

Larissa Danowitz
 Overbrook High School-Pine Hill NJ
 High School Division Winner
 AENJ Breakfast and a Workshop

**Adinkra-Inspired
 Self Portrait Pillows
 Multicultural Lesson
 Grade Level-High School**

(can be modified for elementary and middle school)

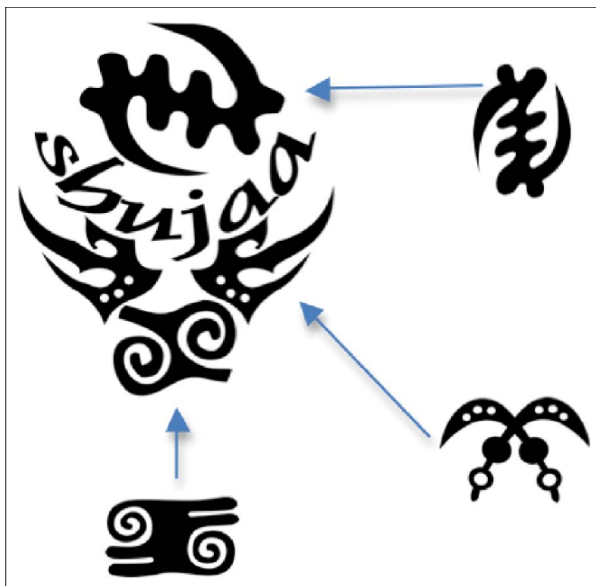
OBJECTIVES

- Experiment with the idea of self portrait and symbolism
- Learn about Adinkra symbols and meanings
- Create a handmade stamp that represents self identity
- Compare today's use of symbols with those of traditional African Adinkra usage
- Create self identity pillow that reflects a personal design inspired by Adinkra symbols and techniques
- (optional) Compare cross cultural perspectives of Adinkra symbolism, Kwanzaa and Christmas.



Adinkra means “saying goodbye or farewell”, in the language of the Akan people of Ghana. Adinkra symbols are visual messages, in the form of figurative and stylized geometric shapes, printed on cloths used for mourning and other special occasions. These symbols originated in Ghana and are often made by woodcut stamps on fabric with black dye made from the bark of a badie tree. The symbols represent the wearers feelings and sentiment about the deceased. And when used for other occasions they represent concepts or original thoughts. The stamps have personal meanings, giving the garment not only a beautiful design, but also a message. Traditionally designed fabric was usually worn for special occasions, such as funerals, but can be seen on walls, pottery and even in modern merchandise.

Adinkra symbols used to inspire Sheva's tattoo-Resident Evil Video Game



Q What do the symbols on Divine Chocolate wrappers mean?

A They are **adinkra** symbols. Created in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa, they are used in decoration at special occasions. Each holds a special meaning, conveying traditional wisdom and values.

Procedures

1. Discuss the idea of how artists express “self” in self portrait. Look at various examples of traditional portraits to experimental abstract and conceptual portraits.
2. Look at traditional African Adinkra cloth and textiles. Discuss the meanings of the symbols and how the cloths represent the people who wear them. Read the bottom of the Adinkra Cloth Symbols Chart Worksheet
3. (Option read “The Talking Cloth” By Rhonda Mitchell to elementary levels.
4. Look up how Adinkra patterns are used today in our culture.
5. Ask students to write their name at the top of paper. Have students pass the paper around the room so that each student can write words that describe the name on the top of the paper. (remind them to use constructive descriptive words)
6. Now ask students to look at the Adinkra symbol chart and find symbols that match the list of words. Students may also add words that describe themselves to the list.
7. Ask students to think about how they would describe themselves as symbol. Discuss the ways in which we use symbols to communicate today. (Think emoji)
8. Sketch 3 examples of simple designs in sketchbook using “Workbook” format. Make a unique design that represents oneself as a means of self portrait. Students may use Adinkra symbols for inspiration and design.
9. Choose one to transfer the designs from paper to a rubber stamp block. Attach stamping rubber to a wooden block for support. on wood or cardboard blocks.
10. Draw or trace 3 small designs on stamp rubber. These designs should be about 3" x 3"
11. Cut 2 pieces fabric that will be used for the pillow. Sizes can range from 12x12 but no larger than 16x16 . Choose colors for the stamps that will coordinate with one another and compliment the design.
12. Practice designs on scrap paper. Create at least 3 ideas. Choose one of the designs and stamp the pattern on the fabric.
13. Sew the fabric pieces together using a sewing machine or baseball stitch by hand. (This is a great opportunity to teach students how to use the sewing machine=life skills) Lay each piece next to one another and sew up on each side, weaving under the cloth from side to side. Taping or pinning the cloth together as you sew will help keep it in place.
14. Fold the pillow over and whip stitch around the edges of 3 sides. Stuff loosely with fiberfill and sew the remaining side.

