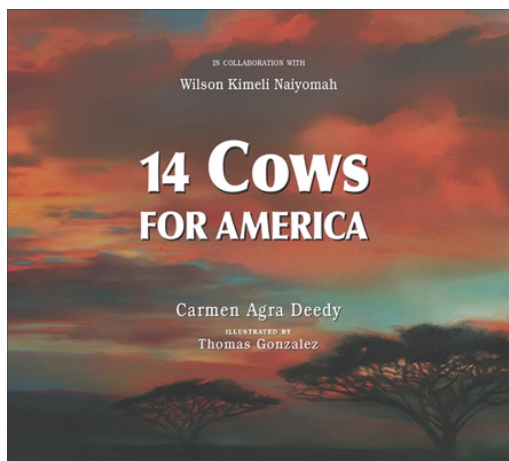


TEACHER'S GUIDE



14 Cows for America

Written by Carmen Agra Deedy | Illustrated by Thomas Gonzalez in collaboration with Wilson Kimeli Naiyomah

HC: 978-1-56145-490-7 | PB: 978-1-56145-961-2

Ages 6–10 | Historical Fiction
Lexile • F&P • GRL S; Gr 4

14 vacas para América

HC: 978-1-56145-550-8 | PB: 978-1-56145-555-3

ABOUT THE BOOK

In 2001, a Maasai student in New York witnessed the horrific events of 9/11. When he returned to his village, he brought with him the sad story from America. The tribe's grief at the news quickly turned to a plan for help as Kimeli Naiyomah's people offered the most precious gift they could think of to those who lost so much: their cows. In Kimeli's words, "to heal a sorrowing heart, give something that is dear to your own." This story has indeed conveyed a message of hope and healing across the world and continues to inspire acts of compassion by communities everywhere.

THEMES

9/11 | Africa | Compassion | Giving | Friendship
Maasai culture | Storytelling | Symbolism

THEMES FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION

Citizenship | Commitment | Cooperation
Creativity | Compassion | Initiative | Kindness
Dedication

BACKGROUND

The Maasai are a compassionate and generous people who herd cattle in East Africa, where their daily life revolves around their cows. After 9/11, their unique culture inspired them to help the Americans with a very special gift. To learn more about the Maasai, their cows, and their generous offering, please visit our "About the Maasai" pages at www.14cowsforamerica.com. There, you will also find background information on the Maasai's history, culture, and language, as well as their African home.

MEETING THE STANDARDS

The activities in this guide directly address a variety of standards across the curriculum. For a complete list of the Common Core English Language Arts Standards addressed, please see page 3.

BEFORE YOU READ

- What do you know about September 11, 2001?
 - Was anyone you know affected by 9/11? Were your family or friends affected? Were you?
 - Who else do you think was affected by the events of 9/11?
 - Let's look at a map. Where did the events happen?
 - Where did the victims of 9/11 live?
 - Where is Africa? Can you find Kenya on a map?
- Note: Transition from Q&A to reading book by saying, "Today we're going to learn about a small village in Africa and how they were affected by the events of 9/11."

AS YOU READ

- Read the book aloud to the class straight through to let the students enjoy the book as a whole.
- Read the book a second time, stopping to point out the Twin Towers imagery to allow students to point out parts of the story that interest them or raise questions in their minds. Take the time to carefully pronounce the Maa vocabulary words using our pronunciation guide and its recordings of Kimeli himself pronouncing each word, available at <http://14cowsforamerica.com/pronounce.guide.pdf>.
- Discuss and answer questions. All questions that cannot be answered during the discussion can be written down and used later as part of the learning activities in this guide.

AFTER YOU READ

- How do you think the Maasai felt when they heard the story of 9/11?
- Why do you think Kimeli gave his only cow to the United States?
- Why did the others join in to add 13 more?
- What did the gift of 14 cows do for the United States?
- Can you think of a time when you did something nice for someone who was suffering?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

SOCIAL STUDIES

- Give each student a copy of Activity 1: Africa Map Activity, found at the end of this guide.
- Read through *14 Cows for America*, paying close attention to the characters' appearance and surroundings. Now go through our Maasai Cultural Overview found at www.14cowsforamerica.com/

[MaasaiCulture1.pdf](#), and lead a discussion around these questions: What would your life be like if you lived in Maasailand? What would you wear and eat every day? What would your house be like, and how would you help your family and tribe?

