

Early African Civilizations



Essential Question

What was more important for the development of African societies, trade or warfare?



About the Photo: This photo shows women in front of a mosque in the city of Djenné, in the modern country of Mali.

In this module, you will read about the geography, early cultures, and great empires of Africa. You will also learn about the ways religion, trade, and natural resources all influenced how early African civilizations developed.

Explore ONLINE!

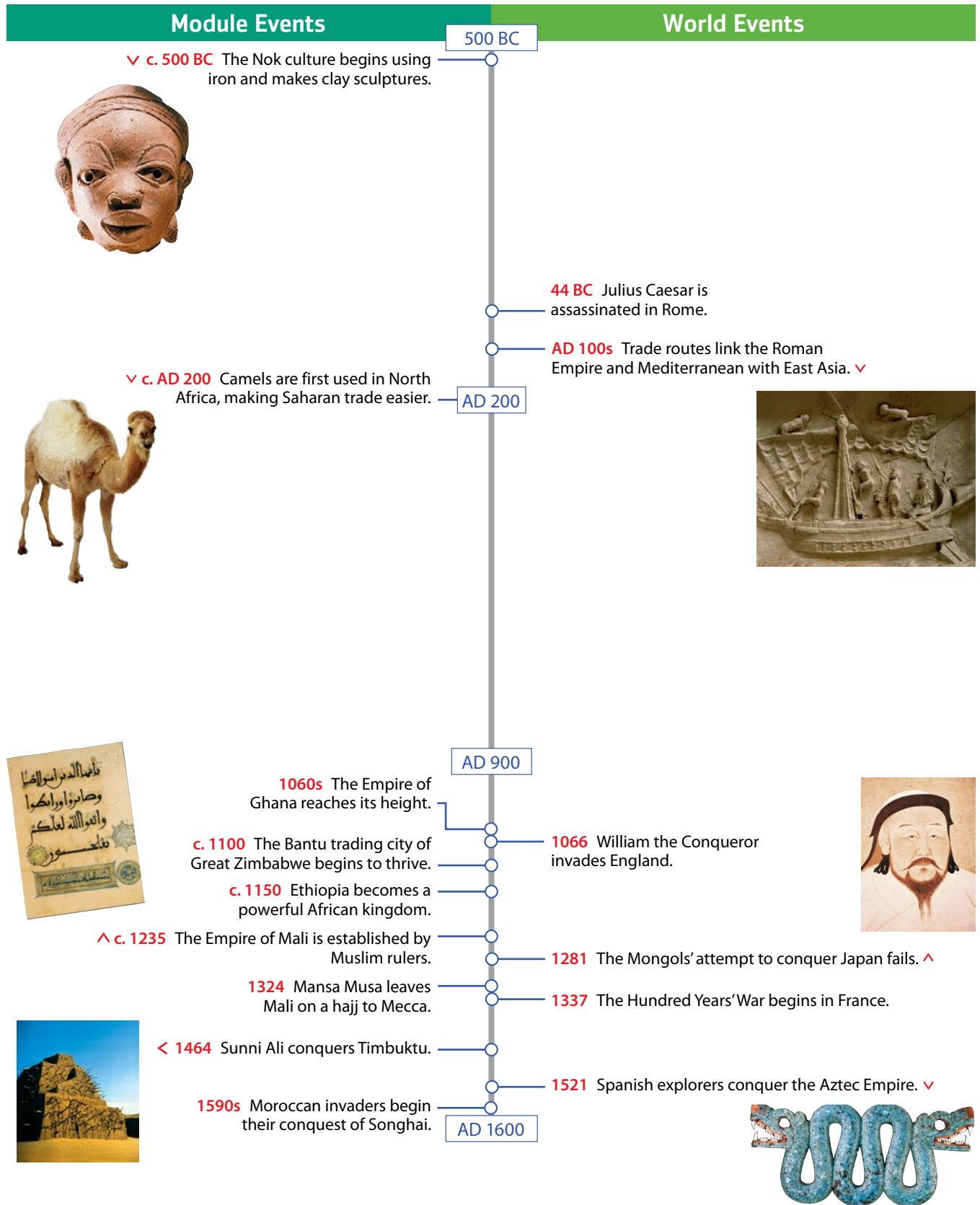


VIDEOS, including...
• The Sahara

- Document-Based Investigations
- Graphic Organizers
- Interactive Games
- Interactive Map: Early African Empires
- Image with Hotspots: Timbuktu
- Image Carousel: Crossing the Sahara

What You Will Learn...

- Lesson 1: Geography of Early Africa 470**
The Big Idea Natural resources, trade, family ties, religion, and iron technology all contributed to the growth of West African societies.
- Lesson 2: The Empire of Ghana 480**
The Big Idea The rulers of Ghana built an empire by controlling the salt and gold trade.
- Lesson 3: The Empires of Mali and Songhai 488**
The Big Idea The wealthy and powerful Mali Empire ruled West Africa after the fall of Ghana, and the Songhai Empire strengthened Islam in the region.
- Lesson 4: Historical and Artistic Traditions of West Africa 498**
The Big Idea Because the people of West Africa did not have a written language, their culture has been passed down through oral history, writings by other people, and the arts.
- Lesson 5: Sub-Saharan Cultures. 506**
The Big Idea The movement and interaction of cultures and peoples created unique ways of life in sub-Saharan Africa.



Reading Social Studies

THEME FOCUS:

Geography, Society and Culture, Science and Technology

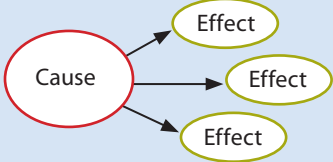

In this module, you will read about West Africa—its physical geography and early cultures. You will learn about different elements of West African society and culture, such as oral traditions and dance. You will see West Africa is a land of many resources and varied features. Some resources were the basis for science and technology that allowed people to create strong tools and weapons.

READING FOCUS:

Organization of Facts and Information

How are books organized in the library? How are the groceries organized in the store? Clear organization helps us find the product we need, and it also helps us find facts and information.

Understanding Structural Patterns Writers use structural patterns to organize information in sentences or paragraphs. What's a structural pattern? It's simply a way of organizing information. Learning to recognize those patterns will make it easier for you to read and understand social studies texts.

Patterns of Organization		
Pattern	Clue Words	Graphic Organizer
Cause-effect shows how one thing leads to another.	<i>as a result, because, therefore, this led to</i>	
Chronological Order shows the sequence of events or actions.	<i>after, before, first, then, not long after, finally</i>	
Listing presents information in categories such as size, location or importance.	<i>also, most important, for example, in fact</i>	Category • Fact • Fact • Fact

Use these steps to use structural patterns to organize information:

1. Look for the main idea of the passage you are reading.
2. Look for clues that signal a specific pattern.
3. Look for other important ideas and think about how the ideas connect. Is there any obvious pattern?
4. Use a graphic organizer to map the relationships among the facts and details.

You Try It!

Read the following passage and then answer the questions below.

Recognize Structural Patterns

- A.** “Living in present day Nigeria, the Nok made iron farm tools. One iron tool, the hoe, allowed farmers to clear the land more quickly and easily than they could do with earlier tools. As a result, they could grow more food.”
- B.** “Thousands of years ago, West Africa had a damp climate. About 5,000 years ago the climate changed, though, and the area became drier. As more land became desert, people had to leave areas where they could no longer survive. People who had once lived freely began to live closer together. Over time, they settled in villages.”
- C.** “Four different regions make up the area surrounding the Niger River. . . . The northern band across West Africa is the southern part of the Sahara. . . . The next band is the semiarid Sahel (sah-HEL), a strip of land that divides the desert from wetter areas. . . . Farther south is a band of savannah, or open grassland. . . . The fourth band gets heavy rain.”

Answer these questions based on the passage you just read.

1. What structural pattern did the writer use to organize the information in passage A? How can you tell?
2. What structural pattern did the writer use to organize the information in passage B? How can you tell?
3. What structural pattern did the writer use to organize the information in passage C? How can you tell?

As you read this module, think about the organization of the ideas. Look for signal words, and ask yourself why the author has arranged the text in the way he or she did.

Key Terms and People

Lesson 1

rifts
sub-Saharan Africa
Sahel
savannah
rain forests
kinship system
extended family
patrilineal
matrilineal
animism

Lesson 2

silent barter
income
Tunka Manin

Lesson 3

Sundiata
Mansa Musa
Sunni Ali
Askia the Great

Lesson 4

oral history
griots
proverbs
kente

Lesson 5

Ethiopia
Coptic Christianity
Bantu
Great Zimbabwe
Swahili



Geography and Early Africa

The Big Idea

Natural resources, trade, family ties, religion, and iron technology all contributed to the growth of West African societies.

Main Ideas

- The landforms, water, climate, and plant life affected history in West Africa.
- West Africa's resources included farmland, gold, and salt.
- Family and religion influenced daily life in early West African society.
- Iron technology changed life in West Africa.

Key Terms and People

rifts
 sub-Saharan Africa
 Sahel
 savannah
 rain forests
 kinship system
 extended family
 patrilineal
 matrilineal
 animism

If YOU were there . . .

You and your family are farmers in West Africa in about 400 BC. The Niger River is not too far away from where you live. The river is full of life—birds, fish, and crocodiles. You use its water to grow crops and raise cattle. Farming is hard work. You use a sharp, wooden stick to dig the soil and put seeds in the ground. One day, you are given farm tools made of a dark metal you've never seen before. These fine tools are so strong you can't break them! They have clean, sharp edges.

Why is this a good place to live? How will these new tools change your life?

Landforms, Water, Climate, and Plant Life

Africa is a big place. In fact, it is the second-largest continent on earth. Only Asia is bigger. An immense desert, the Sahara, stretches across most of North Africa. Along the northwestern edge of the Sahara are the Atlas Mountains. At the opposite edge of the continent, in the southeast, the Drakensberg Mountains rise. In eastern Africa, mountains extend alongside great rifts. These **rifts** are long, deep valleys formed by the movement of Earth's crust. From all these mountains the land dips into plateaus and wide, low plains.

