

***Masai and I*** by Virginia Kroll (New York: First Aladdin Paperback, 1997)  
ISBN: 0689804547

**Literature Annotation:** This story is told through the words of a young African American girl. In school one day, Linda learns about East Africa and the tall, proud people called the Masai. Coming home from school to her apartment she imagines what it would be like to be a Masai child. During that evening and the following days with her family, she makes observations about how things are for her here and how they would be different if she lived in a Masai village.

**Grade Level:** Grade 2

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Economic Concepts:** Scarcity, Consumption, Production, Interdependence

### **Maryland State Curriculum**

**Economics Standard:** Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.

- 4.A.1 Explain why people have to make economic choices about goods and services
- 4.A.2.a Identify the natural, capital, and human resources used in the production of a good or service

**Geography Standard:** Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.

- 3.A.1 Use geographic tools to locate and describe places on Earth
- 3.B.1 Classify places and regions in an environment using geographic characteristics
- 3.D.1 Explain how people modify, protect and adapt to their natural environment

**People of the Nation and World Standard:** Students will understand the diversity and commonality, human interdependence, and global cooperation of the people of Maryland, the United States and the World through both a multicultural and historic perspective.

- 2.A.1.b Explain ways people of different ages and/or cultural backgrounds can respect and help to pass on traditions and customs

**Reading Standard:** Students will use a variety of strategies to understand what they read (construct meaning).

- 1.D.1 Develop and apply vocabulary through exposure to a variety of texts
- 1.E.4 Use strategies to demonstrate understanding of the text (after reading)
- 3.A.1.a Listen to critically, read, and discuss a variety of literary texts representing diverse cultures, perspectives, and ethnicities and time periods

**Objectives:** Students will be able to...

- explain the relationship between the physical environment of a place and its ability to satisfy the wants of people who settle there.
- identify the economic wants for goods and services of the Masai and Linda's family.

- identify and classify economic resources (natural, capital, and human) in the production of goods and services.

### **Vocabulary**

**natural resources:** gifts of nature that can be used to produce goods and services

**goods:** Things that people make or grow that satisfy economic wants; things desired by consumers and supplied by producers

**services:** Community jobs; Actions (jobs) that people do for each other

### **Teacher Materials**

- One copy of *Masai and I*
- Transparency of Resource Sheet 1: *Map of Africa*
- Large world map and/or globe

### **Student Materials**

- An atlas with a physical map of Africa
- Individual copies of Resource Sheet 2: *How Communities Are Alike and Different*
- Individual copies of Resource Sheet 3: *Comparing Linda and the Masai*
- Individual copies of Resource Sheet 4: *Masai Use Resources*

### **Teacher Background**

The Masai (Maasai in Tanzania) are a semi-nomadic people that live along the northern border of Tanzania and the southern border of Kenya. This is an area of gently rolling grassy hills, with some woodland and acacia trees, watered by the Mara and Talek rivers. This area borders the Serengeti plains of Tanzania. The Masai life-style is very dependent on their cattle and some other animals that they herd. The number of cattle in the herd is an indication of a man's wealth. Women wear very bright colored, large jewelry made with beads.

### **Motivation**

On a large wall map and/or the globe, have students locate the continent of Africa. Display the transparency of Resource Sheet 1: *Map of Africa*. Have students notice the many different countries on the continent of Africa. Then, have students locate the countries of Kenya and Tanzania. Next, have students place their fingers on the border between these two countries. Tell students that along this border between the two countries live a very proud group of people, called the Masai (ma-seye).

### **Development**

1. Have students look at a physical map of Africa and list some facts about the landforms and natural environment of Africa. Ask students to find the equator and trace it with their finger. Have students locate Kenya and Tanzania. Have students predict some facts about the climate of these two countries. As a class create a list of some physical features and facts about the natural environment of Kenya and Tanzania and display it on the board.