CREATIVE WRITING

- Prose writing:
 - Write about the ceremony depicted in *14 Cows for America* from the perspective of the cows.
 - Write a story that begins with the sentence "I had to do something to help."
- Journal writing:
 - What does the tragedy of 9/11 mean to you?
 - When have you given someone a gift of compassion, like the gift the Maasai gave to the United States?
- Poetry writing:
 - Give each student a copy of Activity 2: Cinquain Poetry found at the end of this guide.

SCIENCE

Hand out copies of Activity 3: To the Maasai, the Cow is Life, found at the end of this guide.

LANGUAGE ARTS

- Give each student a copy of Activity 5: Maa Word Find found at the end of this guide and the Maa Pronunciation Guide and Glossary at <http://14cowsforamerica.com/pronounce.guide.pdf>.
- Give each student a copy of Activity 6: Tone, and use the Maa Pronunciation Guide to complete it.
- Read or hand out copies of Activity 7: Reading Activity and answer the questions at the end as a class.

ART

- Read through *14 Cows for America* again as a class, paying close attention to the illustrations. What media did Thomas Gonzalez use in his illustrations? What colors does he use? Where can you find the image of the Twin Towers hidden in the illustrations?
- Hand out copies of Activity 4: Maasai Cattle Brands found at the end of this guide.

PROBLEM SOLVING

The 14 cows given to the American people by the Maasai love their peaceful home in Enoosaen, but they're ready for a little adventure. They want to visit New York City! The cows have never traveled before, and they need your help. Will you be their travel agent? Come up with three

different plans to get all 14 cows from their remote village in Kenya to New York City for their trip. How much will each plan cost? Don't be afraid to use your imagination. Follow up questions: What challenges did you encounter in imagining these plans? Do you think the Americans and the Maasai made the right decision to keep the "American" cows in Enoosaen?

RECOMMENDED READING

Papa, Do You Love Me? by Barbara M. Joosse
This gentle picture book provides a glimpse into life in Maasailand through a child's eyes.

The Warrior and the Moon: Spirit of the Maasai
by Nick Would
The author's travels through Africa with the Maasai inspired these five original stories.

Living in the African Savannah by Nicola Barber
Learn all about Maasai culture, from the famous jumping dance to the importance of the cows.

Africa is Not A Country by Margy Burns Knight
This informative book explores the 53 nations that make up the African continent.

Eyewitness: Africa by Yvonne Ayo
This volume in the popular *Eyewitness* series explores the vast history and cultures of Africa.

September 11 (We the People: Modern America series) by Mary Englar
This straightforward, informative book details the events of September 11, 2001.

The Little Chapel that Stood by A. B. Curtiss
The story of St. Paul's Chapel, which stood strong through the events of September 11th despite incredible odds, shows the hope that can rise from the ashes of tragedy.

The Place I Know: Poems of Comfort
Georgia Heard, Editor
This poetry anthology, inspired by the events of September 11th, offers comfort to children who have lived through tragedy and loss.

THE ACTIVITIES IN THIS GUIDE DIRECTLY ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING STANDARDS:

Informational Text: CCSS Strands

- **RI.2-3.3** Describe Characters, Setting, and Story Sequence: These titles relay nuanced **cause and effect relationships** between individuals, events, ideas, events, and ideas.
- **RI.2-3.6** Author, Narrator, and Point of View: These titles **convey unique and multiple points of view**, which shapes content and style. Readers are also able to compare firsthand and secondhand accounts of topic through the narrator.
- **RI.2-3.7** Infer Illustrations: These titles display information for integration and evaluation through visual or quantitative means, via charts, graphs, diagrams, timeline, etc.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carmen Agra Deedy has been writing and traveling around the world telling stories for more than 20 years. Her books, including *Agatha's Featherbed*, *The Library Dragon*, *The Yellow Star*, and *Martina the Beautiful Cockroach: A Cuban Folktale*, have received numerous awards and honors. Carmen has performed in many prestigious venues, but children are her favorite audience. Born in Havana, Cuba, she came to the United States as a refugee and, like most immigrants, sees the world from multiple perspectives.

