near you?
- Think about Mufaro's house and village. What's different about where you sleep or go to school?

Older students could read journals from children their age in southern Africa and write about how their own daily lives compare: <http://pbskids.org/africa/myworld>.

LOCAL CONNECTION

You'll have to plan ahead for a trip to the Spurlock Museum on the campus of the University of Illinois. Through May 3, you can see *Children Just Like Me*, a hands-on exhibit that showcases youth from around the world in an exploration of diversity. Through interactive displays, visitors will learn how much they share with their peers from China, Brazil, Mali, Turkey, Egypt—everywhere. Inquire with museum staff about Around the World Wednesdays, which feature crafts and activities for parents and children. For more information, visit: <http://www.spurlock.illinois.edu>.

WHAT'S A NAME?

THE STUDENTS' STAGEPAGE SAYS:

The characters in *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* have special names that come from the Shona language, which is spoken in Zimbabwe. Can you guess which definition goes with which name?

Mufaro	Snake
Nyasha	Ashamed
Manyara	Happy Man
Nyoka	Mercy

Many names have particular meanings that come from ordinary words (like the names Charity or Victor in English). Akira means "intelligent," Raja stands for "hope," and Latifah refers to someone who is gentle or kind. John means "gracious," but did you know that Juan, Sean, Gianni, Jens, and Ivan are all the name "John" in different cultures?

Does your name have a story to tell too? Some people are named after relatives—maybe you have the same name as a favorite aunt or your father. Some people have place names, like Madison or Brooklyn, or share names with flowers, like Jasmine or Lily. And how about names like Apple or Calico? Those first names are words for objects. Maybe you—or someone you know—got your name because of a funny story (do you have an embarrassing nickname or did your pet get its name because of its weird behavior?).

Last names have stories too. People named Smith were originally called that because they worked as blacksmiths making horseshoes, swords, and other metal objects. Centuries ago, people who were shepherds were often named Schafer (because "Schafer" is the German word for "shepherd"). People named Zhu originally lived in an area by that name in China.

Pick an interesting name—yours, your cousin's, your favorite comic book hero's, the name of someone you're studying in science class, anyone's!—and find out its story. Amaze your classmates with what they never knew—but now do—about names.

For background information on naming practices with links to explanations by cultural group, see: <http://www.mayrand.org/meaning-e.htm>.

The *Oxford Dictionary of First Names* by Patrick Hanks, Kate Hardcastle, and Flavia Hodges (second ed.; Oxford University Press, 2007) offers background on 7,000 names in the English-speaking world as well as a supplement that includes Arabic and Indian names.

The Penguin Dictionary of First Names by David Pickering (second ed.; Penguin, 2004) explores more than 5,000 names through their cultural, religious, and artistic significance.

Elsdon Coles Smith's *American Surnames* (Genealogical Publishing Company, 1986) offers insight into names originating in Europe, Africa, Asia, and India; surnames derived from religious texts; and the 2,000 most common last names in the United States.

More advanced students may be able to navigate this online list and access its information on the countries where specific names are used, associated religious and literary references, derivations, alternates in other languages, and lists by cultural group and subject category, such as names from mythology and popular culture: <http://www.behindthename.com>.

For resources that are more directly related to genealogy and include derivations of names from a wide range of sources, see: <http://www.searchforancestors.com/surnames/origin>.

If all else fails, you can direct your students to Wikipedia (with the usual caveat about its reliability). The main entries can offer surprising connections (did you know that Jung-Hwa and Janet are the same name and that Janet is both an airline and a computer network?), and they might be fascinated by seeing a single name (maybe even their own) written in Danish, Cantonese, and Cherokee.

This project could also be a fun way to introduce kids to the reference section at the school or local library. With their own name, a family name, or a favorite name in mind, they can request and access census records on microfilm, look up family trees, read histories of early settlers to the United States or long-standing families in other countries, research the history of an ancestor, and otherwise engage in an adventure in naming.



