

Kwanzaa celebrates African American roots

Do your parents and grandparents talk about your family's heritage? Some families have holiday traditions that go back to a time before the family came to America.

Kwanzaa is a time to remember cultural traditions. It is one of the holidays celebrated on stamps this year.

The first Kwanzaa stamp was issued in 1997.

Kwanzaa is not a religious holiday. Instead, its purpose is to preserve and promote African American culture. This year Kwanzaa is Dec. 26 through Jan. 1.

Dr. Maulana Karenga, professor of Africana Studies at California State University, created Kwanzaa. The word Kwanzaa comes from the phrase "first fruits" in Swahili. Swahili is an African language.

Kwanzaa teaches Seven Principles. They are Unity, Self-determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity and Faith.

Artist Lloyd McNeill of New York City created this year's Kwanzaa stamp. McNeill spent time with the famous modern artist Pablo Picasso. McNeill is also a jazz musician.

His bold symbolic stamp includes the colors of Kwanzaa. Green represents growth. Red stands for blood. Black represents the African people. The field of green around the borders symbolizes growth and a bountiful harvest.

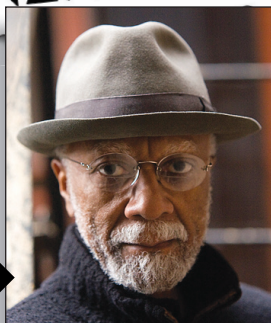
The stamp also features a family. The mother, father and girl represent unity. The girl holds a hoop, which also means unity.

Kwanzaa decorations include art, fresh fruits and colorful African cloth. A Kwanzaa ceremony may include music, drumming and a reading of the "African Pledge." A feast follows each ceremony.

The Kwanzaa greeting is "Habari Gani," which means "What's the News?"

According to its creator, Kwanzaa does not take the place of people's religious celebrations. Instead, it is a time to celebrate a common ground of African culture and history.

The United States Postal Service printed 30 million Kwanzaa stamps.



Artist
Lloyd McNeill

Stamp courtesy
of the artist
Lloyd McNeill

Word Scramble

Unscramble the words associated with Kwanzaa

CAFRIA

REGEN

RUPSEOP

TRIFU

TRELUCU

NIUTY

Newspaper in Education activity

Search your newspaper for words that begin with each letter of Kwanzaa. Write a holiday greeting using the words you found in your newspaper.

K
W
A
N
Z
A
A



For the **Kid** in You