www.carmendagraeedy.com

ABOUT THE COLLABORATOR

Wilson Kimeli Naiyomah received his master of science degree in molecular biology from Stanford University in 2008. He was awarded a Rotary International World Peace Fellowship and completed studies in international development policy at Duke University.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Thomas Gonzalez was born in Havana, Cuba, and moved to the United States as a child. An artist and painter, he directed campaigns for clients such as Coca-Cola, Delta Airlines, NASCAR, the NFL, and McDonald's. Gonzalez lives in Georgia.

www.tomprints.com

AWARDS

- *New York Times* Bestseller
- Parents' Choice Gold Award —Parents' Choice Foundation
- Best Children's Books of the Year (starred)
—Bank Street College of Education
- Beehive Award (informational book nominee)
—Children's Literature Association of Utah
- Best Books for Kids (multicultural category) —Page Ahead
- Bill Martin, Jr. Picture Book Award (nominee)
—Kansas Reading Association
- Black-Eyed Susan Book Award (nominee, picture book)
—Maryland Association of School Librarians
- Bluestem Book Award (Master List) —Illinois School Library Media Association
- California Young Reader Medal (nominee, picture book for older readers) —CRA, CLA, CATE, CSLA
- CCBC Choices (Historical People, Places and Events)
—Cooperative Children
- Charlotte Award Suggested Reading List (primary) —New York State Reading Association 2012
- Colorado Children's Book Award (nominee)
—Colorado Council of the International Reading Association
- Comstock Book Award —Minnesota State University
- Cybils (finalist, non-fiction picture books) —Cybils
- E.B. White Read-Aloud Honor —Association of Booksellers for Children
- Georgia Children's Picture Storybook Award (nominee)
—University of Georgia
- Great Lakes' Great Books Award (nominee, grades 2–3)
—Michigan Reading Association
- Kansas State Reading Circle Recommended Reading List (intermediate) —Kansas National Education Association
- KC3 Reading Program (nominee) —Greater Kansas City Association of School Librarians
- Land of Enchantment Book Awards (Picture Narrative Master List) —New Mexico Library Association, New Mexico Council of IRA
- North Carolina Children's Book Award (nominee, junior book category) —North Carolina Reading Association
- Notable Books for a Global Society —International Reading Association
- Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People
—NCSS / CBC
- Prairie Pasque Children's Book Award (nominee) —SDLA, SDRC, SD State Library, SDESP
- Read Alouds too Good to Miss (ageless) —AISLE
- Selected Book for Georgia —National Book Festival
- Society of School Librarians International Book Awards (honor book, Social Studies K–6)
—Society of School Librarians International
- South Carolina Picture Book Award (nominee) —South Carolina Association of School Librarians
- Teachers' Choices (intermediate) —International Reading Association
- Texas Bluebonnet Award (Master List) —Texas Library Association
- UMW Reading Program —United Methodist Women
- Volunteer State Book Awards (master list, PreK–2) —Tennessee Association of School Librarians
- Young Hoosier Book Award (nominee, intermediate)
—Association for Indiana Media Educators

REVIEWS

“...a lovely picture book...beautifully evocative...”

—***The New York Times***

“...moving and dramatically illustrated...”

—***The Wall Street Journal***

★ “I dare you to read this special picture book without getting teary every time.”

—***Library Media Connection***,

★ “...elegant sentences... The suspenseful pace is especially striking when surrounded by Gonzalez's exquisite colored pencil and pastel illustrations. The colors of Kenya explode off the page...”

—***School Library Journal***

“A moving tale of compassion and generosity.”

—***Publishers Weekly***

“...gentle yet piercing present-tense prose...A stirring, heartwarming tale that made headlines when it happened and is now, thankfully, preserved on the page for children.” —***Kirkus Reviews***

“...the words and the glowing mixed-media illustrations show empathy and connections across communities...”

