



Laura Cork
Bowen Elementary School
Newton Public Schools, Massachusetts

Second Grade
Social Studies Unit: Ghana

Unit designed by Laura Cork, Newton Public Schools, Massachusetts

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1st Oval BEGINNING WITH THE END IN MIND: What should students know and be able to do?

1. On which content standard(s) will the students be working?

Students will understand that events are shaped by the ideas and actions of both individuals and groups in response to meeting fundamental human needs.

2. What are the big ideas, major themes, key concepts or essential understandings embedded in, or which transcend, the standard listed above?

- There are similarities and differences between and among cultures of people.
- People express their culture in many ways: writing, literature, architecture, celebrations, everyday tools, and objects, etc.

3. Given the essential to know/key concepts and ideas identified in #2, how will this unit be different from what/how I taught and asked students to do in years past?

This is a new unit for me

4. When and where (inside and outside of school) have the students encountered information about and had experience with these key concepts/big ideas before?

- There are similarities and differences between and among cultures of people
 - China Unit Study
 - Christian/Jewish/Muslim/Chinese/Japanese/Russian Peers
 - Active Anti-racist curriculum
 - Read Alouds – social justice
- People express their culture in many ways: writing, literature, architecture, celebrations, everyday tools and objects, etc.
 - China Unit
 - Classmates' backgrounds
 - Read Alouds

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2nd Oval ASSESSMENT:

How will my students and I know when they are successful?

- 5. What would it look like when students can demonstrate that they understand the big ideas and have the essential skills? That is, what are some ways they might demonstrate their capacity to use the newly learned concepts/information appropriately in a new situation?**

Students will:

- Recognize how others' feelings, values, and behaviors vary from one's own.
- Identify ways in which people of Ghana satisfy basic human needs.
- Describe cultural expressions of Ghana's people.
- Compare and contrast expressions of their own culture with Ghanaian culture.
- Compare and contrast the lives of people from Ghana, China, Mexico and the U.S.

- 6. What tasks/products would demonstrate student understanding? Should I use a rubric or a performance task list and what criteria should be included?**

- **Postcards from Ghana**
 - Choose a city/village in Ghana to write home about as if you are visiting that place right now.
 - Write a postcard to your family telling about your stay in this place, detailing what you see, hear, and smell.
 - Use at least one sentence to explain how you are surprised about discovering how the people in this place live similarly to you. Use at least one sentence to describe how the people in their place are different from you. (Other than looks!)
 - Use complete sentences, appropriate punctuation and correct spelling.
 - Illustrate the front of the post card to show the place you choose using crayons, colored pencils, or collage. The details of your illustration and the written portion of the postcard must match!
- **RAFT:** You, a travel writer, are preparing a review on your recent trip to Ghana for the next issue of National Geographic for Kids. Fill and bring a suitcase to school as if you just returned from Ghana. Include objects and symbols that represent the ways culture is expressed in Ghana through literature, architecture, food, celebrations, education, and everyday tools. Write 2-3 complete sentences for each object in your suitcase describing the item, its importance in the Ghana culture, and how it is used. Be prepared

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to discuss the contents of your suitcase with a small group of listeners interested in visiting Ghana. (Appendix A shows the Analytic Rubric.)

An exemplary suitcase will include:

- A map/globe highlighting Ghana’s location in the world and on its continent
 - Clothing appropriate for Ghana’s climate (i.e. shorts, t-shirts, sandals, hats, rain coats, a school uniform)
 - An African game, music or art piece that Ghanaian families may own or use (i.e. Oware, Nte-Too, The Catch, Moonshine Baby, a drum, kente cloth, adinkra)
 - A picture of the home you stayed in
 - Something she/he bargained for at the market (i.e. utensils, clay pots, baskets, cloth, food, jewelry, fabric, soap, notebooks, pens)
 - Something you might take to school with you (i.e. your stool, a pencil, a book/journal for what you learn)
 - A short story you have written down that someone in Ghana told you (i.e. an Anansi tale)
 - A recipe for a Ghanaian dish or food you would find in Ghana (i.e. oto, fufu balls, potato or rice soup, yams, tomatoes, onions, peppers)
- **Ghana Reflection Sheet**
 - What have you learned about how Ghanaians live? What have you learned about Ghanaian traditions and culture? What have you learned about what is important to Ghanaians?
 - Complete a **Venn Diagram** comparing and contrasting you and a Ghanaian child.

