

Kente Cloth

It is from Ghana, the West African country best known for this brightly colored woven fabric.

History and Origins

- Where did the Kente cloth come from?
- There are quite a number of stories as regards the origin of the Kente cloth, yet it is clear that it traces its origin to the Akan ethnic group located in the Ashanti region of Ghana.

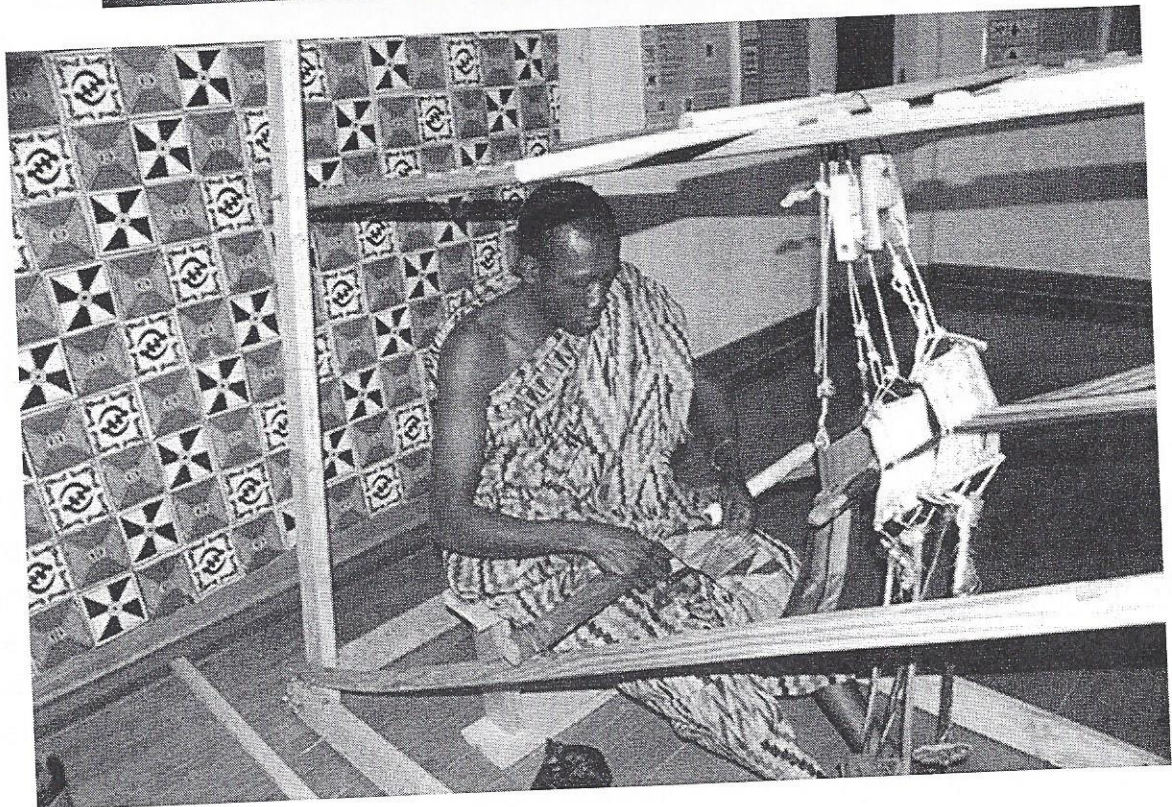
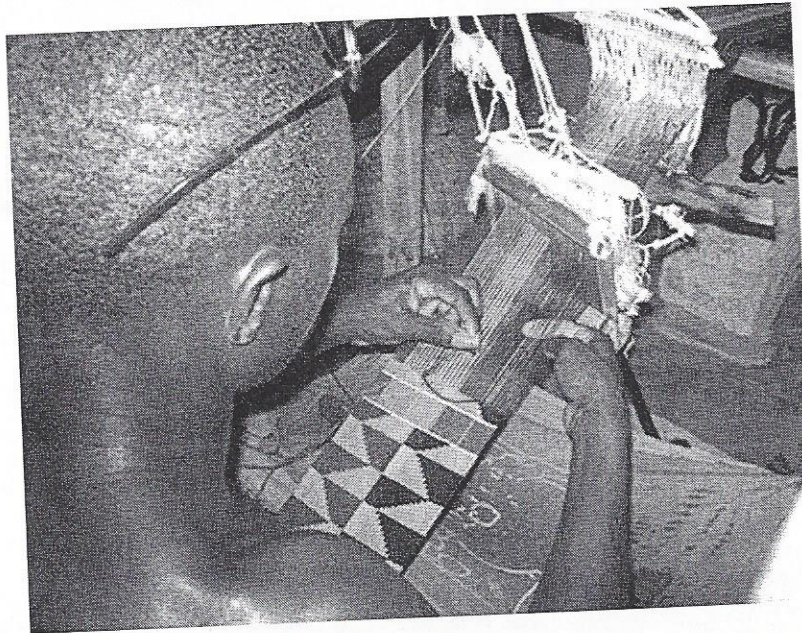