—***Booklist***

Peachtree Teacher's Guide for

14 COWS FOR AMERICA

prepared by Katherine Morrow Jones DePalma
and Katya Jensen

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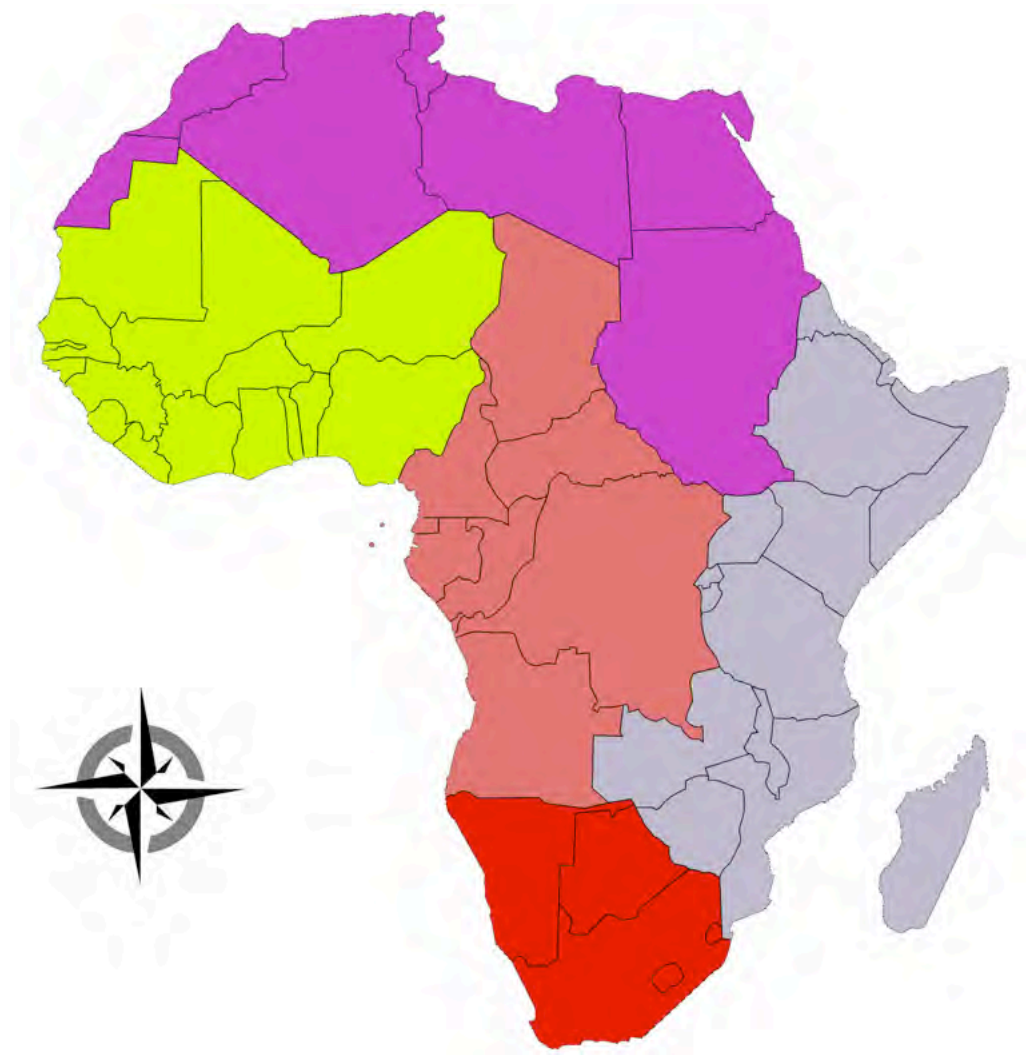
updated 4/14/20

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

ACTIVITY 1: AFRICA MAP ACTIVITY

First, fill out the compass rose with North, South, East, and West.

Label the geographic regions: Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western, and Central Africa.



Draw Maasailand on the map. Hint: It's in both Kenya and Tanzania.

Draw Mount Kilimanjaro on the map.

How many African countries can you label?

Which geographic region is Kenya in?

Is Maasailand a country?

Who lives in Maasailand?

Name: _____ Date: _____

ACTIVITY 2: CINQUAIN POETRY

A **cinquain** is a five-line poem that follows a specific pattern:

- Line One One word: **noun**
Line Two Two words: **adjectives** describing Line One
Line Three Three words: **action verbs** relating to Line One
Line Four Four words: a **complete sentence** about Line One
Line Five One word: a **synonym** of Line One or a word that sums it up

Cheat Sheet:

Noun: A word used to name a person, place, animal, thing, or abstract idea (like *cat*, *happiness*, *toaster*, or *George Bush*)

Adjective: A word used to describe a noun (like *fuzzy*, *silly*, or *wet*)

Action verb: A word that names an action (like *walking*, *falling*, or *crying*)

Complete sentence: A sentence with both a subject and a verb (like *Mary goes to the store* or *The mouse eats the cookie*.)

