

Circle Unbroken by Margot Theis Raven, New York: Melanie Kroupa Books, 2004.

Literature Annotation: As she teaches her granddaughter to sew traditional sweetgrass baskets, a grandmother tells the story of their ancestors in faraway Africa and passes along memories of struggle and freedom.

Grade Level: 5th Grade

Duration: 2-3 class periods

Maryland State Curriculum

Economics Standard: Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.

- 4.A.2.b Describe how available resources affected specialization and trade
- 4.B.1.a Identify examples of tradition, such as the economic roles of men and women
- 4.B.1.c Analyze a market economy and give examples of how the colonial economy exhibited these characteristics such as private ownership and consumer choices

Peoples of the Nation and World Standard: Students will understand the diversity and commonality, human interdependence, and global cooperation of the people of Maryland, the United States and the World through both a multicultural and historic perspective.

- 2.B.2.b Provide examples of how the interactions of various groups resulted in the borrowing and sharing of traditions and technology (Grade 5)

College and Career Ready Standards for Reading Literary Text

- RL1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RL2 Summarize the text.
- RL3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).
- RL4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text

Objectives: Students will...

- identify the human, natural, and capital resources necessary to produce a sweet grass basket.
- describe the contributions of enslaved Africans to American culture.
- identify and describe the elements of traditional and market economies.

Vocabulary

capital resources: the goods that are manufactured and constructed by people and used to produce other goods and services, including but not limited to factories, warehouses, roads, bridges, machinery, ports, dams, and tools. (money is not a capital resource.)

economic resources: the natural, human, and capital resources that are used to produce goods and services: also call factors of production.

goods: physically tangible objects that are made or grown by people and can be used to satisfy economic wants, including but not limited to food, shoes, cars, houses, books, and furniture.

human resources: the health, strength, talents, education and skills that humans can use to produce goods and services.

market: a place where buyers and sellers exchange goods, resources, or services.

market economy: an economy in which decisions of "what", "how", and "for whom" are decided in markets through the interaction of buyers and sellers

natural resources: the renewable, and nonrenewable gifts of nature that can be used to produce goods and services, including but not limited to land, water, animals, minerals, tress, climate, soil, fire, seeds, grain and fruits.

services: physically intangible actions that can be performed to satisfy economic wants, including but not limited to medical care, dental care, haircuts, education, police protection, fire protection and national defense

traditional economy: a system where the economic decisions that people and groups make to answer the basic economic questions of "what", "for whom" and "how" generally repeat the decisions made at an earlier time or by an earlier generation. In other words, people do what they have always done.

winnow: cull out: select desirable parts from a group or list

Teacher Materials

Copy of the book *Circle Unbroken*

Student Materials

Resource 1: *Sweet Grass Baskets*

Motivation

Distribute the following to random students and ask each student to identify his/her object/word/picture:

object/word/picture

Chopsticks

Peanuts

Pizza

Kindergarten

Piñata

Lacrosse

Karate

country

Chinese

South America, Mexico

Italy

German

Mexico

Native Americans

South Asia

Ask: *How did all of these things that are a part of American culture come from other countries?* Have them identify the country of origin of each of the object/word/pictures. Ask them to hypothesize how those things got to the United States.

Development

1. Tell students that the spreading of a cultural trait is known as Cultural Diffusion.
2. Explain that cultural diffusion has taken place throughout history. Regardless of whether people willingly came to the United States or were forced to move here, they brought traditions with them. Tell them that they will be listening to a story about one such experience. Explain that this story takes place mostly in two areas- Africa and Charleston, South Carolina. Have students locate Africa and Charleston on a map.
3. Conduct a Read-Aloud of *Circle Unbroken* by Margot Theis Raven to the class. Distribute Resource 1: *Sweet Grass Baskets* to students. Work with students to complete the worksheet. It may be necessary to refer back to certain sections of the book. The “More about Sweetgrass Baskets” note at the end of the book may be helpful. Discuss the completed worksheet as a class.
4. Display the definition of traditional economy. How is the production of sweet grass baskets an example of traditional economy? (*they are made the same way they have always been made*)
5. Explain to students that African Americans originally used the baskets as a part of their everyday work. Ask: Can you remember any of those uses from the book? (*Winnow rice, carry goods, store goods*).
6. As Charleston became a location for tourists and vacationers, the basket makers realized that people wanted to buy their baskets. Refer to the page of the book with the road-side stand (towards the end of the book). Explain that the road-side stand is an example of a market. Display the definition of market.
7. Tell students that when people make decisions about “what”, “how”, and “for whom” they are going to produce they are participating in a market economy. Display the definition of market economy. Selling sweet grass baskets to tourists is an example of a market economy. Ask: Can you think of another example of a market economy? (*cafeteria, garage sale, farmer’s market*)

Assessment

Have students respond to the following prompt:

Your class is going on a field trip to Charleston, South Carolina. In order to prepare for that field trip, your teacher has broken the class into groups and asked each group to research a different aspect of the area.

Your group has been assigned the topic of sweet grass baskets. Create a brochure which tells your classmates about the importance of sweet grass baskets to the area. Your brochure must be colorful and visually appealing and include the following:

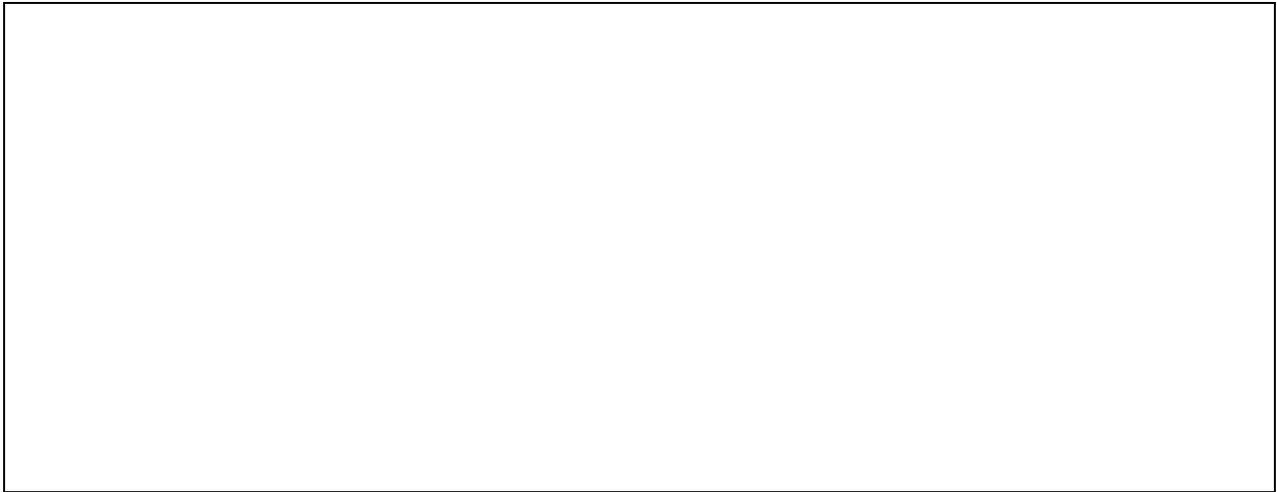
- The history of sweet grass baskets
- The economic resources necessary to the production of sweet grass baskets
- An explanation of how sweet grass basket production is an example of both traditional and market economies

Closure

Have students share their brochures with the class.

Sweet Grass Baskets

1. Product: Sweet Grass Baskets
2. Place of origin:
3. Description:
4. Draw a picture of the product.



5. What economic resources are needed to produce this product? Complete the chart below.

Natural Resources	Human Resources	Capital Resources