

# Education

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## Season's Greetings and Kwanzaa

**ONE.** Before delving into the rich roots of Kwanzaa, let me begin by making the following holiday suggestion:

To the readers of the Sentinel-Voice, as a holiday gift, you can't beat the following price/deal: We all know at least one person living out of town and also one student away at college, right? Why not purchase a year's subscription to the Sentinel-Voice for each one. They would be surprised and well-informed.

**TWO.** KWANZAA, which was started in 1966, is African and American. African because its participants continue to function from an Afro-centric mode. It is American because they are located in America.

Kwanzaa has alternatively been thought of as a transported continental African holiday or as a Christmas substitute. Neither is totally true or false. The creativity that Africans brought to the new world does manifest itself in festivals such as Kwanzaa, however, an intact model itself cannot be found on the continent.

Likewise, depending on

the individual, Kwanzaa can or does not have to be a substitute for Christmas. In fact, Kwanzaa is considered to be the nation's only cultural holiday.

As a testament to its increasing acceptance and popularity, Kwanzaa has grown from a holiday that was originally observed by seven people, to one that is nationally observed by over 8 million people.

Like other holidays, Kwanzaa has its festive colors (red, black and green), and traditional symbols. The colors symbolize the blood that was shed in the diaspora, the color of the people and the fertility of Africa.

The traditional symbols are reflective of past and present concepts. There is the maz-ago (crops) which represent the rewards of collective productive labor. The mkeka (mat), which was chosen as a symbol because it is a traditional African item. The kinara (candle holder) which is symbolic of the ancestors of African-Americans. Vibunzi (ears of corn) represent the number of children within a given household.

## Good Study Skills Equal School Success

by Vava Viegas  
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One common complaint among students who are not achieving their potential is that they try hard, but never seem to know what to study or how to pay close attention in class. Students are taught how to memorize facts in a social studies book and logically deduce outcomes of science projects, but are never taught specific study skills. Good study habits can be developed and learned by any student wishing to per-

form better in class. To develop good study habits, a few simple guidelines should be followed.

The student must first be aware of exactly what he must study to excel in class; planning is needed to determine how to best complete an assignment. This analysis may sound simple, but in actuality, it is something which requires careful consideration. During class, students should always take

Like most holidays of this nature, there are "zawadi" (gifts). Gifts are usually exchanged between parents and children and are instructive or inspirational in nature.

Another important kwanzaa symbol is the "kikombe cha unoja" (unity cup), used to pour libation for the ancestors, and then drunk from by each member of the immediate or extended family as a reinforcing gesture.

Finally, there is the "mishumaa saba" (seven candles). These candles represent the seven principles, and therefore, beginning with the center, which should be black, a candle is lit each day of Kwanzaa from left to right. The Kinara (candle holder) should have three green and three red candles with a black candle

in the center.

The information I have represented was supplied by the New York City Kwanzaa Advisory Committee. Those of us on the west coast and in particular, the Los Angeles area are most fortunate to have near us the founder of Kwanzaa, Dr. Ron Karenga.

Now that you are armed with information on one of this nation's most colorful holidays, join in and tell others. Eight million is a lot of people. And the numbers are growing each year. Season's Greetings.

**HILTON: HIGHER EDUCATION is designed to dialogue with college and world leaders. Education is ongoing and not limited to school classrooms. Keep a file of these columns and use them as a supplemental reference source. Let's talk.**

note of what is needed to complete an assignment, including worksheets, notes, class texts, or library resources. Even for the youngest elementary child, there should be a place in the notebook to set aside materials to take home. This is ideal for any student having trouble remembering what he needs to finish an assignment.

For assignments due at the end of a long period of time, such as a book report or research paper, students should "track" the assignment on a weekly basis. To do this, the student must first write a schedule or timetable entailing the time involved to finish the assignment. In weekly increments, the student should put down exactly what he wishes to accomplish by a certain date. To complete a research paper, for example, one week should be devoted to gathering research; the next week, taking notes; the final weeks, writing the rough copy and final draft. One common pitfall to many students is that they wait until the night before the assignment is due before beginning work on the project; tracking the assignment week by week will alleviate this situation.

In addition, to allocate time properly, students need to know how to organize themselves. Notebooks should be divided into sections for notes, quizzes, and

graded assignments. A separate sheet should be kept in the front of each section for the student to record quiz and test grades as well as grades on daily homework; this way, the student knows exactly what the grade will be before the grading period ends, and there are no devastating surprises.

Listening skills are also very important for students to develop. If a student cannot listen effectively to what the teacher is communicating in class, then much of the material being presented in class will be lost. Students need to be able to note the main idea and general facts that the teacher is presenting as well as being able to adequately sequence events and draw conclusions. These four skills are the cornerstones for active participation and constructive listening in class.

Many supplemental education centers offer structured study skills classes for the students who just cannot seem to get organized; these courses help guide the students through tracking assignments, listening skills, skimming material for information, and more. For the students who need help developing study skills, these guidelines should get them on track for performing better in school.



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