The plains of **sub-Saharan Africa**, or Africa south of the Sahara, are crossed by mighty rivers. Among the main rivers are the Congo, the Zambezi, and the Niger. Along the Niger River in West Africa great civilizations arose. The role this river played in the development of civilizations is one example of the way the physical geography of West Africa affected history there.

West Africa's Great River The Niger River was a source of water, food, and transportation, which allowed many people to live in the area.

Along the Niger's middle section is a low-lying area of lakes and marshes. This watery region is called the inland delta. Although it looks much like the area where a river flows into the sea, it is hundreds of miles from the coast. Many animals and birds find food and shelter in the area. Among them are crocodiles, geese, and hippopotamus. Fish are also plentiful.

▶ Explore ONLINE!

Africa: Physical



The world's largest desert, the Sahara, dominates North Africa.

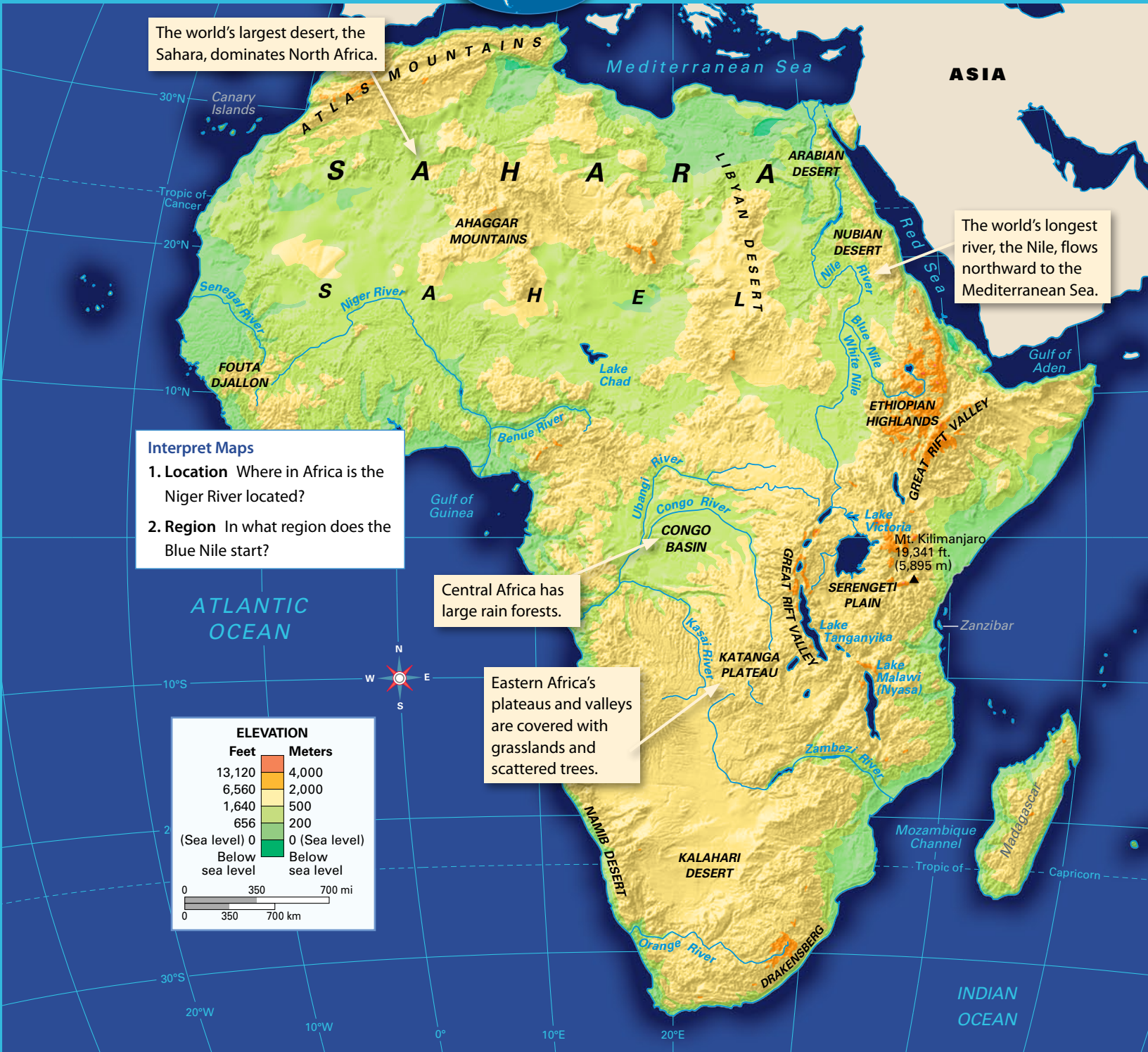
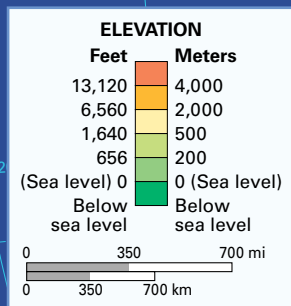
The world's longest river, the Nile, flows northward to the Mediterranean Sea.

Interpret Maps

- Location** Where in Africa is the Niger River located?
- Region** In what region does the Blue Nile start?

Central Africa has large rain forests.

Eastern Africa's plateaus and valleys are covered with grasslands and scattered trees.





Desert

The huge Sahara covers most of North Africa. Here, a traveler crosses a giant sea of sand.



Savannah

Much of Africa is covered by grasslands called savannah. Scattered across the savannah are clumps of trees like these acacia trees.



Rain Forest

Thick rain forests like this one are found in central and western Africa. The rain forests' tall trees provide homes for many different animals.

Academic Vocabulary

impact effect, result

West Africa's Climates and Plants Four different climate regions make up the area surrounding the Niger River. These regions, which run from east to west, are like broad bands or stripes across West Africa. The entire area is warm, but rainfall varies from north to south. The amount of rainfall each region gets has an **impact** on what vegetation, or plant life, exists there.

The northern band across West Africa is the southern part of the Sahara. This huge expanse of sand and gravel is the world's largest desert. Temperatures can climb above 120°F. Rain is very rare.

The next band is the semiarid **Sahel** (sah-HEL), a strip of land that divides the desert from wetter areas. Although the Sahel is fairly dry, it has enough vegetation to support hardy grazing animals.

Farther south is a band of **savannah**, or open grassland with scattered trees. Tall grasses and shrubs also grow there, and grazing animals are common.

The fourth band gets heavy rain. Near the equator are **rain forests**, or moist, densely wooded areas. They contain many different plants and animals.

West Africa's Resources

West Africa's land is one of the region's resources. With its many climates, the land could produce many different crops. Among the **traditional** West African crops are dates raised in desert oases and kola nuts, used for medicines, from the forests' trees. Along the Niger, farmers could use the water to grow many food crops.

Other resources were minerals. People who live mainly on plant foods, like many early Africans, must add salt to their diets. The Sahara was a source of this precious mineral. When ancient lakes there dried up, they left salt behind. Workers mined the salt by digging deep into the earth.

Gold was another mineral resource of West Africa. Although gold is soft and therefore useless for tools or weapons, it makes beautiful jewelry and coins. Gold came from the southern forests. Miners kept the exact locations of the gold mines a secret. To this day, no one knows exactly where the mines were located, but gold became a valuable trade good.

Reading Check

Summarize What are West Africa's four climate and vegetation regions?

