Module One

Lesson One: Setting the Stage for the Millennium Villages Project Classroom Program - 45 Minutes

OVERVIEW
This lesson begins with setting up the classroom ground rules for the project, which include the Rules of Engagement and the MVP Glossary Board. This first class will establish the methodological foundation used throughout the MVP lessons, including:

- Class collaboration to establish the Rules of Engagement for the program
- Creation of Rules of Engagement vocabulary definitions, which will be written on the MVP Glossary
- Explanation and significance of the MVP Student Journals
- Exploration of the Introduction to the African Continent digital map

Once these are established, the teacher will use the Introduction to the African Continent digital map to introduce students to the culturally diverse continent of Africa and its fifty-four countries.

An essential element of this opening lesson is to support students in recognizing and overcoming any preconceived notions or biases they may have about countries in Africa. These can be positive or negative. Students may not realize they have them until they complete these activities. However, the lessons in the modules will counter stereotypes and offer accurate perspectives on contemporary Africa and its countries.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
- How can we create our classroom learning community together?
- How can I become aware of my biases and stereotypes about the African continent?
- How can I identify and acknowledge the cultures and resources within the countries in Africa?
- What do various African countries contribute to the rest of the world?

LEARNING OUTCOMES
Students will be able to:

- Recognize personal biases and stereotypes about the African continent
- Acknowledge the cultures and resources within countries in Africa
- Identify cultural and physical contributions from African countries within the United States and within their own communities

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.5
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MVP GLOSSARY

Note to Teacher: Read about the MVP Glossary Board set-up in the Teacher’s Guide.

• Africa: the second-largest continent; it is a southward projection of the Old World landmass divided roughly in two by the equator and surrounded by sea except where the Isthmus of Suez joins it to Asia. The United Nations states that there are fifty-four countries in Africa.

• Prejudice: a feeling about a group of people or an individual within a group that is based on a stereotype.

• Stereotype: an oversimplified image of a certain group of people.

MATERIALS FOR INSTRUCTOR

• Whiteboard, blackboard, flip chart, or Jumbo Post-Its.
• Introduction to the African Continent digital map

MATERIALS FOR STUDENTS

• MVP Journals

I. INTRODUCTION (5 MIN.)

Share with students that we are beginning a new program in which we will learn about the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were created to support the world’s poorest people, and a specific project, the Millennium Villages Project (MVP), which was created to achieve these goals and focused its initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa.

Let students know they will learn more details about the MDGs and the MVP in the next class. Share with them that because the course covers some difficult subjects, they will work together in this class to create a supportive environment to facilitate the investigation of these complex issues.

II. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (10 MIN.)

Share with the class that because we will be talking about “hot topics,” it is important that everyone’s opinion is heard. To create this environment, it is necessary to set up Rules of Engagement, which is similar to a contract that will support and protect students as they enter into sometimes-tricky conversations.

On the board write “Rules of Engagement” and ask students to create the actual rules. Ask them to consider how they would like to be “heard” by their classmates, and how they would like to be “spoken to.” Start by writing several examples on the board and then invite students to add to the list.
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Target Answers: student responses should include or be similar to:

- Be a respectful and attentive listener.
- Use respectful speech.
- Use equal time for “mic” sharing.
- Be honest and have honest intentions.
- Allow others to keep or change their perspectives.
- Have the intention to create trust and learn from each other, rather than discredit others.

Keep the Rules of Engagement posted and visually accessible throughout the program.

III. BEGIN THE MVP GLOSSARY BOARD (7 MIN.)
Share with the class that in each lesson we will be building a glossary to support us in the exploration of these complex topics. Start the glossary with four key terms from the Rules of Engagement. Guide the class to define words they have chosen in the opening discussion. Here are some sample words with target answers:

- Respectful: feeling or showing deference.
- Attentive: paying close attention to something.
- Honest: free of deceit and untruthfulness; sincere.
- Perspective: a particular attitude toward or way of regarding something; a point of view.

IV. QUICK MVP JOURNAL-WRITING ACTIVITY (8 MIN.)
Share with students that we are going to use our digital map and personal writing activities to explore the African continent. To prepare for the map activity, first we are going to take part in a short journal-writing activity. Let students know that throughout the program they will each have their own MVP Journals to use in their activities. They will be able to write their personal thoughts and reflections in the journal, which will not be handed in to the teacher.

STEP ONE
Begin the first MVP Journal-writing activity by asking students: “What comes to your mind when you think of Africa?”

- Ask students to write down in their journals the first things that come to their minds. They can write in single words using adjectives or in full sentences.
- Let them know that these are private thoughts and they will not be required to share them unless they choose to do so.

Note to Teacher: It is possible that students will not write or share anything negative about the African continent. However, be aware that common biases and stereotypes may include:

- There are no technological advances.
- The people are poor and only want handouts.
- There are no cities; it is only wilderness with wild animals.
- There are many epidemics and most of the people are sick.
- The continent is full of wars, and genocides rage all over the continent.
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STEP TWO
Invite students to share their reflections using a “popcorn” share.

STEP THREE
Go back to the MVP Glossary Board and add stereotype and prejudice.

V. INTRODUCTION TO THE AFRICAN CONTINENT digital map (10-12 MIN.)
Guide students through the Introduction to the African Continent digital map. Refer to the Teacher’s Guide for specific tips on working with the digital maps.

VI. QUICK MVP JOURNAL-WRITING ACTIVITY (5-7 MIN.)
Ask students to write down the first things that come to their mind now when they think of Africa. Share the following prompts:
- Has your perspective on Africa been altered? If so, in what way?
- Write two new things you have learned about Africa.
- Write one thing you would like to learn about Africa.

VII. SHARING AND REFLECTION (REMAINDER OF CLASS)
This will be a whole-class activity. Write or project a T-Chart on the board with two columns. Title column one: Stereotype. Title column two: New Perspective.

Guide students in discussion as they share their answers for both columns on the class T-Chart.

Note to Teacher: If there is not enough time to create a T-Chart you can have students “popcorn” answers.

At the end of the class, let students know that in the next class we will be learning more about the Millennium Development Goals, created to support the world’s poorest people, and the Millennium Villages Project, created to achieve these goals.