

Now, try your hand at writing a song with a story. Here is the first line of a cariso and a calypso. Choose one, and finish the song. Make sure your song has a good story!

*My Cariso:* You talk about your \_\_\_\_\_

*My Calypso:* It was the seventeenth of September 19—

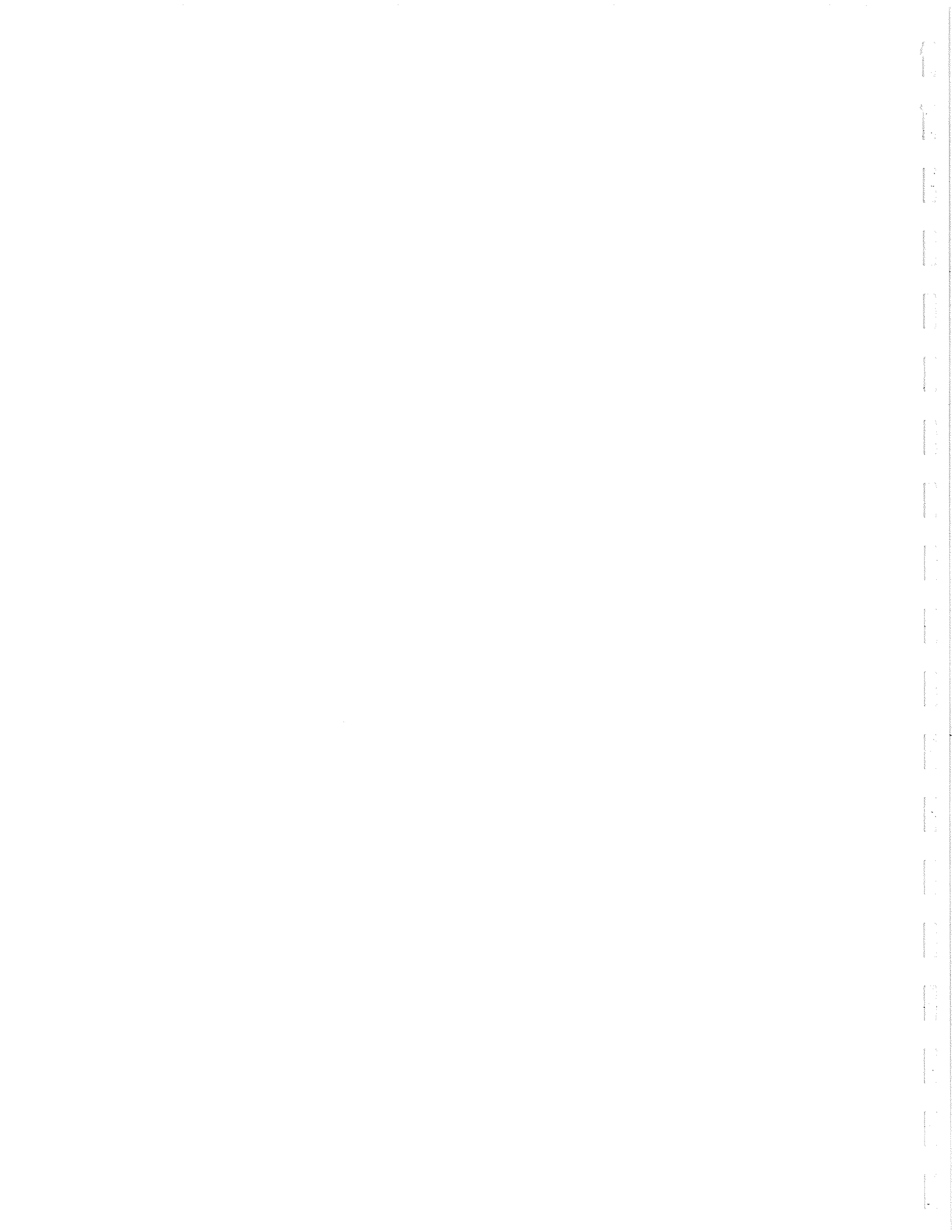
Now, perhaps you'd like to write your own song with a story, from beginning to end. Follow these steps:

