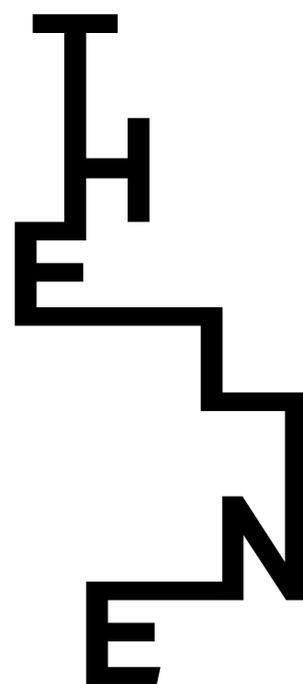


Larry Achiampong: Flags

Teaching Notes

Lesson inspired by the artwork of Larry Achiampong, featured on The Line, London



Session overview

This session can be delivered as a standalone lesson or alongside the two other lessons focussing on the work of artist Larry Achiampong. It can easily be tailored for students in Years 5 – 9 by adapting the teacher facilitation, while keeping the core activities the same. The core lesson can be delivered in 60 minutes however it can be extended to 90+ minutes, and split over a few lessons, by completing an additional optional activity.

At the start of the lesson students will be asked to consider why flags are important and what they symbolise. Subsequently they will respond to four flags created by the artist Larry Achiampong, whose work is featured on The Line (a free outdoor art walk, which runs between Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and The O2 in East London). Finally, students will create their own flag to symbolise their identity.

Achiampong created these flags as part of his multidisciplinary science-fiction project based on his concept of a Relic Traveller. As an optional activity, students can learn more about the future that Achiampong imagines, where African countries have become the most prosperous and wealthy in the world, joining together to form a Pan African Union. In this imagined future, the Pan African Union sends Relic Travellers around the world to find the lost vocal testimonies of people from the past. The Relic Travellers are specifically focused on collecting the testimonies of the African diaspora, who have been exploited and oppressed, to collate lost African histories from around the world. Students consider what we can learn from the past to prepare our society for the future.

The underlying themes of the session are oppression, racism and equality. This is implicit within Achiampong's work, within the optional activity students evaluate related concepts and consider fundamental questions about who can be considered to be oppressed in our society and who can be considered to be the oppressors. Throughout the session, the teacher can ask questions to support students in making links between the lesson content and these key themes.

The learning objectives

- To learn about what flags symbolise
- To consider questions about society, diversity and inclusion
- To create a flag to symbolise their identity

Schools and students who are unable to access The Line in person will be able to supplement their learning by visiting virtually via www.the-line.org

Teaching Challenging Topics

When discussions address issues such as diversity, racism, inclusion, prejudice and stereotyping, teachers should ensure that they are familiar with the school's Child Protection Policy.

This topic is extremely sensitive, and the issues covered will need to be handled with care. It is important to be mindful that certain groups of students may have encountered prejudice and racism, or may come from families where racist views are held.

Please see Teacher Guidance: '[Teaching about race and prejudice](#)' from Cumbria County Council's e-library.

Why are flags important?



Resources – Slide 2

10 mins

Activate

In pairs, ask students to discuss the question 'Why are flags important?'

Combine the pairs of students into groups of four. Ask students to discuss their responses, adding depth to their discussions with examples and detailed explanations.

Further questions to ask the class are: What types of flags do you know?

How are flags linked to history? How are flags linked to identity? Are all flags positive?

Take feedback and create a list of ideas on the board

E.g. Flags are important because...

- They can represent spiritual values and beliefs (e.g. the Khanda in Sikhism)
- They can represent a country's identity, pride, values and history (e.g. Star Spangled Banner)
- They can let us know who/what someone/something is (e.g. pirate flags, the Red Cross)
- They can show someone's interests, hobbies and loyalties (e.g. football flags)
- They can visually identify someone (e.g. during a battle)
- They can remind us of a cause or a struggle (e.g. PRIDE)
- N.B. flags can also remind us of fear, violence of colonialism (e.g. Nazi Swastika, for some the Union Jack would fall into this category)

The meaning of flags



What does this flag symbolise?

