



W H A L E C L A S S

Circle Time Guide

Everything you need, one page per day.

Week 23 · One Continent – Africa

15–19 March 2027 · 13 minutes a day · ages 2.5–6, English learners

Our teacher's home continent — said out loud every single day · 春分 falls on Sunday 21 March

WEEK OVERVIEW



Print · laminate · ring-bind · hold this all week

Last week the whole round world and its five oceans. This week we put one finger down on **one** continent — **Africa** — because that is where **Teacher Tredoux** is from. Say it out loud on Monday with a photograph, and say it again every single day.

FIVE WORDS THEY'LL OWN BY FRIDAY

Africa lion elephant hot drum

Littles (2.5–3) — one word + a gesture is a win: “Africa!” (pat the floor twice), “ROAR!” (big open mouth), “Hot!” (fan your face).

Bigs (4–6) — sentence frames: “This is Africa.” · “The lion is big.” · “It is very hot in Africa.” · “I can hear the drum.”

Never ask a little for a sentence. They will get there by watching the bigs.

THE 13-MINUTE FLOW, EVERY DAY

- 2 MIN** Magic Box hook — chant, shake, sniff, dramatic peek, the day's real object.
- 4 MIN** Teach — the day's word with the real thing in your hands. Get it wrong once on purpose.
- 3 MIN** Song — chorus → today's new verse → chorus.
- 3 MIN** Game — one named game, tied to the day's word.
- 1 MIN** Close — whisper → normal → SHOUT.

IN THE MAGIC BOX, DAY BY DAY

Mon the green Africa piece from the puzzle map + a photo of Teacher Tredoux as a child · **Tue** a lion and a tuft of wool for his mane · **Wed** an elephant and a length of soft tubing — a trunk that really squirts · **Thu** a hand drum · **Fri** everything, plus African printed cloth, a woven basket, warm yellow sand and cold water.

THE WEEK'S CLOSE

Everyone: “Africa... lion... ELEPHANT! BOOM-BA-BOOM!” (*pat the floor twice · roar · one arm swings as a trunk · three big pats on your knees*)

THEME SHELF · FOUR TRAYS

- 1** • African animal size grading — elephant → giraffe → lion → monkey → mouse on a mat printed with their shadows. *Control:* the shadow outlines. (From Tuesday and Wednesday.)
- 2** • Africa on the map — the puzzle-map corner with the green piece, and animal models to stand on it. *Control:* the colour — green card backs, green continent. (From Monday.)
- 3** • Drum rhythm cards — 1, 2 and 3 dot patterns; clap the pattern, then play it. *Control:* play it back together. (From Thursday.)
- 4** • Africa 3-part cards + wool manes — 非洲 · 狮子 · 大象 · 热 · 鼓, plus the 12 sorting cards under 大 / 小 and the action cards. *Control:* the whole control cards; a count card says how many strands of wool.

CHINESE ANGLE

One 汉字 card a day above the map: 非 · 狮 · 象 · 鼓 · 热. Monday: 中国在亚洲, 老师在非洲. Thursday: 打鼓 and 咧咧咧 — Africa has drums and China has drums. Friday: 非洲很热, and this Sunday is 春分 (Sun 21 March) — 昼夜平分, day and night exactly the same length on the whole round world.

FRIDAY'S DARK PHONICS SOUND

y — the front-of-the-mouth sound in yes, yellow, yum. “Yummy yellow yo-yo!” The week carries it: yellow sun, yellow sand, and **YES!** in Friday's verse. Mouth wide, tongue up at the front — y-y-yellow — then say it as fast as you can.

MONDAY · DAY 1

Find Africa

Today's words: **Africa**

Grab: **Grab:** the **green Africa piece** from the continent puzzle map and a **photo of Teacher Tredoux as a child**, both in the Magic Box; the puzzle map itself (or the world map cloth from Week 21) spread on the floor; a long strip of paper pinned up for the week's 汉字 row; the 非 card.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box is flat and almost weightless, and something slides from side to side when you tip it. Whole class chants:

Everyone: "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Tip it — *slide*. Sniff it — nothing at all. Peek in for a long time and let your face go serious. Then lift out the green piece with two hands and hold it up above your head.

