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for
Voices from Africa: Colonized Women Talk Back Lessons

This Lesson Plan is available through the Center for African Studies at Howard University.

cfas.howard.edu/voices-colonized-women
I rose to power in the 16th century Kongo Kingdom (now Angola).

I converted to Christianity, allied with the Portuguese, and seized the throne. I fought the Portuguese when they tried to expand their control of my country.

INFO SOURCE: Shelton, Kathleen. Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women. Scarecrow, 2005
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson

In 1922, we organized to free Kenyan activist Harry Thuku, jailed by the British.

When our men failed to take action, I told them to take my dress and give me their trousers. I led the charge of ululating women against the prison doors. The soldiers killed me and 27 others.

INFO SOURCE: Shelton, Kathleen. Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women. Scarecrow, 2005
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson
In 1929, my neighbors and I “sat” on a tax collector sent by the British.

Igbo women in Nigeria always shamed men by sitting on them and singing insulting songs when they failed to respect women and their work. When the British proceeded with their tax, we attacked British court buildings. The soldiers killed 50 of us. Our revolt is called the Aba Women’s War.

INFO SOURCE: Shelton, Kathleen. Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women. Scarecrow, 2005
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson

I spoke out and sang songs against apartheid.

The South African apartheid government banned me and refused to let me return to South Africa for thirty years.

INFO SOURCE: Shelton, Kathleen. Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women. Scarecrow, 2005
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson
I joined the Mozambique Liberation Front and cared for children orphaned by the war.

I married FRELIMO leader Samora Michel but died when I was only 25.

Today my birthday is celebrated as Mozambican Women’s Day.

INFO SOURCE: Shelton, Kathleen. Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women. Scarecrow, 2005
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson

I joined the Mozambique Liberation Front resisting Portuguese colonizers.

I have been the 1st lady of two countries, Mozambique and South Africa.

INFO SOURCE: Shelton, Kathleen. Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women. Scarecrow, 2005
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson
I was wrongfully enslaved in the Gold Coast.

I escaped to British-controlled territory and in 1876 I brought my case against my former master to a British colonial court. I lost my case but I was heard.

INFO SOURCE: Shelton, Kathleen. Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women. Scarecrow, 2005
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson

In 1954, I helped organize South African women’s opposition to oppressive government policies.

I was tried for high treason and jailed. My husband and all my children were also imprisoned.

INFO SOURCE: Shelton, Kathleen. Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women. Scarecrow, 2005
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson
I was a leader of a group that protested against pass laws for African women.

My friend and I led a historic march in which more than 20,000 women demonstrated in 1956.

On 9 August 1956 in South Africa, thousands us – Blacks, Indians, Coloreds, Whites, – staged a march on the Union Buildings of Pretoria to protest against the abusive passes the Apartheid government was forcing African women to carry.

There were over 20,000 of us – some carrying young children on our backs, some wearing traditional dresses and saris, and some in domestic work uniforms – taking part in the resistance against apartheid.
I was born in England in 1905 into a white privileged life, but I questioned the treatment of Black people in my adopted country of South Africa.

Side by side with my best friend Lilian, we led a historic march in which more than 20,000 women demonstrated against injustice in 1956. Before I died I asked to be buried near Lilian. Side by side we lie in the Avalon Cemetery in Soweto, South Africa.

INFO SOURCE: Shelton, Kathleen. Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women. Scarecrow, 2005
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson

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I was born into an activist Jewish family in South Africa.

I joined the anti-apartheid struggle. I was arrested and jailed. I left South Africa but in 1982, I was killed by a letter bomb sent by South African government agents.

INFO SOURCE: Shelton, Kathleen. Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women. Scarecrow, 2005
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson
My father was the editor of *Indian Views*, an anti-colonialist newspaper.

I protested social injustice in South Africa using Gandhi’s nonviolent methods.

In 1952, I was imprisoned without a trial for six months and banned for five years.

*INFO SOURCE:* Shelton, Kathleen. *Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women*. Scarecrow, 2005  
*ARTWORK:* Mark Robinson

In 1913, I demonstrated against government laws that forced Black South African women to carry passes.

