The Netherlands

Words that are in **bold** print are explained in the glossary.

**Introduction**

The Netherlands is a country not too far from England. Sometimes people call it Holland, but the Netherlands is the proper name for the whole country.

![Map of Europe showing England and the Netherlands](image)

**FACT**

The people in the Netherlands are called Dutch people. The main language they speak is also called Dutch.

**FACT**

It often rains in the Netherlands, and it can also be very windy.
Water everywhere!

Water has always been an important part of people’s lives in the Netherlands, because there is so much of it. There are many rivers and lakes, and a lot of the land is next to the sea.

Having water all around can cause problems. In the past, there were often floods, when water from rivers or the sea rushed onto the land and into streets and houses. People living in the Netherlands also had problems building on some of the land, because the land is very wet.

The Dutch people had to find ways of protecting themselves and their homes from all the water.

These flats are next to a canal. A lot of Dutch people live near to water.
Dikes

One way the Dutch people protected themselves from the water was by building **dikes**. Dikes are like walls that keep water away from land so the land does not flood.

Over the years, many dikes have been built in the Netherlands. Sometimes they were not strong enough to hold back the water, and heavy storms caused dikes to break.
Now, people have found ways of building stronger dikes. People living in the Netherlands don’t have to worry so much about being flooded.

**FACT**  
Without protection from dikes, more than half of the Netherlands would be under water.

**FACT**  
The longest dike in the world is in the Netherlands. It was built in 1932, and is more than 30 kilometres long. You can even drive over it!
Wind power

The power of the wind can be used in different ways to help people.

A windmill needs the wind to make it work properly. When the wind blows, the sails of the windmill start to turn. This makes the machinery inside the windmill work. People in the Netherlands have had windmills for many years.

There are still lots of old windmills in the Netherlands.

Different kinds of machinery are used inside windmills. This means that windmills can be used to do different jobs.

Wind power can be used to grind grain and to make electricity.

FACT

There used to be more than ten thousand windmills in the Netherlands.
Windmills to grind grain

In the past, windmills were often used to grind grain to make flour. Grain from wheat was placed between huge round pieces of stone called millstones, which are inside the windmill. When the wind blew and turned the sails, the millstones turned and crushed the grain into flour, which is white and powdery. Then the flour was used for making bread. Even today, windmills are used in this way in some Dutch villages.

A person who works in a windmill and grinds grain is called a miller.

Many old windmills are still standing in the Netherlands, and people can visit them to find out what they are like inside and how they work. On Windmill Day, you can visit any windmill that is flying the Dutch flag.
Windmills to make electricity

Now, modern windmills called wind turbines use the wind to make electricity. When these turbines are grouped together they are called wind farms.

Wind turbines on a wind farm in the Netherlands.
Bibliography

dike
built to stop water going onto land

flood
when land is covered with water

flour
a powder made from grain that is used to make bread, cakes and other foods

grind
to crush something until it becomes a powder

millstone
a large, round, flat stone used to crush grain

sail
part of a windmill that turns when the wind blows

windmill
a building that uses the wind to power the machinery inside it

Q2. The Netherlands

Practice Questions

A On which page can you find information about dikes?

☐ page 3 ☐ page 4

☐ page 6 ☐ page 7

B Why is it helpful to have a contents page in this booklet?

..........................................................................................................................................................
1 Why is it helpful to have a map on page 2?

☐ to show you what the Dutch people are like ☐ to tell you about the weather

☐ to tell you what language people speak ☐ to show you where the Netherlands is

2 What is the weather like in the Netherlands? Tick 2.
   dry ..............
   cold .............
   hot ..............
   wet ..............
   windy ............

3 On page 3 it says, ...when water from rivers or the sea rushed onto the land and into streets and houses.

   Why has the word rushed been used to describe the water?
   ..............................................................................................................................

4 Why are dikes built?
   ..............................................................................................................................

5 What can cause dikes to break?
   ..............................................................................................................................

6 Why don’t people in the Netherlands have to worry so much about being flooded now?
   ..............................................................................................................................
7 How can the power of the wind be useful? Tick 2.

for building dikes ............

for making electricity ............

for growing wheat ............

for protecting land ............

for grinding grain ............

8 The sentences below tell you how windmills are used to grind grain. One sentence is missing. Fill in the missing sentence.

Grain from wheat is placed between the millstones.

The millstones turn when the sails of the windmill turn.

.................................................................

The flour is used for making bread.

9 Which windmills can you visit on Windmill Day?

..............................................................................................
10 Use the glossary. Match each word to the explanation. One has been done for you.

- flour
  - when land is covered with water
- flood
  - crush something into a powder
- sail
  - used to make bread and other foods
- grind
  - turns when the wind blows

11 Think about the Netherlands in the past. Tick ✓ or cross ✗ these sentences to show whether they are true or not. One has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the past</th>
<th>✓ or ✗</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Windmills only made electricity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dikes never broke.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were thousands of windmills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People didn’t worry about flooding.</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The land often flooded.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q3. Traditions from Africa

Practice questions

A On which page can you find out about African clothes?

