

# BILINGUAL BROWN BABIES CÔTE D'IVOIRE Afrocentric French Lesson Ideas



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# ABOUT ME

**SALUT! JE M'APPELLE KAMI. YOUR LINGUISTIC MAMA DIVA AND BILINGUAL MAMA MENTOR.**

Like you, I am a busy mom. I have four curious and active children, who at the time this curriculum was written, are aged 12, 10 and 8 (twins).

I know it's a lot to juggle work, kids' activities and quality time with the schedule you have and the thought of adding language, although cool in theory, may not seem feasible. I get it. But I want to show you how to make using French at home easy. I want you to do that. Use French at home. My "right away, every day" language techniques are the best methods for Black families learning languages.

***I CHANGE THE WAY BLACK FAMILIES ARE SEEN THROUGH LANGUAGE.***

I am extraordinarily successful in teaching and leaving a lasting impact through language. I am **PASSIONATE** about languages, but most importantly, I am passionate about **YOU** and **YOUR FAMILY** using French. Your level does not matter. If you're not afraid to jump in and get dirty with language for the sake of your kids' success, I'm right here with you. Let's do French as a family.



**BILINGUAL BROWN BABIES CÔTE D'IVOIRE UNIT**

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I'm so excited to offer you a sneak peek into my curriculum with the Côte d'Ivoire Unit! Since I began teaching in 2002, I have shifted my perspective and seen how there are certain aspects of Afrocentric curriculum that canNOT be ignored. Specifically, I've been looking more closely at the ways in which the "white gaze" negatively impacts not only how we speak day-to-day in English but also how we learn other languages.

You'll see how the inclusion of sections is more reflective of Black French practices on purpose in order to normalize all the ways we speak. You'll also see at the end of the unit how to highlight Black French-speaking practices and critical language conversations into your classroom and lifestyle. The framework is based on research completed by April Baker-Bell in her 2020 self-proclaimed "manifesto" [\*Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy\*](#)

This unit is designed to not spoon-feed language lessons, but to provide you with a framework that complements your content standards and incorporates the critical aspects of Black Francophone history and culture. It is my hope this small taste will leave you craving more and you get your copy of the full curriculum too!

There are several key components to this unit that you will find in the larger curriculum:

- History of Côte d'Ivoire
- A blank map of the country
- Reflection questions that can serve as Pre/Post tests using the map
- Flags associated with the country
- Suggested vocabulary to review or teach while using this unit
- Cultural activities that can be done
- Mini-lesson on Black Language Pedagogy included a world language classroom friendly activity
- A way to connect with parents outside of the classroom to involve them with the learning experience!

## CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Ethnic groupings in the country include Akan (42.1%), Voltaiques or Gur (17.6%), Northern Mandés (16.5%), Kru (11%), Southern Mandés (10%), and others (2.8%). Each of these categories is subdivided into different ethnicities. For example, the Akan grouping includes the Baoulé, the Voltaïque category includes the Senufo, the Northern Mande category includes the Dioula, and the Maninka, the Kru category includes the Bété and the Kru, and the Southern Mande category includes the Yacouba. About 4% of the population is of non-African ancestry. Many are French, Lebanese, Vietnamese, and Spanish citizens.

The first recorded history appears in the chronicles of North African Berber traders, who, from early Roman times, conducted a caravan trade across the Sahara in salt, slaves, gold, and other goods. By controlling the trade routes with their powerful military forces, these empires were able to dominate neighboring states. They also became centers of Islamic education. From the 11th century, by which time the rulers of the Sudanic empires had embraced Islam, it spread south into the northern areas of the contemporary Côte d'Ivoire.

The Ghana Empire, the earliest of the Sudanic empires, flourished in the region that includes present-day southeast Mauritania and southern Mali between the 4th and 13th centuries. At the peak of its power in the 11th century, its realms extended from the Atlantic Ocean to Timbuktu. After the decline of Ghana, the Mali Empire grew into a powerful Muslim state, which reached its peak power in the early part of the 14th century. The territory of the Mali Empire in the Côte d'Ivoire was limited to the northwest corner around Odienné.

