

## Kente Cloth from Ghana Rain Sticks

Kente is ceremonial African clothing created by hand weaving strips of cloth on a loom and sewing them together to create larger pieces of cloth. It's native to Ghana, but kente is also considered to be a [pan-African](#) tradition. Your child can make her own brightly-patterned kente cloth out of paper and colorful markers. She will exercise her fine motor skills to draw and color geometric shapes. Then she'll cut and paste strips of "cloth" together onto a piece of poster board for easy displaying. This art activity is a great way for your child to explore different cultures and celebrate African heritage in honor of Black History Month.





The rain stick is believed to have been invented by the Ma-pu'-ches and was played in the belief it could bring about rainstorms. It was also found on the Chilean coasts, though it is not certain if it was made by the Incas. Rain sticks are usually made from any of several species of cactus.

### **What You Need:**

- White paper
- Markers
- Samples of kente cloth from the Internet or local library
- Scissors
- Piece of poster board or paper, 11x17 (you can use two 8.5 x 11)
- Craft glue

### **What You Do:**

1. Go to the library or use the computer to search for samples of what various kente cloth designs looks like. Have your child select one that she wants to use for this project.
2. Talk with your child about the significance of kente cloths, including how they are made and what the different colors on a kente cloth symbolize (see below).
3. On the paper, help your child measure and mark four 3" x 11" strips. Have her cut along the lines.
4. She now has four strips of paper on which to create her kente design.
5. Have your child trace the design of the kente cloth that she has chosen.
6. If your child needs assistance with the geometric patterns, first draw the outline in pencil and then ask her to trace the lines in marker and color them in to match the sample cloth she has chosen.
7. Once she has colored all four sheets, ask her to glue them onto the poster board, leaving a two-inch border at the top. Within that border, your child can write her name and title it "My Kente Cloth."

### **Symbolic Meanings of the Colors in Kente Cloth:**

- Black – maturation, intensified spiritual energy
- Blue – peacefulness, harmony and love
- Green – vegetation, planting, harvesting, growth, spiritual renewal
- Gold – royalty, wealth, high status, glory, spiritual purity
- Grey – healing and cleansing rituals; associated with ash
- Maroon – the color of mother earth; associated with healing
- Pink – associated with the female essence of life; a mild, gentle aspect of red
- Purple – associated with feminine aspects of life; usually worn by women

- Red – political and spiritual moods; bloodshed; sacrificial rites and death.
- Silver – serenity, purity, joy; associated with the moon
- White – purification, sanctification rites and festive occasions

### Instructions

1. If you are interested in a more involved design I will have instructions available on line at [www.tednichols.com](http://www.tednichols.com). This involves using a 11x 17 piece of paper. You wrap the paper around until it meets and mark that spot to show the exact area you need to apply your design. You can also draw a line with a ruler at about 7 Inches down the 11-inch length to show where your design will end. You can wrap it around as you go to see how things line up. This allows you to work on a flat piece of paper. When you have finished, you use glue to attach the paper to the tube. Feel free to use colored, pencils, markers, crayons and ETC to complete the more involved design. You can also use yarn or fancy duct tape on the exposed ends.

Make three-inch strips- Draw three lines on paper in the landscape position.

1. First example
  - a. On the three inch strip measure up two inches on both sides of the paper and draw a line across.
  - b. Measure two-inch section going from left to right on the bottom of the strip. (You will have a small section left. That is ok.)
  - c. Measure one inch over on the two inch line on the left side and then two inch sections after that.
  - d. Draw a line to the inch mark you made from the left corner and then another line to the bottom two-inch mark. This will make a triangle. Continue across to make 4 triangles.
  - e. Draw line one-quarter inch above the triangles.
  - f. Draw small circles above the line at half-inch intervals. You can just do this freehand.



2. The second example
  - a. Measure over and make marks 1 and a half inch apart across the page
  - b. Do the same process at the top of your three inch strip

- c. Next draw a line from the left corner to the one and one half inch mark at the top and then draw a line down to the three-inch or second made you made at the bottom.
- d. Continue this until you get 2 and a part of a third triangle.
- e. Next measure over on half inch on the inside of the triangle and add two marks on the bottom. Do the same thing across from the triangle lines over the bottom marks.
- f. Form another smaller triangle inside you first one and let the lines form a point.