☐ page 4 ☐ page 7

☐ page 8 ☐ page 9

B How do you know which words in the text are explained in the glossary?

........................................................................................................

1 Which word tells you that Africa is a large continent?

☐ vast ☐ smaller

☐ surface ☐ land

2 Why are more and more West African people moving to towns and cities?

........................................................................................................

3 Which of these sentences about West African clothes are true?
Tick 2.

People always wear traditional clothes. .........................

People sometimes wear modern clothes. .........................

People never wear traditional clothes. .........................

People wear different styles of clothes. .........................

People never wear modern clothes. .........................

4 When do people dress in ken-te clothes?

........................................................................................................
5 How are ken-te clothes made? Explain as fully as you can.

First ............................................................................................................................................

After that .....................................................................................................................................

6 What does wearing a mask make dancers feel?

..................................................................................................................................................

..................................................................................................................................................

7 What do listeners sometimes have to do to help the storyteller?

☐ wear a mask ☐ build a fire

☐ decide on the story’s ending ☐ decide on the story’s beginning

8 What kind of special creature is Anansi?

..................................................................................................................................................

9 a) Use the glossary. What does traditional mean?

..................................................................................................................................................

..................................................................................................................................................

b) Write 3 things that are done in a traditional way by African people.

1 ..................................................................................................................................................

2 ..................................................................................................................................................

3 ..................................................................................................................................................

10 Why is it helpful to have a contents page in Traditions from Africa?

☐ to teach you about alphabetical order ☐ to show what information is in the text

☐ to explain words you might not understand ☐ to tell you where the text was made
11 Here is some more information about Africa.
Match each sentence to the correct heading in the text.
The first one has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creation stories describe how and why the world was made.</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa has deserts, forests and mountain areas.</td>
<td>Clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional African clothes are made from local materials.</td>
<td>Music and Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some African people play 'talking drums'.</td>
<td>Story Time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Traditions from Africa

Introduction

Welcome to Africa, a vast continent covering more than one fifth of the earth’s land surface. Africa is made up of many countries, peoples, lifestyles and traditions.

As you can see on the map there are over 40 different countries in Africa. Some of the countries are smaller than England but many are larger.

The traditions that people follow depend on where in Africa they live. In the text below you will find out about some of the traditions of West Africa.
West Africa is an interesting mix of the old and the new, the modern and the traditional.

*Lagos, a city in Nigeria.*

Most people live in the countryside but more and more West Africans are moving to towns and cities in search of work.

*A house in a traditional West African village*
Clothes

A street scene in Ghana showing different styles of clothing.

People in West Africa wear many different styles of clothing.

In Ghana, weavers make narrow strips of cloth from silk. These strips are called ken-te strips. The long ken-te strips are sewn together into large cloths, which people wear on special occasions. Sometimes strips of ken-te cloth are worn with modern clothing.

Ken-te cloth worn in a traditional way.

Ken-te cloth worn in a modern way as a tie.
Music and Dance

All over Africa, music and dance play an important part in celebrating events such as birth and marriage. Music and dance in West Africa are a mix of the traditional and modern.

A singer from Senegal mixes traditional and modern music at a pop concert.

Traditional dancers often wear masks made from wood or animal skins. Mask-makers work carefully so that the masks are the same as they have been for hundreds of years.

Masks can be in the form of a person or animal or a mixture of both. When people put on a mask they can almost feel like they have become another person or animal.

A wooden mask.
Story Time

There has always been a great tradition of storytelling in Africa. Around fires at night, people told stories and poems that entertained them and helped them to make sense of the world. In some villages, people still gather together to hear stories.

African stories are for children and adults. Many stories are designed to teach the listener how to behave. In most stories at least one character is taught a lesson. Some stories explain how things first came about or were discovered.

Many traditional African stories are hundreds of years old. However, each time a story is told, the storyteller changes the story a little. The changes the storyteller makes will depend on who the listeners are. If the listeners are young children the storyteller will make the story easier to understand.

African stories often have an unusual or surprising ending; in this way the storyteller keeps the listeners on the edge of their seats right to the end. Sometimes the listeners even have to help the storyteller decide on the best ending for a story.
Many African stories have been made into books. People all over the world enjoy reading about traditional characters such as Anansi.

Anansi is a special creature. Sometimes he is a spider, sometimes a man and sometimes a little bit of both. Anansi is often called a ‘trickster’ because he likes to play tricks on people and animals. Anansi stories came first from Ghana in West Africa, and later travelled to different parts of Africa and to the islands of the Caribbean.

The story you are going to read next is about another special spider.

Two books about Anansi the spider.
Glossary

Caribbean

A sea off the coast of America.

ken-te

Ken-te is the name given to a colourful silk cloth made in a traditional way.

modern

Doing things in a new way.

traditional

Doing things in the way they have been done for many years.