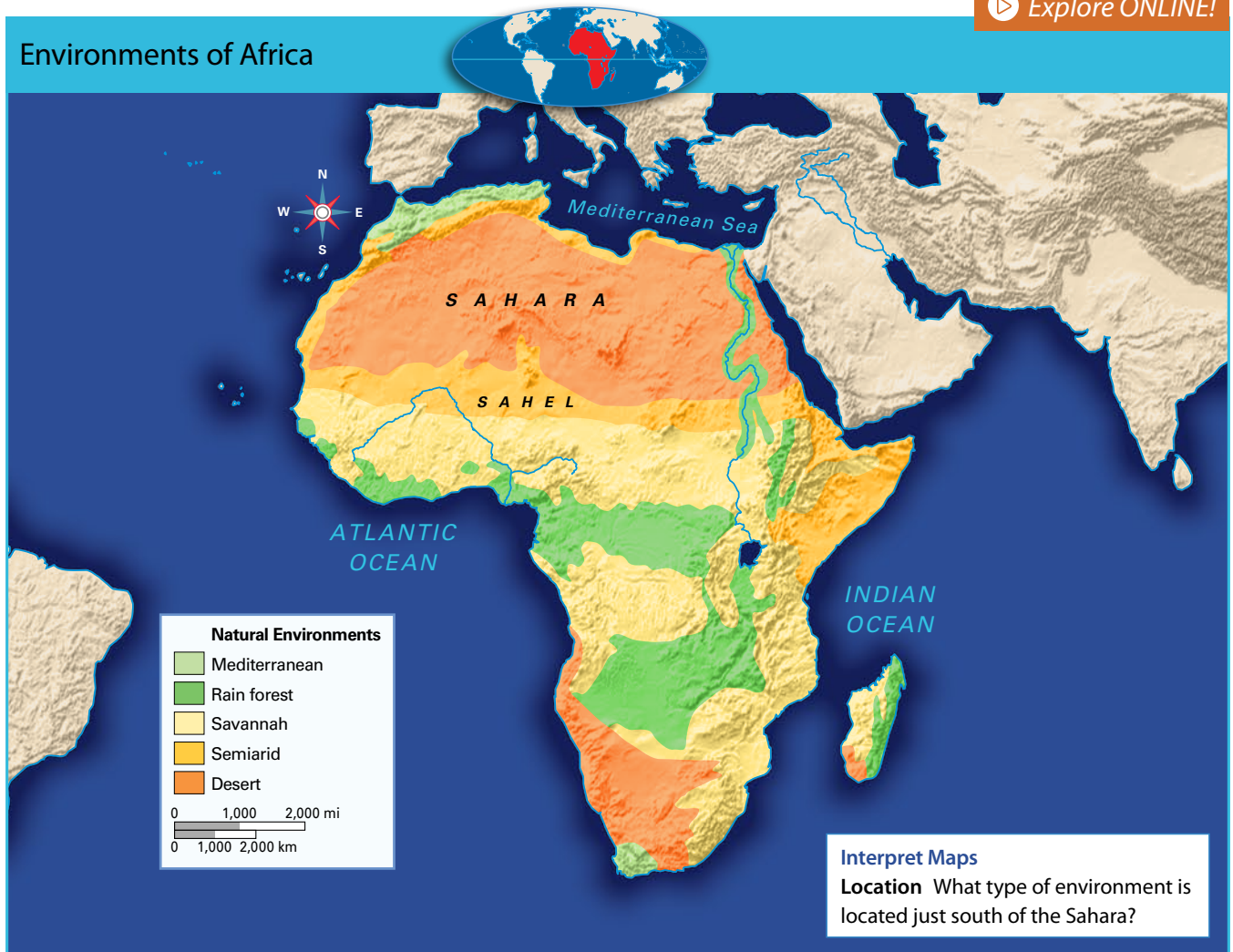
Academic Vocabulary

traditional customary, time-honored

Reading Check

Find Main Ideas What are some of West Africa's major resources?

Environments of Africa



Families, Religion, and Daily Life

Thousands of years ago, West Africa had a damp climate. About 5,000 years ago the climate changed, though, and the area became drier. As more land became desert, people had to leave areas where they could no longer survive. People who had once roamed freely began to live closer together. Over time, they settled in villages. At the heart of village life was the family.

Families, Villages, and Loyalties Historians today look at traditional African communities to learn about how life was lived long ago. They believe that such communities have a social organization similar to that of early communities in West Africa and other parts of the world.

The main way people organized themselves was by living in larger groups of relatives. This is called a kinship system. A **kinship system** is a system of social organization based on family ties. These family ties are used for production and group decision-making.



Village Life

Families were an important part of West African village society. Here a family gathers in a Nigerian village.

The kinship system started with an **extended family**, which included a father, mother, children, and close relatives. Extended families lived with other people related to them in villages. People in villages were parts of larger clans. A clan is a large group of people who are related to each other.

African societies could also include another type of group—age-sets. In age-sets, men who had been born within the same two or three years formed special bonds. Men in the same age-set had a duty to help each other. Women, too, sometimes formed age-sets.

In some West African villages, the older people, or elders, of the village were the leaders and made the decisions. Other groups had a chief who was descended from the founder of the clan. The chief relied on a council of important people who advised him. The council also helped him make laws for the community.

In most of these societies, leadership was hereditary, meaning that it was passed down from a relative. Some societies were **patrilineal**. Leadership passed from fathers or grandfathers to sons, grandsons, or

Village Society

Families

Families were the basic group of village society.



Extended Families

Extended families included grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and their families.



Village Chiefs

Extended families often had a male leader who served as a village chief.



Council of Elders

Sometimes, village chiefs formed a council of elders that led the village. Sometimes a village would just be run by a council of elders.



nephews. By contrast, others were **matrilineal**. Even though men still served as leaders, leadership passed down through the mother's family. For example, in matrilineal societies a new leader might be the son of the old leader's daughter.

Members of families, villages, and clans were expected to be loyal to one another. Loyalty to family and age-sets helped people work together and maintained order in the community. It seems that there was not the same concept of individual rights in these communities that we have today.

Social Roles Everyone in a community had specific duties. The men hunted and farmed. Among the crops that men tended were millet and sorghum. These hardy grains grew well in the savannah in spite of the poor soil there. After being harvested, the grain could be made into a thick paste or ground into flour to make bread. Cattle could eat the grain. Farmers also raised goats and sheep.

Like the men, West African women worked very hard. They farmed, collected firewood, ground grain, and carried water. Women also cared for children. Even the very young and the very old had their own tasks. For example, the elders, or old people, taught the family's traditions to younger generations. Through songs, dances, and stories, elders passed on the



This photo shows West African villagers performing a traditional dance learned from their elders.

community's history and values. Among the values that children learned was the need for hard work. Children began working beside older family members as soon as they were able.

Religion and Culture Another central feature of village life was religion. Some religious practices were similar from village to village. A traditional belief showed the importance of families. Many West Africans believed that the unseen spirits of their ancestors stayed nearby. To honor these spirits, families marked places as sacred spaces by putting specially carved statues there. Family members gathered in these places to share news and problems with the ancestors. Families also offered food to the ancestors' spirits. Through these practices they hoped to keep the spirits happy. In return, they believed, these spirits would protect the village from harm.

Another common West African belief had to do with nature. We call it **animism**—the belief that bodies of water, animals, trees, and other natural objects have spirits. Animism reflected West Africans' dependence on the natural world for survival.



This Nok terra cotta (ceramic clay) sculpture depicts human heads, a common feature of Nok artistry.

Technology and Change

As time passed, the people of West Africa developed advanced and diverse cultures. Changes in technology helped some early communities grow.

Sometime around 500 BC West Africans made a discovery that would change their region forever. They found that they could heat certain kinds

Reading Check
Form Generalizations
What role did families play in traditional West African culture?

of rock to get a hard metal. This metal was iron. By heating the iron again, they could shape it into useful things. Stronger than other metals, iron was good for making tools.

One of the earliest peoples to use this new technology was the Nok. Living in what is now Nigeria, the Nok made iron farm tools. One iron tool, the hoe, allowed farmers to clear the land more quickly and easily than they could with earlier tools. As a result, they could grow more food. The Nok also used iron tips for arrows and spears. Iron weapons provided a better defense against invaders and helped in hunting. As better-equipped farmers, hunters, and warriors, the Nok gained power. They also became known for fine sculptures of animals and human heads they made from clay.

Iron tools also provided another benefit. They helped West Africans live in places where they couldn't live before. Iron blades allowed people to cut down trees to clear land for farms. Because they had more places to live and more farms for growing food, the population of West Africa grew.

Reading Check

Find Main Ideas

How did technology change life in West Africa?

Summary and Preview Families and religion were central to early West African cultures. The physical geography of the continent also impacted people's lives. When West Africans developed iron technology, communities grew. In the next lesson, you will read about the West African empires based on the trade of gold and salt.

Lesson 1 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

- Define** What is a savannah?
 - Contrast** How might living in the Sahel be different from living in a rain forest?
 - Evaluate** In which African climate region would you most like to live? Why?
- Identify** What were two of early West Africa's important mineral resources?
 - Explain** How were these resources related to West Africa's physical geography?
 - Elaborate** Why do you think miners kept the location of the gold mines a secret?
- Identify** What are two groups to which a person in early West Africa may have owed loyalty?
 - Analyze** How did animism reflect what was important to early West African peoples?

- Describe** How did the use of iron change farming?
 - Make Inferences** What evidence do you think historians have for how the Nok people lived?

Critical Thinking

- Summarize** Create a chart like this one. Use it to describe the characteristics of West Africa's four climate regions.

