Margaret Musgrove's *Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions* is a unique alphabet book. I chose the book because it has two very useful purposes within the literacy curriculum. In Chapter 4 - "Phonics and Phonemic Awareness," it is listed on Figure 4.2, "Alphabet Books for Use in Language Development" (p. 149). This book may be discussed as a text in which authors use the alphabetic structure to teach language development to older students. When sharing this book with students, focus attention on the way the author provides pronunciation guides for the letter associations such as "A/Ashanti (uh-shahnt'-ee)." The author also defines the terms within the text.

As this alphabet book is shared, point out Leo and Diane Dillon's illustrations, for which they won the Caldecott Medal, to add to the understanding of the specific culture. By careful observation, students will discover that each painting to accompany an alphabet letter includes "a man, a woman, a child, their living quarters, an artifact, and a local animal" (unnumbered). This observational purpose is heightened by the borders for the illustrations. These borders are based on the Kano knot, a design originally used in northern Niger during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The knots in the design are appropriate because they symbolize endless searching. This book lends itself to endless searching.

*Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions* also provides an excellent introduction to or an accompaniment for a unit or study of African and African American folklore discussed in Chapter 10 - "Literacy Instruction for ELL Students, Multicultural Education, and Students With Special Needs." Musgrove's text includes a map locating specific peoples living in Africa. When showing the map, teachers can share the knowledge that many of the African folktales came from Western Africa, especially the Yorubas and the Ashantis. Both the A/Ashanti and Y/Yoruba are illustrated in the alphabet book. Students may need to be reminded that the African people who were taken as slaves to the United States brought their oral folklore with them. Consequently, a study of African American folklore is enhanced by a study of the African cultures with their traditional values that are also found in African American folklore.

--- Donna Norton
This book provides the opportunity to explore not only African folklore and traditions but our own and that of our students. My ideas are as follows:

1. The teacher could teach children the African words.

2. A display of Africa and African tribes could be set up. Teachers could consult African American families to see if they have artifacts, traditional fabrics, etc.

3. The illustrations in this book should be studied carefully. Since the Dillon’s have included artifacts, animals and people in all their illustrations these should be discussed and pointed out to children.

4. Children could look at other books illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon and compare/discuss their illustration style.

5. After #3 & 4 teachers could offer children the opportunity to paint in the Dillon style.

6. The teacher could prepare a semantic map with children on Africa.

7. Showing just the cover illustration of the book the children could discuss or predict what the book is about.

8. A large map or replica of the map in the book could be utilized in the classroom. Children could make the traditional salt map of Africa.

9. Children could draw their own traditions book or as a group, make a classroom traditions book.

10. Children could learn African songs or listen to African music.

11. Children could make drums and practice drumming.

Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions by Margaret Musgrove and illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon, which won the Caldecott Medal, is a wonderful picture book that offers an opportunity to link reading and writing for older students. Because Leo and Diane Dillon have purposely drawn “a man, a woman, a child, their living quarters, an artifact and a local animal” for each culture, I would ask students to select one group at a time, study the visual representation and the text written below, then describe what they see happening in the picture. This will encourage the students to look carefully at the picture, to reread the text multiple times and to transform the words in the text to be able to use
them in their descriptions. I would suggest that students do this first as an oral exercise. Then, the students could write about the man, woman, child the living quarters and the animal. Using Visual Thinking Strategies, they could answer the questions:

1) What is happening in the picture?
2) What do you see that makes you say that?
3) What more can you say?

A scaffolding activity might be to make a chart with the headings, a man, a woman, a child, living quarters, an artifact, and a local animal and a place for the name of the tribe at the top. There could be an added row for the activity. This would include descriptive writing and making inferences about actions and activities. Under each area, the students could begin to describe the detailed drawings of each. Similarities and comparisons across the different tribes could be made. There actually could be a story written eventually for each picture. These could be put together for individual books or for a class book. An example such as the one below would help.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe and location on map</th>
<th>C / Chagga (chah’· guh) – located in the southeast coast of Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>A priest is wearing the traditional costume of multiple layers of white and brown robes. From his ears hang large metal earrings that have made holes in his ears. He also has on beads of different shapes and colors as well as bracelets of multiple colors. In his hands, he is carrying a staff and an instrument which is decorated with feathers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Quarters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Animal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Have students make book boxes by decorating the outside of the box or other container and collect 3-5 objects related to the story, such as a drum (or picture), a bowl for stew, and colorful material or beads. Students place an inventory sheet about the contents and write a sentence about WHY they chose those items (or what they represent).