7. What does a task analysis reveal about the skills, the knowledge and the level of understanding required by the task?

Skills	Knowledge
Determining importance of materials Writing/dictating complete sentences Giving a talk with appropriate voice Level, pacing, eye contact and content	Which objects and symbols represent Ghanaian culture The importance of the objects/symbols in Ghanaian culture How to prioritize the importance of objects/symbols Ghana’s writing symbols Ghana’s climate How to write/dictate complete sentences

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8. Do I already have sufficient pre-assessment data or do I need to gather more? What does the pre-assessment data tell me about the skills and knowledge on which the entire group will need to focus? Are there individual students who will need additional support if they are to have a realistic opportunity to demonstrate mastery? In which areas will they need support?

- In terms of content, most second graders have extremely limited exposure to Ghanaian culture and therefore start with almost zero background knowledge about its people. However, students do understand, at varying levels, that people live differently depending on where they reside in the world. From their study of China and their own lives, they understand that people speak, eat, practice traditions, and value symbols differently. I will engage students in a **Frame of Reference** activity to gather more specific pre-assessment data that can highlight misconceptions prior to the study.

In addition, based on my close work with students' writing and speaking performances in other academic areas, I have solid data to plan learning experiences that will enable them to write and speak fluently, clearly, and effectively. Based on my work with students' reading development, I also know which students can easily determine what's most important about a story and what's not, and therefore already have some strength in prioritizing information. I also know which students have difficulty in doing this and will need additional support.

- J.S. and N.H. will require support for 1) reading text, 2) making realistic comparisons, 3) using time to make connections and comparisons. I will meet with them first and get them to talk about their ideas before having them approach tasks independently. A.T. M.M. N.H. R.J. and T.S. will require support for determining what's most important about what they are learning and then organizing the information for later retrieval. I will coach our literacy aide to help these students practice highlighting "most important details" from their reading and give strong retellings. The whole class will also practice these skills.

3rd Oval LEARNING EXPERIENCES:

What learning experiences will facilitate their success?

9. How will I “Frame the Learning” so that students know what they are going to be doing, what they will know and be able to do as a result of those activities, how they will be assessed, and how everything they are doing is aligned with the standard?

- Explain the “Ghana Must Knows” to start the unit study as what students will know and be able to talk about by the end of the unit. Before each lesson related to this unit, show students which “Must Know” we are working towards understanding.
- At the beginning of the unit, show students the **Venn Diagram** which they are expected to fill in and discuss.
- Ask students why they think these are important pieces of knowledge and skills and then discuss with students the importance of 1) visiting parts of the world and being able to appreciate the people and their cultures along the way, 2) being able to work and socialize with people who come from different backgrounds than yourself, and 3) understanding that events are shaped by the ideas and actions of people trying to have their human needs met.
- Provide students with examples of learning experiences, which they will be engaged in, and show sample products from these experiences that previous students have created to show what they have learned.
- Explain the travel logs and the RAFT assignment, showing students the performance task list. Highlight the expectations; yet also emphasize the space for choices and creativity.

10. How will I help students access prior knowledge and use it productively, either building on it or reframing their thinking as appropriate?

- Using a **Graffiti**, ask students to think about a child from Ghana coming to visit our country for the first time. In small groups students will visit 6 posters titled: Climate, Families, Transportation, Food, Education and For Fun to record ideas of what that child will learn about America and its culture during a visit.
- Review similarities and differences between the way we live and how individuals in China live. **Model Thinking Aloud** about and recording predictions for how my life may be similar and different from individuals living in Ghana using a **T-chart**. Pair students to record their own predictions using individual T-charts. Have students share their predictions in small groups. (Identify misconceptions)

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- As a whole group, have students generate questions about how Ghanaians may live and what they may value. Post the questions: “What We Wonder/Want to Learn about Ghana.”
- Post answers next to the questions as they are discovered throughout the study.