According to Ashanti legend, in the 17th century, two brothers from the village of Bonwire, came across a spider spinning a web. Amazed by the web's intricate beauty, the brothers returned to their homes eager to recreate the spider's web. They wove a cloth using **black and white** fibers from a **raffia tree**. The fabric they produced looked like a **basket** and this earned it the name "**Kente**" as the Akan name for the basket is "**Kenten**". This new discovery was shared with the rulers at that time and they, in turn, chose to adopt the fabric as a national cloth for special occasions.

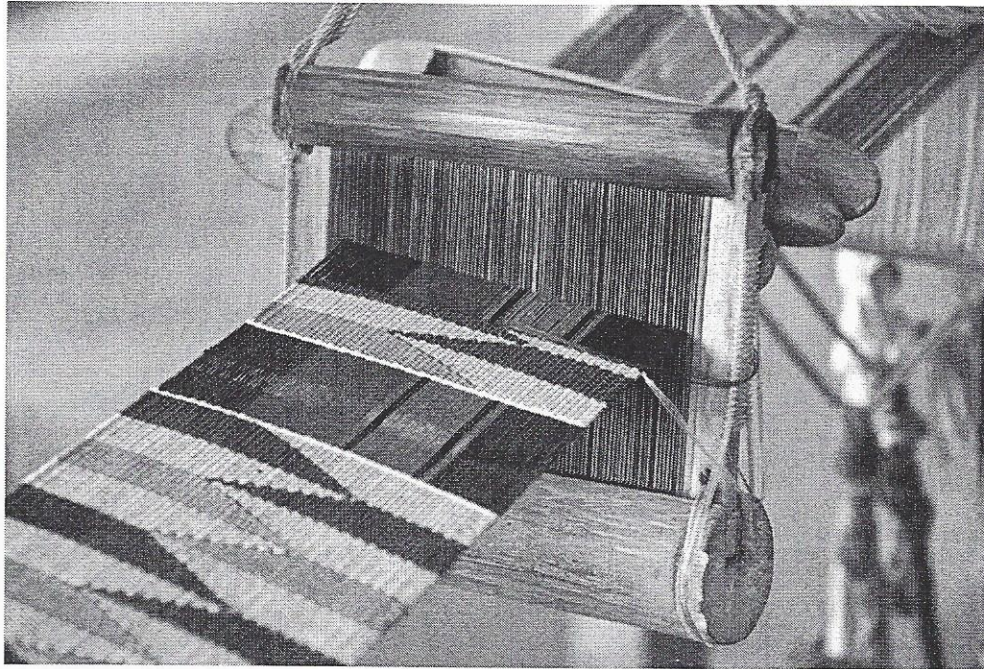
How is Kente cloth made?

Originally, Kente cloth was woven from raffia fibers but with the increase in trade and importation, Silk became readily available and the weavers chose to use it to make this colorful fabric.

The cloth is woven in four-inch narrow strips that are sewn together. It is usually woven on ancient hand looms with craftsmen operating the loom with their hands and feet. The needle, which treads the wrap is placed between the toes and a shuttle passing from the left hand to the right hand in weft movement inserts the weft.