RESOURCES

<https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/Page/4065>

<https://www.zazzle.com/adinkra+symbols+pillows>

Inspired by-Lesson page <http://www.dickblick.com/multicultural/adinkrapillows/>

ADINKRA CLOTH SYMBOLS CHART

Aban (Great Fortress) Seat Of Government	Abode Santann (All Seeing Eye) God's Omnipresence	Abusua Pa (Good Family) Family Unity	Adinkrahene (King Of Adinkra Symbols) Authority	Adwo (Peace) Serenity	Agyin Dawuru (Agyin's Gong) Loyalty	Akobon (War Horn) Valor	Akofena (State Swords) Heroic Deeds	Akoko Nan (Hen's Feet) Protection	Akoma (Heart) Love
Akoma Ntoaso (Joined Hearts) Togetherness	Akwaaba (Welcome) Hospitality	Ananse Ntontan (Spider's Web) Craftiness	Ani Bere A Enso Gya (Red Eyes Can't Spark Flames) Discipline	Anji Me Aye A (If You Will Not Praise Me) Ingratitude	Asaawa (Sweet Berry) Sweetness	Asaase Ye Duro (The Earth Has Weight) Divinity	Asetena Pa (Good Living) Prosperity	Awurade Baatanfo (God The Mother) Nurturing Spirit	Aya (Fern) Defiance
Bese Saka (Bunch Of Cola Nuts) Abundance	Boafo Ye Na (Willing Helper) Patronage	Dame Dame (Board Game) Strategy	Donno (Bell Drum) Adoration	Donno Ntoaso (Talking Drum) Poetic Eloquence	Duafe (Wooden Comb) Femininity	Dwennimmen (Ram's Horns) Strength	Eban (Fence) Protection	Epa (Handcuffs) Bondage	Ese Ne Tekrema (Teeth And Tongue) Interdependence
Esono Anantam (Elephant's Footprint) Leadership	Fafanto (Butterfly) Tenderness	Fihankra (Compound House) Security	Fofofo Abo (Fofofo Plant Seed) Jealousy	Funfunmimidi-Danjenmihuru (Two-Headed Crocodile) Unity	Gyawanu Atikro (War Hero's Hair Style) Bravery	Gye Nyame (Except God) God's Omnipotence	Gye W'Ani (Enjoy Yourself) Joy Of Living	Hwehwemudua (Measuring Rod) Standard Of Quality	Hye Wo Nhue (Measuring Rod) Permanence
Kokromotie (Thumb) Cooperation	Kramo Bone (Unfaithful Muslim) Hypocrisy	Kuntunkantan (Inflated Pride) Arrogance	Kuronti Ne Akwamu (Power And Balance) Democracy	Kyerfene (Potsherd's) Experience	Mako Nyinaa (All Peppers) Inequality	Mate Masie (What I Here, I Keep) Prudence	Mekyia Wo (I Salute You) Recognition	Mframadan (Wind Sturdy House) Fortitude	Mmara Krado (Seal Of Law) Legality
Mo No Yo (Congratulations) Praise	Mpatapo (Reconciliation Knot) Harmony	Mpuankron (Five Tufts Of Hair) Democracy	Mpuannum (Two Good Friends) Spiritual Loyalty	Miramuo (Crossing Paths) Life's Challenges	Musuyidee (Good Fortune) Good Luck	Nante Ye (Goodbye) Farewell	Nana Onim (Quest For Knowledge) Knowledge	Nkomsankonson (Chain Link) Brotherhood	Nkotimsefo Mpuia (Court Attendants Hair Style) Loyalty
Nkrabea (Destiny) Fate	Nkuruma Kesse (Big Okra) Superiority	Nkulumu (Crossed Divisions) Precision	Nkyinkynin (Twisting Hair) Toughness	Nnampo Pa Baanu (Two Good Friends) Friendship	Nokore (Truth) Veracity	Nsaa (Hand-Woven Fabric) High Quality	Nsa Ko Na Nsa Abo (Hand Go Hand Come) Cooperation	Nsereva (Cowry Shell's) Affluence	Nsoroma (Star) Patronage
Nya Gyidie (Have Faith) Faith	Nyame Biribi Wo Soro (God Is With Us) Faith In God	Nyame Dua (God's Protection) God's Protection	Nyame Nti (By God's Grace) God's Blessing	Nyame Nwu Na Mawu (God Help Me Reach It) God's Guidance	Nyame Ye Ohene (God Is King) Majesty Of God	Nyansapo (Wisdom Knot) Wise Leadership	Obaatan Awaamu (Mother's Warm Embrace) Maternal Love	Obi Nka Bi (Bite Not Each Other) Harmony	Obohemmaa (Diamond) Precious Treasure
Odenkyem (Crocodile) Adaptability	Odo Nyera Fie Kwan (Love Guides You Home) Devotion	Ohene Adwa (King's Stool) Royal Authority	Ohene Aniwa (King's Eyes) Royal Vigilance	Ohene Kra Konmunde (Royal Leadership) Royal Leadership	Ohene Kye (King's Crown) Royal Power	Ohene Kyiniie (King's Umbrella) Royal Protection	Ohene Papa (Good King) Exemplary Leadership	Okodee Mmowere (Eagle's Talon) Power	Osidaan Nyame (God The Builder) God's Creations
Osram Ne Nsoroma (Moon And Star) Faithfulness	Otumfuo Wu Ye Ya (The King Is Gone) Honored King	Owia A Repue (Rising Sun) Progress	Owo Foro Adobe (Snake Climbing Palm) Ingenuity	Owuo Atwede (Ladder Of Death) Mortality	Pagya (Strikes Fire) Bravery	Pempamsie (Prepared For Action) Fearlessness	Sankofa (Learn From The Past) Wisdom	Sepo (Executioner's Knife) Justice	Sesa Wuruban (I Change My Life) Life Transformation
Som Onyankopon (Worship God) Devotion To God	Sunsom (Soul) Purity	Tabono (Oars) Confidence	Tamfo Bebre (Jealous Enemy) Envy	Ti Koro Nko Agyina (Power Sharing) Power Sharing	Tumi Te Se Kosua (Power Is Like An Egg) Fragility	Tuo Ne Akofena (Gun And State Sword) Protection	Wawa Abo (Wawa Tree Seed) Perseverance	Wo Nsa Da Mu A (If Your Hands Are In The Dish) Democracy	Yebehua Bio (We Shall Meet Again) Farewell