Its slow decline starting at the end of the 14th century followed internal discord and revolts by vassal states, one of which, Songhai, flourished as an empire between the 14th and 16th centuries. Songhai was also weakened by internal discord, which led to warfare. This spurred most of the migrations southward toward the forest belt. The dense rainforest covering the southern half of the country created barriers to the large-scale political organizations that had arisen in the north. People lived in villages or clusters of villages; their contacts with the outside world were filtered through long-distance traders. Villagers lived by agriculture and hunting.

Compared to neighboring Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, though practicing slavery and slave raiding, suffered little from the slave trade. European slave and merchant ships preferred other areas along the coast. A French mission was established in 1687 at Assinie near the border with the Gold Coast (now Ghana). The Europeans suppressed the local practice of slavery at this time and forbade the trade to their merchants. Assinie's survival was precarious, however; the French were not firmly established in Côte d'Ivoire until the mid-19th century.

In 1843–4, French admiral Louis Edouard Bouët-Willaumez signed treaties with the kings of the Grand Bassam and Assinie regions, making their territories a French protectorate. French explorers, missionaries, trading companies, and soldiers gradually extended the area under French control inland from the lagoon region. The French did not have complete control of the inland region until 1915.

By the end of the 1880s, France had established control over the coastal regions of the Côte d'Ivoire, and in 1889 Britain recognized French sovereignty in the area. In 1893, Côte d'Ivoire became a French colony, with its capital in Grand-Bassam. Agreements with Liberia in 1892 and with Britain in 1893 determined the eastern and western boundaries of the colony, but the northern boundary was not fixed until 1947 because of efforts by the French government to attach parts of Upper Volta (present-day Burkina Faso) and French Sudan (present-day Mali) to Côte d'Ivoire.

Côte d'Ivoire stood out as the only West African country with a sizeable population of European settlers; elsewhere in West and Central Africa, Europeans who emigrated to the colonies were largely bureaucrats. As a result, French citizens owned one-third of the cocoa, coffee, and banana plantations and adopted the local forced-labor system.

### **Côte d'Ivoire Independence**

Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the son of a Baoulé chief, became Côte d'Ivoire's father of independence. In 1944, he formed the country's first agricultural trade union for African cocoa farmers like himself because he saw that colonial policy favored French plantation owners. Houphouët-Boigny soon rose to prominence and within a year was elected to the French Parliament in Paris. A year later, the French abolished forced labor. Houphouët-Boigny established a strong relationship with the French government, expressing a belief that Côte d'Ivoire would benefit from the relationship, which it did for many years. France appointed him as a minister, the first African to become a minister in a European government.

A turning point in relations with France was reached with the 1956 Overseas Reform Act (*Loi Cadre*), which transferred a number of powers from Paris to elected territorial governments in French West Africa and also removed the remaining voting inequities. On December 4, 1958, Côte d'Ivoire became an autonomous member of the French Community, which had replaced the French Union.

In 1960, the country was easily French West Africa's most prosperous, contributing over 40% of the region's total exports. In other African nations, the people drove out the Europeans following independence, but in Côte d'Ivoire, they poured in. The French community grew from only 30,000 prior to independence to 60,000 in 1980, most of them teachers, managers, and advisors. For 20 years, the economy maintained an annual growth rate of nearly 10%—the highest of Africa's non-oil-exporting countries.

In the early hours of September 19, 2002, while the President was in Italy, an armed uprising occurred. Troops who were to be demobilized mutinied, launching attacks in several cities. The battle for the main gendarmerie barracks in Abidjan lasted until mid-morning, but by lunchtime, the government forces had secured Abidjan. They had lost control of the north of the country, and rebel forces made their stronghold in the northern city of Bouaké.

That the French were helping either side was not established as a fact, but each side accused the French of supporting the opposite side. Whether French actions improved or worsened the situation in the long term is disputed. What exactly happened that night is also disputed. Gendarmes and vigilantes bulldozed and burned homes by the thousands, attacking residents.

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An early ceasefire with the rebels, which had the backing of much of the northern populace, proved short-lived, and fighting over the prime cocoa-growing areas resumed. France sent in troops to maintain the cease-fire boundaries, and militias, including warlords and fighters from Liberia and Sierra Leone, took advantage of the crisis to seize parts of the west.