2. Read the book *Masai and I*. As you read the story have students notice the physical features and the natural environment shown in the illustrations (grassland, small hills, some trees, water hole, animals). Compare these observations with the class list on the board.
3. Have students recall some of the economic wants that the Masai have in the story (food, clothing, shelter, water, honey for treats). Then have students create a list of natural resources that the Masai might have in their environment that could be used to meet some of these economic wants (water hole, stream, trees, grass, soil or mud, beehives, birds, cattle, giraffes, buffalo, red clay, gourds, and sweet smelling leaves).
4. Have students identify ways that the Masai are using the natural resources where they live to meet their wants for goods and services. (Possible answers include the following: *make a home with mud and grass, get water at the water hole, use gourds to carry water, get honey from the beehive, have a bird to show where the beehive is, have sandals made of buffalo hide, get milk from the cattle, have a cowhide flap as a door for the hut, use cows' fat and red clay to soften skin, use sweet-smelling leaves to make the skin smell sweet, and sleep on a cowhide bed.*)
5. Have students think about how Linda says she and her family are different than the Masai. Have students volunteer ways that they get food, sweets, water, shelter, and clothing. Ask students if they are similar to Linda or the Masai.
6. Divide the students in small groups or pairs. Distribute a copy of Resource Sheet 2: *How Communities Are Alike and Different* to each group. Have students record ways that they and Linda meet their wants for food, clothing, shelter. Then have them list ways that the Masai meet these wants.
7. Display a transparency of Resource Sheet 2: *How Communities Are Alike and Different* and have the class share their information to create a class chart. Have students discuss how they are similar and different than the Masai.
8. Distribute student copies of Resource Sheet 3: *Comparing Linda and the Masai*. Have students read the title of each box and draw pictures in each box to show the differences between Linda and the Masai.
9. Have students discuss resources that they use to get food, clothing, shelter. Then have them recall some of the natural resources that the Masai use to get food, water, shelter, and clothing.

### **Assessment**

Distribute individual student copies of Resource Sheet 4: *Masai Use Resources*. Have students read the caption and draw a picture to show the natural resources that the Masai use to meet an economic want.

### **Additional Activities and Resources**

- Have students read *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* by Verna Aardema. This book shows the traditional Masai “morán” tending the cattle. It tells of the young herder-warrior hoping for rain to fall on the dry parched land.
- Have students read the tale “Who’s In Rabbit’s House” by Verna Aardema. This is a tale from the Masai region of East Africa and has a hut similar to the *Masai and I* book.
- Have students research the Masai people to find out more about their culture and life-style.

Resource Sheet 1  
**Map of Africa**



***How Communities Are Alike and Different***

	<b><i>Food</i></b>	<b><i>Shelter</i></b>	<b><i>Clothing</i></b>	<b><i>Transportation</i></b>	<b><i>Furniture</i></b>
<b>Linda and People in the United States</b>					
<b>Masai in Kenya and Tanzania</b>					

List several natural resources that the Masai use to produce goods that they want.

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List several resources that Linda and people in the United States use to produce goods that they want.

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Resource Sheet 3  
**Comparing Linda and the Masai**

Linda's Community	<i>Masai Community</i>
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<i>Water for Linda and Ray</i>	<i>Water for the Masai</i>
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<i>Linda's sweet dessert</i>	<i>Masai's sweet dessert</i>
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<i>In Linda's room</i>	<i>In a Masai hut</i>
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Transportation for Linda	<i>Transportation for the Masai</i>
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Resource Sheet 4  
**Masai Use Resources**

<p><b>The Masai walk to a water hole and use giant gourds to bring back water.</b></p>	<p><b>Masai follow a bird to find beehives. They scoop out honeycomb for sweets.</b></p>
<p><b>Masai make their huts using twigs, grass, mud, and water.</b></p>	<p><b>Masai huts only have stools and cowhide beds laid on an earth floor.</b></p>
<p><b>Masai rub cows' fat and red clay on their skin. Then they crush sweet-smelling leaves on the shiny skin.</b></p>	<p><b>Masai tend their cattle on the grasslands. They drink milk and eat meat from the cattle.</b></p>