11. What methods of presentation and what active learning experiences can I use to help students achieve the standard? Could I provide multiple sources of information and exercises that would help all students make real world connections and use sophisticated thinking skills?

- **Virtual Tour/Simulation:** Use narrative script to accompany the virtual tour while students pretend/imagine flying to Ghana on British Airways.
- **Imagery Script** of the four land regions; Teacher reads script while students draw the four regions, imagining themselves in the environment. Then, in small groups, students use a graffiti activity to create word splashes for the four regions. Finally, in partners students create travel brochures to entice tourists to visit a region of choice using the descriptions posted on the corresponding word splash.
- **Guest Speakers:** Joe and Vida (native Ghanaian) perform a presentation for the class in which they pass around kente cloth, adinkra cloth, demonstrate how to wear the clothing depending on your gender, how to carry goods in a basket on your head, how to carve out a calabash to collect water, how to collect water, how to carry a baby on your back, how students learn by call and repetition in school, how to play the drum, how to perform a native dance, etc.
- **Video:** Students watch “Georgina Williams of Ghana” then participate in creating a class Venn Diagram and then individually complete their own comparing their own life with the life of Georgina Williams.
- **Text:** Teacher reads aloud *Kofi and His Magic* and organizes literature circles. Prior to the reading, the teacher posts and reviews questions the students will be expected to discuss in small groups following the read aloud. After the read aloud, each student is given a slip of paper with a number on it and one of the posted questions. This paper tells the student his/her group number and the question he/she is responsible for leading and collecting a consensus response to report back to the whole group.
 - In what ways is Kofi a magician?
 - What does Kofi mean when he says “I open my mind?” How and when do you open your mind?
 - What did you learn about the importance of the golden stool?
 - Why do you think the boys’ hats with horns made them feel brave? Do you have something you like to wear that makes you feel brave?
 - What information about Kofi’s life interested you the most?

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- What more do you want to know about Ghana or Kofi's life?
- Using **Talk, Talk** the teacher (or a guest) demonstrates a storytelling experience based on an Ashanti legend. After the oral retelling of the story, students participate in a **Think-Pair-Share** for several questions requiring students to respond to concepts, elements, and content in the book.
 - What makes the ending clever?
 - How would the story ended differently if the chief's golden stool had spoke before the chief sent the farmer, the fisherman, the weaver, and the bather away?
 - Why was the chief angry when the men told their stories?
 - What parts of this tale could be true? Which parts could be false?
 - Do you think this story is finished? Why?
- **Simulation of meeting a Ghanaian Family:** The grade level teachers bring their classes together and role-play several Ghanaian family members (while showing photographs of these real-life individuals) using a script. After meeting the family, students are asked to think about three questions based on what they just heard, pair with someone else to share their response, and then the partners share their responses with the whole group.
 - *How do many Ghanaian family members help one another?*
 - *How is our Ghanaian family similar to families in the United States?*
 - *How are the Ghanaian family's experiences different from ours?*
- Students analyze a recipe of a typical Ghanaian food they sample. Questions to be asked are: Which ingredients are common to your own diet? Which ingredients are not?
- Through teacher-led discussion, students assess their previous predictions about what they expected to learn about Ghanaian life and culture, and make new predictions.
- In small groups students generate questions collaboratively, with an emphasis on productive questions.
- **Ghana Buddies:** After a lesson, meet with one of your buddies (determined by a Ghanaian city) and summarize one new think you learned, and offer one question you now have.
- Students will log entries into travel journals – what they have seen, experienced, and “What I’m Learning About Ghana.”
- **Numbered Heads Together**
 - Name 3 Ghanaian _____ (foods, objects, clothing pieces symbols, etc.)
 - List 3 similarities between your school experience and a Ghanaian child's experience.
 - List 3 differences between your life and either Anusibuno's or Georgina's life.

