

# CELEBRATIONS

## Kwanzaa

### Teacher's notes

**Age:** Adults and young adults

**Level:** Upper-intermediate–Advanced (B2–C1)

**Time:** 60–90 minutes

**Activity:** In this lesson, students will:

1. Read an article about Kwanzaa;
2. Learn about the celebration of Kwanzaa, its principles and symbols;
3. Discuss activities that take place between 26 December and 1 January;
4. Watch a short video and answer questions about Kwanzaa.

**Language focus:** vocabulary related to Kwanzaa and African American culture

**Materials:** one copy of the worksheet per student; access to the internet

### Procedure

#### 1. Warmer

Students answer the questions, depending on whether or not they have any prior knowledge of Kwanzaa. This can be done in pairs, groups or as a whole class. They should then read the article and see if it reflects their prior knowledge or guesses.

#### 2. Key words

Students first look at the key words in the box then highlight them in the article. Next, they should write the correct key word next to its definition, while noticing how the words are used in context.

**Note:** The definitions are in the order that the words appear in the article.

#### Key:

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. principles    | 6. collective    |
| 2. contemplative | 7. righteousness |
| 3. pledge        | 8. heritage      |
| 4. position      | 9. unity         |
| 5. alienated     |                  |

#### 3. Understanding the article

Students read the statements and decide whether they are true or false according to the information in the article. Working in pairs, they should correct the false statements.

#### Key:

1. False. Kwanzaa is the name of a cultural (non-religious) celebration mostly celebrated in the USA.
2. False. It is mostly celebrated by black Americans, but the events and celebrations are open to anyone who would like to join in.
3. True.
4. False. Kwanzaa was created just over 50 years ago by Maulana Karenga.
5. True.
6. False. Kwanza (with six letters) is part of a Swahili phrase, *matunda ya kwanza*, which means *first fruits* (of the harvest).

#### 4. The symbols of Kwanzaa

Students read and then match the names and descriptions of the seven main symbols associated with Kwanzaa. They should then write the names in the appropriate places to correctly identify the objects in the photo.

#### Key:

1. e
2. b
3. f
4. a
5. g
6. c
7. d

# CELEBRATIONS

## Kwanzaa

Teacher's notes



### 5. Video and online research

- Students watch the short informative video about Kwanzaa. After watching, they should discuss the questions as a whole class.
- Students use the internet to research the Kwanzaa events held each year at the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

### 6. Discussion

In pairs, students discuss the questions. Feedback as a whole class, focussing on any interesting answers given. Similar festivals include Thanksgiving (celebrated in the USA), the New Yam Festival (celebrated in Ghana and Nigeria) and the Jewish festival of Hanukkah.