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# KENYA

## Facts about Kenya

Kenya is located on the eastern coast of the African continent and shares borders with Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania. It is named after the beautiful Mount Kenya, the second largest mountain in Africa. Its capital city is Nairobi.

**Population:** 37 million

**Life Expectancy:** 56 (UK – 78.5)

**Health:** 6.7% of the Kenyans live with HIV/AIDS. In the UK it is 0.2%.

**Education:** Primary School – 76% of girls (UK – 99%) and 75% boys (UK – 99%) attend

Secondary School – 42 of girls (UK – 94%) and 43% boys (UK – 90%) attend

**Literacy:** 90.5% of adult males can read and write (99% in UK)  
80% of adult females can read and write (99% in UK)

**Languages:** English (official), Kiswahili and indigenous languages

**Currency:** Kenyan Shilling

**Poverty Levels:** 50% of Kenyans live below the poverty line.  
14% of British people live below the poverty line

Data from – [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org) and  
[www.cia.gov.uk/library/publications/the-world-factbook](http://www.cia.gov.uk/library/publications/the-world-factbook)

Some figures are approximate.



From the first sign of people in Kenya 2 million years ago, Kenya has had a long and varied history. More than 40 ethnic groups live in Kenya, the largest is the Kikuyu who came to Kenya in the 18th Century.

Britain took control of Kenya in 1890 and it became a British colony in 1920 when it was named British East Africa. In 1963, Kenya became an independent country again. It was ruled by a single party for 18 years and only in 1992 were people able to choose between more than one party in an election.

Kenya had a terrible time in the 1990s. Flooding, epidemics and fighting between different ethnic groups weakened the country. In 1998, terrorists bombed the US embassy in the capital Nairobi, killing 243 people and injuring more than 1,000

Most recently, political and ethnic violence and droughts have continued to disrupt Kenya. In 2007, violence broke out between supporters of rival political parties. But, with the intervention of Kofi Annan, who used to work for the UN, the leaders of the two parties agreed to work together. One will be President and the other Prime Minister. It is hoped that this will bring stability to the area.



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## Want to learn more?

Try your local library, your school library or the internet. You could try getting in touch with Girl Guiding members in Kenya by email. The Kenya Girl Guides Association website is: [www.kgga.co.ke](http://www.kgga.co.ke)

## Some recent important dates:

**2002** President Kibaki announces free primary schooling for all children

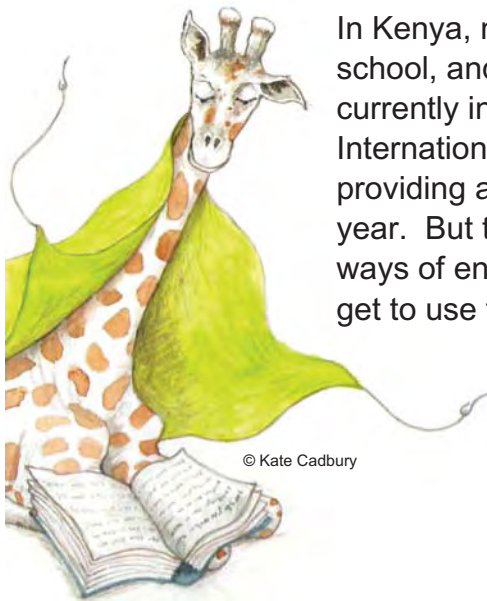
**2004** Kenya wins seven Olympic medals, including a gold medal in the 3000 metre men's steeplechase

**2006** Kenyan environmental activist Wangari Maathai wins the Nobel Peace Prize for her work as leader of the Green Belt Movement, which has aimed to empower women, improve the environment and fight corruption in Africa for almost 30 years. She is the first African woman to ever win the Nobel Peace Prize

**2007** Fighting breaks out between the Luo and Kikuyu tribes, after the December presidential elections were allegedly rigged. More than 1,000 people die in ethnic violence

**2008** The Kenyan Government introduce free secondary education for all

# Book Aid International in Kenya



In Kenya, most girls don't get to finish primary school, and less than a quarter of girls are currently in secondary education. Book Aid International are helping this situation by providing around 52,000 books to Kenya every year. But they also support some very different ways of ensuring that everyone – even nomads – get to use those books. Look at this!

NOMADS are people who live in a tribe and have no permanent home.

