

Math-Based Jewelry-Making Activity Guide

Module: Kenya – Maasai Beadwork

Grade Level: 4th–6th

Math Focus: Ratios, Patterns, and Multiplication

Art Focus: Bead Design & Necklace Construction

Time Required: 60–90 minutes

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Learn how the Maasai people of Kenya use beads to communicate identity and status
 - Use **ratios and repeated patterns** to create a beaded necklace or bracelet
 - Apply **multiplication and counting skills** to plan and execute a design
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Cultural Connection

The Maasai of Kenya are famous for their colorful beadwork. Beads are used in necklaces, belts, earrings, and other adornments. The **color combinations, patterns, and shapes** tell a story about the wearer—age, marital status, social role, and even regional identity.

Fun Fact:

Red beads symbolize bravery and unity. Blue represents energy and the sky. White stands for purity and health.

Math Concepts

- **Ratios** (e.g., 2 red : 1 white)
 - **Multiplication** (How many total beads for repeated patterns?)
 - **Patterns and Sequences** (e.g., AAB, ABAB, AABBBCC)
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