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- Write 2 ways that Ghanaian life is shaped by where they live in the world.
- Name 2 Ghanaian celebrations.
- List 3 comparisons between your typical food shopping experience and that of a Ghanaians.
- **Sort Cards**
 - In small groups, students generate words and short phrases about Ghana on index cards.
 - Each small group sorts their own cards into self-determined categories.
 - While one person from each group stays at the base table as an expert, the rest of the group tours the classroom to observe whatever categories the groups devised.

12. What assignments, projects, and homework will help students see the relevance of the learning and help them not only to meet the standard, but retain their learning? How might I provide multiple pathways to learning?

- Students learn how to play one Ghanaian game, become an expert in it, and then teach it to others through a jigsaw puzzle activity. After playing students are asked to identify and discuss similarities between the games they became an expert in and a game from their own culture.
- Students simulate trading at the marketplace using manipulatives to bargain for desired items. Students are then asked to make comparisons between their own grocery experiences and experiences at the marketplace.
- See Appendix B for homework assignments.
- Evaluate original and modified predictions – what have we learned?
- Students share travel journal entries and compare with one another.
- Small groups discuss what they can expect to learn when visiting other countries.

13. What classroom activities/observations, as well as formative quizzes and tests would provide my students and me information on their progress toward the standard?

- When I listen to students' conversations with their Ghana buddies and read their written comparisons between their own lives and the life of a Ghanaian individual I gain interesting insights into student learning. During these times I frequently check for stereotypes and misconceptions as well as initial understandings of how people are similar and different based on where they live in the world. I also check whether student responses include a balance of information relating to similarities versus differences and how deep the comparisons go. For example, if a student responds to the prompt, "Name one way you and Anusibuno are similar." with "We both eat," I would know the student is not gaining sufficient information to make

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meaningful comparisons across cultures. However, a student who responds “We both have responsibilities in our families. She has to collect water for the family each morning and I have to set the table at mealtimes” demonstrates sufficient understanding that people across cultures are similar and different.

- Each student creates and writes a postcard to an American friend (or Japanese, Chinese, or Russian depending on where my students are from) explaining three ways in which his own life is similar to and different from Ghanaian life. Prior to writing, students meet in small groups to generate and record category topics and share them with the whole group. The ease in which each student is able to generate ideas for comparisons informs me of their progress toward the standard.

14. What materials and resources do I need to locate and organize to provide multiple pathways to learning?

- Gather a range of reading level appropriate books
- Prepare photographs of the concepts to be studied
- Prepare large maps for classroom display and smaller maps for the students to manipulate
- Organize games and food recipes (give recipes to room parents for them to prepare)
- Establish Ghana buddies
- Bookmark virtual tours
- Write directions and expectations on chart paper
- Post “Must Knows” standards
- Make travel journals and label the “Ghana Crate”
- Secure exemplars of assignments
- Teach students how to use a variety of graphic organizers

How should I organize the classroom and the materials to provide easy student access?

- Place books on display and in labeled book tubs
- Keep all the Ghana information together in one part of the classroom
- Have student work surround the map of Ghana
- Provide open and closed questions
- Establish appropriate questions for stand/ sit activities

15. What else might I do to provide challenging and meaningful experiences for both struggling and advanced learners? Are there other human, print, or electronic resources I might consult to refine/review my plan?

I have strived to embed strategies for reaching both kinds of learners within the previously outlined learning experiences and assessment practices.

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4th Oval REFLECTION & DATA ANALYSIS:

Based on data, how do I refine the learning experiences and/or the assessment?

16. How did students do on the performance task? Were there some students who were not successful? What might account for that? What might I do differently next time?

17. What else do I need to consider in my advance planning the next time I am focusing on this standard?

I believe that in order for students at this age to make comparisons between their own and another's culture, they need more experience recognizing elements of their own culture (both familial and community). So next time I teach this unit I will spend more time helping students access an understanding of their own culture (and what does and doesn't define culture) before leaping into trying to make comparisons of their own culture. This came clear to me in the Graffiti activity when student responses were limited or stereotypical when asked to write phrases about what a Ghanaian child would learn about American culture if s/he lived with us for a year.

