

VODOUN EXERCISES

A – exercises

1. Look at a map of the world. Make a smaller map yourselves in which you show:
 - Where the Vodoun lifestyle first developed
 - Where there are Vodoun communities today
 - Where we can find closely related religions
2. What kinds of people live in Haiti today?
3. Explain why there are such large differences between rich and poor in Haiti.
3. In the past, three religions have been important on Haiti. What were they? Where did each of these religions originally come from?
4. Why does Vodoun have such a bad reputation in the western world?
5. Would you call Vodoun monotheistic (the belief in one god) or polytheistic (the belief in more than one god)? Explain your answer.
6. How does Vodoun relate to Catholicism and traditional Yoruba religion?
7. Try to find as many similarities and differences as possible between Vodoun religion and creation myth, and those of the Yoruba.
8. Do the same for Catholicism and Vodoun.
9. Damballa did not only create the earth. What else did he create?
10. In many creation myths "the great flood" is caused by a conflict. It is a kind of punishment. Is this also the case in the Vodoun creation myth? What is the cause of the flood and what happens after the flood?
11. In the information you have (and also on internet) find everything you can about the Loa. Make a list of what you find.
12. What similarities do you see between the Vodoun creation myth and those of other cultures?

B- exercises

Look at a few websites that deal with this culture and choose one or two that have images, sounds or text that you think are useful for preparing your presentation. Before your presentation write a summary or make a sketch of the Vodoun creation myth.

Choose one of the following exercises:

1. Temples play an important role in the Vodoun religion. Make a model of a Vodoun temple and also of the priests and believers (for instance by cutting out cardboard figures). Place the people near the temple. During your presentation use sounds that you think belong to the model you have created.

or

2. The Western World does not have a very positive opinion of Voodoo (think of the Catholic occupiers, the more recent Protestant criticisms and those who think that Voodoo is only black magic). On the other hand, we can learn a lot from Voodoo about tolerance of other religions. Together prepare a television interview about the Vodoun religion. One of you is the presenter of the program, one of you somebody who opposes Vodoun (this person thinks that Vodoun is dangerous*), one of you thinks positively about Vodoun and the last person is a Vodoun priest from Haiti.

dangerous = think for instance about the following newspaper article:*

LONDON - In Great Britain children are being abused in Satanic rituals. According to a report from the British Ministry of Health, Satanic abuse is really happening and victims are not inventing the stories. The researchers say that some children born in "Satanic" families are never registered with the county. They are basically born to be abused.

C - exercises

Why do you think that the Vodoun religion has such a bad reputation in Europe and the United States? Do you think that's fair?