Climate region	Characteristics

History and Geography

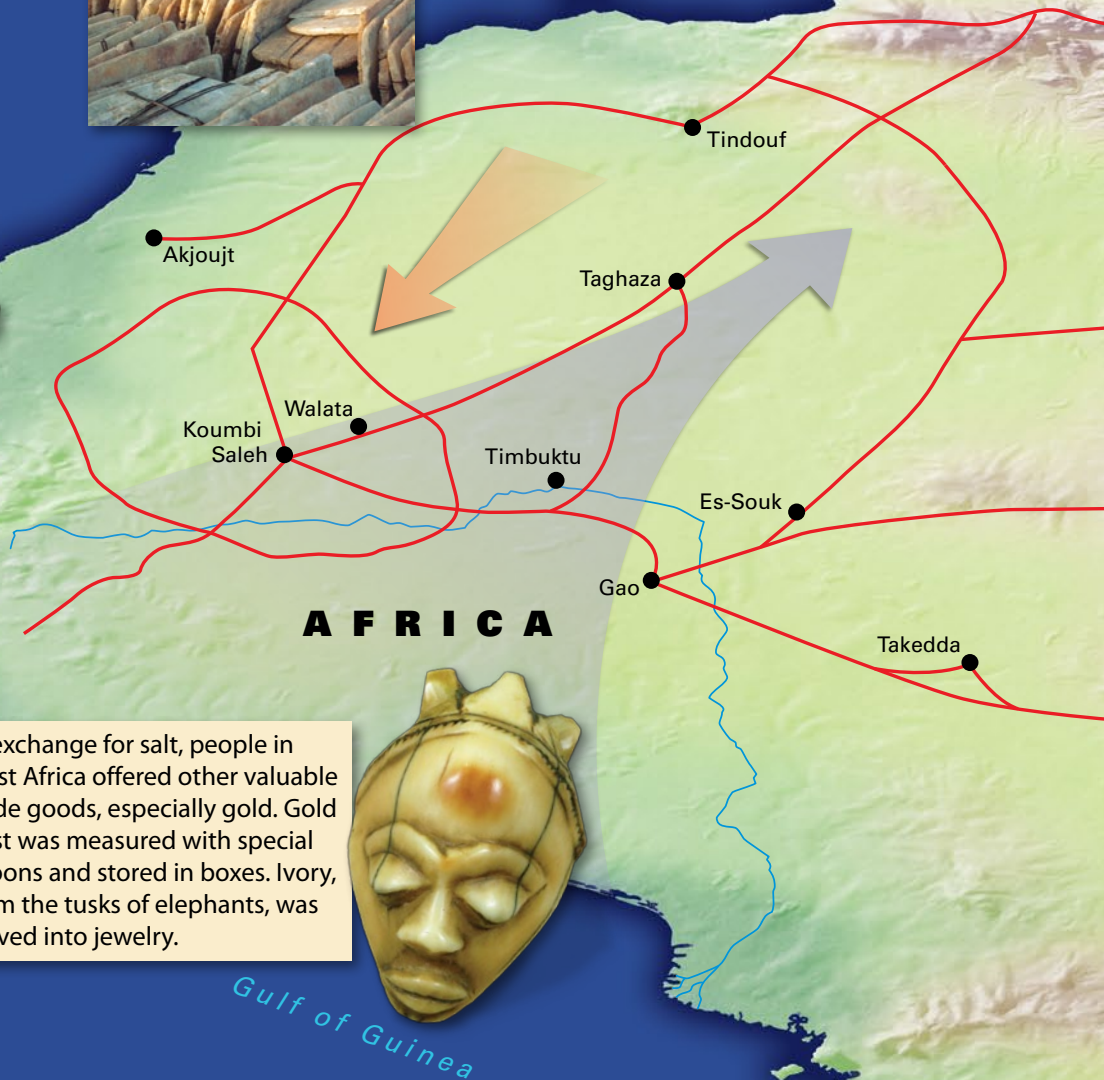
Crossing the Sahara

Crossing the Sahara has never been easy. Bigger than the entire continent of Australia, the Sahara is one of the hottest, driest, and most barren places on earth. Yet for centuries, people have crossed the Sahara's gravel-covered plains and vast seas of sand. Long ago, West Africans crossed the desert regularly to carry on a rich trade.

Salt, used to preserve and flavor food, was available in the Sahara. Traders from the north took salt south. Camel caravans carried huge slabs of salt weighing hundreds of pounds.



In exchange for salt, people in West Africa offered other valuable trade goods, especially gold. Gold dust was measured with special spoons and stored in boxes. Ivory, from the tusks of elephants, was carved into jewelry.



ATLANTIC OCEAN



EUROPE



Some goods that were traded across the Sahara, like silk and spices, came all the way from Asia along the Silk Road. These luxury items were traded for West African goods like gold and ivory.

A Difficult Journey

Temperature Temperatures soared to well over 100°F during the day and below freezing at night. Dying of heat or cold was a real danger.

Water Most areas of the Sahara gets less than 1 inch of rain per year. Travelers had to bring lots of water or they could die of thirst.

Distance The Sahara is huge, and the trade routes were not well marked. Travelers could easily get lost.

Bandits Valuable trade goods were a tempting target for bandits. For protection, merchants traveled in caravans.

Interpret Maps

- 1. Movement** What were some goods traded across the Sahara?
- 2. Human-Environment Interaction** Why was salt a valued trade good?

SAHARA

Daima

Ghat

Ghadames

Zawilah

Bilma

— Trade route
● Settlement
Scale varies on this map.

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

RED SEA



The Empire of Ghana

The Big Idea

The rulers of Ghana built an empire by controlling the salt and gold trade.

Main Ideas

- Ghana grew as larger populations settled on desert trade routes.
- Ghana controlled trade and became wealthy.
- Through its control of trade, Ghana built an empire.
- Ghana's decline was caused by attacking invaders, overgrazing, and the loss of trade.

Key Terms and People

silent barter
income
Tunka Manin



Carving of a human head from Ghana

If YOU were there . . .

You are a trader, traveling in a caravan from the north into West Africa around AD 1000. The caravan carries many goods, but the most precious is salt. Salt is so valuable that people trade gold for it! You have never met the mysterious men who trade you the gold. You wish you could talk to them to find out where they get it.

Why do you think the traders are so secretive?

An Empire at the Desert's Edge

For hundreds of years, trade routes crisscrossed West Africa. For most of that time, West Africans did not profit much from the Saharan trade because the routes were run by Berbers from northern Africa. Eventually, that situation changed. Ghana (GAH-nuh), an empire in West Africa, gained control of the valuable routes. As a result, Ghana became a powerful state.

Desert Trade For a long time, West Africans had ventured into the desert for trade. However, those early travelers could only make short trips from oasis to oasis. Their horses couldn't go far without water.

In the AD 200s, the situation changed. At about that time, Romans started to use camels to carry goods throughout northern Africa. These long-legged animals could store water and energy in their bodies for long periods of time. They could also carry heavy loads.

With camels, people could cross the Sahara in two months. Traders formed caravans to make the trip. A North African people called the Berbers used their knowledge of the desert to lead the caravans. Even with camels and the Berbers' skills, crossing the Sahara was dangerous. Supplies could run out, thieves could attack, and caravans could lose their way.

Ghana's Beginnings The empire of Ghana lay between the Niger and Senegal rivers. This location was north and west of the location of the modern nation that bears the name Ghana. As the people of West Africa grew more food, communities had more than they needed to survive. West Africans began to trade the area's resources with buyers who lived thousands of miles away.

Archaeology provides some clues to Ghana's early history, but we do not know much about its earliest days. Historians think the first people in Ghana were farmers. Sometime after 300 these farmers, the Soninke (soh-NING-kee), were threatened by nomadic herders. The herders wanted to take the farmers' water and pastures. For protection, groups of Soninke families began to band together. This banding together was the beginning of Ghana.

Once they banded together, the people of Ghana grew in strength. They learned how to work with iron and used iron tools to farm the land along the Niger River. They also herded cattle for meat and milk. Because these farmers and herders could produce plenty of food, the population of Ghana increased. Towns and villages grew.

 Explore ONLINE!

Ghana Empire, c. 1050



Reading Check
Analyze Effects
How did camels
change Saharan
trade?

Besides farm tools, iron was also useful for making weapons. Other armies in the area had weapons made of bone, wood, and stone. These were no match for the iron spear points and blades used by Ghana's army.

As with other early societies, as the towns and villages grew, people in Ghana began to specialize in types of labor. Some people became blacksmiths, others were gold miners, while still others were farmers or traders.

Trade in Ghana and West Africa

Ghana lay between the vast Sahara Desert and deep forests. In this location, they were in a good position to trade in the region's most valuable resources—gold and salt.

Gold and Salt Gold came from the south, from mines near the Gulf of Guinea and along the Niger. Salt came from the Sahara in the north.

West Africa's gold and salt trade became a source of great wealth. People wanted gold for its beauty. But they needed salt in their diets to survive. Salt, which could be used to preserve food, also made bland food tasty. These qualities made salt very valuable. In fact, Africans sometimes cut up slabs of salt and used the pieces as money.

Camels carried salt from the mines of the Sahara to the south to trade for gold. Traders then took the gold north, to Europe and the Islamic world. Along with gold and salt, traders carried cloth, copper, silver, and other items. They also bought and sold human beings as slaves.

Slavery was part of Ghana's society and the other West African empires that followed it. Over more than 1,000 years, the trans-Saharan slave trade affected at least 10 million enslaved men, women, and children. Slave traders moved people from West and East Africa to places in North Africa, the Middle East, and India. These slaves and their descendants became part of the royal households and armies of these regions' rulers.

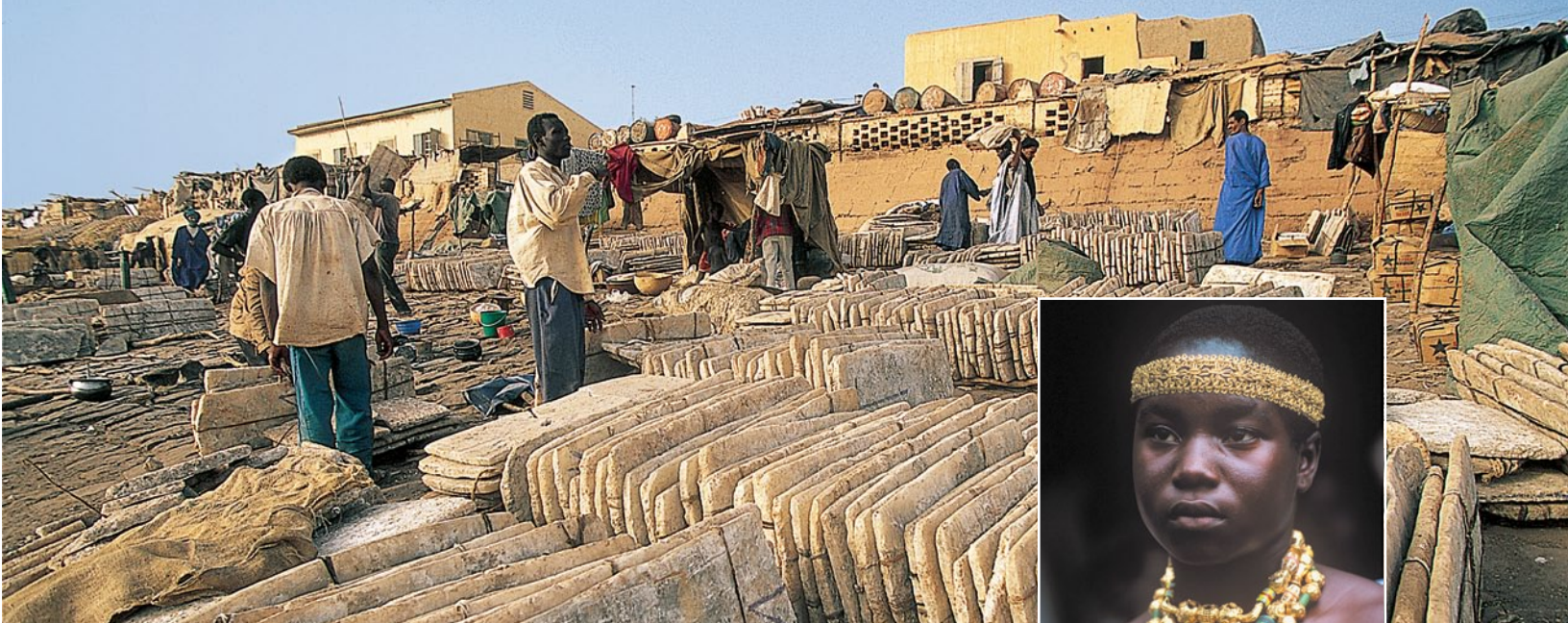
Scarcity drove the trade in gold and salt. South of the Sahara, salt was scarce. In northern Africa and Europe, gold was scarce. People had to make trade-offs to get what they needed or wanted and did not have. In Ghana, this exchange sometimes followed a **process** called silent barter.

