



## Reuse Treasure Bin – African Tapestry

**Name:** Yetunde Kupoluyi

**Subject:** Social Studies

**Grade 2-4**

**“Gawu”** — African-influenced Tapestry made from recycled objects

**Content Standard #2** — Using knowledge of structures and functions.

**Content Standard #4** — Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

### **Teaching Point:**

Students will be able to use visual structures and functions of art to communicate their ideas.

### **Materials:**

Craft Sticks; assorted colors

Elmer's® Craft Bond Tacky Glue,

General's® White Charcoal, package of 4, 3" x 1/4" sticks

Blick® Studio Newsprint Pads,

Recycled items to incorporate into the tapestry: papers, labels, jar lids, metal caps, etc.

### **Optional Materials:**

African Textile Design

40 sheets Animal Print Designs (11262-1020)



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Hygloss™ Metallic Foil Paper,

Prang® Metallic Art Markers,

**Background Information:** Teacher will share with the students the background information about the project as follows.

Ghana-born artist El Anatsui is known internationally for his large-scale sculptures called “Gawu,” a composite of the words “ga,” meaning something made of metal and ‘wu,’ meaning a fashioned garment. From a distance, the “Gawu” appear to be large pieces of draped, luxurious fabric, similar to the traditional kente cloth that is woven for African royalty. Close examination reveals the sculptures are made from discarded materials, such as metal liquor bottle wrappers and tops, and flattened food tins. El Anatsui leads his viewers to contemplate the social and economic history of West Africa, consumerism, and waste, as woven into beautiful sculptures. In this lesson, students create their own tapestries as a response to El Anatsui's art, using African kente to discover rhythm and pattern in art. Recycled materials can be used, including folded papers and labels. Craft sticks glued to a burlap background give the piece rigidity and dimension, so it can hang as a sculptural “Gawu.”

### Vocabulary Words:

“**Gawu**”, patterns, kente, design, stitch, tapestry, fold, dimension, drape, sculpture.

### Preparation and Process:

If desired, plan design on newsprint first, then sketch it onto the burlap with white charcoal. Sticks may be halved to distribute across class. 2. Fill design with folded papers, foils, labels, and found materials. Materials may be glued or stitched into place. 3. Glue craft sticks in place around the border of the burlap or in other areas to give the tapestry sculptural dimension. Craft sticks may be enhanced with patterns created in marker or paint.



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Step 1: Plan design based on African textile colors and patterns.

Step 2: Create design on burlap using folded papers, found objects, and craft sticks for rigidity.

Step 3: Hang the tapestry, allowing it to drape and hang sculpturally

### Procedure:

- I will read the teaching point to my students and explain to them what they will be able to do at the end of the lesson. I will then briefly share with them the background information and the culture of the project's origin.
- Next will be to go over the vocabulary words with the students with visual supports.
- Students will then watch and discuss the images of El Anatsui's art and also African designs and patterns for kente.
- Gather colorful, metallic found materials to incorporate into the tapestry. Flat items such as foil, labels, and papers can be folded to fit. Bottle caps, jar lids, can pulls, paper clips, and more can also be used, as long as there are no sharp edges.
- Cut burlap into 23" x 18" pieces (four per yard). If desired, plan design on newsprint first, then sketch it onto the burlap with white charcoal. Sticks may be halved to distribute across class.
- Fill design with folded papers, foils, labels, and found materials. Materials may be glued or stitched into place.
- Glue craft sticks in place around the border of the burlap or in other areas to give the tapestry sculptural dimension. Craft sticks may be enhanced with patterns created in marker or paint.

All students will be engaged with necessary support when requested.

**Sharing:** Students will share and present their final work when finished.



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Website: [cdn.dickblick.com/gawu-african-inspired-tapestry](http://cdn.dickblick.com/gawu-african-inspired-tapestry)