18. Did all of the activities guide students toward mastery of the standard? Are there activities that need to be added, modified, or eliminated? Am I using these activities because I have always used them or have I analyzed them to be sure that they are the most efficient tools at my disposal?

The learning experiences are all very effective in motivating students to learn about a culture quite different from their own and find similarities they can relate to. Students are able to speak of these similarities and differences among themselves, their families, and other adults in the building. During many read-alouds in which other groups of people are represented, students are excitedly noting ways their culture is being expressed and are comparing them to what they learn about Ghanaian culture.

I would not add additional activities to this unit. However, I would modify several experiences. For example, next time I would:

- Reduce the amount of writing students are asked to do (i.e. instead of asking students to create their own Venn Diagrams after watching the Georgina Williams video, I would have them write one piece of new information on a post-it note and when we create a class Venn Diagram they add their idea to it.)

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- Provide students with earlier samples and practice with designing a travel brochure.
- Change how students come to understand Ghanaian families instead of having a script read to them with accompanying photographs. I'm not sure how to do this yet, but I am contacting our special guest speakers (natives of Ghana) for more insight.
- Use a chart in the room to collect pertinent vocabulary throughout the study. This collection will help all students access and expand their language in their verbal and written assignments for making more specific comparisons

Each of these changes is based on my analysis of the effective use of the students' time to either gain information or understanding or to demonstrate what they have learned. Each change is based on whether the activity is a meaningful attempt for students to acquire and retain understanding of the standard being taught, or merely serves as a fun "time-filler". Several activities have been modified to reduce the amount of writing students are asked to perform because many of my students were hung up on the process of writing versus having their ideas captured for future reference. In these cases I am comfortable with taking the recording role. I will continue to seek to provide a greater balance of modes for sharing learning through short written phrases, graphic organizers, discussions, pictures, and the creation of material.

19. Overall, was this unit effective for addressing the standard(s)? Are there other standards that I could incorporate into this unit or are there other units of study where I can have the students revisit these standards or essential understandings?

Yes, this unit was very effective for students to explore what constitutes culture and how cultures vary from one another. Learning about other cultures at such an early age is risky. It takes the chance that students won't gain the concepts because they are still figuring out right and left; much less where another country is located, and they are still exploring their own family cultures. However, through this unit, students were able to effectively develop the skills and knowledge needed to draw upon what they already know and integrate it with the ability to make comparisons and begin organizing and communicating new learnings. Prior to this unit, students examined these same standards in a unit on China and will revisit each standard through the next unit of study, Mexico, as applicable to another culture.

GHANA BUDDIES

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Name _____

Date _____

What's Your Prediction?

One way to make learning easier is to make predictions and then recheck them when you have new information. This afternoon we are going to watch a video about a girl named Georgina from Ghana. In the chart below, make predictions about how your lives may be similar and different.



I predict Georgina and I are similar in that...

I predict Georgina and I are different in that...

Name _____

Date _____

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WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTING IDEAS ABOUT GHANA?

When you hear the word *GHANA*, what does it make you think of? _____

What is one interesting thing you learned from our "visit" to Ghana? _____

If you could interview Anusibuno, what two questions would you ask her?

1) _____

2) _____

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Understanding Ghana: Homework Assignments

Choose one activity to complete for homework each week. Circle each assignment you completed. Bring your weekly product to school each Thursday.