Silent barter is a process in which people exchange goods without ever contacting each other directly. The method made sure that the traders did business peacefully. It also kept the exact location of the gold mines secret from the salt traders.

In the silent barter process, salt traders went to a riverbank near gold fields. There they left slabs of salt in rows and beat a drum to tell the gold miners that trading had begun. Then the salt traders moved back several miles from the riverbank.

Soon afterward, the gold miners arrived by boat. They left what they considered a fair amount of gold in exchange for the salt. Then the gold miners also moved back several miles so the salt traders could return. If they were happy with the amount of gold left there, the salt traders beat the drum again, took the gold, and left. The gold miners then returned and

Academic Vocabulary
process a series of steps by which a task is accomplished



Gold and Salt

Ghana's rulers got rich by controlling the trade in salt and gold. Salt came from the north in large slabs like the ones shown here. Gold, like the woman is wearing in the photo, came from the south.

picked up their salt. Trading continued until both sides were happy with the exchange.

Growth of Trade As the trade in gold and salt increased, Ghana's rulers gained power. Over time, their military strength grew as well. With their armies, they began to take control of this trade from the merchants who had once controlled it. Merchants from the north and south met to exchange goods in Ghana. As a result of their control of trade routes, the rulers of Ghana became wealthy.

Additional sources of wealth and trade were developed to add to Ghana's wealth. Wheat was grown and came from the north. Sheep and cattle were raised, and honey was produced. These items came from the south. Local products, including leather and cloth, were also traded for wealth. Among the prized special local products were tassels made from golden thread.

As trade increased, Ghana's capital grew. The largest city in West Africa, Koumbi Saleh (KOOM-bee SAHL-uh) was an oasis for travelers. These travelers could find all the region's goods for sale in its markets. As a result, Koumbi Saleh gained a reputation as a great trading center.

Influence of Islam The Soninke name for the empire was Wagadou. Today it is usually called its Arabic name, Ghana, which was the name Muslim traders gave the empire. The name is not the only way Islam influenced Ghana. Muslim traders had a large influence on the society. The written language, currency, architecture, and business practices were all influenced by Islamic culture. Muslims also became government officials and treasurers.



Trade in West Africa

For centuries, West Africans have traded goods in markets like this one. At these regional markets, people could get local goods like food and clothing, as well as more valuable goods from far away.

Reading Check
Form Generalizations
How did trade help
Ghana develop?

Some historians believe that Islamic beliefs about slavery influenced the growth of the slave trade in Ghana. The Qur'an, the Muslim holy book, recognizes slavery as a condition that exists. The text encourages the kind treatment of slaves and states that it is a humane act for an owner to free a slave. Islam forbids Muslims from enslaving other Muslims. However, any non-Muslim who lived outside of Muslim territory was someone who could become a slave. Traders began to see profit in the slave trade. An Arab geographer described an area along a trans-Saharan trade route as "chiefly remarkable for black slaves. . . ." The slave trade continued to play a significant role in Ghana's growing economy.

Ghana Builds an Empire

By 800, Ghana was firmly in control of West Africa's trade routes. Nearly all trade between northern and southern Africa passed through Ghana. Traders were protected by Ghana's army, which kept trade routes free from bandits. As a result, trade became safer. Knowing they would be protected, traders were not scared to travel to Ghana. Trade increased, and Ghana's influence grew as well.

Taxes and Gold With so many traders passing through their lands, Ghana's rulers looked for ways to make money from them. One way they raised money was by forcing traders to pay taxes. Every trader who entered

Ghana had to pay a special tax on the goods carried. Then the trader had to pay another tax on any goods taken away when leaving.

Traders were not the only people who had to pay taxes. The people of Ghana also had to pay taxes. In addition, Ghana conquered many small neighboring tribes and then forced them to pay tribute. Rulers used the money from taxes and tribute to support Ghana's growing army.



Traders from Ghana exchanged goods made from gold at centralized marketplaces.

Not all of Ghana's wealth came from taxes and tribute. Ghana's rich mines produced huge amounts of gold. Some of this gold was carried by traders to lands as far away as England, but not all of Ghana's gold was traded. Ghana's kings kept huge stores of gold for themselves. In fact, all the gold produced in Ghana was officially the property of the king. Taxes, tributes, and gold were all forms of **income** for Ghana.

Knowing that rare materials are worth far more than common ones, the rulers banned anyone else in Ghana from owning gold nuggets. Common people could own only gold dust, which they used as money. By limiting who could own gold nuggets, Ghana's leaders increased the metal's economic value. When only a small number of people have access to something, that item becomes more valuable. Gold dust did not have as much value because everyone was allowed to have it. This decision to restrict gold ownership also ensured that the king was richer than his subjects.

Expansion of the Empire Ghana's kings used their great wealth to build a powerful army. With this army the kings of Ghana conquered many of their neighbors. Many of these conquered areas were centers of trade. Taking over these areas made Ghana's kings even richer.

Ghana's kings didn't think that they could rule all the territory they conquered by themselves. Their empire was quite large, and travel and communication in West Africa could be difficult. To keep order in their empire, they allowed conquered kings to retain much of their power. These kings acted as governors of their territories, answering only to the king.

The empire of Ghana reached its peak under **Tunka Manin** (TOOHN-kah MAH-nin). All we know about this king comes from the writings of a Muslim geographer who wrote about Ghana. From this geographer, we know that Tunka Manin was the nephew of the previous king, a man named Basi. Kingship and property in Ghana did not pass from father to son but from uncle to nephew. Only the king's sister's son could inherit the throne.

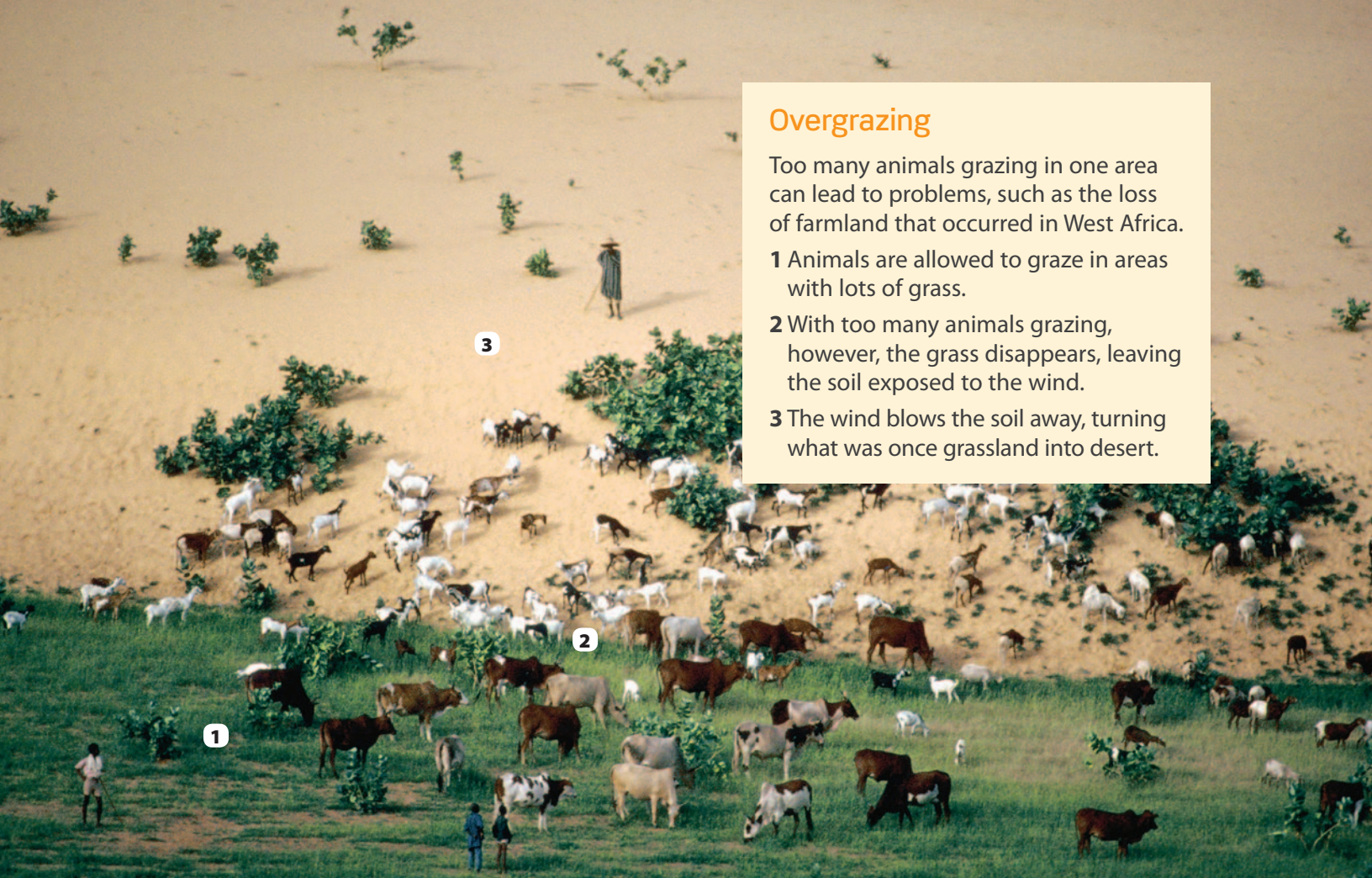
Once he became king, Tunka Manin surrounded himself with finery and many luxuries. He had a splendid court where he displayed the vast wealth of the empire. A Spanish writer noted the court's luxuries.

"The king adorns himself . . . round his neck and his forearms, and he puts on a high cap decorated with gold and wrapped in a turban of fine cotton. Behind the king stand ten pages holding shields and swords decorated with gold."

—al-Bakri, from *The Book of Routes and Kingdoms*

Reading Check Analyze Causes

How did the rulers of Ghana make sure that gold nuggets were worth more than gold dust?



Overgrazing

Too many animals grazing in one area can lead to problems, such as the loss of farmland that occurred in West Africa.

- 1 Animals are allowed to graze in areas with lots of grass.
- 2 With too many animals grazing, however, the grass disappears, leaving the soil exposed to the wind.
- 3 The wind blows the soil away, turning what was once grassland into desert.

Ghana's Decline

In the mid-1000s, Ghana was rich and powerful, but by the end of the 1200s, the empire had collapsed. Three major factors contributed to its end.

Invasion The first factor that helped bring about Ghana's end was invasion. A Muslim group called the Almoravids (al-moh-RAH-vidz) attacked Ghana in the 1060s in an effort to force its leaders to convert to Islam.

The people of Ghana fought hard against the Almoravid army. For 14 years they kept the invaders at bay. In the end, however, the Almoravids won. They destroyed the city of Koumbi Saleh.

The Almoravids didn't control Ghana for long, but they certainly weakened the empire. They cut off many trade routes through Ghana and formed new trading partnerships with Muslim leaders instead. Without this trade, Ghana could no longer support its empire.

Overgrazing A second factor in Ghana's decline was a result of the Almoravid conquest. When the Almoravids moved into Ghana, they brought herds of animals with them. These animals ate all the grass in many pastures, leaving the soil exposed to hot desert winds. These winds blew away the soil, leaving the land worthless for farming or herding. Unable to grow crops, many farmers had to leave in search of new homes.

Reading Check
Analyze Causes
Why did Ghana
decline in the 1000s?

Internal Rebellion A third factor also helped bring about the decline of Ghana's empire. In about 1200, the people of a country that Ghana had conquered rose up in rebellion. Within a few years the rebels had taken over the entire empire of Ghana.

Once in control, however, the rebels found that they could not keep order in Ghana. Weakened, Ghana was attacked and defeated by one of its neighbors. The empire fell apart.

Summary and Preview The empire of Ghana in West Africa grew rich and powerful through its control of trade routes. The empire lasted for centuries, but eventually Ghana fell. In the next lesson, you will learn that it was replaced by two new empires, the Mali and Songhai.

Lesson 2 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Identify** What animal made trade across the Sahara easier?

b. Summarize In what directions did the main trade items of West Africa move?
- a. Identify** What were the two most valuable resources traded in Ghana?

b. Explain How did the silent barter system work?
- a. Identify** Who was Tunka Manin?

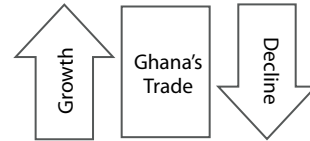
b. Form Generalizations What did Ghana's kings do with the income they raised from taxes?

c. Elaborate Why did the rulers of Ghana not want everyone to have gold?
- a. Identify** What group invaded Ghana in the late 1000s?

b. Summarize How did overgrazing help cause the fall of Ghana?

Critical Thinking

- Organize Information** Draw a diagram like the one shown here. Use it to identify factors that helped Ghana's trade grow and those that led to its decline.





The Empires of Mali and Songhai

The Big Idea

The wealthy and powerful Mali Empire ruled West Africa after the fall of Ghana, and the Songhai Empire strengthened Islam in the region.

Main Ideas

- A ruler named Sundiata made Mali into an empire.
- Mali reached its height under the ruler Mansa Musa.
- Mali fell to invaders in the late 1400s.
- Songhai regained power from Mali.
- Askia the Great ruled Songhai as an Islamic empire.
- Songhai fell to Moroccan invaders, ending the great era of West African empires.

Key People

Sundiata
Mansa Musa
Sunni Ali
Askia the Great

If YOU were there . . .

You are a farmer in the Niger River Valley in about 1500. You're making your first visit to the great city of Timbuktu. You stare around you at the buildings with their tall towers. In the streets you hear people talking in many different languages. Some are telling old stories about the wealthy Mali ruler Mansa Musa and his pilgrimage to Mecca. Others must be students from other countries who have come to study in the universities here. From the tower of a mosque, you hear the call to prayer.

How does the great city make you feel?

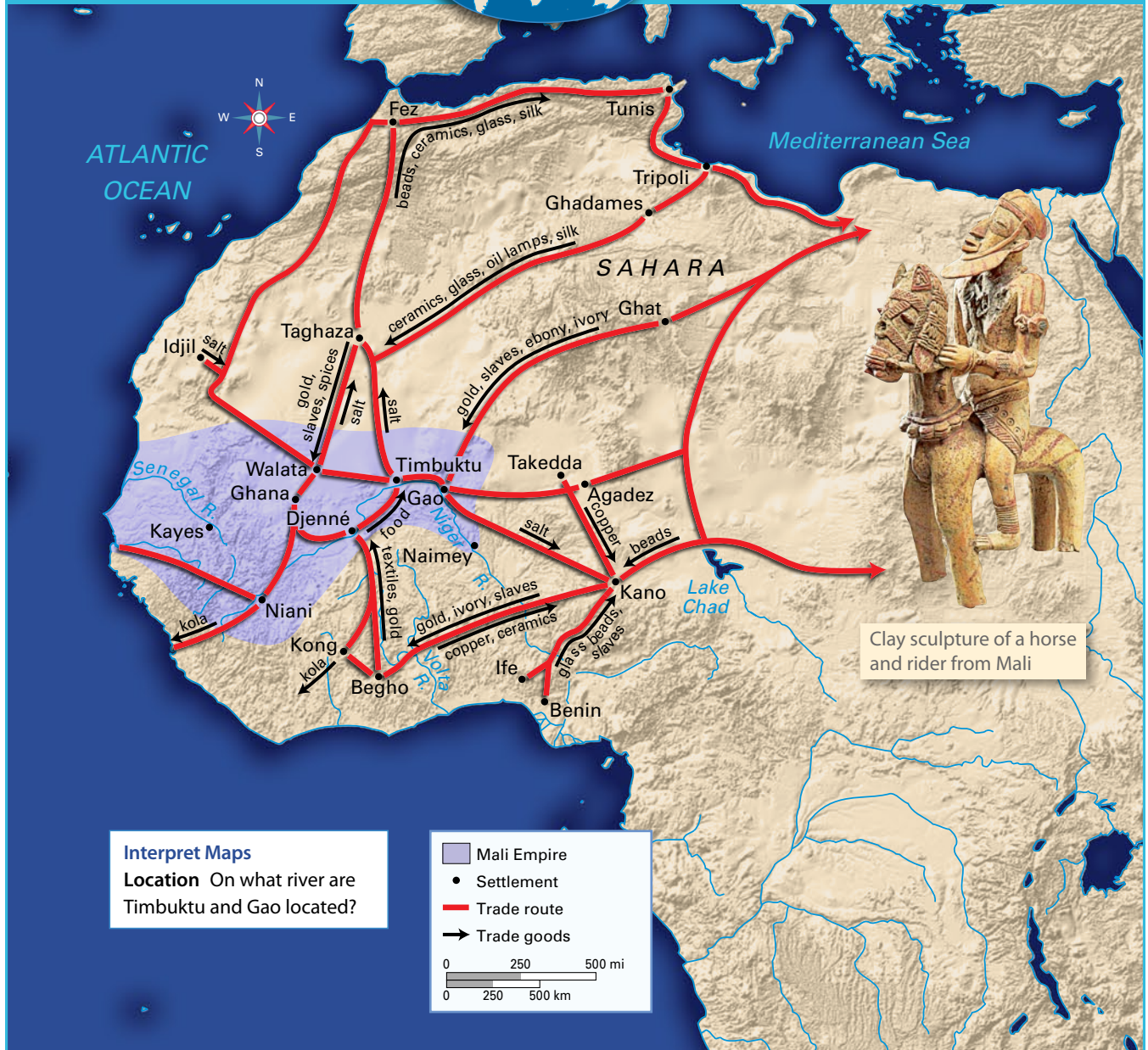
Sundiata Makes Mali an Empire

Like Ghana, Mali (MAH-lee) lay along the upper Niger River. This area's fertile soil helped Mali grow. In addition, Mali's location on the Niger allowed its people to control trade on the river. Through this control of trade, the empire became rich and powerful. According to legend, Mali's rise to power began under a ruler named **Sundiata** (soohn-JAHT-ah).

Beginnings of the Empire Because written records about Mali are scarce, the details of its rise to power are unclear. Many legends about this period exist, though. According to these legends, Sundiata, Mali's first strong leader, was both a mighty warrior and a magician. According to the legends, he had to overcome great hardships before he could build his empire.

Sundiata was the son of a previous king of Mali. When he was a boy, however, Mali was conquered by a powerful king who treated the people of Mali badly. Sundiata grew up hating the king. When he reached adulthood, Sundiata built a huge army and won his country's independence. Then he set about conquering many nearby kingdoms, including Ghana.

Mali Empire, c. 1300



Interpret Maps
Location On what river are Timbuktu and Gao located?