## Camel Mobile Library Service



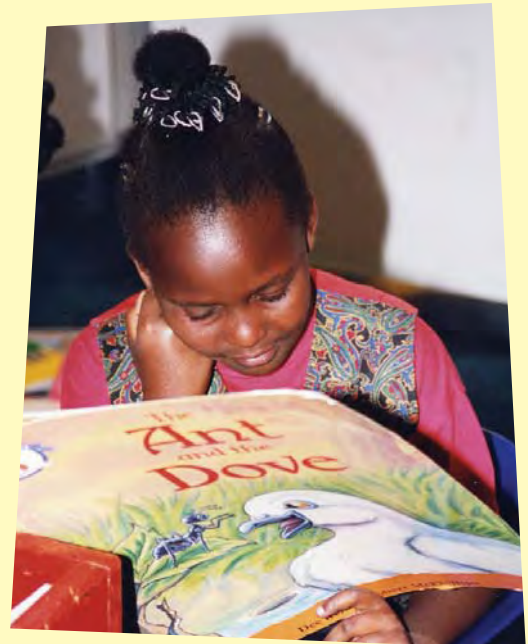
This unique library service travels out to nomadic communities in one of Kenya's poorest areas, the semi-desert province of Garissa. The people in this part of the country are mainly Muslim and nomadic. Over 85% of the people in the region can not read or write. The families must move around to where their camels and goats can reach pasture and water. This often means their children have to abandon school. So each morning three camels - one carrying two boxes of books, one loaded with a tent and one spare - set off to visit villages and communities in the area. Each year, these camels bring more than 7,000 books to the area!

## What's living in Kenya like?

Kenya is very different to the UK. Firstly, there are wild animals like lions, elephants and giraffes. This is why Kenya is famous for its safaris! The climate is also very different. Kenya is on the equator which means that the temperature is almost always the same throughout the year. Most people are poor and live in the country. They make a living through farming or other agricultural industry. Not all children in Kenya go to school, especially girls, children affected by AIDS or children who have to work to provide for their family. However this is improving every year.... My friend Dalila can tell you more about life in Kenya.



My name is Dalila and I am twelve years old. I live with my mum and dad in the north of Kenya in a house which is made of tree branches and thatched with dried grass. At about midday, I get ready for school. Because I have to look after our goats in the morning, I only go to school in the afternoon, and some days, I'm too busy to go at all. There are about 60 children of all ages in my class. Sometimes our teacher takes the class outside, under the trees! I love the school library, and I borrow as many books as I can. I like reading stories best! When I get home from school, I help my mum to sweep our house and cook a meal. We usually eat stew with beans and vegetables. Sometimes I go to the well and collect water. Before I go to bed, I read stories to my mum and dad. They did not have the chance to learn to read, and love to listen to me.



## Kenyan culture

### Kenyan beads

Bead-making is a traditional art amongst the people of Kenya. The Maasai tribe are especially famous for their wonderful jewellery. These very distinctive beads are usually made by women and girls and are often a source of income for sole parent homes and widows. Before the Europeans arrived in Kenya in the nineteenth century, bead-makers used mostly natural materials found in the local area such as iron, charcoal, ivory, horn, clay, bone, seed, copper, brass and even dried fruit. Now, plain glass beads are the most popular.



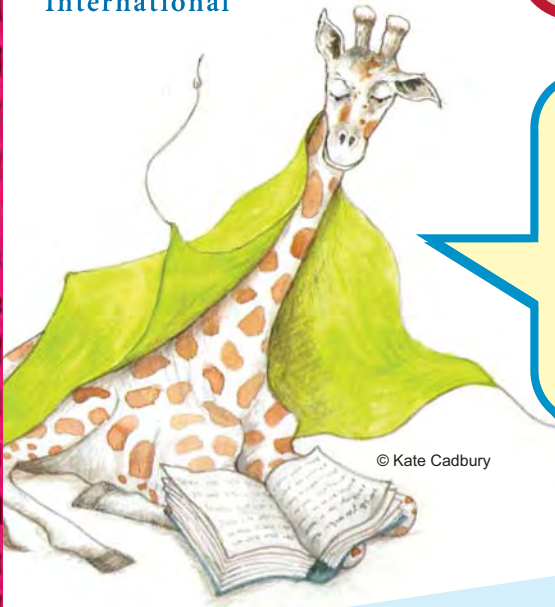
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**Kenya has a rich and captivating culture! I would like to show you some fascinating aspects which are especially interesting: let's start with beads.**

If you visit Kenya, you will notice young girls sitting in the local area making beautiful jewellery. They make these bead-works for themselves and also to sell to tourists.

*See Activity Nine*

## Poetry



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In many African countries, there is a strong oral culture, and families and friends often spend time telling each other stories and poems. Below is a beautiful poem written in the style of “Utenzi” a traditional poem that often tells a story of a heroic act. It was written by a Kenyan woman, Mwana Kupona Binti Msham in 1858 in Swahili for her daughter.