Teacher: "It's **green**... and it is a piece of the **WORLD**." (*turn it slowly so everybody sees the shape*)

Now reach back in for the photograph and hold it beside the green piece: "**Teacher Tredoux was a little boy — in Africa.**" Let them look for as long as they want. Everybody pats the floor twice: "**Africa!**"

4 MIN TEACH · AFRICA

The green piece stays in your hands. Say it twice; the second time they do the actions with you:

Africa, Africa — **big** and green, (*draw one enormous shape in the air with both hands*)

The **hottest** place that I have seen! (*fan your face*)

My teacher lived there, long ago... (*point at the teacher, then hold both hands low, like a small child*)

Africa, Africa — **now you know!** (*pat the floor twice*)

Then the map. The green piece goes home into its own hole — let a child push it in and feel it drop. Now two fingers, one on each place: "**We live HERE**" (Asia, China, this room) "**... and Teacher lived THERE.**" Trace the distance between them slowly with one finger while everybody watches.

Littles pat the floor and say "**Africa!**" Bigs owe you the frame: "**This is Africa.**" "**Teacher Tredoux is from Africa.**"

Teacher fails: try to force the Africa piece into **Australia's** hole. Push harder. Turn it round. Push again, huffing. Wait to be rescued.

Chinese moment: pin the 非 card at the top of the strip — 非洲. Then the two together: 中国在亚洲, 老师在非洲. The row of 汉字 grows by one card every morning this week.

3 MIN GAME · FIND AFRICA

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" The map is on the floor in the middle of the circle and everybody can reach it.

Teacher: "Walking feet... go and stand on **Africa.**" (*one child at a time; the rest sit and watch*)

The child walks round, finds the green shape, stands on it (or lays one hand flat on it) and everybody else points at them and says it together: "**Africa!**" Then they sit down and the next one goes.

Bigs get the harder version: stand on Africa, then walk to **Asia** and stand where we live. Two continents, two names, one journey.

Go round until every single child has stood on it. This is a naming game, not a race — nobody is wrong and nobody is quick, and by Friday they will run to it.

1 MIN CLOSE

Everybody kneeling round the map, hands flat on the floor. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: "Africa... lion... ELEPHANT! BOOM-BA-BOOM!" (*pat the floor twice · roar · one arm swings as a trunk · three big pats on your knees*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *Handa's Surprise* (Eileen Browne) — a girl carries a basket of fruit on her head and the animals take it one by one. Let them shout the animal's name on every page.

3 MIN · Today's song moment — chorus → Monday's verse → chorus, sitting round the map.

"Africa is big and yellow-gold, / Hot in the day and at night it's cold!" (*draw the big shape again; fan your face, then hug yourself and shiver*)

TUESDAY · DAY 2

The Lion Roars

Today's words: **lion** (*Africa comes back every day*)

Grab: **Grab:** a model **lion** and a **tuft of wool** for his mane in the Magic Box; one small mouse or a mouse puppet; card lion faces, wool and a blunt needle or a punched card for the shelf tray; the 狮 card.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box is heavier, and something in it does not slide — it **thumps**. Chant, then shake it once and let a low growl come out of **you**, not the box.

Everyone: “What’s in the box? What’s in the box?”

Sniff the lid, jump back from it, then peek in with one eye shut. Lift out the lion very slowly and stand him on your open palm, facing the circle.

Teacher: “He has big feet... a gold coat... and a **very** big mouth.” (*hold the wool tuft round the lion’s face — the mane*)

Everybody opens their mouth wide: **“ROAR!”**

4 MIN TEACH · LION

The lion sits on your palm the whole way through. Say it twice; the second time they do it with you:

The lion has a **gold** mane, (*both hands make a big circle round your own face*)

He walks so **soft**... and walks again, (*soft padding hands on your knees, very quietly*)

He opens up his big, big mouth... (*both hands open wide in front of your mouth*)

and **ROAR** comes out! (*one enormous roar, then instant silence*)

Then the volume dial: your hand low on the floor is a **mouse squeak**, your hand up high is a **full roar**, and everything in between is theirs to follow. Move your hand slowly up and down and let twenty voices slide with it. End with the hand on the floor.

Little’s just roar — **“ROAR!”** — and that is a full win. Bigs owe you a sentence: **“The lion is big.” “The lion says roar.”**

Teacher fails: hold the wool mane round your own face, look enormously fierce, and say **“meow”**. Very quietly. Wait.

Chinese moment: the 狮 card joins 非 on the strip — 狮子. And remember the New Year 舞狮, the dancing lion? That one is a costume with two people inside; **this** one is a real animal, asleep in the hot grass in Africa. Same word, two very different lions.

3 MIN GAME · LION AND MOUSE

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” Two children in the middle: one is the **lion**, one is the **mouse**. Everybody else is the echo.