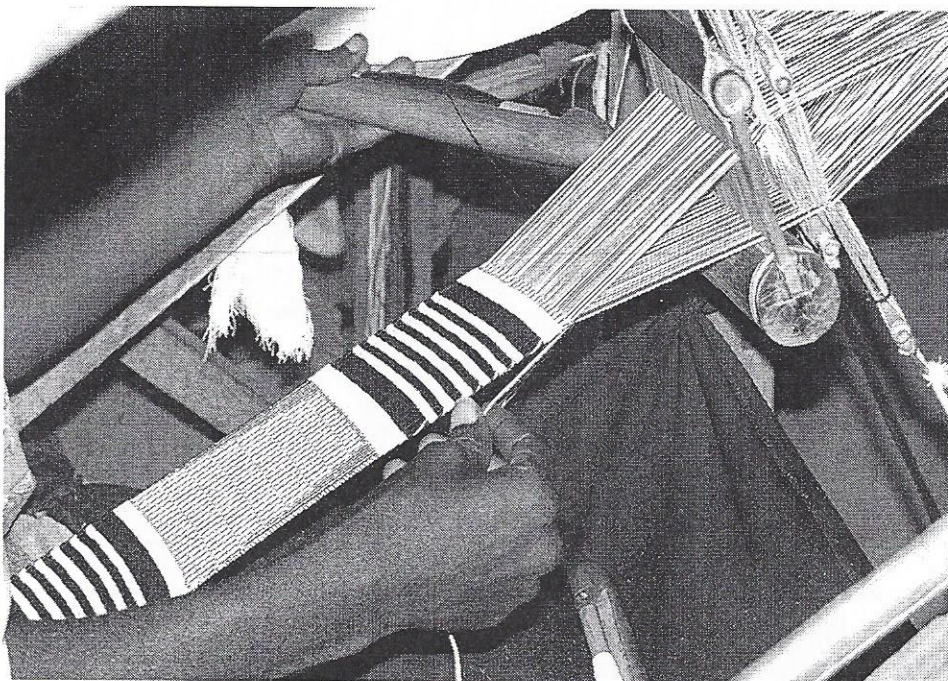
Kente cloth usually has sharply defined geometric shapes woven in bright colors along the entire length of the strip. Women are not allowed to weave the Kente cloth, hence the whole process is left to the men.



What do the colours of the Kente cloth mean?

Originally, the first set of Kente cloth was in black and white yet in time introduced.

color was



Kente Colors & Their Meanings



Gold: royalty, wealth, spiritual purity

Yellow: royalty, wealth, holy, precious



White: purity, healing, festive occasions



Blue: peace, harmony, love



Green: harvest, growth, spiritual renewal



Red: blood, strong political & spiritual feelings



Maroon: mother earth, healing



Purple: earth, healing, femininity



Black: maturation, spirits of the ancestors

Who wore the Kente cloth in the past?

Kente cloth was reserved for the royals and the elite. It was the ultimate “rich-man cloth”. It was also worn during special occasions.



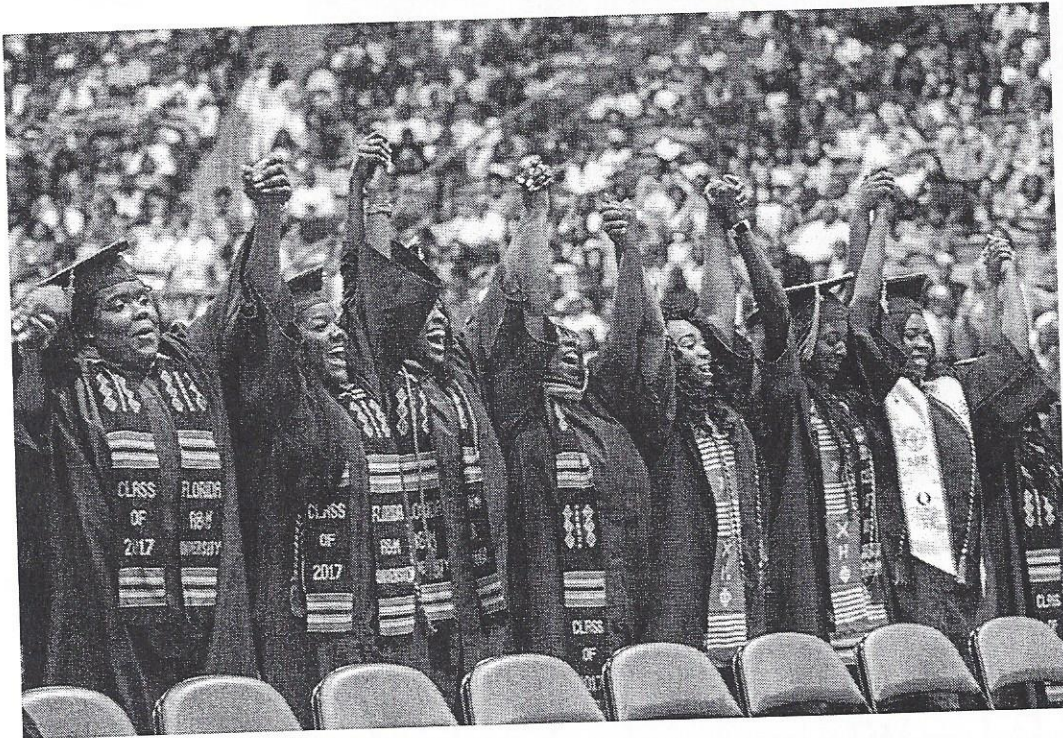
How is Kente cloth being used today?

Kente cloth is still being used for special occasions in Ghana, especially traditional wedding ceremonies. It is now affordable and readily available to everyone, not just the elites.

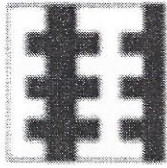


In other parts of the world, especially in the United States, the fabric has been used to make scarves to be worn on graduation by African American and African students. These scarves are worn to represent the membership to a Black sorority, fraternity, or an African student organization at the different colleges and universities.

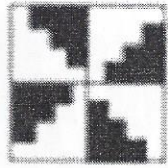
This fabric has also been used to make unique jewelry pieces and accessories.



Kente Cloth Designs



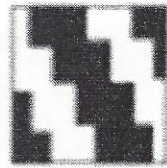
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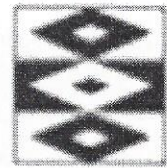
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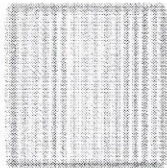
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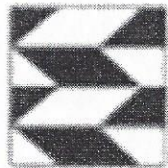
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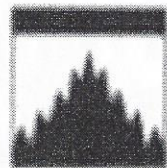
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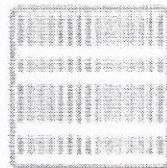
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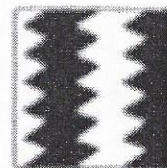
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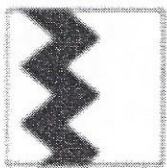
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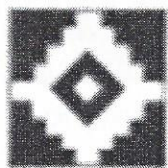
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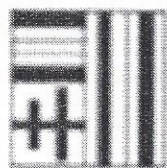
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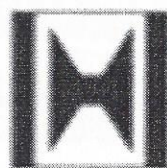
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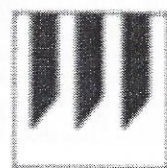
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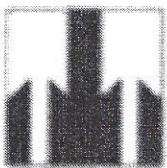
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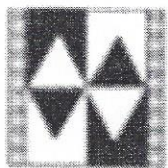
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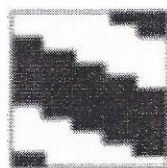
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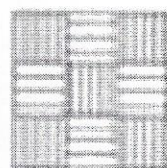
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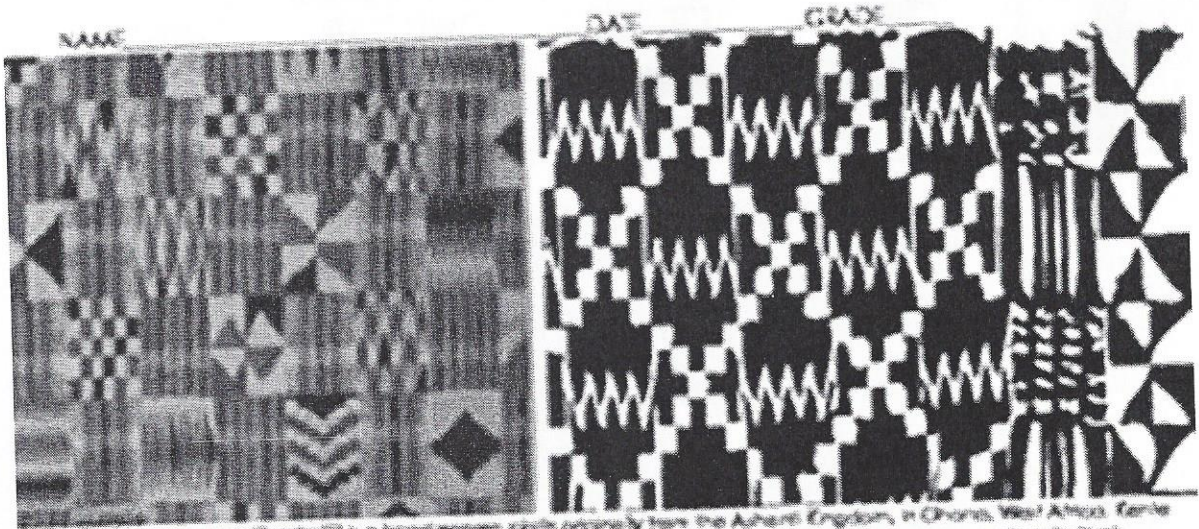