### 3. The Third sample

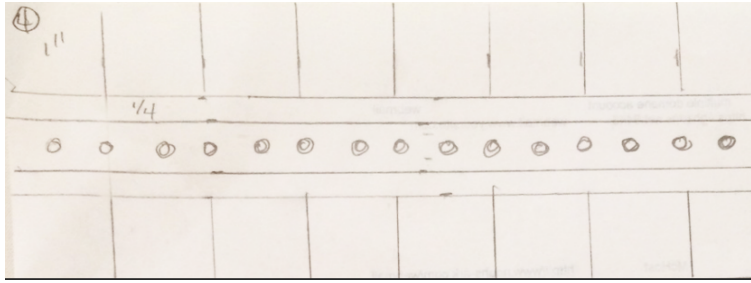
- a. In this sample you draw three lines one inch apart that makes three one inch sections



### 4. The forth example

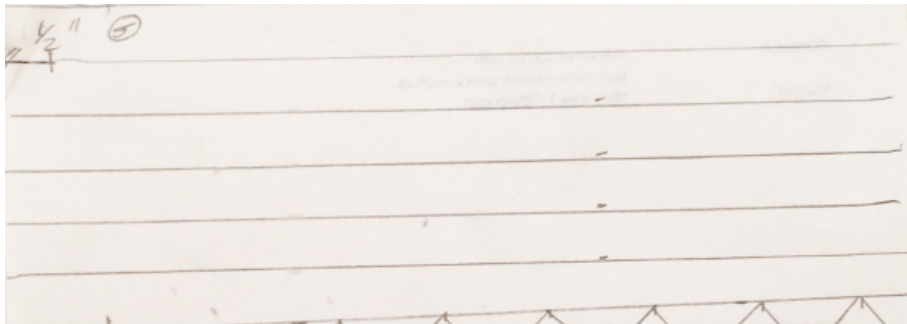
- a. First divide the strip in to 3 one-inch sections like the last example.
- b. Divide the bottom and top into one-inch squares going from left to right.
- c. The center strip you will draw a line one-quarter inch down from the top and bottom.
- d. Next draw small circles at one half-inch interval's across the page. You can freehand this as before.





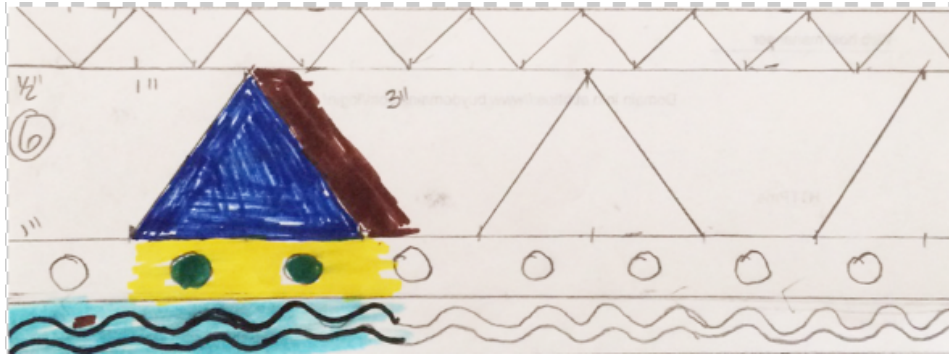
5. The fifth example

- a. In this sample you draw three lines one-half inch apart that makes five one-half inch sections



6. The sixth example

- a. First make two one-inch sections from the bottom.
- b. Measure up and make a one and one-half inch section.
- c. This will leave a final one-half inch section at the top
- d. On the bottom freehand two zigzag lines across the section
- e. Next add 8 medium circles. The first circle is one half inch from the left side and the others are one inch apart.
- f. In the one and one-half section mark one inch mark across the page. Do the same at the top of this section. From the one inch mark on the bottom draw a line to the two-inch mark on the top and then make another line connecting to the three inch line on the bottom. This will form a triangle. Then move over one inch and repeat the process to make another triangle. Next you will draw one line to start the third triangle.
- g. Finally in the last section divide up the top with one-inch marks. Mark the bottom with a half-inch mark on the bottom. Then continue with one-inch divisions across the strip. Draw a line from the top left to the one half inch line on the bottom and connect another line to the one-inch line on top. This will form a triangle and continue making triangles across the page.



Yellow – preciousness, royalty, wealth, fertility <http://kidworldcitizen.org/2014/06/24/ghanian-kente-cloth-kids-art-project>