1. Choose a topic. The topic must form a story, but it can be about anything that inspires you: what you had for lunch; a story in the news; your own experience with hurricane Hugo; the funny way your Aunt Tilly walks!
2. Listen to the calypso and the cariso on the audio tape several times to get a feel for the rhythm and the rhyming patterns.
3. Write the words to your own calypso or cariso. If you are musical, you could even put the words to music, or "borrow" a tune from another song to put the words to.
4. Recite (or sing!) your calypso to the class. The class should vote on:
  - The funniest song
  - The song with the best story
  - The best over-all song

# *Folklife Celebrations*



Masqueraders parade down Main Street on St. Thomas during Carnival.



Watch the videotape. Read the articles in the Festival Program Book.

## TEACHER PREPARATION

After viewing the videotape and the photographs, engaging in a discussion, and completing the suggested activities, the student should be able to:

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- understand the importance of a cultural celebration to people in the Virgin Islands and Senegal
- name several elements integral to a cultural celebration, such as food, costumes, music and dance
- recognize the roles of two important characters in the cultural celebrations of Carnival (Mocko Jumbies) and the *lambe* (serignou mbeur)
- explain how a celebration changes if it is “restaged” outside of its own cultural setting (i.e., at a folklife festival)



Mocko Jumbie John McCleverty and friend.

# LESSON ONE: COMPARING TWO CELEBRATIONS

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### STUDENT EXPLANATION

In this videotape, you will learn how traditional celebrations — Carnival in the Virgin Islands, and *lambe*, a traditional wrestling match that includes music, dance and ritual in Senegal — are presented in a festival setting. You will see scenes from the celebrations in their home setting (in the Virgin Islands, Carnival taking place on a St. Thomas street; in Senegal, a *lambe* taking place in a village) as well as the “restaging” of the celebrations in Washington, D.C. at the 1990 Festival of American Folklife.

As you watch the videotape, notice how the celebrations are different in their home settings (which folklorists call the “natural context”) and in the festival setting. Take note of, and think about, the different audiences in both settings.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name three things that are similar about the celebrations of Carnival and the *lambe*. Name three things that are different.
2. Name three things that are different in the celebrations of Carnival and the *lambe* in their home setting and in the festival setting.
3. How many types of folklife did you notice as part of these celebrations (music, dance, etc.)?
4. How are these celebrations different from everyday types of folklife (cooking everyday meals, occupational skills used everyday, etc.)?
5. Did you notice any interaction between the people from Senegal and the people from the Virgin Islands at the celebrations? Explain.

## STUDENT ACTIVITY #10

# CELEBRATION PHOTO DETECTIVE

Look closely at the photographs of the Virgin Islands Carnival and the Senegalese *lambe* presented in their home settings and at the 1990 Festival of American Folklife. Read the written information about the two traditional events. Answer the following questions:

- What is different between the folklife events in their home setting and at the festival (costumes, audience, background scene)?
- What is similar or the same?
- Do you think that it was easier to “stage” the Carnival or the *lambe* at the Washington, D.C. festival? Why?
- How much do you think the Washington, D.C. audience understood about the events? What helped them understand more?

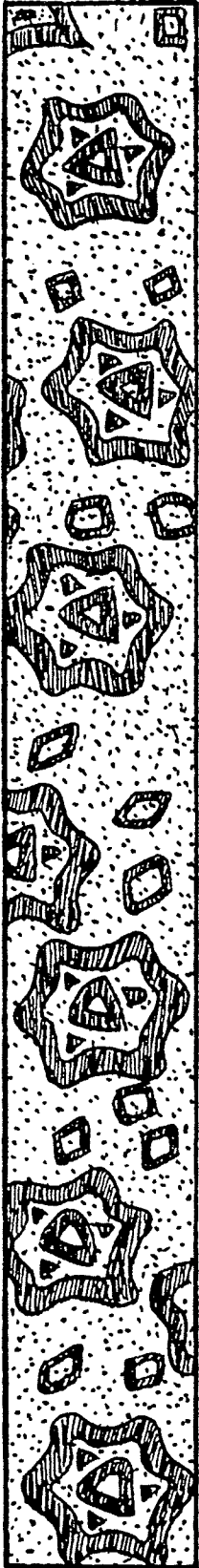
Using the photographs, the videotape and the written descriptions of these celebrations, make a list of the elements of Carnival and the *lambe* in their home settings. Include as many aspects of these events as you can: costumes and other “props” (things that people carry or use as part of the celebration), music and dance, number and type of participants, schedule of events, decorations, etc.