2) Create a sensory web from the book including what students might smell, touch, taste, see or hear if they lived with some of the African traditions and celebrations.

3) ABC booklet on American traditions, for example: a---apple pie, b---baseball, c---coupons, d---doughnuts, etc.

4) Build a triarama or quadrama to represent 3-4 different aspects of the African culture: [http://www.susq-town.org/bye/20Reading%20Themes/create_a_triararama.htm](http://www.susq-town.org/bye/20Reading%20Themes/create_a_triararama.htm)
First of all, I would do a read aloud with the students because of the lovely illustrations and short amounts of information that are found in each page. This is a great book to read during social studies or during literature classes. Since there are always so many students of different languages and cultures in each class I would begin with the read aloud then I would talk about each tradition noted in the book and have a discussion from the students about similar traditions in their own cultural groups. I would then have the students write in their journals or illustrate on a paper with lines already drawn on the paper the similarities found in the African traditions compared to the different traditions found in the different cultures represented in the classroom.

There is for example, a similarity of the Mexican culture where the people make foods or grow different foods and sell these foods daily in the market place. In some of the African cultures the people sell dates, meat, cloth and other things. There is bargaining done just like in the market places in Mexico. That is part of the cultures to bargain. Students who select this custom and discuss it could do a Venn diagram and discuss the similarities and differences of this tradition. Additionally, they could write about the similarities in their journal of the two cultures and the custom which is so similar. They could be encouraged to bring samples of what is sold in the market they are use to seeing in their particular culture. After they do this they could share orally with their classmates. They could learn not only about the various traditions but could additionally learn academic vocabulary which is so important once again for all learners and most especially English learners.

This book is rich in African traditions. I would invite some guest speakers from the community to discuss Kwanza celebrations so the students could see that many of the roots of the Kwanza celebrations came from some of the African traditions that are being represented in the literature book.

I would read other stories about African Americans and African people and continue making comparisons so that students could see how similar we are in the different cultures. Discussions of these similarities should follow.

Other activities which could be done would be to have the children/youth bring in some of the native costumes of their particular cultures. In the Mexican culture for example, the Mexican singers or Mariachi bands have very traditional clothing that represents a tradition of the Mexican people. The African people illustrated in this beautiful literature book also wear the cultural clothes which represent many different things to the people in the various villages. Again, the fact that all the cultures have clothing which represent some part of their various cultures could be most informative for each student. A deeper respect could come from each student as the various cultures are represented in the classroom.
In reading about different cultures through literature we also learn how similar the various cultures are. This is very helpful in attempting to bring various cultures and people closer together.

I really enjoyed this book because there are few books we have in basal readers that bring forth customs and awareness of different cultures. This one not only does this but is so realistically illustrated. This is an excellent choice for cultural awareness.

Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions – I like the idea of using this book in an intermediate classroom to reinforce students' knowledge of expository text structures. For my activity, I would have students work in groups to create their own alphabet book based on a culture or region of their choice. (To modify this assignment, it can also be linked to other topics such as a sport or sports, professions, or famous Americans.) To complete this assignment, students would need knowledge of expository text structures and the need for descriptive language. There were many excellent examples of descriptive language in the picture book, Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions (e.g., “where they carve their fields into the rugged mountains like wide flat stair steps”)

The activity that I came up with was that the students, 4-6 grade, could do word studies - etymologies of the different words listed in the book. Accompanying this activity would be one that would look at geography. These two activities combined could lead into a discussion about how different parts of a county speak different dialects and use different terms for common items. This could also lead into a discussion in looking at the vocabulary and talk about customs - where did they come from, why are they practiced, what is their significance.

IDEAS FOR COLLEGE CLASSROOMS

What a beautiful book! With my college students in the Intro to Literacy class, we would use this book to talk about an integrated unit. We would read this book as a read aloud. I would then have the students go to the library and find fiction and nonfiction books regarding African traditions and culture. We would then see how, with each alphabet letter (a different tradition) and the additional material, students could write their own nonfiction story based on real facts.