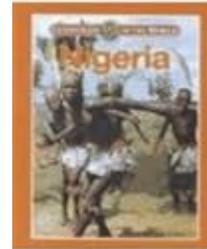


H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



Yinka Ismail. *Nigeria*. Milwaukee: Gareth Stevens, 2002. 96 pp. Ages 9-14. \$29.27 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8368-2337-0.



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Nigerian Scenes

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Very colorful, with many photographs in bright colors, this book will appeal to students from the ages of nine to fourteen. The production quality is excellent, and the book is strong enough to sustain multiple uses, even abuses, without getting destroyed. It has information on additional sources, including Internet sites to assist students who want to learn more about Nigeria. The main author is a Nigerian woman based in Lagos, Nigeria. Her degrees in geography, land management and philosophy are put to good use supplying valuable information on the country. Others have done important work to improve the book, as editors, designers, and picture researchers. The final product is competent and adequate for the interest of young readers.

The book is divided into three sections (not chapters) covering about twenty-six themes. Each theme is short, well presented with different photographs, and the story line receives lavish illustration. The book starts with a brief overview that ends in the optimistic statement that Nigerians have “faith in their recently elected democratic government” (p. 5). This is followed by a description

of the country’s rivers, terrain, vegetation, seasons, and wildlife. Here, the book hints at the issue of oil pollution, a way to educate children about environmental problems, which is further developed on pp. 60-61. Issues covered with respect to history include the kingdoms, the arrival of the Europeans, explorers and missionaries, colonization, and independence. Three biographies are presented (p. 15) on Amina Zazzua, a legendary princess of the 16th century, Frederick John Lugard (1858-1945), a leading pioneer British administrator, and Nnamdi Azikiwe (1904-1996), the first president. It is not clear why these three people are identified for special mention, all on one page.

Government and economy are combined in a single theme (pp. 16-19), which provides information on the state and federal governments, with an honest statement that corruption is a problem. With respect to the economy, the emphasis is on agriculture and oil. The country’s debt is the highest in the continent, a problem that compounds the economic crisis. A discussion on people follows, with descriptions of family life, ethnic groups, and the roles of women and youth. The readers will also learn about education, religion, literature, language, arts,

music, festivals, leisure, sports, and food.

In the last section of the book, entitled "A closer look at Nigeria," the book offers more details on agriculture, the kingdom of Benin, clothes, music, religion, environment, foreign trade, culture and soccer. Children will find very useful the fascinating discussion on sports, and Nigeria's relations with the United States. On the latter, this is one of the few books that introduces young readers to international politics. In one of the longest themes in the book entitled "Relations with North America" (pp. 75-85), the author reviews the relations between Nigeria and the United States from the 1960s to the late 1990s.

Issues of common interest in trade, global politics, and cultural ties are discussed.

The illustrations are very impressive, with original photographs, paintings by famous Nigerians, and ancient artifacts. There are photographs on women hurdlers, boxers, soccer heroes, professors, literary icons, political leaders, the major cities of Lagos and Abuja, musicians, clothes, food, and some interesting landscapes. To end this review, the book has successfully offered various aspects of Nigerian scenes, with colorful illustrations on various fascinating customs and people.

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