Mali Empire
 Settlement
 Trade route
 Trade goods

0 250 500 mi
 0 250 500 km

Improvements in Mali After Sundiata had conquered Ghana, he took over the salt and gold trades. He also worked to improve agriculture in Mali. Sundiata had new farmlands cleared for beans, onions, rice, and other crops. He even introduced a new crop to Mali—cotton. People used cotton to make clothing that was comfortable in the warm climate. Realizing its value, they also sold cotton to other people.

To help feed the people of his new empire, legend says that Sundiata put some soldiers to work in the fields. Once Mali’s enemies had been defeated, the soldiers didn’t need to fight, so they worked alongside slaves on large farms. Using conquered people as slaves was a common practice in Mali as it was in Ghana.

Reading Check

Analyze Motives

What steps did Sundiata take to turn Mali into an empire?

Consolidation of Power Under Sundiata's guidance, Mali grew into a prosperous kingdom. To keep order and protect his authority, Sundiata took power away from local leaders. These local leaders had borne the title *mansa* (MAHN-sah), a title Sundiata now took for himself.

Mansas had both political and religious roles in society. By taking on the religious authority of the *mansas*, Sundiata gained even more power in Mali.

The religious role of the *mansa* grew out of traditional Malian beliefs. According to these beliefs, the people's ancestors had made an agreement with the spirits of the land. The spirits would make sure that the land provided plenty of food. By keeping in touch with their ancestors, the people could contact these spirits.

Sundiata died in 1255. His son, who was the next ruler of Mali, also took the title of *mansa*, as did the empire's later rulers. Unlike Sundiata, though, most of these later rulers were Muslims.

Mansa Musa

Mali's most famous ruler was a Muslim king named **Mansa Musa** (MAHN-sah moo-SAH). Under his skillful leadership, Mali reached the height of its wealth, power, and fame in the 1300s. Because of Mansa Musa's influence, Islam spread through a large part of West Africa.

Mansa Musa ruled Mali for about 25 years. During that time, his army captured many trade cities, including Timbuktu (tim-buhk-TOO), Gao (GOW), and Djenné (je-NAY). These cities became part of Mali's empire.

Mansa Musa



The World Learns about Mali Religion was very important to Mansa Musa. In 1324, he left Mali on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Making such a journey, or hajj, is a spiritual duty for all Muslims.

Mansa Musa's first stop on his hajj was Cairo, Egypt. According to one account, he arrived in the city with nearly 100 camels, each loaded with 300 pounds of gold. Some 60,000 men traveled with him, along with his wives, servants, and slaves. About 10 years later, a historian spoke to an official who had met him.

“[H]e did me extreme honour and treated me with the greatest courtesy. He addressed me, however, only through an interpreter despite his perfect ability to speak in the Arabic tongue. Then he forwarded [sent] to the royal treasury many loads of unworked native gold and other valuables. . . . He left no court emir nor holder of a royal office without the gift of a load of gold. The Cairenes [people of Cairo] made incalculable [uncountable] profits out of him.”

—Ibn Fadl Allah al-Umari, from “The Kingdom of Mali and What Appertains to It” in *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*

This historian says that Mansa Musa gave away so much gold that it was no longer rare in Egypt! As a result, gold's value dropped steeply.

Through his journey, Mansa Musa introduced the empire of Mali to the world. Before he came to power, only a few people outside of West Africa had ever heard of Mali, even though it was one of the world's largest empires. Mansa Musa made such a great impression on people, though, that Mali became famous throughout Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Learning and Religion in Mali Mansa Musa supported education. In his first years as ruler, he sent scholars to study in Morocco. These scholars later set up schools in Mali for studying the Qur'an. Timbuktu became famous for its schools.

Mansa Musa wanted Muslims to be able to read the Qur'an. Therefore, he stressed the importance of learning to read and write the Arabic language. Arabic became the main language not only for religious study but also for government and trade.

Mansa Musa wanted to spread Islam in West Africa. To encourage this spread, he hired architects from other Muslim countries to build mosques throughout his empire. Elaborate mosques were built in Timbuktu, Djenné, and other cities.

Mansa Musa hoped that people would accept Islam as he had, but he did not want to force people to convert. He allowed animism to continue to be practiced in his empire along with Islam. Some historians believe that even the rulers of ancient Mali after Mansa Musa never completely gave up their belief in animism. Still, during Mansa Musa's reign Islam became very popular in Mali. Following their king's example, many people from Mali went to Mecca. In turn, Muslims from Asia, Egypt, and other parts of Africa visited Mali. These journeys between regions helped create more trade and made Mali even richer.

Reading Check
Analyze Events
How did Mansa Musa spread Islam?

This Spanish map from the 1300s shows Mansa Musa sitting on his throne.



Timbuktu

Timbuktu became a major trading city at the height of Mali's power under Mansa Musa. Traders came to Timbuktu from the north and south to trade for salt, gold, metals, shells, and many other goods.

Mansa Musa and later rulers built several large mosques in the city, which became a center of Islamic learning.

Winter floods allowed boats to reach Timbuktu from the Niger River.

Timbuktu's walls and buildings were mostly built with bricks made of dried mud. Heavy rains could soften the bricks and destroy buildings.

At crowded market stalls, people traded for goods like sugar, kola nuts, and glass beads.

Camel caravans from the north brought such goods as salt, cloth, books, and slaves to trade at Timbuktu.

Analyze Visuals
How did traders from the north bring their goods to Timbuktu?

Reading Check
Analyze Effects
How did Mali's growth eventually weaken the empire?

The Fall of Mali

Mali's success depended on strong leaders. Unfortunately, some of Mali's leaders were not strong. Their poor leadership weakened the empire.

When Mansa Musa died, his son Maghan (MAH-gan) took the throne. Unlike his father, however, Maghan was a weak ruler. When raiders poured into Mali, he couldn't stop them. The raiders set fire to Timbuktu's great schools and mosques. Mali never fully recovered from this terrible blow. Weakened, the empire gradually declined.

One reason the empire declined was its size. The empire had become so large that the government could no longer control it. Parts of the empire began to break away. For example, the city of Gao declared its independence in the 1400s.

Invaders also helped weaken the empire. In 1431, the Tuareg (TWAH-reg), nomads from the Sahara, attacked and seized Timbuktu. Soon afterward, the kingdom of Takrur (TAHK-roohr) in northern Mali declared its independence. Gradually, the people living at the edges of Mali's empire broke away. By 1500, nearly all of the lands the empire had once ruled were lost. Only a small area of Mali remained.

The Songhai Build an Empire

Even as the empire of Mali was reaching its height, a rival power was growing in the area. That rival was the Songhai (SAHNG-hy) kingdom. From their capital at Gao, the Songhai participated in the same trade that had made Ghana and Mali so rich.

By the 1300s, the Songhai had become rich and powerful enough to draw the attention of Mali's rulers. Mansa Musa sent his army to conquer the Songhai and make their lands part of his empire. As you have already seen, Gao became one of the most important cities in all of Mali.

The Birth of the Empire Songhai did not remain part of Mali's empire for long. As Mali's government grew weaker, the people of Songhai rose up against it and regained their freedom.

Even before they were conquered by Mali, the leaders of the Songhai had become Muslims. As such, they shared a common religion with many of the Berbers who crossed the Sahara to trade in West Africa. Because of this shared religion, the Berbers were willing to trade with the Songhai, who began to grow richer.

Growth and Conquest As the Songhai grew richer from trans-Saharan trade, they expanded their territory. Gradually, they built an empire.

Songhai's growth was largely the work of one man, **Sunni Ali** (SOOH-nee ah-LEE), who became the ruler of Songhai in 1464. Before Ali took over, the Songhai state had been disorganized and poorly run. As ruler, he worked constantly to unify, strengthen, and enlarge it.

Much of the land that Sunni Ali added to his empire had been part of Mali. For example, he conquered the wealthy trade cities of Timbuktu and Djenné. In 1468, the rulers of Mali asked Sunni Ali to help fight off Tuareg

Songhai Empire, c. 1500



Reading Check
Find Main Ideas
 What did Sunni Ali achieve as ruler of the Songhai?

invaders who were about to capture Timbuktu. Ali agreed, but once he had driven off the invaders he decided to keep the city for himself. From there he launched attacks against Djenné, which he finally captured five years later.

As king, Sunni Ali encouraged all people in his empire to work together. To build peace between religions, he participated in both Muslim and local religions. As a result, he brought peace and stability to Songhai.

Askia the Great

Sunni Ali died in 1492. He was followed as king by his son, Sunni Baru, who was not a Muslim. However, most of the people of the empire's towns were. They were afraid that if Sunni Baru didn't support Islam they would lose power in the empire, and trade with other Muslim lands would suffer. As a result, they rebelled against Sunni Baru.



The Songhai kingdom prospered during Askia's reign.

The leader of the people's rebellion was a general named Muhammad Ture (moo-HAH-muhd too-RAY). After overthrowing Sunni Baru, he took the title *askia*, a title of high military rank. This man became the ruler of Songhai when he was nearly 50 years old. And he ruled for about 35 years. History now calls him **Askia the Great**.

Religion and Education Like Mansa Musa, the famous ruler of Mali, Askia the Great took his Muslim faith very seriously. After he defeated Sunni Baru, Askia made a pilgrimage to Mecca, just as Mansa Musa had 200 years earlier.

Also like Mansa Musa, Askia worked to support education. Under his rule, the city of Timbuktu flourished once again. The great city contained universities, schools, libraries, and mosques. Especially famous was the University of Sankore (san-KOH-rah). People arrived there from all over West Africa to study mathematics, science, medicine, grammar, and law. In the early 1500s, a Muslim traveler and scholar called Leo Africanus wrote this about Timbuktu.