Teacher: “Lion... **ROAR!**” (*the whole class roars it back at the same size*) “Mouse... *squeak.*” (*the whole class squeaks it back, tiny*)

Swap the pair every two turns so everybody who wants a go gets one. Little’s copy the volume and nothing else; Bigs must say which one is coming *before* the class answers: **“The lion is big!”**

Always finish on the **mouse**. A game that ends loud leaves twenty roaring children; a game that ends in a squeak leaves twenty children listening for the next thing you say.

1 MIN CLOSE

Everybody up on their knees, mane hands round their faces. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: “Africa... lion... ELEPHANT! BOOM-BA-BOOM!” (*pat the floor twice · roar · one arm swings as a trunk · three big pats on your knees*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *The Lion Inside* (Rachel Bright) — a tiny mouse goes to ask the lion how to roar and finds out the lion is frightened too. It is the loud/soft game in a story.

3 MIN · Today’s song moment — chorus → Tuesday’s verse → chorus — once as the lion, once as the mouse.

“The lion says ROAR — the king of all, / Big, big lion — hear him call!” (*mane hands, then one big roar; both hands cupped behind your ears*)

WEDNESDAY · DAY 3

The Elephant

Today's words: **elephant** (*Africa · lion come back*)

Grab: Grab: a model **elephant** and a length of **soft tubing** — a trunk that really squirts — in the Magic Box; a basin of water and a towel (or take the squirting outside); the animal size-grading mat on the shelf tray; the 象 card.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box is **heavy** — make a real effort lifting it — and when you set it down it lands with a thump.

Everyone: “What’s in the box? What’s in the box?”

Shake it: one slow, heavy roll. Peek in and say nothing at all. Then lift out the elephant with **both** hands, like something precious and enormously heavy, and walk him slowly round the inside of the circle.

Teacher: “Grey... big... and look at his **nose**.” (*pull the soft tubing out of the box and hold it to your own face*)

One arm swings down from every face: **“Elephant!”**

4 MIN TEACH · ELEPHANT

Your arm is the trunk from here on. Say it twice; the second time everybody swings with you:

The elephant’s nose is **long** and grey, (*one arm hangs from your face and swings*)

He picks the leaves and walks away, (*scoop with the arm, then four slow heavy steps*)

He fills it at the waterhole... (*dip the arm down and sniff up loudly*)

and **SQUIRT** — all over! (*throw the arm up over your head*)

Then the real thing: the tubing goes in the basin, you suck up a mouthful of air and squirt water out of it. Do it once, badly, all over your own feet. Then every child gets a turn to make the trunk pick something up — a scarf, a bean bag — and put it down again.

Littles swing the trunk arm and say **“Elephant!”** Bigs owe you a sentence: **“The elephant is big and grey.” “The elephant has a long nose.”**

Teacher fails: try to pick up a block with your **ear**. Lean right over. Try the other ear. Look genuinely puzzled that it will not work.

Chinese moment: the 象 card joins 非 · 獅 — 大象, and the 大 is the whole joke: the big animal. Then 鼻子, and everybody points at their own nose and then at the elephant’s, which is very much longer.

3 MIN GAME · ELEPHANT TRUNK WALK

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” Everybody stands, one arm hanging as a trunk, knees soft.

Teacher: “Heavy feet... slow, slow, slow... and **SQUIRT!**” (*the whole herd walks the room at half speed, then throws the trunk up together*)

Walk, squirt, walk, squirt. Then the hard bit, which they love: the herd walks in one line, each child’s trunk arm holding the hand of the child in front, all the way round the room without breaking.

Half speed is the lesson. Ask them to walk so heavily that you can **hear** it, then so heavily you can hear it and nobody bumps — that is body control dressed up as an elephant.

1 MIN CLOSE

Everybody standing, trunk arms hanging, ready to swing. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: “Africa... lion... ELEPHANT! BOOM-BA-BOOM!” (*pat the floor twice · roar · one arm swings as a trunk · three big pats on your knees*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *Elmer* (David McKee) — the patchwork elephant who is not grey. Hold the book open at the last page and let them find Elmer in the crowd.

3 MIN · Today’s song moment — chorus → Wednesday’s verse → chorus, sung slowly — elephant speed.

“The elephant’s nose is long and grey, / Squirt, squirt, squirt — hip hooray!” (*swing the trunk arm slowly; three squirts up, then arms wide*)

THURSDAY · DAY 4

Boom, Boom, Drum

Today's words: **drum** (*Africa · lion · elephant come back*)

Grab: Grab: a hand drum in the Magic Box — the biggest one you own; the rhythm dot-cards for the shelf tray; a second drum or an upturned tub so two can play at once; the 鼓 card.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box **booms**. Do not shake it — tap the side of it once with one finger and let the sound do the work.

