

# LESSONS & ACTIVITIES FOR BLACK UNSCHOOLERS & HOMESCHOOLERS

Learn about activities, lessons, & resources for facilitating learning in the areas of reading, writing, language arts, mathematics & STEAM from a real unschool/homeschool family!

Cultivating  
Black Child  
Brilliance,  
Inspiring  
Creativity,  
Promoting  
Self-  
Sufficiency

©2018 Traverro L. Harden-Ali. All rights reserved. Fayetteville, North Carolina 28306, United States of America.



## THE HYBRID APPROACH: Unschooling-Homeschooling



My family is an unschooling-homeschooling family. Say what? Yes! We believe that our children should have the freedom and empowerment to allow their curiosity of the world around them to be satisfied through exploration and study- as they choose to do so.

And we as parents, are simply facilitators to ensure they have the support and resources necessary to have these experiences- this is the unschooling. At the very same time, there are things that we as Afrikan parents believe our children should know and learn early- this is where the structured homeschooling comes in.

For example, we believe that it is essential that all of our children learn to read and write as soon as they demonstrate that they are ready to learn. This has usually happened between four and five years old for our children. The primary reason for this being a non-negotiable for us is that we desire for our children to be able to be as self-

sufficient and self-reliable as possible. The ability for them to learn things on their own because they can pick up a book, periodical, encyclopedia, or other form of media allows us as parents to concentrate and work on other necessary things within our family life.

Secondly, we are big believers that if you decide it, write it, plan it, and do the work- you are sure to succeed if you are persistent and consistent. So, being able to work through this “vision process” requires the ability to write.

The activities within this unschooler’s homeschooling lesson supplement is a collection of activities I have utilized within our family’s homeschool from subjects which the children chose to learn about. Just as these activities have helped our children to learn the world around them, I believe they may be of significant use to your family’s educational journey as well.

# Reading, Writing, & Language Arts

## Reading



Our Afrikan-centered home education began with reading. Using the internet and the local public library, I have been able to procure so many rich and wonderful books written for Afrikan children by Afrikan authors. Additionally, I've been able to find books written by other melanated people about their culture & lives.

This experience of "learning ourselves" has undoubtedly been the lifeblood of our unschooling-homeschool experience! I can tell you that as a parent the empowerment it brings to Afrikan children when they are given their first images within books as ones that look like themselves and their families- is immeasurable.

Below is a listing of some of the books we have used during these first two years of primary education within the Djehuti Institute. Note: The books listed are ones I read aloud to the children during our regular Circle Time. Books that I have utilized for teaching (but not reading aloud) are identified by an asterisk \*. Books authored by non-African authors \*\*

## *Spirituality*

- *I am Mind, Body, & Spirit*- Kajara Nia Yaa Nebthet
- *I Get Energy from the Sun*- Kajara Nia Yaa Nebthet
- *42 Laws of Ma'at for Children*- Kajara Nia Yaa Nebthet
- *Finding Soul on the Path to Orisa*- Tobe Correal \*

## *Kiswahili*

- *Moja Means One: Kiswahili Counting Book*- Muriel Feelings
- *Jambo Means Hello: Alphabet Book*- Muriel Feelings
- *Counting in Kiswahili*- Kujichagulia Press

## *Character Building*

- *Positive Messages for Black Children*- Kujichagulia Press
- *Positive Messages to Uplift and Empower Black Children*- Kujichagulia Press
- *A Treasure Within: Stories of Remembrance & Rediscovery*- Dr. Chike Akua
- *Character Building for the African Scholar- Grades 1-3*- Nikala Asante
- *Brothers of the Knight*- Debbie Allen
- *Dancing in the Wings*- Debbie Allen
- *Thunder Rose*- Jerdine Nolen
- *The Honest-to-Goodness Truth*- Patricia McKissack

## History & Culture

- *My First Trip to Africa*- Atlantis Browder with Anthony Browder
- *Nile Valley Contributions to Civilization*- Dr. Anthony Browder\*
- *Sankofa Superherus*- Angela Freeman
- *Malcolm Little: The Boy who Grew Up to Become Malcolm X*- Ilyasah Shabazz
- *A Long Walk to Water*- Linda Sue Park\*\*
- *Galimoto*- Karen Lynn Williams\*\*
- *New Year*- Rich Lo\*\*
- *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut*- Derrick Barnes
- *The First Music*- Dylan Pritchett
- *Muffaro's Beautiful Daughters*- John Steptoe
- *Encounter*- Jane Yolen\*\*
- *Muhammad Ali: Champion of the World*- Jonah Winter & Francois Roca\*\*

The books listed above help the children to understand Afrikan spirituality, cosmic energy, and Afrikan history (events, people) and character building. The children enjoy the rich images within these texts, the narratives, and the overall content. I may Q & A them about specific things (Who were the main characters in the book? What character was your favorite? What is kuumba?) discussed within the book or we may simply have an open discussion about the persons or events within the books. Either way, it is a time of learning and gaining pride in and for themselves and their culture.

## *On Personal Reading for the Children*

PaHeru and Khalid are required to independently read anywhere from 10-15 storybooks a week or 2-3-chapter books per week (their choice). I am often asked by other homeschooling parents, what books do my children read. Because we literally check out hundreds of books each month from our public library system, I will keep the list below to a minimum. Below are books that PaHeru (age 7) has read this year so far (I have listed only books by Afrikan authors with Afrikan characters though PaHeru chooses to read a variety of books.)

- *Donovan's Word Jar*- Monalisa DeGross (Young Donovan loves words! Some people might choose to collect stamps or coins, Donovan collect words. And oh, what a journey!)
- *STAT (Standing Tall and Talented)*-Amari Stoudemire (a series book) (A young boy living with his father and brother goes through growing pains, all the while, perfecting his character and basketball skills.)
- *Jaden Toussaint: The Greatest*- Marti Dumas (a series book)
- *Little Shaq*- Shaquille O'Neal (a book series) (Little Shaq and his cousin Barry gain valuable lessons from their peers and family through facing personal challenges and playing basketball.)
- *Little Shaq Takes a Chance*- Shaquille O'Neal
- *Little Shaq: Star of the Week*- Shaquille O'Neal
- *Dancing Drum: A Cherokee Legend*- Terri Cohlene

*Assessing Writing & Language Arts skills through Special Projects*

After each chapter book is read, PaHeru writes a book report. This creative activity allows him to practice and perfect his reading comprehension, penmanship/handwriting, language arts skills, and creative arts skills. Each book report is created on a folded 8.5" x 11" sheet of copy paper and it contains 4 parts: illustration of a scene or character in the book (front cover), short character analysis, plot written in 5-7 sentences, and a "What I Learned" section (back cover).

**Back Cover**

"What I Learned"	<b>Front Cover</b> Personal Illustration  Book Title  Author's Name
------------------	--

**Inside of Paper**

List of Characters or Character Analysis	The Plot (5-7 Complete sentences including the beginning, middle, and end of book/story)
--	---

Within each book report, I check for the following things: