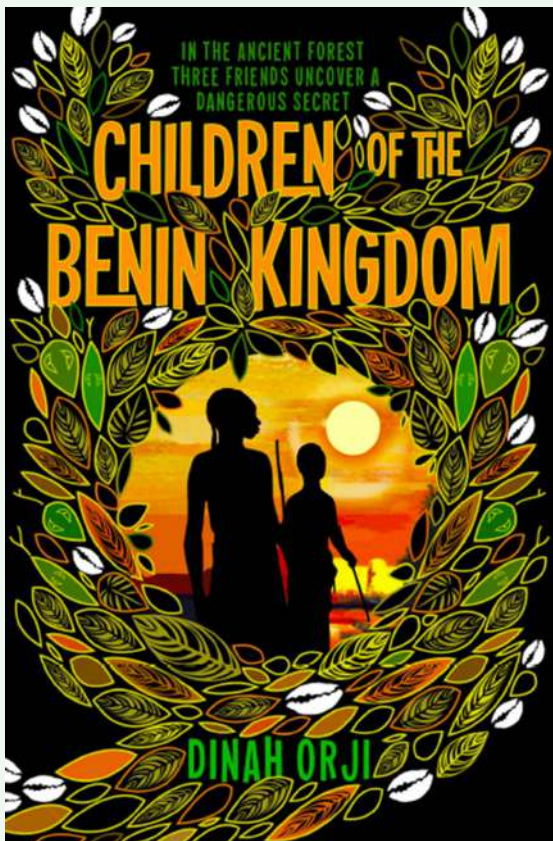


# KS2 Benin Topic

## *Children of the Benin Kingdom*

- Creative writing projects
- Discussion and comprehension
- Benin history activities
- Art activity sheets
- KS2 Benin Topic
- School Author Visit



# CHILDREN OF THE BENIN KINGDOM



Dinosaur Books

www.dinosaurbooks.co.uk

## Contents/Teacher Notes

These activities can be used by readers independently, in groups or as a whole-class activity. They are linked to *Children of the Benin Kingdom* and designed for children who are reading the story. This information also supports the primary history and literacy curriculum.

- 🌿 **Benin Map Quiz** – designed to help children locate the story
- 🌿 **Timeline Quiz** – get an overview of the long history of the Kingdom of Benin then complete the activity: a fill the blanks comprehension\* exercise or a discussion activity which can be completed in pairs or larger groups.
- 🌿 **Story Writing** – first person story writing – and thinking creatively about what happens next? Can be completed when readers finish Part One of the story.
- 🌿 **Craft Activity** – make a traditional Edo brass bracelet! – a fun and creative activity
- 🌿 **Story Writing** – practise writing the story from a different character's point of view. Can be completed when readers finish the whole book.

### \*Answers for Kingdom of Benin Timeline Quiz

- 1.500 BCE – 500 AD
2. Elders
3. Igodomigodo
4. Elders, Chiefs
5. Ife, Oyo
6. 1200s/1300 AD
7. Brass
8. 1887
9. Benin City, Nigeria

## Introduction

### ***Children of the Benin Kingdom: exciting historical fiction.***

*Children of the Benin Kingdom* is fast-paced, exciting story that makes an excellent class reader. It is the perfect text to enrich learning about the Kingdom of Benin – the book will immerse children in West African culture.

The book has received many great reviews from literature and curriculum specialists. Books for Keeps described it as “a riveting historical adventure.”

The Reading Zone said:

**“When reading this book, you become completely absorbed into the culture of the West African people ... because the story is rich and gripping.”**

The book was also named as a Reading Agency "Book of the Year" for 2020.

### **Author Talks and Workshops**

The author of *Children of the Benin Kingdom*, Dinah Orji, is available for KSI and KS2 school author visits and creative writing workshops.

Dinah Orji's contact details: [dinahorji@aol.com](mailto:dinahorji@aol.com)

This resources booklet was devised by Natalie Cooper, an artist and experienced leader of creative writing workshops which focus on African history and culture.

Natalie offers creative workshops based both on her historical and cultural knowledge of Africa and her expertise as an artist. These sessions explore the book's themes in addition to wider aspects of African cultures, particularly traditional music.

Natalie Cooper's contact details: [www.ami-book.com](http://www.ami-book.com)

*Children of the Benin Kingdom* is available from the specialist supplier of diverse books: BookLove, all school book suppliers, chain bookshops such as Amazon and Waterstones and [Bookshop.org.uk](http://Bookshop.org.uk), which supports local bookshops.

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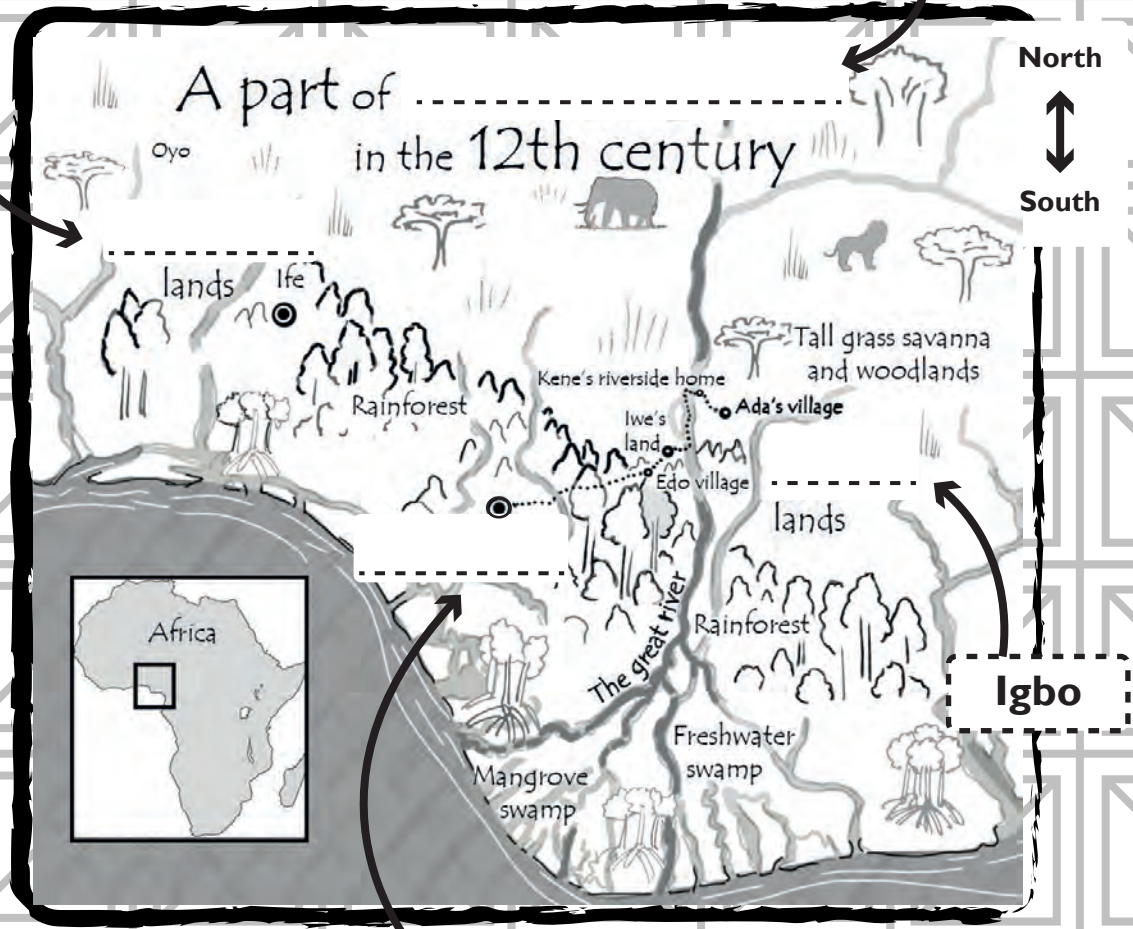
# CHILDREN OF THE BENIN KINGDOM

The Kingdom of Benin was located in **West Africa**, in an area that is now a part of the modern country of **Nigeria**. The kingdom was built in the rainforest which the Edo people cleared to build villages. It was large and varied but many people lived in the **Edo city**.

The Edo people of Benin had many cultural and trade connections with people right across to East Africa and to Central Africa as well as their neighbours the **Igbo** people who lived mostly to the East of the River Niger and the **Yoruba** people who lived to the north.

Yoruba

West Africa



Edo City

Igbo

remember to colour me in!

The Kingdom of Benin was in modern day southern .....



# CHILDREN OF THE BENIN KINGDOM



- **500 BCE – 500 AD** Edo people clear land in the rainforests of West Africa. The people live in extended family groups led by local elders. In common with other communities in West Africa, iron smelting is used to make useful implements.
- **500 – 1200 AD** Gradually the kingdom becomes more centralised and an Edo city emerges. The Edo people unite under one king – the Ogiso. The kingdom is called Igodomigodo – named after Igodo, who is thought to be the first Ogiso of the Edo kingdom. The Ogiso is believed to be divine and this gives him the right to rule. However power in the kingdom is also held by a council of elders as well as chiefs of both the city wards and of the surrounding farming areas. Together, these power bases form a sophisticated system of government.
- Iron technology and metal working skills continue to develop and the fabrication of iron tools and weapons facilitate efficient agriculture and hunting, as well as successful warfare.
- Decorative metalworking begins to produce some great works of art and the kingdom maintains contact with other West African civilisations such as Ife and Oyo, sharing artistic techniques as well as spiritual and cultural beliefs.