March 8 th	March 15 th	March 22 nd	March 29 th	April 5 th
Make a map of Ghana that outlines its four main regions. Use different materials/textures to represent each region accurately.	Make up a brief skit showing your morning routine as a Ghanaian child. Your skit should start with you sleeping and end with you arriving at school.	Using some fabric or textured paper design your own small kente cloth.	Imagine going to the market in a village in Ghana. Make a list of what you could trade. Then show what you could realistically expect to trade for your goods.	Write a letter to a friend or relative telling about at least three of the most interesting things you learned about Ghana.
Write a travel review for the Boston Globe About your visit to 1 of Ghana's four regions. Persuade vacationers to visit	Create and Perform your own storytelling of one of your favorite short stories. Use voice changes and include a moral for your story.	Create a song to teach other kids how to count to 10 in a Ghanaian language.	Write a poem describing the atmosphere of a marketplace in Ghana.	Make up at Least four song titles that highlight four things you've learned about Ghana.
Create a painting showing the landscape of one Ghana's four regions. Be prepared to explain why you chose your colors and objects. Your painting will hang in the classroom.	Put together a short scrapbook as if you were a child in Ghana. Include your family, your home, celebrations, traditions, and so on.	Make a list of 10 children's books you would recommend to Anusibuno to learn about how American children live. Explain why you choose 2 of the books.	Tape record a conversation with a vendor at the marketplace when attempting to barter for goods. Have a friend role-play the vendor, but tell him/her what to say <i>before</i> you tape record.	Create four different illustrations that represent Ghanaian culture. These illustrations will be used for the backs of a deck of playing cards.

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CALLING ALL TRAVELERS!

Show what you know in this GHANA FINAL PROJECT

You, a travel writer, are preparing a review on your recent trip to Ghana for the next issue of National Geographic for Kids. Fill in and bring a suitcase to school as if you just returned from Ghana. Include objects and symbols that represent the ways culture is expressed in Ghana. Think about its geography, home life, schooling, foods, socializing, everyday tools, homes, and so on.

Write 2-3 sentences for each object in your suitcase describing the item, its importance in Ghanaian culture, and how it is used.

Be prepared to discuss the contents of your suitcase with a small group of listeners interested in visiting Ghana.

**Use the
attached
rubric for
help.**

IN YOUR SUITCASE YOU HAVE BROUGHT BACK:

- 1) A map/globe showing Ghana's location in the world.
- 2) Clothing appropriate for Ghana's climate.
- 3) An African game, music, or art piece.
- 4) A picture of the home where you stayed.
- 5) Something you bargained for at the market.
- 6) Something you would take to school with you
- 7) A short story you wrote down that someone in Ghana told you
- 8) A recipe for a Ghanaian dish, or food you would find in Ghana.

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Presenter _____ Date _____

Total Score: _____

16-14

You're ready to write your review!

13-10

You're almost ready to write. Zest it up a little.

9-5

It's hard to write without info and enthusiasm.

4-1

Go back to Ghana! Take notes and photos.

Objects	At least 7 objects/symbols have been appropriately chosen to accurately represent Ghanaian culture 4	4-6 objects/symbols have been appropriately chosen to accurately represent Ghanaian culture 3	3 objects/symbols have been chosen to represent Ghanaian culture 2	1-2 objects/symbols have been chosen to represent Ghanaian culture 1
Explanations	Each object is accompanied by at least 2-3 complete sentences describing its purpose and value in Ghanaian culture 4	Each object is accompanied by 2 sentences describing its purpose/value in Ghanaian culture 3	At least 2 objects are accompanied by complete sentences describing the objects' purpose/value in Ghanaian culture 2	0 or 1 object is accompanied with a description of its purpose/value in Ghanaian culture 1
Understanding & Practice	Student shares and discusses the selected objects in a way that demonstrates knowledge, practice and ease 4	Student shows that s/he mostly understands the content and has practiced his/her presentation 3	Student shows limited understanding of the content and little practice of his/her presentation 2	Student shows no understanding or practice of his/her presentation 1
Creativity & Effort	The project reflects creativity and effort 4	The project reflects some creativity and effort 3	The project reflects minimal creativity and effort 2	The project reflects no creativity or effort 1

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Name _____ Date _____

Ghana Reflection

What was one of the most interesting facts you learned about Ghanaian culture?

What was your favorite learning experience during our study of Ghana?

What about Ghanaian culture do you want to know more about or are left wondering about?

