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# Concentration Cards

**Alice Walker**

(1944- )



In her younger years, she was very involved in the civil rights movement. She became a writer and teacher of literature at Jackson State College. She wrote mostly poetry. In 1970, she wrote her first novel, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. In the 1970's, she taught at Wellesley College and wrote many books and poems. In 1982, she wrote her most famous book, *The Color Purple*. This book won the Pulitzer Prize, the American Book Award, and a National Book Critics Circle Award Nomination. Steven Spielberg then produced the story as a movie, and it received several Academy Award nominations.

**Harriet Tubman**

(1821?-1913)



This woman, who was an escaped slave herself, led as many as 300 people out of slavery in the South to freedom in the North. Despite the fact that there was a \$40,000 reward for her capture, she returned to the South 19 times to help African Americans make the trip using the Underground Railroad. She was able to obtain freedom for her husband and elderly parents making this dangerous journey. She worked as a laundress, cook, and seamstress to pay for these trips. During the Civil War, she worked as a cook, nurse, scout, as well as a spy for the Union Army.

**Wilma Rudolph**

(1940-1994)



This woman made incredible achievements in athletics. She was born into a family of 22 children. At the age of four, she suffered scarlet fever and polio. This left her weak and partially crippled. The doctors said she probably would never walk again. She worked hard to prove that the doctors were wrong. She did learn to walk again and later found that she loved to run in track and field events. At the age of 16, she won the Bronze Medal in a relay at the 1956 Olympics. In the 1960 Olympics, she earned three gold medals in the races that she ran.

# Kwanzaa

## What is Kwanzaa?

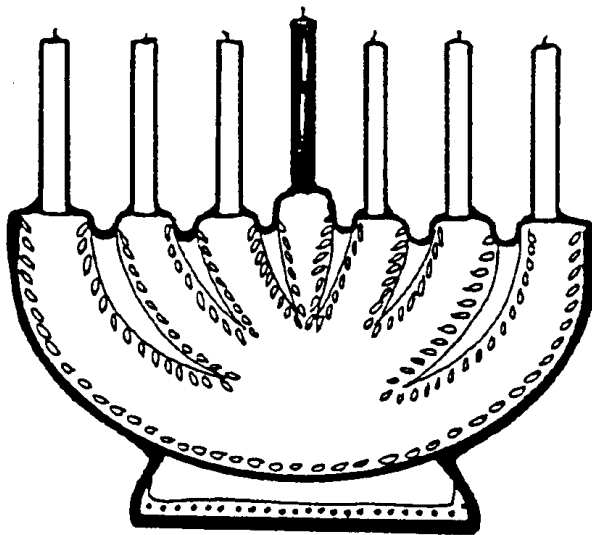
Many cultures have special celebrations. In 1966, Dr. Maulana Karenga decided African Americans should have a celebration that would be uniquely theirs. He wanted this celebration to occur between December 26 and January 1 each year. He thought it would give African Americans a chance to learn about their African heritage, as well as plan for the future.

## From where did the word Kwanzaa come?

In Africa, many tribes celebrate the first harvest of the crops. In Swahili this celebration is called *Matunda ya Kwanza* which means “First Fruits.” Dr. Karenga used this name *Kwanza* to tie the new holiday to this tradition. However, he changed the name of the holiday to *Kwanzaa* by adding an extra “a.” The purpose of this change in spelling was to show that the holiday was built on the old tradition, but also represented the beginning of a new tradition. The spelling now uses seven letters which indicate the number of days included in the holiday.

## How is Kwanzaa celebrated?

There are special objects used for the Kwanzaa celebration. The first is *mkeke* (m-KEH-ka), which is a handmade mat. Next is a *kikombe cha umoja* (kee-KOM-beh chah oo-MO-jah) which is a cup that everyone drinks from to show that African Americans are a united people. One ear of corn, called *muhindi* (moo-HIN-de), is put out for each child in the family and is a reminder that children are the hope of the future. Next is the *kinara* (ki-NAH-rah), a wooden candleholder. It holds seven candles—one candle is black to symbolize African Americans, three candles are red to symbolize hard work and the fight for freedom, and three candles are green to symbolize hope. The last items on the table are gifts. They are called *zawadi* (zah-WAH-dee) and are handmade.



Each night for seven nights the family gets together, and one candle is lit as someone explains the belief for that day. On the first night, the black candle is lit to celebrate *umoja* (oo-MOE-jah), which means unity. On the second night, a red candle is lit for *kujichagulia* (koo-jee-cha-goo-LEE-ah), which means self-determination. On the third night, a green candle is lit for *ujima* (oo-JEE-mah), which means collective work and responsibility. On the fourth night, a red candle is lit for *ujama* (oo-jah-MAAH), cooperative economics. On the fifth night, a green candle is lit for *nia* (NEE-ah), which means purpose. On the sixth night, a candle is lit for *kuumba* (ku-OOM-bah, which means creativity. It is on the sixth night that the family has a huge feast. However, the last night is thought to be the best. All the candles are finally lit, and the belief is *imani* (ee-MAHN-ee), which means that good will always happen. After the candles are lit, everyone exchanges their *zawadi*, or gifts.