Everyone: “What’s in the box? What’s in the box?”

Tap it again, twice. Put your ear right against it. Tap it a third time and let your eyes go wide. Then lift the drum out and hold it flat on your palm without playing it at all — wait until the room is completely silent — and hit it **once**, hard.

Teacher: (*one enormous beat, then total stillness*) “That is a **drum**. It talks with your **hands**.”

Everybody pats their knees twice: “**Drum!**”

4 MIN TEACH · DRUM

Hands, never sticks. Say it twice; the second time everybody plays their knees with you:

Boom, boom — the big drum calls, (*two slow, heavy pats*)

Ba-da-**boom** — it fills the walls, (*three quick pats*)

Fast, fast, fast — now everybody run... (*patting as fast as you can, running feet on the spot*)

and **STOP** — the drum is done! (*both hands flat on the drum, everything freezes*)

Then every child gets the real drum for **three beats**, counted out loud by the whole class — one, two, three — and passes it on with two hands. Loud is allowed. Longer than three is not, and they will police it for you.

Littlest pat their knees and say “**Drum!**” Bigs owe you the frame: “**I can hear the drum.**” “**The drum is loud.**”

Teacher fails: try to play the drum with your **elbow**. Then with your head. Then put it on like a hat and look round for it.

Chinese moment: the 鼓 card joins 非 · 狮 · 象 — 打鼓, and the sound in Chinese: 咚咚咚. Africa has drums and China has drums, and both of them say the same thing: *come here, something is happening*.

3 MIN GAME · DRUM SAYS

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” Everybody stands with space round them. The drum gives the orders; you say nothing at all after the rules.

Teacher: “**Fast** drum — run on the spot. **Slow** drum — tiptoe. **No** drum — **FREEZE.**” (*then play, and let the drum do all the talking*)

Fast, slow, silence, over and over, and the silences get longer and longer. Last round, the drum goes to a Big and **they** run the room while you play in it like everybody else.

Three speeds only, all week, no new instructions. Matching a whole body to a sound is the same skill as hearing the difference between two English words — which is what the Friday phonics sound needs from them.

1 MIN CLOSE

Everybody sitting, hands raised over their knees, ready to play. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: “Africa... lion... ELEPHANT! BOOM-BA-BOOM!” (*pat the floor twice · roar · one arm swings as a trunk · three big pats on your knees, with the real drum on the shout*)

Before home time: hide the animals for tomorrow’s safari walk — one per child, some in plain sight at knee height for the littlest ones. Count them into the basket tonight so that tomorrow’s count comes out right.

Got 3 spare minutes? *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* (Verna Aardema) — a cumulative rhyme that grows a line at a time. Beat the drum softly under it and let them join in on the repeats.

3 MIN · Today’s song moment — chorus → Thursday’s verse → chorus, with one child on the real drum.

“Pat the drum — boom, boom, boom, / Everybody dance around the room!” (*three big pats, evenly spaced; everybody up and dancing*)

FRIDAY · DAY 5

Hot Yellow Land + Big Review

Today's words: **hot** — and **Africa** · **lion** · **elephant** · **drum**, the whole week

Grab: Grab: every prop from the week packed into the box, plus a piece of **African printed cloth** and a **woven basket**; a jar of warm yellow sand and a bowl of cold water; the animals hidden round the room from yesterday; the awards (print pack page 17); the 热 card. This Sunday, **21 March**, is 春分.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

The box comes out bulging, wrapped in the printed cloth, and will not quite shut.

Teacher: “Today the box is FULL — it’s got our whole WEEK inside it!”

Pull each thing out and hold it up in complete silence. They will supply the word before you can.

The green map piece → **“Africa!”** The lion → **“ROAR!”** The elephant → **“Elephant!”** The drum → **“Drum!”**

Last of all, the jar of sand. Open it, pour a little into every open hand, and let them feel it. **“HOT!”**

4 MIN TEACH · HOT, THEN THE WHOLE WEEK

Everybody stands. We tell the whole week with our bodies, twice — slow, then fast:

Yellow sun and yellow sand, *(one big circle overhead, then flat hands sweeping)*

Africa is a **HOT**, hot land! *(fan your face twice)*

A **lion**, *(mane hands and a roar)* an **elephant**, *(swing the trunk arm)* a **drum**, *(three pats on your knees)*

YES! — to Africa we come! *(both arms thrown wide)*

Then hot and cold, done with hands and not words: one bowl of warm sand, one bowl of cold water, and every child puts a hand in both. **“Hot!”** **“Cold!”** Africa in the day is the first one; Africa at night is the second one, which is the surprise of the week.

