

Mkeka (Mat) for Kwanzaa

Practice weaving as you create this mat, which serves as the basis for the Kwanzaa table, a key part of this African American tradition.

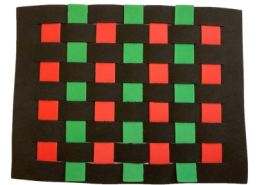
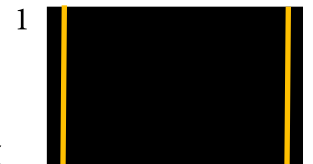


What you will need:

- Black, red, and green construction paper, felt, or foam sheets.
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Glue or tape

Make the Mkeke

1. Draw a line 1 inch from the shortest ends of the black paper.
2. Draw lines one inch apart longways across the black sheet. Cut along these lines, being careful not to cut all the way to edge of the sheet.
3. Cut the red and green sheets into 1 inch strips. You should have seven strips total in the end, four red and three green.
4. Begin weaving. Start with red and weave one into the black mat—under, over, under, over —until you get to the end. Next, weave in a green strip, but this time go over, under, over, under.
6. Continue switching colors to weave until you use all seven strips. You may need to push the woven strips together to make room for more.
7. Secure the strips with tape or glue if needed once strips are woven in.



Finished

Learn about Kwanzaa

African Americans have been part of the fabric of Alexandria since the 1700s. Kwanzaa is one of many reminders of the rich African American history and culture in the City. Kwanzaa is an African American holiday from December 26 through January 1 that celebrates family, community, and culture. It was created by Maulana Karenga and first celebrated in 1966. Learn more from the founder's official website: officialkwanzaawebsite.org.

