



Nile River



Mount Kilimanjaro



African children

Learning About Africa

Here is basic information to share with students to help them discover the size and wonder of Africa.

- There are 54 countries in Africa, which is more than a quarter of the 193 independent countries that the U.S. Department of State identifies in the world.
- There are 911 million people living in Africa (as of 2006). That is about three times the number of people who live in the United States. Have each student imagine three times as many people living in her or his household.
- There are about 2,000 languages spoken in Africa. Most people in the U.S. speak the same language—English—although some people also speak another language that they learn at home or in school.
- Africa covers 12 million square miles. Use a world map to point out that 12 million square miles is very big. By comparison, approximately all of the United States, Europe, and China could fit into Africa.
- There are mountains, rivers, lakes, flat plains, deserts, and many other types of land forms in Africa. (Whatever your region is like, chances are something similar is found in Africa.) Africa has some of the world's biggest and greatest land forms. The Sahara is the largest desert in the world. The Nile is the longest river in the world. It is more than 4,000 miles long, which is greater than the coast-to-coast distance across the United States. Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania is the tallest mountain in Africa.
- African animals are some of the world's biggest and most impressive. For example, the African elephant is the largest land mammal on earth. Elephants drink 30 to 50 gallons of water each day. The giraffe is the tallest living animal. A giraffe calf is typically six feet tall and can grow an inch a day. Yet a giraffe has the same number of neck bones as a human—seven. A lion's roar can be heard as far away as five miles!

Check these Web sites for more information and activities to continue your class study of Africa:

"Africa for Kids" <http://pbskids.org/africa/>

"Africa: One Continent. Many Worlds." www.nhm.org/africa/science/

"African Voices" www.mnh.si.edu/africanvoices/

African Wildlife Foundation www.awf.org/content/wildlife

Afro-America@: Kids Zone www.afro.com/children/index.html