Synonym: A word with the same or almost the same definition as another (like *student* and *pupil* or *house* and *home*)

Here's an example of a **cinquain**:

Cows
Quiet, strong
Grazing, lowing, healing
They are a gift.
Life

Now try writing your own **cinquain** inspired by the story of *14 Cows for America*. Choose one of the words below to be your noun or subject for Line One, or make up your own.

Africa	America
Cows	Gifts
Maasai	New York

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

ACTIVITY 3: TO THE MAASAI, THE COW IS LIFE

Beef is served only on special occasions, like feasts and celebrations.

Draw a big beefy feast.

The Maasai live mostly on cow's milk and corn meal mixed with milk.

Draw a tasty glass of milk.

In Maasai culture, wealth is measured by the number of cows a person has.

Draw a big herd of cows.

The Maasai believe that cows were given to them by their goddess Enkai.

Draw Enkai giving cows to the Maasi people.

To the
Maasai,
the Cow is Life!

The Maasai make shoes and clothes from cowhide.

Draw a snazzy cowhide outfit.

The Maasai use dried cow dung as fuel for fires.

Draw a cow-patty campfire.

The Maasai mix cow dung with leaves and sticks and bake it in the sun into bricks. They use these bricks to make their homes.

Draw a cow-dung cottage.

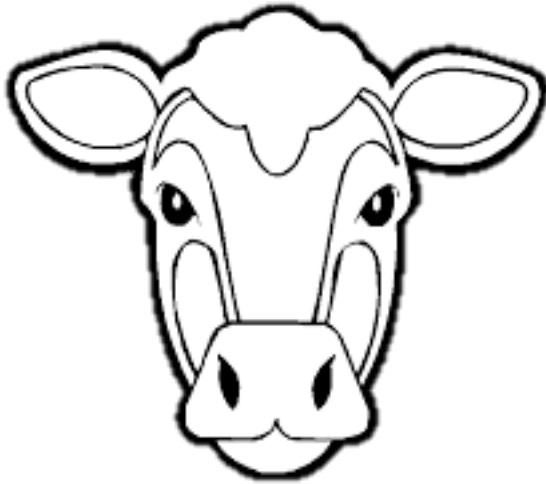
The Maasai sing songs to their cattle and give them names.

Draw yourself a cow companion and give it a name.

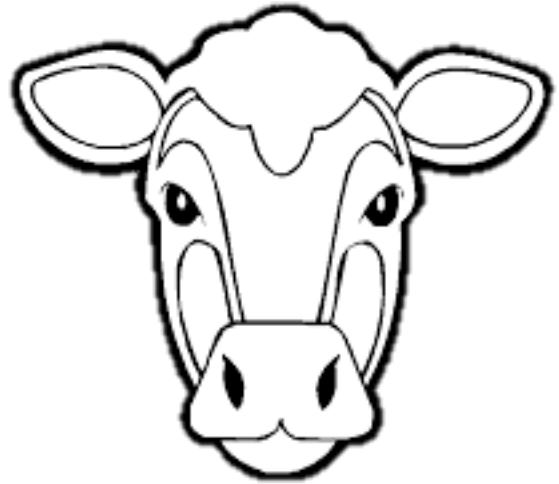
Name: _____ **Date:** _____

ACTIVITY 4: MAASAI CATTLE BRANDS

The Maasai brand their cows' ears to identify them. They created a new brand in the shape of the Twin Towers to identify the fourteen cows they gave to the United States after 9/11. Design your own cattle brands for:



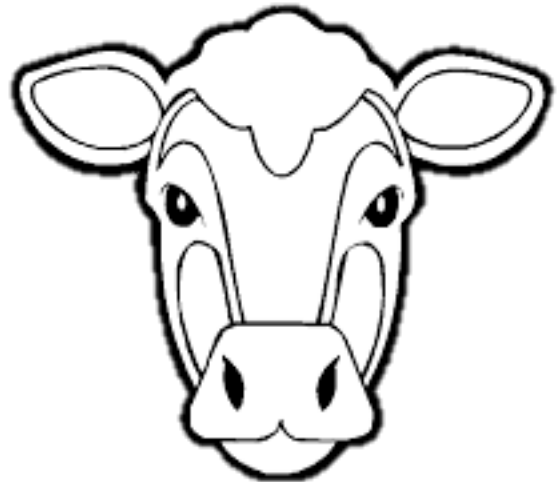
Your city



Your school



Your family



Just for you!