## Kingdom of Benin Timeline

- **1200s/1300 AD** A power struggle among the rulers results in turmoil. As the Edo people have strong cultural and religious ties with the nearby Yoruba kingdom of Ile Ife, Prince Oranmiyan of Ife agrees to help restore order to the kingdom. He establishes his son Eweka on the throne and this new dynasty of kings is called the Obas (instead of the Ogisos).
- **1300 – 1600 AD** The Oba era begins along with the “Golden Age” of the kingdom, when many of its most exceptional works of art are produced. In this era, the brass plaques known as the “Benin Bronzes” are produced. The famous Benin walls are extended during this period too and the kingdom extends its power and territory.
- **1600s – 1800s AD** A period of decline. The kingdom becomes weaker, militarily.
- **1887 AD** British armed forces attack Benin city for financial and territorial gain. They destroy the city and steal Benin Bronzes and other works of art. Britain had previously attacked and colonised other nearby regions and the country of Nigeria has been formed as a British colony (a country owned by Britain). The Kingdom of Benin becomes part of Nigeria.
- Today, the Edo city is called Benin city and is in the southern Nigerian Edo state. The Obas and their courtiers retain ceremonial roles.



# CHILDREN OF THE BENIN KINGDOM

## Kingdom of Benin Timeline Quiz

The Edo people passed down their history orally – they did not write it down in books but relied on the king's historians to be able to tell people the history of the kingdom.

Complete this quiz by referring to the timeline and writing in the blank spaces.  
Or, challenge yourself to be an Edo historian! Read the timeline information very carefully and then use these questions as prompts to tell a friend (or your class) as much as you can remember about the history of the Kingdom of Benin.

1. The Edo people of West Africa began clearing land in the rainforest between ..... and .....
2. During this time, Edo family groups were led by local .....
3. The first kingdom of the Edo people was called .....
4. The king, or Ogiso, shared power with ..... and .....
5. .... and ..... are two other kingdoms in the region that the Edo people had contact with.
6. The Oba dynasty of kings came to power in the .....
7. The Benin Bronzes are made of .....
8. British armed forces attacked Benin city in .....
9. The Edo city is called ..... today and is in the country of .....



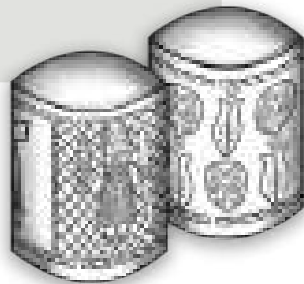
# CHILDREN OF THE BENIN KINGDOM

## Benin Bronze Activity

In Chapter 5 of Children of the Benin Kingdom, Ada finds a precious bracelet which turns out to be a clue to her real identity. In this period, brass jewellery would only have been available to royalty and high ranking chiefs. The Kingdom of Benin eventually became famous for the skill of its metal workers, particularly their ability to make beautiful plaques, figures, heads and jewellery.

