



Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions

Margaret Musgrove , Leo Dillon (Illustrator) , Diane Dillon (Illustrator)

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Artists Leo and Diane Dillon won their second consecutive Caldecott Medal for this stunning ABC of African culture. "Another virtuoso performance. . . . Such an astute blend of aesthetics and information is admirable, the child's eye will be rewarded many times over."--Booklist. ALA Notable Book; Caldecott Medal.

Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions Details

Date : Published July 15th 1992 by Puffin Books (first published 1976)

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Author : Margaret Musgrove , Leo Dillon (Illustrator) , Diane Dillon (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions for online ebook

Jennifer (JenIsNotaBookSnob) says

I enjoyed this, but, I do feel that it misses a big opportunity. While the tribal traditions are wonderfully fascinating, it's important to understand that these are historical traditions, not necessarily currently the case in modern Africa. If you just picture the Maasai the way they are portrayed in the book, then you don't know that many of them finish school and go away to college.

These sorts of books are why people treat African students at US colleges so backwards. Yes, there are tribal traditions, but, depending on which African country you are speaking of, 80% of adults have cell phones.

This book makes it appear that Africans are still living in grass huts. While I'm sure some still are, I would point out that there are plenty of US citizens here living in substandard housing. My own town still has some people living in tin shacks or at least did just a few years ago.

A cool book, but, if you are using this in the classroom, don't forget to include information about modern African cities and so on.

Jenny says

I had read this Caldecott winner a number of years ago, and I was pleased to see that I still found it fascinating. Visiting Africa is on my bucket list (although I recognize that I will obviously not be able to go to all parts of Africa), and I find the variety of cultures fascinating. It might be interesting to learn how these cultures have adapted and changed in this modern world, if they have. (By no means am I saying that I hope they have given up their cultural traditions, but anthropology was my minor in college and I know that cultures change over time...and also, I know that unfortunately many tribes and groups have not maintained their traditional practices as the world has become more global). Both the text and illustrations were fascinating to me. This text is longer, so my daughters and I read it over a 3 day period. But they thought it was pretty interesting as well.

Lisa Vegan says

This is ostensibly an alphabet book but it's really a book about the many different people who live in various parts of Africa and it contains much information about the diverse cultures. The A-Z is not what's important here. There's a map at the end that shows the various places mentioned in the book that I enjoyed because I'm a sucker for maps. I think most would love the pictures. They do contain wonderful detail but from a purely aesthetic point of view I didn't love them. They really enhanced the information in the book though and I appreciated them; I just didn't think they were beautiful, but I'll bet many would disagree with me. I would recommend this for children who are old enough to read it themselves.

Kathryn says

The gorgeous illustrations really made this book stand out for me. So detailed, so evocative of African

cultures, exhibiting a certain sense of timelessness.

Also, gotta love an ABC book that doesn't fudge on ANY of the letters. Yes, thanks to the fabulous languages of Africa, we really do have a tribe named after every letter of the English alphabet!

I'm honestly not sure how much young kids (the usual audience for ABC books) would enjoy this telling as it definitely seems information-based in content, a bit scholarly albeit pleasantly written, no "story" or fun characters to follow. However, I think it's a great way to expose them to other cultures and the illustrations alone are worth sharing.

Kathryn Anne says

Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions by Margaret Musgrove goes through the alphabet describing and explaining parts of the culture of people living in Africa. For the letter V, the Vai people of Liberia carry heavy baskets on their heads to transport the items that they need. Some women even hold babies at the same time. I learned also about the Hausa men who pray five times a day to Allah for the letter H, and the letter C for Chagga which is a group of children of the same age and sex that grow up together. The work, play, and go to school together until they all become adults at the same time together with a special ceremony that they all participate in. I learned about the Dogon people who are farmers that live in Mali who dig stair steps in hillsides for farming. The illustrations in this book were all drawn in earthy tones. The overall quality of the illustrations were grainy and kind of smudgy. The amount of detail used in the illustrations was impressive, and the illustrator did an impressive amount of research to write and illustrate this book. In my own classroom, I would use this book to discuss differences and similarities between the culture shown in the book and the cultures of my students. I would ask my students to list and draw different things from their culture in alphabetical order.

Laura Noto says

Ashanti to Zulu is an alphabetic picture book made for older readers. On the first page of text it says, "I have tried to introduce the reader to 26 African peoples by depicting a custom important to each. Some of the customs are unique and relate only to a particular people. Others are shared by many peoples, but all reflect African values or philosophies." On each page there is a letter of the alphabet, a paragraph describing the word that starts with that letter, the pronunciation, and a beautiful picture. This book talks about food, music, religion, animals, landforms, and other aspects of the African culture. The illustrations in the book are very detailed and interesting to look at. The informational text mixed with the beautiful pictures enables readers to learn a lot about African culture.

sarafem says

Do you want to know why Sarafem always leans toward multicultural children's books? Well, she thinks it all stems from the day in second grade when she found this book in the library and decided she wanted to be African, because being white was so frickin' boring. Every day, she showed up at school making some sort of attempt to prove that she was an albino African who was just *adopted* into her painfully white family. One day a neighbor down the street humored her and let her borrow some of his kente cloth, which she wore to school. It fell down to her waist while she was playing on the jungle gym and she went from Ashanti to

Masai in like two seconds. Another day she wore giant hoop earrings and strung keys on them to make her earlobes stretch so far that she practically ripped them, and she wore so many necklaces that her neck stiffened to giraffe-esque heights for several days afterwards. Yet another day she showed up with lipstick and powder smeared all over her face according to some sort of tribal custom somewhere, probably in a Revlon village in Arkansas, but the point is, she tried, okay? Then in music class she tried so hard to get the entire class to beat on their drums and tambourines like Africans that she got sent to the principal's office, and don't even get her started on when she tried to teach the class what she believed was an authentic Zulu dance routine.

