

**Living Arts of Africa** (Study sheet for February 15 and 22)

1. Start your exploration of the African galleries in Gallery 236, where the key theme is “Designing Form and Function.” Choose one object and briefly describe its form. Does the form emphasize the object’s function, or does it conceal the object’s function? What do you see that makes you say that?

In Galleries 250 and 254, the objects are arranged in a fluid manner, and many connect in multiple ways to the main themes noted on the big wall panels. These themes are:

- Commanding Authority
- Communing with the Spiritual World
- Performing Dance (and Music)
- Connecting with World Religions
- Expressing Identity

2. Choose an object that “commands authority.” Describe how the object visually conveys authority to the viewer.

Do any other themes connect to this object and its use?

How do we express “authority” visually in our culture? What similarities are there, with your chosen object? What differences?

3. Select a mask you find intriguing. Describe how motion or movement might change your perception of the work.

If the object was used in a performance, what else is missing, when we view a mask within a case?

4. Spend some time exploring the interactive map of Africa in the gallery. How do you envision using the map on a tour?

5. Select an object that connects with world religions or communing with the spirit world. Describe what visual elements of the sacred or spiritual you find in the object's form or design.

How do those elements compare to your own culture's view of the spiritual and sacred? Similarities? Differences?