Littles fan their faces and say **“Hot!”** Bigs owe you a whole sentence each: **“It is very hot in Africa.”** **“The sun is hot.”** **“This is Africa.”**

Teacher fails: get ready for Africa by putting on a winter coat, a scarf, a woolly hat and gloves. Announce that you are ready. Start fanning yourself. Wait.

Chinese moment: the 热 card completes the row — 非 · 狮 · 象 · 鼓 · 热, the whole week on the strip, and 非洲很热 is the sentence. Then this Sunday: 春分, 21 March — 昼夜平分, day and night exactly the same length, here in China *and* in Africa, on the same round world we found on Monday's map.

3 MIN GAME · SAFARI WALK

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” The animals are hidden round the room, one for every child, and the woven basket sits in the middle of the circle.

Teacher: “Quiet feet... find **one** animal... bring it back and **tell us what it is.**” *(one animal each — the rest stay hidden for the next child)*

Everybody comes back, sits down, and one at a time holds theirs up and names it: **“Lion!”** **“Elephant!”** Bigs give the sentence — **“I found a big elephant.”** Then it goes in the basket and we count the whole basket out loud together.

Quiet feet, on purpose. A safari is the one hunt where you find more by being silent, and after four loud days they can feel the difference.

1 MIN CLOSE + AWARDS

Every child gets a “You are a STAR!” award to take home. Then, standing round the map with the drum, all four gestures:

Everyone: “Africa... lion... ELEPHANT! BOOM-BA-BOOM!” *(pat the floor twice · roar · one arm swings as a trunk · three big pats on your knees, and the drum on the shout)*

Got 3 spare minutes? Sing the whole song one more time with the drum, then tell them what is coming: next week we **zoom right in** from the whole green continent to **one country** at the very bottom of it — Teacher Tredoux's own country. Do not name it yet. Let them wonder all weekend.

3 MIN · Today's song moment — Friday's verse, then the WHOLE song, top to bottom, round the map with the drum.

“Yellow sun and yellow sand, / YES! I love this yellow land!” *(circle overhead, then flat sweeping hands; both arms thrown wide on YES)*

SONGBOOK

★ “Africa Is Hot!”

C (0003) F (2010) G7 (0212) Am (2000) · Strum: Down · Down · Down-Up (“boom — boom — boom-ba”)

Steady and marching, at drum speed, with a big rest before “a whole lot!” so the roar lands clean. **Am is one finger** — the same finger as C, moved to the other side — and it appears once per chorus, on the drum line. Every verse is only C and G7. Chant it without the uke first; add the chords once they know the actions.

CHORUS — EVERY SINGLE DAY

- C Africa, Africa — the F sun is C hot! (*fan your face*)
F Lions and C elephants — a G7 whole C lot! (*roar, then swing one arm as a trunk*)
Am Boom-ba-boom goes the F big drum C song, (*pat your knees on every beat*)
F Dance in C Africa G7 all day C long! (*everybody dances on the spot*)

MONDAY · AFRICA

- C Africa is big and yellow-gold, (*draw one big shape in the air*)
G7 Hot in the day — C and at night it's cold! (*fan your face, then shiver*)

TUESDAY · LION

- C The lion says ROAR — the king of all, (*mane hands, then one big roar*)
G7 Big, big lion — C hear him call! (*both hands cupped behind your ears*)

WEDNESDAY · ELEPHANT

- C The elephant's nose is long and grey, (*swing the trunk arm slowly*)
G7 Squirt, squirt, squirt — C hip hooray! (*three squirts up, then arms wide*)

THURSDAY · DRUM

- C Pat the drum — boom, boom, boom, (*three big pats, evenly spaced*)
G7 Everybody dance C around the room! (*everybody up and dancing*)

FRIDAY · YELLOW

- C Yellow sun and yellow sand, (*circle overhead, then flat sweeping hands*)
G7 YES! I love C this yellow land! (*both arms thrown wide on YES*)

Each day: chorus → today's verse → chorus. Friday: sing the whole thing top to bottom, sitting round the map with the drum going and every animal home on the green continent — that run-through is the review of the week. If your fingers get stuck, put the uke down, give one child the real drum and do the finger-play instead; the actions carry the meaning either way.