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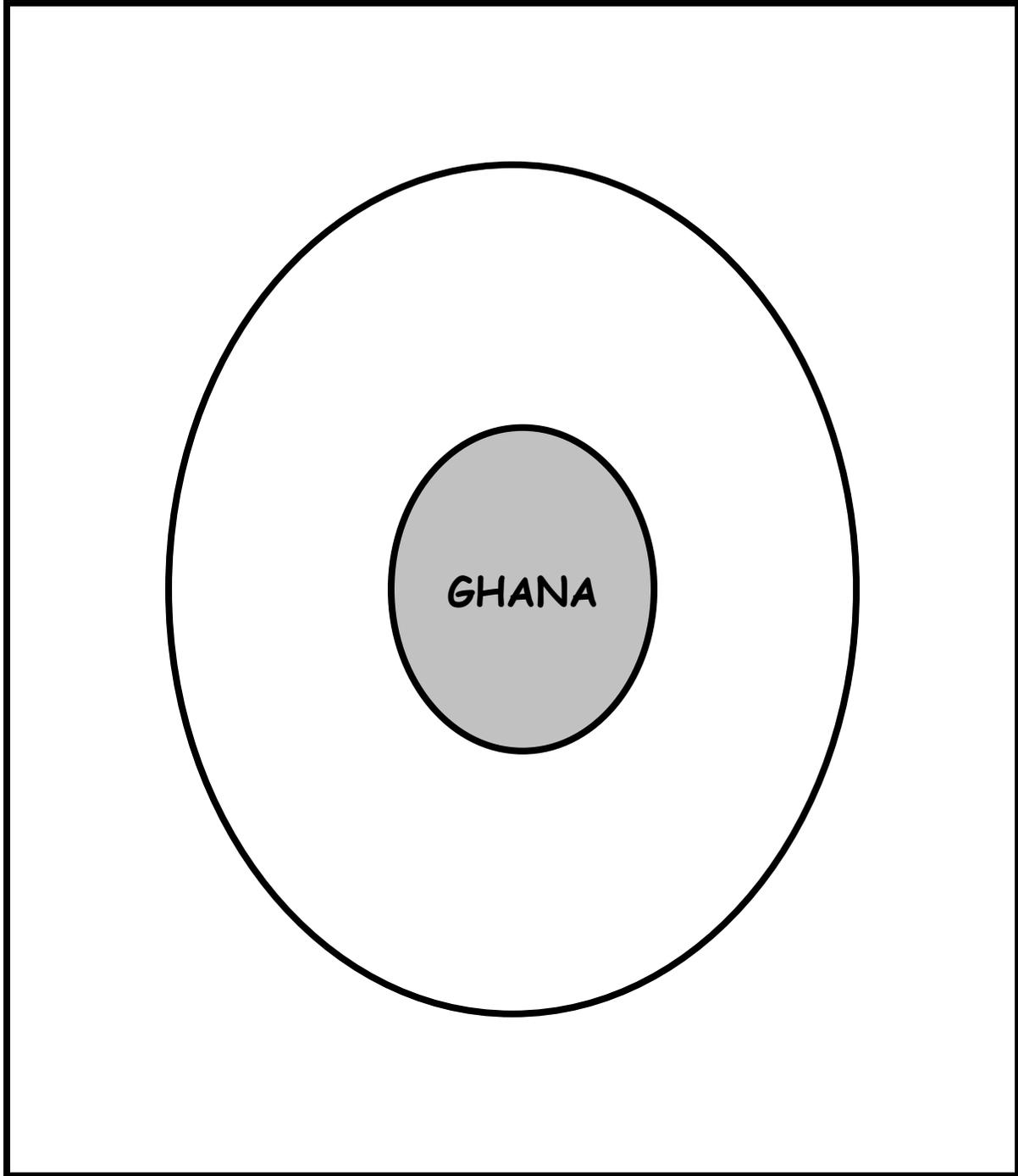
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Name _____

Compare how your life is similar to and different from the life of a Ghanaian child. You should have at least three ideas in each section of the Venn Diagram.

Name _____

Date _____



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