See Activity Ten

### Poem to Her Daughter by Mwana Kupona Binti Msham

Daughter, take this amulet,  
tie it with cord and caring.  
I'll make you a chain of coral and pearl  
to glow on your neck. I'll dress you nobly.  
A gold clasp too – fine, without flaw,  
to keep with you always.  
When you bathe, sprinkle perfume, and weave your hair in braids,  
string jasmine for the counterpane.  
Wear your clothes like a bride,  
anklets for your feet, bracelets for your arms...  
Don't forget rosewater,  
don't forget henna for the palms of your hands...

## Food

Kenya is a very varied country. There are lots of different ethnicities and different styles of living. This means that there are lots of different types of food as well! Most dishes are simple, inexpensive and filling. Staples are corn, maize, potatoes, and beans. By the lakes, people will also eat fish while those living inland eat more meat. If they can afford to! The Maasai people rely only on the cattle that they raise themselves.



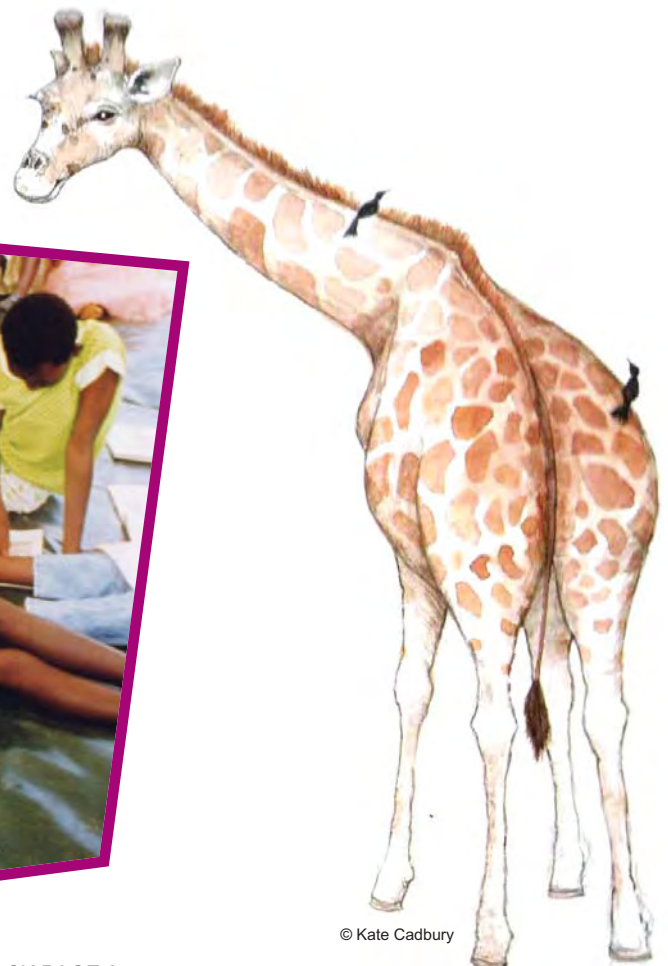
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See Activity Six and Seven

# Words in Swahili

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Hello                                      | <b>Jambo</b>             |
| No problems<br>(response)                  | <b>Sijambo</b>           |
| How are things?                            | <b>Habari?</b>           |
| Fine, etc.<br>(response)                   | <b>Nzuri</b>             |
| Goodbye to one/<br>goodbye to many         | <b>Kwaheri/Kwaherini</b> |
| Come in                                    | <b>Karibu</b>            |
| Thank you                                  | <b>Asante</b>            |
| Mr. (respectful<br>- adult man)            | <b>Bwana</b>             |
| Mrs., Miss<br>(respectful-<br>adult woman) | <b>Mama</b>              |
| youth/youths                               | <b>kijana/vijana</b>     |
| child/children                             | <b>mtoto/watoto</b>      |

|                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| What is your name?   | <b>Jina lako nani?</b> |
| My name is...        | <b>Jina langu...</b>   |
| What are you called? | <b>Unaitwaje?</b>      |
| I am called...       | <b>Nina itwa...</b>    |
| Thank you            | <b>Asante</b>          |
| I am happy           | <b>Nimefurahi</b>      |
| Book                 | <b>Kitabu</b>          |
| Food                 | <b>Chakula</b>         |
| Drink (noun)         | <b>Kinywagi</b>        |
| I am happy           | <b>Nimefurahi</b>      |
| People               | <b>Watu</b>            |
| Tree                 | <b>Mti</b>             |
| Village              | <b>Kijiji</b>          |
| Water                | <b>Maji</b>            |
| OK!                  | <b>Sawa</b>            |
| Sing                 | <b>Imba</b>            |



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