As we marched, we shouted, “We have done with pleading; we now demand!”

*INFO SOURCE:* Shelton, Kathleen. *Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women*. Scarecrow, 2005  
*ARTWORK:* Mark Robinson
In 1900, I led a 6th month siege against the British.

I was commander-in-chief of the combined Asante forces and had my own army.

The British exiled me to the Seychelle Islands far from Ghana. I died there in 1921.

INFO SOURCE: Shelton, Kathleen. Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women. Scarecrow, 2005
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson

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I was born in Egypt in 1879. When Egyptian women left harems all over Egypt to protest British rule, I stepped forward to organize the protests.

In 1923 I founded the Egyptian Feminist Union. We focused on various issues, including women’s suffrage and education.

That year I also removed my veil in public, shocking many. Yet within the decade, most woman in Egypt had removed their veils as well.

INFO SOURCE: Bois, Danuta. distinguishedwomen.com
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson
I was born in 1935 in French-ruled Algeria. When I was growing up, all children were instructed to say every morning, "France is our mother." I refused and instead would shout "Algeria Is Our Mother!" Of course, I was punished for this.

As I grew, I continued to protest French control of my country. In 1957 I was tried for bombing French soldiers and sentenced to the guillotine. Public outcry saved me. I am still alive and still protesting injustice.

In Nigeria in 1946 our women’s union began to organize against the British particularly the taxation of market women.

Fifty of us died charging British courts buildings.
I was a Shona spiritual leader living in colonial Rhodesia.

When the British imposed taxes on us, we rebelled. In the 1890s I led the resistance. The British hanged me.

Today places all over Zimbabwe are named for me.

INFO SOURCE: Shelton, Kathleen. Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women. Scarecrow, 2005
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson

I began wearing Yoruba dress and speaking Yoruba in public to demonstrate my nationalism and opposition to British colonialism.

I traveled to England in 1947 to protest a British crafted constitution.

INFO SOURCE: Shelton, Kathleen. Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women. Scarecrow, 2005
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson
In 1952 when I was 20 years old, I became a spy for the Mau Mau fighters who had camped in the forests of Kenya.

I still have the dreadlocks I had when I opposed the British Imperial Army. I’ll cut my locks when the fruits of independence are enjoyed by the people who sacrificed most.

_INFO SOURCE:_ museumofbritishcolonialism.org, Mail & Guardian
_ARTWORK:_ Mark Robinson

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In 1949 five hundred of us marched on Grand Bassam prison in Ivory Coast to protest the incarceration of our husbands and brothers by French colonialists.

We were stopped and beaten by French soldiers. This statue honors our protest.

_INFO SOURCE:_ en.unesco.org/womeninafrica
_ARTWORK:_ Mark Robinson

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I was born in Wollo, Ethiopia in a Christian and Muslim family.

I facilitated the downfall of Italy at the Battle of Adwa in 1896.

I commanded my own battalion at the frontline, motivating men not to retreat.

INFO SOURCE: afrolegends.com
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson

I was born in 1689 into a wealthy Christian family in the Kongo Kingdom (now Angola). My vision of Catholicism was Kongo-centered.

I recognized the pope’s authority but opposed corrupt European missionaries who were unsympathetic to the needs of Kongolesse Catholics.

I was declared a heretic and burned at the stake on the orders of Catholic monks.

INFO SOURCE: www.metmuseum.org
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson
I provided food & supplies for our Kikuyu men fighting the British in Kenya.

INFO SOURCE: Shelton, Kathleen. Historical Dictionary of Sub-Saharan Women. Scarecrow, 2005
ARTWORK: Mark Robinson

I became aware of the racism in South Africa and the injustices of apartheid when I was a young girl. My awareness grew as I grew. In 1958 I married Nelson Mandela, a man who was a well-known anti-apartheid activist. Three years after our marriage, the apartheid government imprisoned Nelson. During his 27 years in prison, I became an anti-apartheid leader in my own right. The apartheid government relentlessly persecuted me but I continued to speak out.

After apartheid ended I led the African National Congress’ Women’s League and served as a Member of Parliament from 1994 to 2003.

ARTWORK: Mark Robinson