Adinkra Symbols & Meanings
West African Wisdom: Adinkra Symbols & Meanings

• African symbols known as adinkra are ubiquitous in Ghana, a beautiful West African country on the Atlantic. On cloth and walls, in pottery and logos, these Asante tribe symbols can be found everywhere.

• http://www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra_index.htm
Here are some symbols & their meanings:

**AKOMA**
"the heart"
symbol of patience and tolerance
According to Agbo, when a person is said to "have a heart in his stomach," that person is very tolerant.

**SANKOFA**
"return and get it"
symbol of importance of learning from the past

**ADINKRAHENE**
"Chief of the adinkra symbols"
symbol of greatness, charisma and leadership
This symbol is said to have played an inspiring role in the designing of other symbols. It signifies the importance of playing a leadership role.
Why a certain design/symbols

- The designing is done according to the message the wearer or owner of the cloth intends to convey to the participants of the event.
- The quality of the cloth also shows the status of the one wearing it.
- The original Adinkra cloth is not meant to be washed since it faded easily as a result of the natural ink used without any chemical additives.
Observe how the shapes interlock and make a unique design.
Look at the stamps on your project sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bi-nnka-bi (obi nnka obi)</th>
<th>Bite not one another</th>
<th>Peace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Caution against strife and provoke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Osram ne Nsoroma</th>
<th>The moon and the star.</th>
<th>Love</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Faithfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fondness.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Mmusuyidee                 | That which removes ill luck or evil. | Good fortune |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------| Sanctity |
|                            |                                      | Spiritual strength |
The Asante people have developed their unique art of adinkra printing.

They use two traditional printing methods; the block-stamp technique,

which involves the use of wooden or metal stamps and the screen printing.
Badie bark is boiled with iron scraps. When the colour (deep brown) emerges from the pulp it is sieved and engraved onto a piece of calabash or pot.
The stamp process

• The Adinkra cloth was originally printed from hand carved stamps from calabash or gourd (apakyiwa).

• The various stamps carved from the calabash are tinted with dye and pressed in sequence onto plain cotton cloth, pegged on the ground.
Everyday symbols
Here are some students finished pieces

1. Draw your design(s)

2. Transfer design* and carve in to linoleum block

*You will be making 2 DESIGNS
Just a few more steps...

3. Grid your paper and background design

4. Printing your design as a finished piece. (in black ink)
Our Assignment Today

• Find a symbol that represents your culture.
• You can research on the internet/cell phone for ONLY this purpose or find symbols that would represent you. Start to DRAW some ideas.

• Tomorrow we will be adding one last spread to our Sketchbooks. But...

• On Monday we will try an activity using apples or another source as a stamp.