20. *Asafo*

The designs used in Kente cloth symbolize different things. These designs will be repeated with others to make a pattern. Kente cloth is very bright and colorful. The colors used in the designs also have meanings.

Green- Earth, life, growth
 Blue- peaceful, love, patience, wisdom
 Yellow- royalty, wealth, sun
 Red- sacrifice, death
 Pink & Purple- calm, sweet, tender
 Black- mystery, strength, maturity
 White- innocence, healing, peace
 Gray- healing, protection

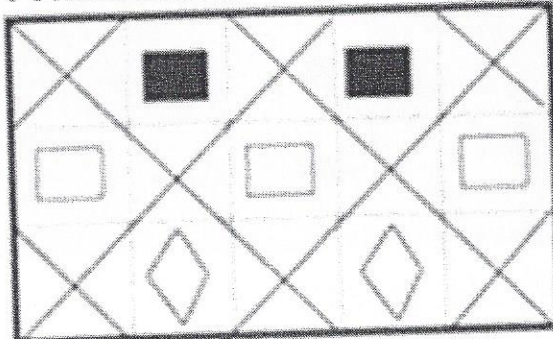
Elements of Art & Design-Pattern



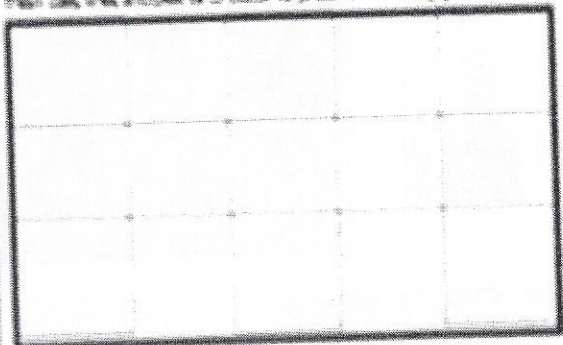
Kente (Sentele means "basket") is a hand-woven cloth originally from the Ashanti Kingdom, in Ghana, West Africa. Kente are full of color and patterns. Kente is worn by royalty and wealthy especially for special occasions such as funerals, ceremonies, and holidays. The colors have **SYMBOLIC** meaning.