What feelings and emotions are linked to this flag?

If this flag had a name, what would it be?

Resources – Slide 3, 7

20 mins (30+ inc. optional activities)

Explore

Give each group of students copies of the Pan-African Alliance flags (Slide 7). At this point, do not share the names or any background information about the flags.

Students should discuss the following questions:

- What does the flag symbolise?
- What feelings and emotions are linked to this flag?
- What name would you give this flag?

Take feedback from each group, asking them to justify their answers to each question.

Then watch a clip of Achiampong explaining the inspiration behind these flags.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=10&v=-YrGVx0Bxxo&feature=emb_logo

The meaning of flags



Motion



Squadron



Community



Ascension

Resources – Slide 4

20 mins (30+ inc. optional activities)

Explore

This artwork is by Larry Achiampong. The first flag was commissioned by Somerset House, and is an extension of his multidisciplinary science-fiction project based on his concept of a Relic Traveller. Achiampong imagines a future where African countries have become the most prosperous and wealthy in the world, joining together to form a Pan African Union. In this imagined future, the Pan African Union sends Relic Travellers around the world to find the lost vocal testimonies of people from the past. The Relic Travellers are specifically focused on collecting the testimonies of the African diaspora, who have been exploited and oppressed, to collate lost African histories from around the world. The aim of their project is to listen to and learn from the past, using this learning to prepare for the future.

These flags are called the Pan African Flags for the Relic Travellers Alliance. For information see: <https://www.larryachiampong.co.uk/list-of-artworks/pan-african-flag-for-the-relic-travellers-alliance-squadron>

“Included in the series are four flags that highlight African diasporic identity. The design of each flag features 54 stars that represent the 54 countries of Africa. While the colours green, black and red reflect its land, its people and the struggles the continent has endured, respectively. The field of yellow gold represents a new day and prosperity. Achiampong has configured these Pan African colours into symbols and forms that are suggestive of various elements: community, motion (technology and the speed of darkness), squadron and the human figure in ascension. The flags culminate Afrofuturistic icons moving towards unity and equilibrium. The work does not frame Pan African Futurism as a utopian vision of the African continent, but one that considers aspects of responsibility in relation to the hidden tremors of history”



Resources – Slide 5 (optional)

20 mins (30+ inc. optional activities)

Deep Dive – Relic Traveller

Larry Achiampong's Relic Traveller series can support class discussions around a range of key themes, such as: migration, community, empire, exploitation, equality, racism, colonialism, fairness, identity, belonging, responsibility. Another central idea is that of Sanko-time, which relates to the Ghanaian Twi word Sankofa. Sankofa means 'to go back for what has been left behind'. Sanko-time alludes to using the past to prepare for the future.

- Introduce the class to the concept of Sanko-time and ask 'Why do we need to understand the past to prepare for the future?'
- Then watch Relic Traveller 1 (from 7min – 11min 40 sec). Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/233984155> Password: relic001). (Relic 1, 4K Video (2017), commissioned by PS/Y.
- Class Discussion – Who is giving this testimony? What oppression have they been subjected to? Who is the oppressor? How can we learn from the past to make our society a fairer and more equal place?

A Glossary is provided at the end of these notes.

