

Kwanzaa Traditions Celebrate the Power of Honoring Our Past

Source: <https://www.oprahdaily.com/life/a34894511/kwanzaa-traditions/>

In the heaviest and most unpredictable of times (we're glaring at you coronavirus), traditions offer a welcomed respite. They can teleport us back to our childhood in an instant, or move us forward with hope. They can be elaborate or sentimentally simple. And they remind a person of who they are and what matters most to them. This is what celebrating Kwanzaa is like.

Drenched in rich traditions, and based on seven key principles, this seven-day celebration of individuals with African roots is an invitation to contemplate what has been, what is, and what can be in African American communities and those across the world with ties to Africa. From December 26 to January 1, a collection of customs will unite and uplift those that observe—even if Zoom has to be thrown into the mix. These are the most common Kwanzaa traditions that will be honored during that period—complete with accompanying terms in Kiswahili, the language used to name the elements of the holiday.

Assembling the Kwanzaa Display

An arrangement of items that represent seven symbols is the visual centerpiece of Kwanzaa, which comes from the Swahili phrase “*matunda ya kwanza*” or first fruits.

First, a mat (*Mkeka*) is placed down. That's a symbol of tradition. All other symbols are placed on top of it. Next, and most notably, is the candleholder (*Kinara*) that holds the seven candles (*Mishumaa Saba*). There's one candle for each of the seven principles of Kwanzaa or the *Nguzo Saba*. You will also typically find the unity cup (*Kikombe cha Umoja*).

Lighting the Candles

A key custom during Kwanzaa is the daily lighting of the *Kinara*, in which black, red, and green candles (the colors of the Pan-African flag) are burned. On day one, the black candle—also known as the unity candle—which symbolizes the people themselves, is lit. On the second day, the red candle (for the struggle or blood shed in the past) is lit. On day three, the green candle, which represents the earth or the abundance of possibilities the future holds, is lit. Then, the candles alternate until day seven is reached.

Reflecting on the Principle of the Day

Kwanzaa was founded in 1966 in the United States by activist and educator Dr. Maulana Karenga. Stemming from his Kawaia philosophy of cultural and social change, Karenga created the seven principles, *Nguzo Saba*, as the cornerstone of the holiday observed by



African Americans and the African diaspora. Each night, those who celebrate Kwanzaa not only light a candle, but look inwardly as they contemplate the theme of the day. The seven principles, in order of celebration, are: Unity (*Umoja*), self-determination (*Kujichagulia*), collective work and responsibility (*Ujima*), cooperative economics (*Ujamaa*), purpose (*Nia*), creativity (*Kuumba*), and faith (*Imani*).

Preparing and Sharing Food

During Kwanzaa there is a feast called the *Karamu* each day—ideally highlighting foods of the African diaspora, notes Navies. “You feast every day to savor the blessings of the harvest and strengthen family or community bonds,” she says.

Honoring Ancestors

Often Kwanzaa opens with the pouring of libations into the unity cup for those who have paved the way for the living, says Navies. Survivors of the Middle Passage, sowers of seeds for freedom, and all those who have perished are saluted. The eldest person in a gathering usually guides this practice.

Sharing Your Talents

The sixth day of Kwanzaa draws attention to the creativity (*Kuumba*) flowing out of the Black community. Most people interpret this to mean artistic creativity, so there are often community exhibitions of dance, poetry, and live African drumming, says Navies. Partakers often choose to wear traditional African garments as a way to further honor their origins. Black vendors are also invited to display their ingenuity and craftsmanship at such events.



