

# Session 1

## Here we are



Greta is off on a journey to Zimbabwe. From the UK, it's about 13 hours by plane as it is about 8,300 km away. But because you are travelling mostly southwards, the time difference is only two hours, so 9am in the UK will be 11am in Zimbabwe. The country is landlocked, which means all its borders are with other countries and it does not have a coast. There are five major rivers, one of which is called the Zambezi and is the fourth longest river in Africa, and there is a very famous big waterfall called the Victoria Falls. The capital city is called Harare. Have a look at the map and see what countries border Zimbabwe.

The climate is mild, with a rainy season (November to March) and a dry season. Some areas, especially the south east, experience frequent droughts.

Much of Zimbabwe is covered with grassland (savanna) with occasional trees. In the east are evergreen forests. Animals that live there include lions, hyenas, jackals, elephants, hippopotamuses, giraffes, gorillas, chimpanzees, baboons, antelope, and crocodiles.

The country is named after Great Zimbabwe, an ancient city in the south eastern hills, thought to have been the capital of a great kingdom between around 1100 CE and the 15th century. In the ruins archaeologists found several soapstone sculptures of birds, which are now the national symbol. Can you spot them on the flag?

Almost everyone who lives in Zimbabwe is African. The main groups are Shona (82%) and Ndebele (14%). Shona and Ndebele languages are widely spoken but English is used in government.



Most people live in rural areas where the main crops grown are tobacco, cotton, corn and sugarcane. Coffee is becoming a popular crop and farmers may grow bananas, oranges and other produce. Some keep cows, goats, sheep, pigs or chickens. Mining is important: gold, nickel, coal and other minerals are mined in the hills. According to UNESCO, about 92% of young Zimbabweans and 87% of adults are literate. Despite this, many are unemployed.

About 13 million people live in Zimbabwe, nearly half of them (6.3 million) children. Over two thirds of these children live in poverty, many in extreme poverty. More than a quarter of children under 18 do not live with their parents, being orphans or abandoned, mainly because adults have died from a highly contagious and very dangerous illness called AIDS. A small number of children live in orphanages, children's homes or foster care; many live with relatives, and some actually just continue to live alone.

Three quarters of Zimbabweans are Christian, mostly Protestants. Some mix their Christian belief with traditional religions of the Shona and Ndebele people. The Shona god is known as 'Mwari', whilst the Ndebele god is called 'uMlimu'. Many people believe they can talk to Mwari and uMlimu through the spirits of their ancestors and deceased chiefs. There are a very small number of Muslims in Zimbabwe and about ten per cent of people say they do not follow any particular faith.

People in Zimbabwe consider politeness very important, especially respect for people older than you. People who are older than 50 are sometimes referred to as "Sekuru" (Old man) or "Ambuya" (Granny), a way of showing respect. People don't tend to have middle names in Zimbabwe. Their family names are almost always traditional and usually in the language of their origin, but sometimes they may have an English first name – either one like those used in Britain (such as Henry or Mary) or one which represents a quality their parents hope they will display (such as Patience or Happiness or Bright).



## Bible link Genesis 1:24-25

*Then God said, "Let the earth be filled with animals. And let each produce more of its own kind. Let there be tame animals and small crawling animals and wild animals. And let each produce more of its kind." And it happened. So God made the wild animals, the tame animals and all the small crawling animals to produce more of their own kind. God saw that this was good.*



- I wonder which of the many animals God placed in Zimbabwe is your favourite
- I wonder why God created such variety and didn't just stop at one or two different creatures
- I wonder what God's hope is for all who live in Zimbabwe and for all who live in the UK

## Prayer

Creator God, thank you for all the variety on earth – different creatures, plants, landscapes, climates and all the different people. You made all these things and called each of them good. Help us to be curious as we find out more about different countries and especially as we learn about children like us in Zimbabwe, all part of your big family here on earth. Amen.

## Active Prayer

Take a heart-shaped piece of coloured or decorated paper. Tear it into three pieces. Think about those children who have no parent to care for them or whose families have been torn apart. Glue the pieces onto a square of card, slightly apart, and colour between them with gold pen. Ask God to heal their fear and sadness, to love them, and to bring people into their lives who will love them and keep them safe.

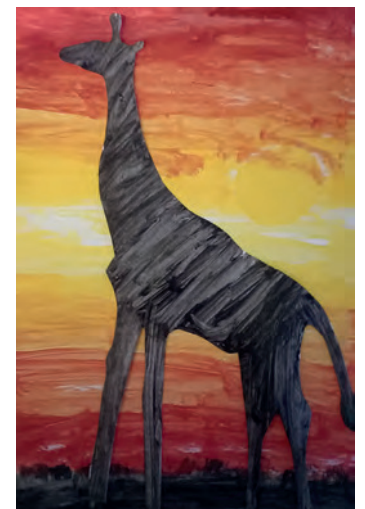
## Game

You need sets of cards with the names of African animals on, with either three or four cards each having the same animal. Shuffle the cards and give one each to the players. They have to make a sound effect or do an action for their animal and, without speaking, find the other players who have the same card. Animals: Elephant, Giraffe, Lion, Crocodile, Snake, Monkey, Warthog, Cow, Goat, Chicken.



## Greta Wonders...

- What must it be like to live in a country where there are very few elderly people and there are as many children as adults? How would it be different?
- Many people in Zimbabwe have a name which says something about them, such as "Innocent" or "Happy" or "Patience". What name would best describe you?



## Activity

Create silhouettes of African animals by cutting them out of black paper. Take a sheet of white paper and colour it with paint, wax crayon, pastel etc. You could do a sunset pattern – a black stripe at the base for land, then starting with a pale yellow stripe, then deeper yellow, and then adding a bit more red to the yellow each time until finishing with a red stripe.

Or do a pattern reminiscent of the animal's coat (you may need some photographs of different Zimbabwean animals to refer to). Then glue the silhouette on top.

## Action Point

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states the rights of every child in the world, regardless of their race, religion or abilities. Read the UNICEF child-friendly version [www.bit.ly/46oFkHy](http://www.bit.ly/46oFkHy) and think about how these rights are reflected in your daily life. As we start to find out about a child's life in Zimbabwe, look out for where things might be different for them, especially if they have no parent to look after them.

## Watch

[https://youtu.be/GcCATJm\\_EJg](https://youtu.be/GcCATJm_EJg)

Party Croc – a folktale from Zimbabwe