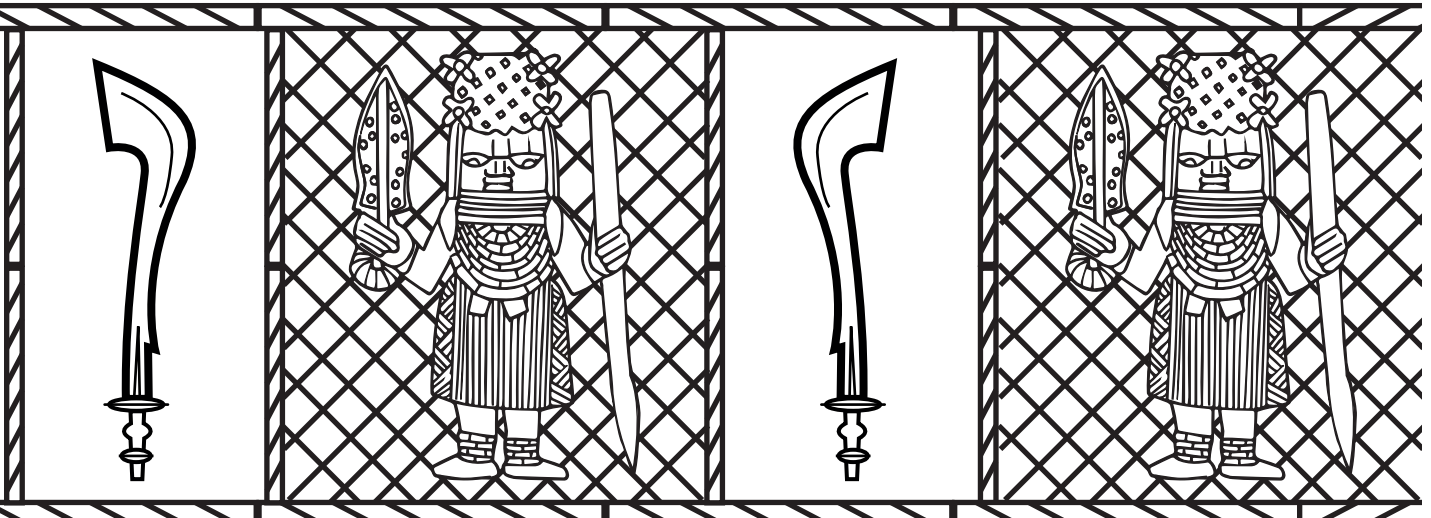
### Make Your Own Bronze Bracelets!

1. Cut along the dashed lines and glue each bracelet to a piece of card
2. Colour in each design
3. Use glue or tape to stick the short edges together

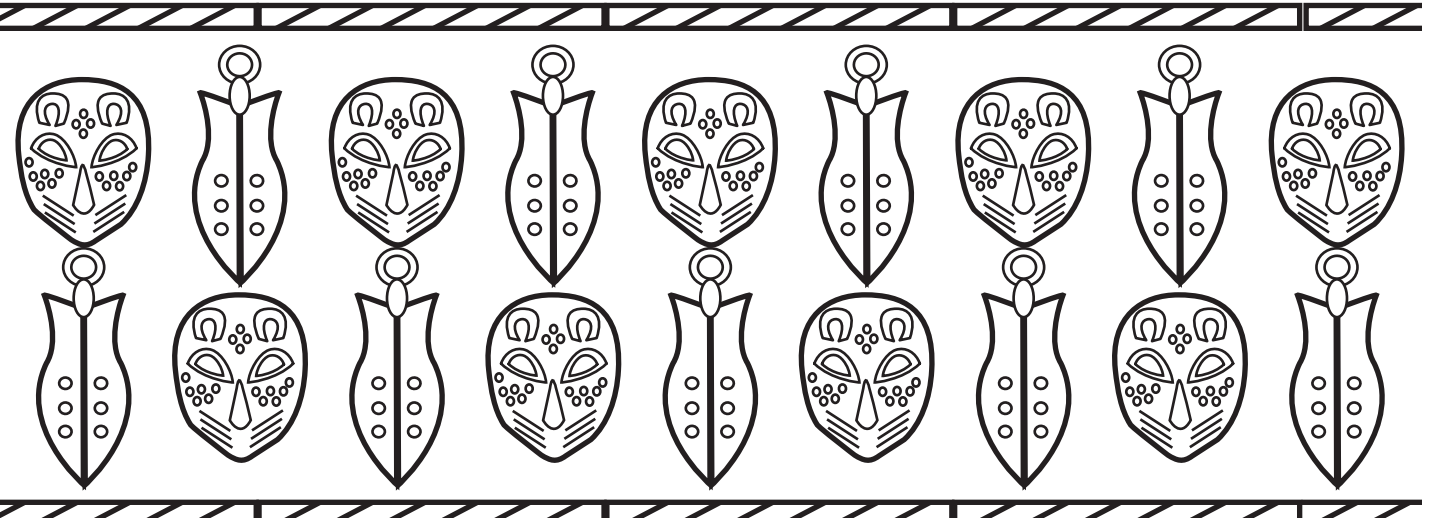


Or why not try...  
Cut out and stick to the back of a bronze or gold piece of card.

Draw over the design with a sharp pencil or pen to reveal an imprint on the metallic side!



glue or tape here



glue or tape here



# CHILDREN OF THE BENIN KINGDOM

## Madu's Story

*This is a creative story-writing exercise that can be completed near the end of the book, after Chapter 24.*

Write from Madu's point of view, about what happens after the children enter Edo city. How would the city seem to Madu? Think about how he would describe the Ogiso, the council of elders and the guildsman at the meeting with Sky-King. (Don't forget he does not get to meet these people like Ada and Nosa do).

A large rectangular writing area with horizontal dotted lines for text entry.