BREAKING NEWS

THE STUDENTS' STAGEPAGE SAYS:

Imagine that you're living in Mufaro's village and the king has just invited all of the most worthy and beautiful daughters to his court. This is a big story that will be reported on the local news. Think about who would be interviewed—the king, Mufaro, Manyara, and Nyasha for sure, but who else might be in the story? Who would you interview if you were the reporter?

Now volunteer to be the reporter. Who would you want to interview? What would you want to know?

Next, volunteer to be one of the main characters. What would you want the people watching your interview to know?

Imagine that you are someone else involved in the story. What would you want to say?

Remember to think like the character you're playing—it's your chance to be an actor!

If students need prompting about other people who might be involved in this local story, here are a few possibilities that could take their reporting in different directions:

- Nyoka the snake
- The king's family
- People who dislike the king's plan
- Other parents in the village
- Other daughters in the village
- People who couldn't afford to travel to the king's court
- Local merchants selling food or clothes to the many families headed to the king's court
- Servants who work for the king

If students have a hard time choosing which character to interview, they might benefit from focusing on these questions:

- What would you want to know about Mufaro (or any other character)?
- What would you ask Manyara (or Nyasha) about her lonely journey to the city?
- What would you ask Nyasha (or Manyara) about Nyoka?
- What would you ask Nyoka about his disguises?

In case your students need help with fashioning questions, here are a few possibilities that you could suggest for the reporter to ask Mufaro:

- Why would Nyasha make a good queen? Why would Manyara?
- What makes you proudest about your daughters?
- What do you hope will happen to each daughter in the future?

Here are some questions that the reporter might ask Nyasha:

- Why would you make the best queen?
- What will you do if you don't become queen?
- Why do you think your sister ran away?
- What do you like best about Manyara?

Here are a few questions that could be directed to Manyara:

- What made you run away?
- Why would you make the best queen?
- Why didn't you take the advice of the old woman?
- What do you like best about Nyasha?

Here are a couple of ways to approach the king:

- Why did you make this plan to choose a wife?
- How will you decide who is worthy to be your queen?
- What did you hope to learn from interacting with Manyara and Nyasha in the forest?

If students need help thinking from the character's perspective, they could start by answering these questions:

- If you were Mufaro, what would you want to tell the world about your daughters?
- If you were the king, what would you say about life in the city?
- If you were Manyara, how would you describe your father?
- If you were Nyasha, how would you describe your trip to the king's court?

Here are a few ways to instigate a discussion about invented characters:

- If you lived next door to Mufaro and his daughters, what would you think about Manyara running away?
- If you were a servant preparing for all of the daughters coming to the king's house, how would you feel?
- If you were the daughter in a poor family that couldn't afford to send you to the king's court, how would you react to the news about the invitation?
- If you lived in another country and heard this story on the news, what would you think?

You could certainly take a different moment in the book or play to focus on. Perhaps students would enjoy interviewing people after it's been discovered that Manyara has left on her own. Aside from her family, people in the village would have relevant reactions that students could enact. And if they're old enough to have seen a red carpet event, they might relish the opportunity to stand outside the king's court as the worthy daughters and their families are filing in.

LOCAL CONNECTIONS

The Urbana Free Library

Krannert Center has partnered with the Urbana Free Library to help expand your students' Youth Series experience. The Urbana Free Library has placed materials that relate to *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* on display, and librarians are prepared to help your students immerse themselves in the wide-ranging subject areas that are covered by the play. These resources will be available approximately two weeks before through two weeks following the performance.

The Urbana Free Library is located at 210 West Green Street in Urbana, directly west of Lincoln Square Village. Below are the library's hours of operation:

Monday-Thursday
9am-9pm

Friday-Saturday
9am-6pm

Sunday
1pm-5pm

Please feel free to share this information with your students and their families. We hope that you are able to take advantage of this exciting partnership!

The Center for African Studies

The Center for African Studies at the University of Illinois is dedicated to integrating a deep study of Africa, its people, and its cultures into the curriculum and across all subjects. Its extensive resources range from classroom visits to online curriculum materials to courses for educators. See the enclosed handout or visit the web site below for additional information: <http://www.afst.uiuc.edu/outreach/k-12.html>.