### **2002 Unity Government**

In January 2003, President Gbagbo and rebel leaders signed accords creating a "government of national unity". Curfews were lifted, and French troops patrolled the western border of the country. The unity government was unstable, and central problems remained, with neither side achieving its goals. In March 2004, 120 people were killed at an opposition rally, and subsequent mob violence led to the evacuation of foreign nationals. A later report concluded the killings were planned. Though UN peacekeepers were deployed to maintain a "Zone of Confidence", relations between President Gbagbo and the opposition continued to deteriorate.

Early in November 2004, after the peace agreement had effectively collapsed because the rebels refused to disarm, Gbagbo ordered airstrikes against the rebels. During one of these airstrikes in Bouaké, on November 6, 2004, French soldiers were hit, and nine were killed; the Ivorian government said it was a mistake, but the French claimed it was deliberate. They responded by destroying most Ivorian military aircraft, and violent retaliatory riots against the French broke out in Abidjan. A peace accord between the government and the rebels, or New Forces, was signed on 4 March 2007, and subsequently, Guillaume Soro, leader of the New Forces, became prime minister. These events were seen by some observers as substantially strengthening Gbagbo's position.

### **Arts and Culture in Côte d'Ivoire**

Each of the ethnic groups in Côte d'Ivoire has its own music genres, most showing strong vocal polyphony. Talking drums are also common, especially among the Appolo, and polyrhythms, another African characteristic, are found throughout Côte d'Ivoire and are especially common in the southwest.

Popular music genres from Côte d'Ivoire include zoblazo, zouglou, and Coupé-Décalé. A few Ivorian artists who have known international success are Magic Système, Alpha Blondy, Meïway, Dobet Gnahoré, Tiken Jah Fakoly, DJ Arafat, AfroB, Serge Beynaud and Christina Goh, of Ivorian descent.



### **MAP ACTIVITY**

- 1) Locate and mark the capitol city on the map
- 2) Highlight the areas where the different ethnic groups live in the country
- 3) Talk about the similarities to the other countries studied
- 4) Talk about the differences from the other countries studied



## **CULTURAL COMPONENT - DANCE**

Dance is an integral part of African life in general, but Francophone life in the Caribbean countries in particular. Rooted in the African traditions of dance as a form of storytelling, in many communities families and friends will go late into the night singing, dancing, and enjoying each other's company as a way of remembering family stories, historic moments, and memorable occasions.

- 1) Does your family have get-togethers that last a really long time?
- 2) What does your family do at these get-togethers?

*Nota - How can you frame these same types of questions for your students to have an age-appropriate conversation?*

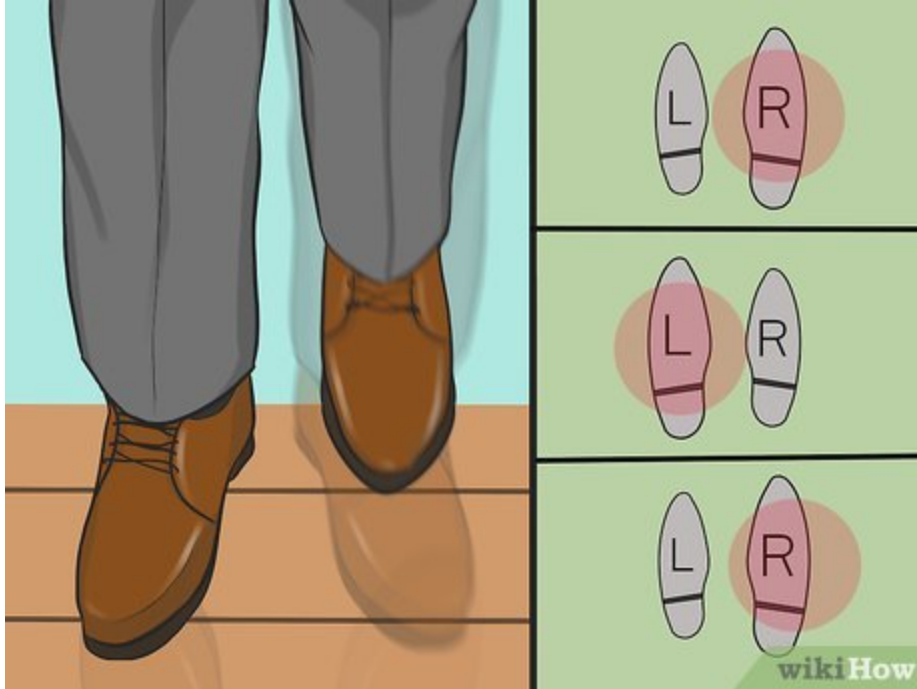
## **KOMPAS DANCE**

With strong African roots, Kompa is often referred to as the national dance of Haiti but has influences from Martinique and Guadeloupe as well. The history of kompa music began in Haiti during the mid-1950s, when saxophonist and maestro, or band leader Nemours Jean-Baptiste and his first band Conjunto International began adapting the traditional sounds of Haitian dance music into a new style. The popularity of kompa has inspired many Caribbean music forms, including the Antillean zouk and cadence-lypso, from the Dominican Republic.

