



Africa: Maasai Culture in Kenya

Pre-visit Activity: Background Reading

Africa is a continent. Africa has many different types of people, land, plants, animals, and climates. People have lived in Africa for millions of years. Most of the early people lived in family groups known as tribes. Each tribe had its own language and way of life, depending on where the tribe was located.

Today, the continent of Africa contains many different countries. Each country is unique. We have to be careful not to think everyone living in Africa is the same. One reason each country is different is because of the tribes that lived there first.

Kenya is a country in Africa where the Maasai people first lived. Because grass grows well in Kenya, there are many animals living in the area. Some of the animals are wild, such as lions, giraffes, and zebras. Cattle also live there. The Maasai people depend on the cattle to supply all of their needs, so cattle are very important to them. Maasai men are taught to protect the cattle from the wild animals who live nearby. When a boy gets old enough, he is trained to become a Maasai warrior to help protect the cattle.

Maasai women are known for making beautiful jewelry from colored beads. The colors of the beads have special meanings, so the jewelry they make has meanings also. For example, the beads on a necklace can show if a woman is married.

Source: *National Geographic, Book of Peoples of the World: A Guide to Cultures*





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Fill in the blanks with the best answer choice from the reading:

1. Africa is a _____. (country or continent)
2. The first people to live in Africa lived in family groups called _____. (tribes or schools)
3. The Maasai people live in _____. (Kenya or Egypt)
4. Maasai warriors work to protect _____. (lions or cattle)
5. Maasai women make beautiful jewelry from different colored _____. (straw or beads)

On the map of Africa, locate Kenya and color it red to help you remember the Maasai who live there.





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2. The first people to live in Africa lived in family groups called **tribes**.
3. The Maasai people live in **Kenya**.
4. Maasai warriors work to protect **cattle**.
5. Maasai women make beautiful jewelry from different colored **beads**.