Henry Martin says

This book was probably the most interesting A to Z book I ever came across. Each letter stands for a different African tribe or subculture, and each brief entry covers something special about the tribe and its culture. This is done only in a single paragraph, so don't expect any great depth, but each entry is also accompanied by a colorful illustration depicting the tribal traditions.

Very enjoyable book to read to the young readers.

Rick Bavera says

One of my favorite kinds of picture book, an A-Z alphabet book. This Caldecott winner introduced the social life and customs of 26 African tribes.

Pictures (excellent pastels, watercolors and acrylics) and the text were researched for accuracy. The text focuses on one aspect of life, pictures use that text and other information to show "families" and artifacts. The book is a good "starting point" resource on Africa. Pictures can be used to pic out things about culture that are not in the text.

Manybooks says

Both the presented facts (author Margaret Musgrove's featured text) and the accompanying illustrations are engaging, educational, and really, quite amazing actually (it is indeed no wonder that [Ashanti to Zulu](#) won the Caldecott Medal, as Leo and Diane Dillon's pictorial renditions are not only simply glowingly gorgeous and wonderful in every way, they also continuously both complement the author's narrative and often much expand on it, providing additional cultural details and information).

However, while Margaret Musgrove's printed words are indeed enlightening and always to the point, with much relevant detail presented in and by few relevant sentences, I do have to wonder and question whether [Ashanti to Zulu](#) would (or even could) ever be used as an actual alphabet book (as it seems to be more of a case of information on African tribes in the costume of an alphabet book, that the alphabet aspect of the book is but a method for relaying cultural and historical nuggets of knowledge). And because of the latter, because of the fact that at least in my opinion, [Ashanti to Zulu](#) is more an introduction to African culture and traditions than a book of letters for language, for vocabulary and word usage practice, I personally do consider the lack of any bibliographical information with suggestions for supplemental readings a very much

and serious academic shortcoming for this otherwise excellent offering and actually rather limiting especially the supplemental learning and research value of Ashanti to Zulu (for I do not know about other readers, but the twenty-six described African tribes, one for every letter of the alphabet, has just whetted my curiosity and appetite for more information, and it is more than a little frustrating that author Margaret Musgrove has not provided a manner of achieving this, has not provided suggestions for further study and research to and for her readers).

Mort says

This book is great. Book speaks diversity in the classroom. Gives children knowledge about another culture.

Dolly says

While this is "just" another alphabet book, it's one of the more interesting ones we've read. We really enjoyed the information and I didn't find myself counting my way through the letters until we were done.

The illustrations are quite artistic and we learned a lot of new information in the twenty-six entries. I really appreciated that there were pronunciation guides for the African words, since I would've got many of them wrong without them.

This book was selected as one of the books for the October 2015 - Quarterly Caldecott discussion at the Picture-Book Club in the Children's Books Group here at Goodreads.

SamZ says

1977 Caldecott Winner: favorite illustration - I love the Baule page with the details on the clothing of the people and the beautiful, sorrowful face of the Queen.

This ABC book presents a glimpse into 26 different cultures and customs from various African tribes. I actually really like this ABC format for older kids. I think it presents a fun and accessible way for kids to get the information without reading a more "traditional" text book. I think this would be a great book to introduce various African cultures during a unit on Africa during Social Studies or Geography. I also would love to learn more about the modern traditions of these tribes, so that I could compare them and see how many cultural traditions are still carried on today (hopefully several). The illustrations that accompany each page are beautiful, and the artists strove to not only include traditional elements, but also to show both an adult and a child as well as the dwellings in as many of the pages as possible, to help enhance the readers understanding.

Book Concierge says

Illustrations by Leo and Diane Dillon. Winner of the 1977 Caldecott Medal for illustration in children's literature.

Margaret Musgrove was born and raised in Connecticut, but she has lived and studied in Ghana. She

supplemented her own experience with extensive research to write this children's book which explains some of the customs and traditions of various African tribal peoples. In this work she examines 26 different tribes, across the African continent, from Ashanti to Zulu.

Leo and Diane Dillon's illustrations are simple magnificent. In each portrait they not only illustrate the customs about which Musgrove writes, but they give a glimpse of more of the culture of that tribe. Most illustrations include a man, a woman, a child, a typical dwelling, some cultural artifact, and an animal indigenous to that tribe's area of Africa. I found myself examining the many details of the pictures. As a bonus the front and back cover are two illustrations which are not contained within.

Mariah Roze says

This is an ABC book of African culture. This book is for higher students and I read a different letter everyday to my students. This book talked about different tribes and communities and shared in only a paragraph, a major tradition that they do. This opened up discussion with my students on similarities and differences between the US and different African Cultures and more specifically how different African cultures can be.