HIV AIDS
AWARENESS
MONTH

December 2021 Calendar

Universal Human Rights Month
World AIDS Awareness Month

- 11/28-12/6 – Hanukkah (Judaism)
- 1 – Rosa Parks Day (US)
- 4 – World Wildlife Conservation Day
- 5-11 – National Handwashing Awareness Week (US)
- 7 – National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (US)
- 8 – Bodhi Day (Buddhism)
- 12 – Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Catholic)
- 16-24 – Posadas (International)
- 22 – Winter Solstice (Wicca)
- 25 – Christmas (Western Christian)
- 26 – Zoroastrian Diso (Zoroastrian)
- 26-1/1 – Kwanzaa (International)

“Connecting Worlds” Healthcare Interpreting Course – Year 15

By Elena Morrow, MPPA, CT, CMI, MIS Department Manager

In September and October of 2021, UCDH Medical Interpreting Services department hosted its 15th annual training of healthcare interpreters. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, this training was held on Zoom for the 2nd time. 31 students speaking 12 different languages with experience in many fields of interpreting came together on five Fridays to learn the basic skills of healthcare interpreting.

The 40 hours of instruction included lecture time and homework, activities, terminology reviews, interpreting practice, case studies, role play, and an in-depth study of medical interpreter roles, ethics, and legal issues. All participants received a full training binder and a certificate of completion.

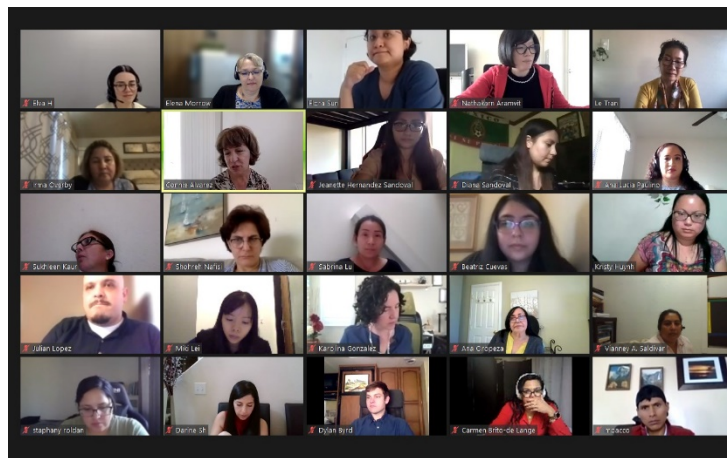
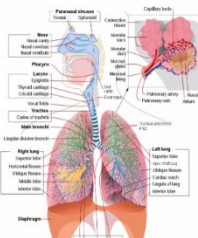
Students especially appreciated an overview of video remote interpreting, networking opportunities with industry professionals, training tips from guest speakers, an overview of the two national certification exams, and tips on national exam preparation and requirements. *“It was very thorough and I learned so much to become an effective interpreter. I see myself as a professional and also I was encouraged to keep learning”* – said one of the 2021 class participants.

This training is an industry standard and was developed in California in 2002. It satisfies the prerequisite requirement of both the NBCMI and the CCHI national certification tests for healthcare interpreters. The list of interested trainees for the 2022 class is filling up already! For more information, please visit: https://health.ucdavis.edu/interpreting_services/

Common Problems
Group 4
G-18 G-19

Some Lung Cancer Terminology in Spanish and Russian

English:	Spanish:	Russian:
Lung Cancer	Cáncer de Pulmon	pat legkih
Cancerous Tumors	Tumores cancerígenos	opyholi
Larynx	Laringe	gortani
Cancer Cells	Células cancerígenas	rakovije kletki
Chronic Bronchitis	Bronquitis Crónica	bronxit



New Supervisor Profile: Elva Horath

Elva Horath joined the MIS management team in August of 2021 as the dispatch & training supervisor. Elva was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Spanish being her first language, but growing up mostly bilingual. She had the opportunity to go to college in Mexico where she graduated as a Medical Doctor from the Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara. Elva has worked as a certified professional interpreter for 5 years, with experience in Quality assurance and interpreter training. Patient care is her passion, in any shape or form that it may present itself. Elva believes that quality language access is pivotal to closing the communication gap amongst our limited English patient population. She stays committed to her oath to do no harm and to help our interpreters provide the best care possible. In her free time, Elva enjoys reading and spending time with her husband, two girls, and their family dog. She loves to experience other cultures through food (especially if its spicy).

Welcome to MIS, Elva! We are looking forward to many great trainings!