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

ACTIVITY 5: MAA WORD FIND

As you find the Maa words, listen to the sound files in the pronunciation guide at <http://14cowsforamerica.com/c.guide.pdf> and say them aloud.

Maasai

Maa

Enkarûs

súpa

enkáng

aakúa

takúényà

hello

fence

welcome

name

elder

language

tribe

k	a	k	a	g	o	h	s	e	l
n	a	e	à	k	e	û	û	m	t
t	a	ú	y	à	m	n	r	l	é
r	k	k	n	i	a	g	a	é	e
i	ú	ú	é	p	n	n	k	c	l
b	a	à	ú	á	g	û	n	h	d
e	m	s	k	u	é	e	e	a	e
r	z	n	a	p	f	l	a	l	r
ú	e	g	t	a	l	a	é	l	e
w	e	l	c	o	m	e	g	ú	l

Match each Maa word to its meaning.

Maasai

a language in Africa

Maa

fence

Enkarûs

welcome

súpa

a name

enkáng

hello, to a man

aakúa

hello, to a woman

takúényà

a tribe in Africa

Two Maa words mean almost the same thing. What's the difference?

ACTIVITY 6: TONE

Use this worksheet to guide an activity for the entire classroom to do together. Use the pronunciation guide to say all the Maa words in *14 Cows for America*. The Maasai language, Maa, has some sounds that we don't have in English. It's a tone language, and your voice goes up and down as you say words. Like this:

high			high
	low	low	

Tone languages are languages that use high and low sounds to make words mean different things. Can you think of languages that go up and down, almost like people are singing?

Use the pronunciation guide to fill in some Maa words in the boxes below. Listen to the recordings of Kimeli saying each word. Show which parts are high and which are low.

	high	low
súpa		
<i>soo-pah</i>		
enkáng		
<i>ehng-kahng</i>		
aakúa		
<i>ah-kwah</i>		
Enkarûs		
<i>eng-kah-rohs</i>		

Try saying the sentences below. Can you make and hear the differences in tone?

Éár olmurraní olngátúny (The warrior will kill the lion.)

eh	ar				ni		nga	tu	
		olm	oo	ra		ol			nee

Éár olmúrrání olngátúny (The lion will kill the warrior.)

eh	ar		oo	ra				tu	
		olm			ni	ol	nga		nee

Does your voice go up and down when you speak English?

ACTIVITY 7: READING ACTIVITY

A CONVERSATION WITH KIMELI NAIYOMAH

Kimeli Naiyomah began life as a homeless boy in Kenya's Maasailand. He knew he wanted an education, but he also knew that he would not be able to go to school in Kenya. "I was fortunate that my struggle caught the attention of the *Washington Post*," he recalled. The newspaper granted him a scholarship to a major American university and a plane ticket to get him there. Kimeli was visiting New York City when tragedy struck. The young man from Maasailand spent the next two weeks in a city reeling from unimaginable disaster. "The tragedy became very personal to me," confided Kimeli. Back at school in California, he continued to be haunted, not just by the event but by a need to help. "So I had to do something. I was thinking and thinking and thinking.

"The idea of giving a cow to America just came to me," Kimeli marveled. "I'd never owned a cow—I'd been homeless all my life." But now, he could buy his first cow and ask the elders of his village to bless it. "I found something important to me that would mean something to give."

For Kimeli, finding the solution was both a great relief and a delicate matter. This was something that had never been done before. "We don't give cows to strangers," he explained. "All cows must come home. You grow up knowing that cows stay in Maasailand and, as a warrior, you do not ever betray that." It took a warrior's courage to implement his plan.

Kimeli began his campaign with the first elder, sharing the story and telling him, "I think God will not punish us for this." It was a gentle beginning, but the idea built momentum. One elder led him by the hand to another, and Kimeli repeated the story and his request for a blessing. Kimeli personalized the Americans for these people who knew only Maasailand, making them like family—it would not be a curse to give this gift to a kinsman. Kimeli explained to them that "These people feed me, they give me the milk of their cows, they are the reason we have clean water in our village." But it is not just the gifts they had given him that he wanted the elders to understand; it was also their common humanity. "These people are us, and they have been very hurt." The elders saw this young warrior break down. "They knew that I was a man and they know I am not weak," he said simply.