Adinkra is the name given the colorful, hand-stamped and hand-embroidered cloths used for mourning and other special occasions by the Akan people of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire (the Ivory Coast). Stylized symbols called adinkra symbols are printed onto these cloths. Used for mourning, the symbols express the wearer's feelings and sentiment about the deceased person. Used for other special occasions, the symbols convey such messages as hope, peace, bravery, faith, and love.

Adinkra literally means "saying good-bye or farewell," in the language of the Akan people, who comprise about one-half of the population of Ghana. Adinkra cloth symbols have been in use for hundreds of years and constitutes an ancient African writing system of verbal and visual imagery. The symbols are figurative and stylized geometric images that embody poetic messages. Some of the symbols express the legendary history of the Akan people, and others are cultural metaphors and aphorisms about philosophy, myths, legends, beliefs, rituals and social values. They contain multilayered meanings and



profound truths. They provide a framework of moral virtues and lessons for the good life. They epitomize the Akan world view and their quest for truth and righteousness in the world.

The stamp designs are made from carved calabash which are dipped into a specially made ink called adinkra aduro (adinkra medicine). The designs are then stamped onto a variety of colored cotton cloths to be worn for all occasions.

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KWANZAA PRINCIPLES

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Umoja (Unity)	Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)	Ujima (Collective Work & Responsibility)	Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)	Nia (Purpose)	Kuumba (Creativity)	Imani (Faith)
[Decide with your family how you will celebrate today and recognize the principle of Umoja.]	[Decide with your family how you will celebrate today and recognize the principle of Kujichagulia.]	[Decide with your family how you will celebrate today and recognize the principle of Ujima.]	[Decide with your family how you will celebrate today and recognize the principle of Ujamaa.]	[Decide with your family how you will celebrate today and recognize the principle of Nia.]	[Decide with your family how you will celebrate today and recognize the principle of Ku-umba.]	[Decide with your family how you will celebrate today and recognize the principle of Imani.]
<i>To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.</i>	<i>To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.</i>	<i>To build and maintain our community together and make our brothers' and sisters' problems our problems and to solve them together.</i>	<i>To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.</i>	<i>To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.</i>	<i>To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.</i>	<i>To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.</i>

