

The History of Kwanzaa

Read the story. Highlight all the nouns yellow. Underline all the verbs in red.



Once there was a man named Maulana Karenga. He was a very intelligent African American scholar. Maulana looked around his world and saw racial inequality, the battle for civil rights, and prejudice. He believed that African Americans needed to learn more about their African history. He knew that Africans would unite into a stronger community if they understood and honored their common ancestry.

In 1966, Maulana Karenga decided to combine many different African customs and traditions into one special holiday called Kwanzaa. The word Kwanzaa means “first fruits” in Swahili, an African language. Many families all around the world observe Kwanzaa, an African American holiday celebrated for seven days, from December 26 to January 1.

The celebration of Kwanzaa focuses on Seven Principles (*Nguzo Saba*). These principles are taught by using the Seven Symbols. Families spread the *mkeka* on a low table. The *kinara* and *kikombe cha umoja* are placed in the center. The *mubindi* are placed around the *kinara*. The *mishumaa saba* are set to the far right. The *zawadi* and *mazao* go on the *mkeka*. The symbols and principles are designed to pull the African American community together and to grow stronger as one body.



🌿 Celebrate the Joy of Kwanzaa! 🌿

Circle the things you might enjoy on this joyous holiday! Color the pictures.

