

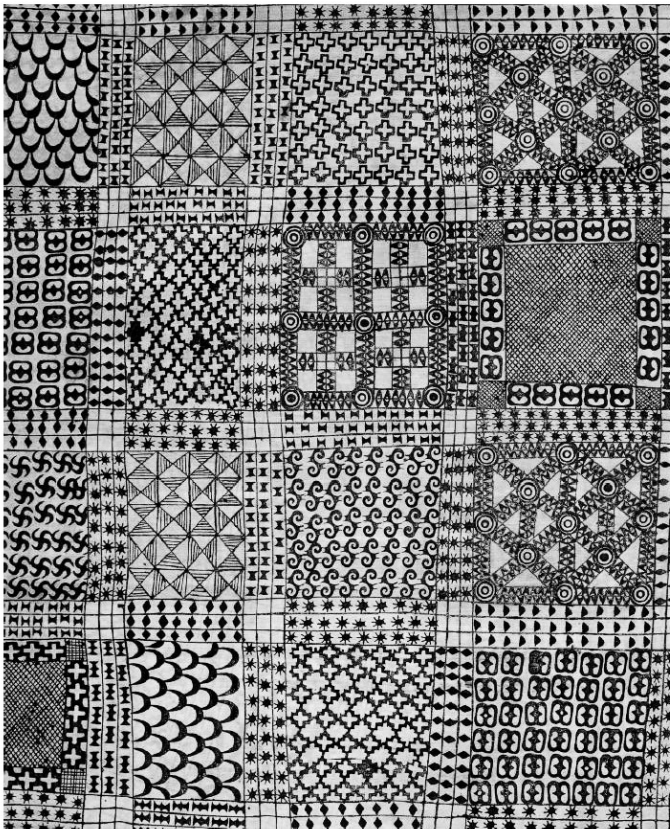
Adinkra Cloth from Ghana

The History of Adinkra Cloth:

Adinkra Cloth comes from the Ashanti people who live in Ghana, which is a country in West Africa. The Adinkra symbols are printed on both cloth and pottery and are made using stamps and screen-printing. The traditional stamps are carved out of an old calabash squash, with a handle carved out for ease of use. Each stamp and symbol tells a story, so when creating an Adinkra cloth, the Ashanti people chose a story that was important to them.



Photo by Flickr user nikkorsnapper



Originally, the Adinkra cloth was only worn for funerals. The symbols in the funerary cloths represented respect and sadness. With modern Adinkra cloths, people wear them for different kinds of celebrations, draped around them like a toga. These cloths can also be used as tablecloths, wall hangings, and pieces of clothing.

Photo Credit: Adinkra mourning cloth collected by Thomas Edward Bowdich in 1817. *Photo is a 2D work more than 100 years old [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons*



What do the Adinkra Symbols Mean?

There are many different symbols used in Adinkra cloth, and they each have a unique meaning. In the image at left, the #7 symbol translates to “five tufts of hair” and one of its meanings is ‘loyalty’.

When you are making your Adinkra cloth, you should choose symbols that tell a story.

You can find a listing of these symbols and their corresponding meanings in an online index at www.adinkra.org.

Photo Credit: By Robert Sutherland Rattray [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons.

Where in the world is Ghana?

Ten percent of Ghana’s population live in the capital city Accra. That’s 2 million people!



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Make Your Own Adinkra Cloth

You can make this project in: **1/2 hour**

What you will need:

- Piece of cloth
- Paint
- Scissors
- Dried/ flattened sponge

How To:

1. Sketch out a design for your symbol.
Then, draw your symbol onto the dried sponge.



2. Carefully cut out the outline of your symbol from the sponge using scissors.



3. Slightly wet your sponge to expand it, then wring out any excess water.



4. Lay your piece of fabric out, and dip your sponge into the paint.



5. Create patterns on your fabric using your sponge stamp.



6. When you're finished, let your Adinkra cloth dry, and then display it or wear it!



Think about this:

1. What story does your Adinkra cloth tell?
2. Why are your symbols important to you?
3. Is there a celebration that you would wear your Adinkra cloth to?
4. What are other ways you could use your Adinkra cloth?
5. What materials do you think the Ashanti tribe used to make Adinkra cloths?
6. What other materials do you think you could use to make a stamp?

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