Useful questions for facilitating a student-led discussion

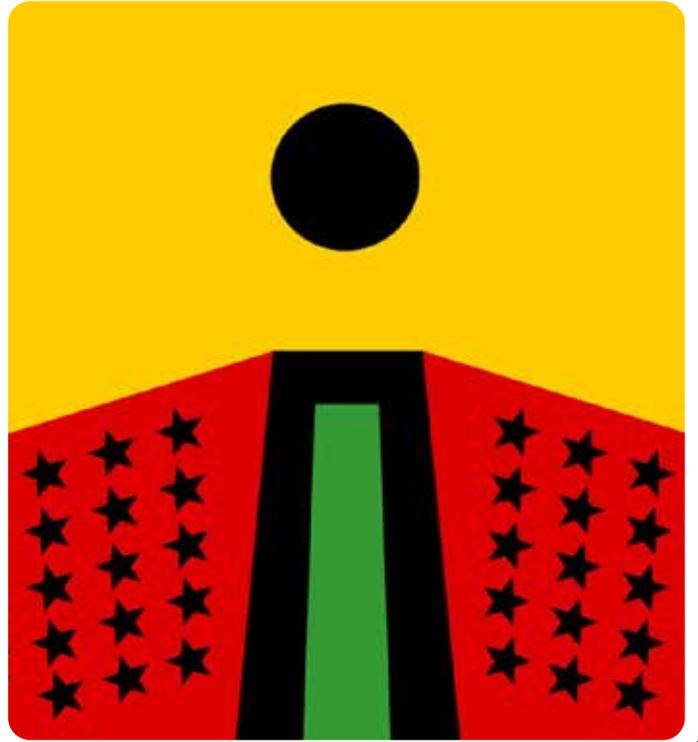
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|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Can you/someone give an example to back up that point? — Can you/someone explain that with more detail? — Are you saying X ? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Is that always true, sometimes true or rarely true? — Who agrees/disagrees with this point? — Are there any counter examples? — Can you make a link or connection to another idea/concept? — Can we draw any conclusions? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Who can summarise what we have discussed? — Do we feel that we have answered the question, or do we need to return to it and discuss it further? — Has your thinking changed during our discussion? Why? |
|--|---|--|

A flag to represent me

What are the most important parts of your personality?

What symbols would best represent who you are?

What colours would best represent your identity?



Resources – Slide 6

30+ mins

Create

In the Relic Traveller series, Achiampong believes that flags should not just be seen as a stamp of authority or connected to an organisation. He believes that flags can be beacons of emotion, belonging and pride in personal identity. Achiampong asks, if a flag symbolising your identity and values was draped over your shoulders, what would you want people to understand about you? How would it show your personality, individuality and uniqueness?

- Imagine that you are going to create a flag to symbolise you – your values, beliefs, interests and hobbies. What would it look like?
- Students design and create their own flags.

Glossary

Affirmation – the act of confirming something positively, encourage and support

African Union – Continental organisation representing 55 African states

Ally – traditionally, a country who backs another in international affairs. In relation to Black Lives Matter (or prejudice in general), an ally is someone who is willing to act with and for those that are oppressed with the aim of ending said oppression

Alliance – a group or network formed to help and support one another

Bigotry – intolerance towards those who hold different opinions from oneself

Colonialism – the policy of one country seeking rule over other people or places

Migrant – a person who moves from one country to another seeking work or a better life

Nationalism – supporting or favouring your own country / nation sometimes to the detriment of others

Oppressed – people living under harsh or unfair treatment, unable to thrive

Prosperity – a state of financial security and wealth

Protest – an expression or declaration of objection, disapproval, or dissent, often in opposition to something a person is powerless to prevent or avoid

Relic – an object surviving from another time or place

Revolution – a forcible overthrow of a government or social order, in favour of a new system

Sankofa – Sankofa is a Ghanaian Twi word which means to 'go back for what has been left behind'. Sankofa also alludes to using the past to prepare for the future. Based on Sankofa, Larry has developed the concept of Sanko-time

Science Fiction – books and films describing invented worlds in the future, often featuring time travel

Testimony – a spoken statement, recording an event or experience

White Privilege – the societal privilege that benefits white people over non-white people in some societies, particularly if they are otherwise under the same social, political, or economic circumstances

For more information and further resources visit:

www.the-line.org
info@the-line.org
[@TheLineLondon](https://www.instagram.com/TheLineLondon)

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