Think about packing up all of the elements of these events and bringing them to Washington, D.C. to “stage” the events. Assume



## UNIT 4

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you can pack three large trunks full of items to bring. What would you choose to bring? What would you leave at home?

How would what you bring affect how much the audience in Washington, D.C. understood about the events? Could you replace or rebuild some items with materials found in Washington, D.C.? Could you tell the audience about some of the things you had to leave behind, to make them understand more?

Now, pick a traditional event that your family or community celebrates: for instance, a holiday celebration, a community festival, or a family reunion. Assume that you are “staging” this event in a place hundreds of miles from the usual setting for an audience who may not understand the meaning of the event to your family or community.

Make a plan for restaging the event:

- What will you bring?
- Will the event last as long as it does in the home setting?
- How will you make the audience understand the meaning of the event to your family or community?

## LESSON TWO:

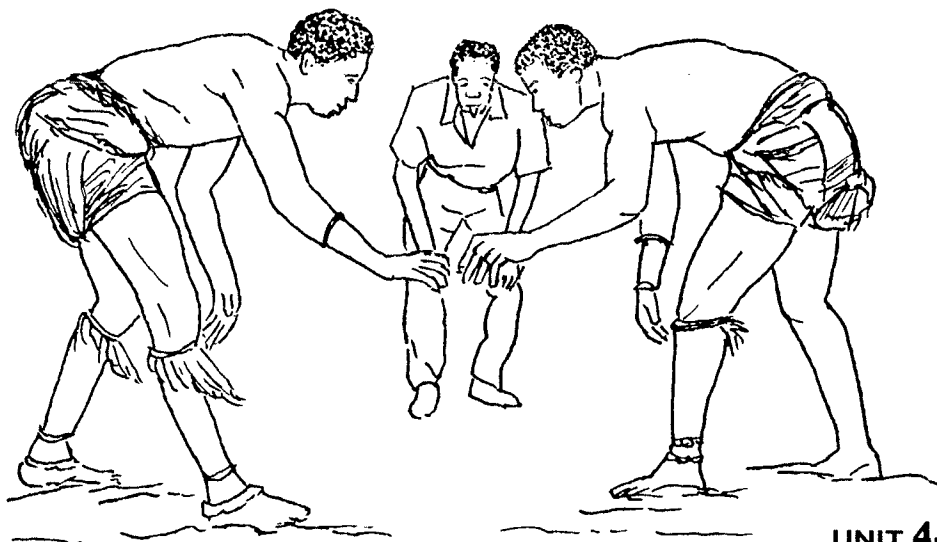
# MOCKO JUMBIE & SERIGNOU MBEUR

As you will learn from the videotape, the Mocko Jumbie is an important part of Carnival, and the serignou mbeur (the man who travels with a wrestler and uses his knowledge of spiritual forces to help his wrestler win) is an important part of the *lambe*. In this activity, you will discover more about these special people and their traditional roles in the two events. Before you begin, answer the following questions:

1. How would the two celebrations be different without the Mocko Jumbies and the serignou mbeur?
2. Do the Mocko Jumbies and the serignou mbeur have anything in common?
3. Compare the costumes of the two.
4. What special knowledge or skills do you have to have to be a Mocko Jumbie? A serignou mbeur?

## STUDENT EXPLANATION

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



As the referee blows the whistle, traditional wrestlers begin a match at a *lambe* tournament in the town of Samba Dia, Senegal.





## STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET #11

# MOCKO JUMBIE & SERIGNOU MBEUR

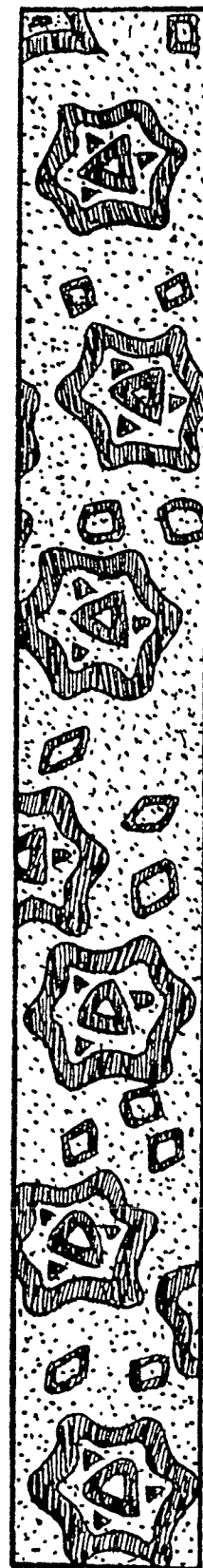


As you saw on the videotape, the Mocko Jumbie is an important part of Carnival, just as the serignou mbeur is to the *lambe*. Carnival wouldn't be so colorful or interesting without the Mocko Jumbies, and the *lambe* would just be another wrestling match without the special help of the serignou mbeur!

Here is a summary of their roles:

**Mocko Jumbie:** Are stiltwalkers who perform in a masquerading tradition originally brought from West Africa to the Caribbean. Originally, they formed part of religious ceremonies. Today they participate in Carnival and other festivals individually, accompanied by a drummer, or in a troupe. Mocko Jumbie stiltwalkers say that when the Spirit enters them they are able to dance on stilts and perform fancy steps. Young children are often frightened by Mocko Jumbies because of their size and because parents will tell them that if they don't behave the Mocko Jumbie will come and get them at Carnival.

Mocko Jumbie John McCleverty performs at the 1991 U.S. Virgin Islands Folklife Festival on St. Croix.





**Serignou Mbeur:** Is the specialist who acts as a spiritual coach to the wrestlers and helps them win the match. He prepares special medicines and instructs the wrestlers about things to do that will make the fighters stronger. Sometimes it is translated to English as “ju-ju man.”

Write a story about a Mocko Jumbie and a serignou mbeur. You may illustrate your story with a drawing if you like.



Souley N'Diaye, a Serer wrestler, takes on a fighting stance at a *lambe* tournament in the village of Samba Dia in the Sine region of Senegal. In his hand he holds a talisman made of horn.

## LESSON THREE:

# PLAN YOUR OWN CELEBRATION

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In this lesson, you will plan and carry out your own special celebration. Everyone in the class will give ideas for a celebration, and the class will vote on which celebration to use as a focus. This could be a “restaging” of an existing celebration, such as Carnival, or an invention of a new celebration unique to your class (Mrs. Smith’s Sixth Grade Class Celebration of Spring?). Use the activity sheet to help plan your celebration. You will use as many of the skills and information that you have learned in the earlier lessons as you can cram into your own celebration! Before you start, discuss the following:

1. What are some of the elements of a good celebration?
2. Name some celebrations that you are familiar with. What time of year do they occur? What makes them special?
3. Do you think that a successful celebration takes a lot of planning and work? Why or why not?

## STUDENT EXPLANATION

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET #12

### LET'S CELEBRATE!

The first step is to decide on a celebration. This should take some thought. One way to decide is to put up a “suggestion box” for several days. Students in the class can write down ideas for the celebration, and place them in the box. When everyone has had a chance to submit at least one idea, your teacher should read them to the class. The class can then discuss the best ideas, choose three or four, and vote to see which idea they like best.

Keep in mind that the chosen celebration should have some of the following elements:

- music
- dance
- costumes
- special foods
- storytelling sessions
- feats of strength or showings of talent
- stalls to sell handmade crafts or treats
- a parade

Next, decide where the celebration will take place: in your classroom; in the gymnasium or auditorium; on the school grounds; at a local fairground or other public space. This will depend, of course, on the type of celebration you are planning.

Now, decide when the celebration will take place. If you are planning an outdoor activity, be sure to pick a rain date! Also, make sure that