Finally, the elders told him that "we have to consult the divine elder who speaks with God." What Kimeli had requested was very difficult and could be perceived as a betrayal. "It was the most intense period of my life," remembered Kimeli. "If they had said no, I would have been an outcast."

When at last they affirmed his gift, they also told him, "Son, if you want, I can give you my calf, too." These people knew of the young man's poverty. They were moved by his sacrifice to offer many of their own. The elders created a new "American" clan in Maasailand, and, with the help of the U.S. Ambassador to Kenya, created a new ear brand that had never existed before: two parallel cuts pointing up, representing the Twin Towers. The children had a part to play as well: keeping Kimeli's calf from running away.

Kimeli's note at the end of *14 Cows for America* details what happens next—how the herd is held by the community in trust for the Americans. But how did the story become a book?

continued

A CONVERSATION WITH KIMELI NAIYOMAH

(continued)

Kimeli was approached by many people who wanted to bring his story to a wider audience. Kimeli chose Carmen Agra Deedy because “she captured the entire spirit of the story.” Her version’s closing sentence came directly from the heart of the story, “Because there is no nation so powerful it cannot be wounded, nor a people so small they cannot offer mighty comfort.” Kimeli talked with her after seeing that last phrase, knowing she understood the sacrifice and vulnerability of his act. “What am I?” asked the young man. “Nobody knows my father. Only by education did I become somebody. I was going back not as a strong Maasai—I had to beg the elders to understand me.” Carmen needed to capture Kimeli’s humility for the book to work. She needed to make this, as Kimeli sees it, “a human story with a Maasai context.”

Kimeli said that “People are people—we’re all human,” but he went on to add that “this story has blessed my people because it has told them who they really are. I was reading into the ancient Maasai.” Hospitality and compassion are central to their beliefs and values. “You’d see children by the side of the road who would tell strangers to come and drink milk; they care about the wellbeing of another person regardless of who that person is.”

Kimeli is proud that “Now, in my village, we know we are compassionate people. We are the people who comforted America.” And at the moment when the Star-Spangled Banner played, when he put his hand on his heart and saw his people follow his lead, Kimeli was healed as well. “This was a defining moment. Some things you must do.” Carmen Deedy has done her part as well. “I wanted so badly to leave a true version of this story behind—newspaper stories contain the truth but not the spirit. What ever happens now, I am at peace.”

Kimeli leaves these words to the children who read his story: “What you feel in your heart is important. Mature with experience but keep your heart. I learned this from my people. The song is there, just start singing it. Soon you will have an entire world singing with you. When you die you leave the song behind.”

A Conversation with Kimeli appears courtesy of Kimeli Naiyomah and Ellen Myrick.

READING ACTIVITY QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever seen or heard about something that bothered you for a long time after? What did you want to do?
2. What kind of gift means the most to you? Have you ever given someone a gift that made you feel really good or better about something?
3. Why do you think Kimeli chose to give the Americans a cow instead of something else? What made the cow such a special gift?
4. Why was it so difficult for the Maasai to decide whether to give their cows away? What did it mean when they did?
5. What does this story tell us about the Maasai people? Do you think they learned something from it too?

ANSWER KEY

ACTIVITY 1

Which geographic region is Kenya in?

Kenya is the Eastern Africa geographic region.

Is Maasailand a country?

No, Maasailand is a region inside both Kenya and Tanzania.

Who lives in Maasailand?

The Maasai live in Maasailand.

ACTIVITY 5

Match the words to their meanings.

Maasai	a tribe in Africa
Maa	a language in Africa
Enkarûs	a name
súpa	hello, to a man
enkáng	fence
aakúa	welcome
takúényà	hello, to a woman

Two Maa words mean almost the same thing. What's the difference?

Súpa and takúényà both mean "hello." One is for talking to men, and the other is for talking to women.

ACTIVITY 6

Can you think of languages that go up and down, almost like people are singing?

Common examples of tone languages include East Asian languages such as Thai, Vietnamese, and Mandarin, and Southern African languages such as Yoruba and Zulu.

Does your voice go up and down when you speak English?

English does not have tone, but we do use it to ask questions. We use tone to give meaning to sentences, not words.