### **Basic Step**

Although Kompa is usually done in partners, the basic step can be easily taught to children (and adults). Here is what it looks like:





Step right foot, then left foot

The red circles in the image above shows where to lean your body weight.

That's it. Nothing else. You can insert popular dances with the children as solos and shining moments so that they can see the fun and culture of it all!

Want to add *un petit saveur*? swing your hips when you step!

Need some music to dance to? Try these songs:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4t5D2wNzPJI>

## VOCABULAIRE - LES COULEURS

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VOCABULARY	PRONUNCIATION	ENGLISH MEANING
rouge	ROOj	red
bleu	bleh	blue
vert	vayr	green
orange	oh-ranj	orange
jaune	jahn	yellow
violette	vee-oh-LEHT	violet
violet	vee-oh-leh	purple
rose	RRohs	pink
blanc	blahn	white
noir	noo→wah	black
gris	gree	gray
marron	mah-RRohn	brown

## BLACK LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY - Grammatical and Rhetorical Features of Black Spanish

Remember those rules we talked about in the Benin unit? Let's see if you were right! Here's some basic rules to speaking Antillean Creole!

### Antillean Creole<sup>12</sup>

Lesser Antillean Creole began as the pidgin "baragouin" in 1635. It was spoken by French settlers, their African slaves, and Aboriginal peoples that resided on the islands. It originated in the Guadeloupe and Martinique areas of the Lesser Antilles. It was not until 1700, when there was an increase in African influences, that this pidgin transitioned into the creole that it is today. The formation of this creole was influenced by many different dialects and languages. These include dialects of French, other European languages, Carib (both Karina and Arawakan), and African languages.

CREOLE	FRENCH	ENGLISH
mwen	mon	my

<sup>1</sup> Gordon, Raymond G., Jr. (ed.), 2005. Languages of Dominica. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* SIL International, Fifteenth edition. Dallas, Tex.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.avirtualdominica.com/project/creole-kwevol-language/> (retrieved 28 January 2022)

ou/w	ton	your
li/y	son	his, her, its
nou	nous	our
zot	vous	your
yo	son	their

Possessive adjectives are placed after the noun;

kay mwen 'my house'

manman'w 'your mother'

'ou' and 'li' are used after nouns ending in a consonant and 'w' and 'y' after nouns ending in a vowel. All other possessive adjectives are invariable.

Kaz ou - Your house

Kouto'w - Your knife

Madanm li - His wife

Sésé'y - Her sister

### Definite article

In Creole, there are five definite articles (la, lan, a, an, nan) which are placed *after* the nouns they modify, in contrast to French. The final syllable of the preceding word determines which is used with which nouns.

If the last sound is an oral consonant and is preceded by an oral vowel, it becomes *la*:

CREOLE	FRENCH	ENGLISH
kravat-la	la cravate	the tie
liv-la	le livre	the book
kay-la	la maison	the house

### Other Vocabulary

CREOLE	FRENCH
bonjou	bonjour

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souplé	s'il vous plaît
eskizé mwen	excusez-moi
ka ou fé/ sa ou fé	ça va

### LIFESTYLE CHANGES WITH LANGUAGE

Continuing with the commands from the last unit, this unit we will focus on a way to make your child your “in-home French teacher.” As they are learning colors, this is a good time to not only help them practice those colors in French, but also create fun ways to engage them with language at home so that you can learn the colors too!

“Donne-moi un chose \_\_\_\_\_” (DUHN-mwah ahn shohs \_\_\_\_\_)

- Show me something \_\_\_\_\_.

By inserting one of the colors in the command above, you can get your child to practice not only the colors but gross motor skills as they find and return items of that color for you.

**Like what you see? You can purchase the full curriculum using the QR code below:**