1. Create your own preferred Kente cloths below.

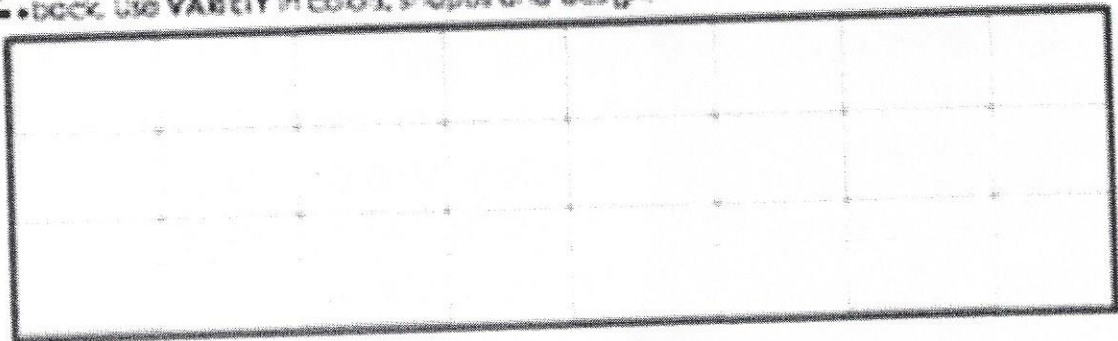
• **START HERE** with color & design.



Feel like the shape and color to practice making your own.



2. Now make your own Kente cloth below, then when finished make another on the back. Use **VARIETY** in colors, shapes and design.



United Art & Education®

Paper Strip Kente Weaving - Project #164

Project Statistics

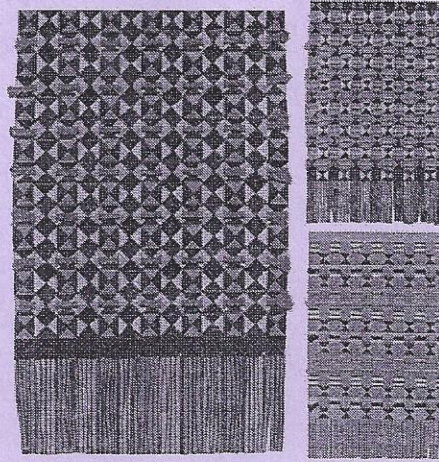
Time: 2-3 Class Periods

Difficulty: Moderate

Cleanup: None

General Materials:

- Scissors



Project Video:

<http://youtu.be/QL6QTVvDTgc>

Directions:

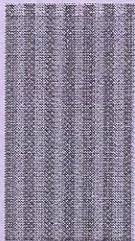
Step 1: Start off with one horizontal and 13 vertical weaving strips. With glue stick, glue each vertical strip to the horizontal strip across the top. The horizontal strip can either be woven through the vertical strips or glued straight (which is easier for younger children).

Step 2: Choose 15 more weaving strips. Weave these strips horizontally through the vertical strips, starting from the top and finishing a few inches from the bottom. Trim the ends of the horizontal strips flush with the vertical strips.

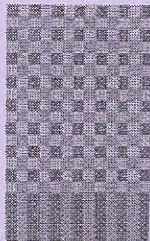
Step 3: Use black markers to create Kente design accents.

Step 4: Add texture by weaving yarn pieces into the Kente project with a yarn needle. Use scissors to cut the remaining bottom vertical strips to look like fringe.

asdf



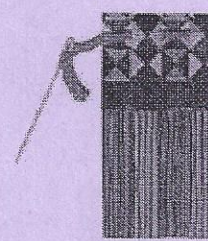
Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4

Products Used:

Crayola Markers - Broad Line, black (B-7751)

Elmer's Washable School Glue Sticks - Single Sticks, 0.21 oz. Purple (E-E514)

Pacon Yarn Needles - 3" Extra-Large Eye (P-00830)

Pepperell Jumbo Roving Yarn - Yellow (PYR-JRYB03)

Pepperell Jumbo Roving Yarn - Orange (PYR-JRYB04)

Pepperell Jumbo Roving Yarn - Light green (PYR-JRYB06)

Hygloss Paper Weaving Strips (HY-15781)

Paper Strip Kente Weaving Project Kits - Complete Kit (USCPK164)

Paper Strip Kente Weaving Project Kits - Refill Kit (USCPK164R)



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