**African People and their Culture**

The vast continent of Africa is so rich and diverse in it's culture with it not only changing from one country to another but within an individual country many different cultures can be found.

Much of Africa's cultural activity centers on the family and the ethnic group. Art, music, and oral literature serve to reinforce existing religious and social patterns. The Westernized minority, influenced by European culture and Christianity, first rejected African traditional culture, but with the rise of African nationalism, a cultural revival occurred. The governments of most African nations foster national dance and music groups, museums, and to a lesser degree, artists and writers.

Africa was the birthplace of the human species between 8 million and 5 million years ago. Today, the vast majority of its inhabitants are of indigenous origin. People across the continent are remarkably diverse by just about any measure: They speak a vast number of different languages, practice hundreds of distinct religions, live in a variety of types of dwellings, and engage in a wide range of economic activities.

Over the centuries, peoples from other parts of the world have migrated to Africa and settled there. Historically, Arabs have been the most numerous immigrants. Starting in the 7th century, they crossed into North Africa from the Middle East, bringing the religion of Islam with them. A later movement of Arabs into East and Central Africa occurred in the 19th century.

Europeans first settled in Africa in the mid-17th century near the Cape of Good Hope, at the southern end of the continent. More Europeans immigrated during the subsequent colonial period, particularly to present-day South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Algeria. South Asians also arrived during colonial times. Their descendants, often referred to as Indians, are found largely in [Uganda](http://www.africaguide.com/country/uganda/), [Kenya](http://www.africaguide.com/country/kenya/), [Tanzania](http://www.africaguide.com/country/tanzania/), and [South Africa](http://www.africaguide.com/country/safrica/).

**1. List Advantages and Disadvantages of living in a continent where many cultures are represented**

**2. How does this reading connect to the Stations in the Station Activity you completed in class today?**