“Here are great store of [many] doctors, judges, priests, and other learned men, that are bountifully maintained at the kings cost and charges. And hither are brought diuers manuscripts or written bookes out of Barbarie [North Africa] which are sold for more money than any other merchandize.”

—Leo Africanus, from *History and Description of Africa*

The city of Djenné was another place of learning and scholarly study, especially in medicine. Doctors there discovered that mosquitoes spread malaria. They even performed surgery on the human eye.

The people of Songhai depended on the Niger River for many things. It was an important transportation route and provided fertile lands and a source of water for farming. People continue to depend on the river today.



Reading Check
Draw Conclusions
What do you think was Askia's greatest accomplishment?

Trade and Government Timbuktu and Djenné were centers of learning, but they were also trading centers. Merchants from distant lands came to these cities and to Gao. Most of Songhai's traders were Muslim, and as they gained influence in the empire so did Islam. Askia the Great, himself a devout Muslim, encouraged the growth in Islamic influence. Many of the laws he made were similar to those of Muslim nations across the Sahara.

To help maintain order, Askia set up five provinces within Songhai. He removed local leaders and appointed new governors who were loyal to him. One such governor ran the empire when Askia was away on pilgrimage to Mecca. When Askia returned, he brought even more Muslim influence into his government.

Askia also created special departments to oversee certain tasks. These departments worked much like government offices do today. He created a standing professional army, the first in West Africa.

Songhai Falls to Morocco

When he was in his 80s, Askia went blind. His son Musa forced him to leave the throne. Askia was sent to live on an island. He lived there for nine years until another of his sons brought him back to the capital, where he died. His tomb is still one of the most honored places in all of West Africa.

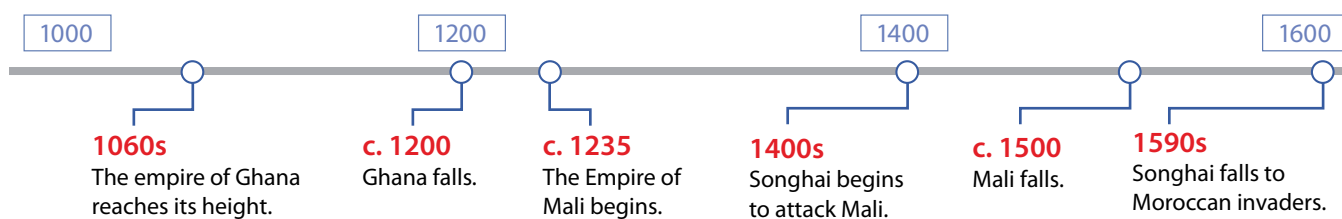
After Askia the Great lost power in 1528, other *askias* ruled Songhai. The empire did not survive for long, though. Areas along the empire's borders started to nibble away at Songhai's power.

The Moroccan Invasion One of Songhai's northern neighbors, Morocco, wanted to control the Saharan salt mines. To get those mines, Moroccan troops invaded Songhai. With them they brought a terrible new weapon—the arquebus (AHR-kwih-buhs). The arquebus was an early form of a gun.

The Moroccans wanted control of the salt mines because they needed money. Not long before the fight over the mines, Morocco had defended itself against huge invading armies from Portugal and Spain. The Moroccans had eventually defeated the Europeans, but the defense had nearly ruined Morocco financially. Knowing of Songhai's wealth, the Moroccan ruler decided to attack Songhai for its rich deposits of salt and gold.

The Moroccan army set out for the heart of Songhai in 1591. Not all of the troops were Moroccan, though. About half were actually Spanish

Timeline: West African Empires



Interpret Timelines

What is the order of the three empires?

Academic Vocabulary
various of many types

Reading Check
Make Inferences
What do you think happened to the people of West Africa after the empire of Songhai was defeated?

and Portuguese war prisoners. These prisoners had agreed to fight against Songhai rather than face more time in prison. Well trained and disciplined, these soldiers carried **various** weapons, including the deadly new guns. The Moroccans even dragged a few small cannons across the desert with them.

The Destruction of Songhai The Moroccans' guns and cannons brought disaster to Songhai. The swords, spears, and bows carried by Songhai's warriors were no match for firearms.

The Moroccans attacked Timbuktu and Gao, looting and taking over both cities. The Moroccans didn't push farther into Songhai, but the damage was done. Songhai never recovered from the loss of these cities and the income they produced.

Changes in trade patterns completed Songhai's fall. Overland trade declined as port cities north and south of the old empire became more important. For example, people who lived south of Songhai began to trade along the Atlantic coast. European traders preferred to sail to Atlantic ports than to deal with Muslim traders. Slowly, the period of great West African empires came to an end.

Summary and Preview The empires of Mali and Songhai were known for their wealth, culture, learning, and effective leaders like Mansa Musa and Askia the Great. In the next lesson, you will study the historical and artistic traditions of West Africa.

Lesson 3 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Identify** Who was Sundiata?

b. Explain How did Sundiata turn Mali into an empire?
- a. Identify** What became the main language of government, trade, and Islamic scholarship in West Africa?

b. Summarize How did Mansa Musa's journey change people's perceptions of Mali?

c. Elaborate How did Islam help turn Mali into a center of learning?
- a. Identify** What group invaded Mali in 1431?

b. Explain How did Mali's size lead to its fall?
- a. Identify** In what part of West Africa did Songhai begin?

b. Summarize What did Sunni Ali accomplish?

- a. Identify** What religion gained influence in Songhai under Askia the Great?

b. Analyze How did contact with other cultures change Songhai's government?
- a. Identify** Which group of people invaded the Songhai Empire in the 1590s?

b. Predict Effects How might West Africa's history have been different if the invaders who conquered Songhai had not had firearms?

Critical Thinking

- Organize Information** Draw three boxes. In them, list three major accomplishments of Sundiata, Mansa Musa, and Askia the Great.

Sundiata	Mansa Musa	Askia the Great



Historical and Artistic Traditions of West Africa

The Big Idea

Because the people of West Africa did not have a written language, their culture has been passed down through oral history, writings by other people, and the arts.

Main Ideas

- Storytellers helped maintain the oral history of the cultures of West Africa.
- Visitors to West Africa from other lands wrote histories and descriptions of what they saw there.
- Traditionally, West Africans have valued the arts.

Key Terms

oral history
griots
proverbs
kente

If YOU were there . . .

You are the youngest and smallest in your family. People often tease you about not being very strong. In the evenings, when work is done, the people of your village gather to listen to storytellers. One of your favorites is about the hero Sundiata. As a boy he was small and weak, but he grew to be a great warrior and hero.

How does the story of Sundiata make you feel?

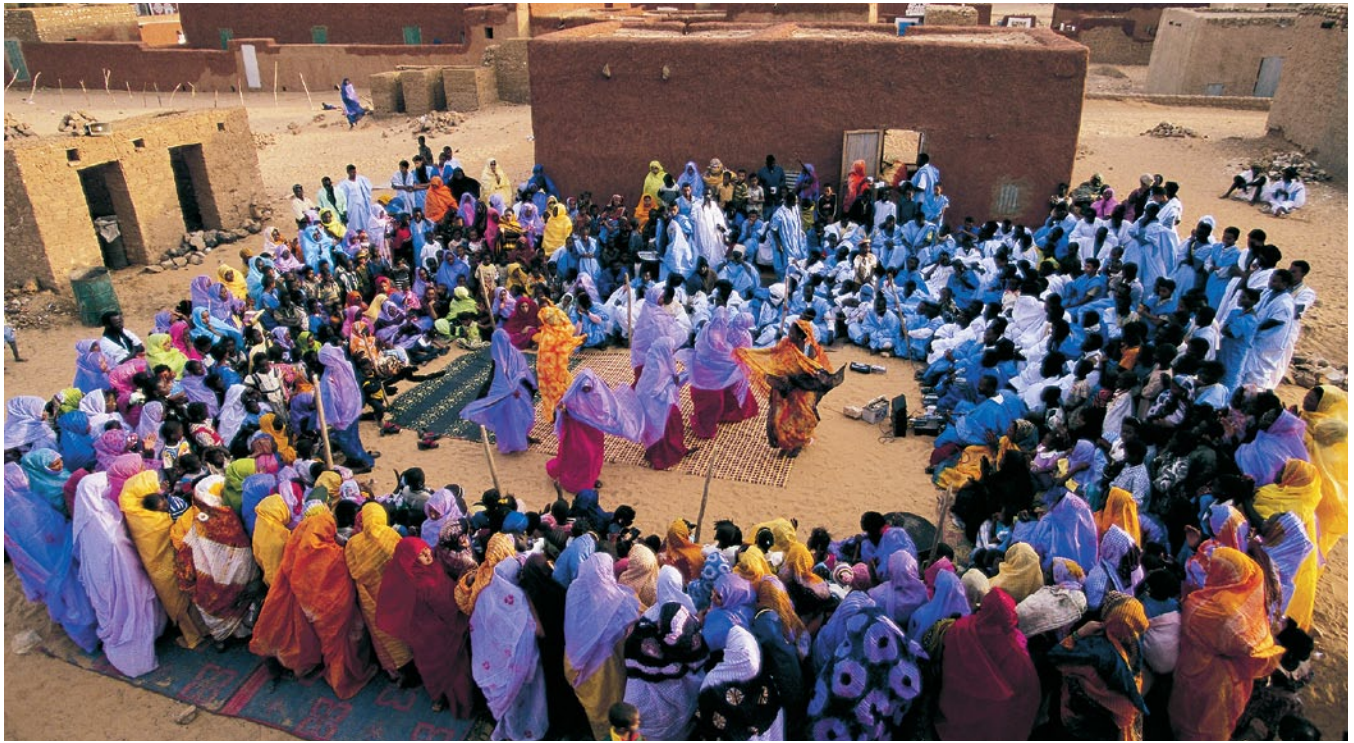
Storytellers Maintain Oral History

Although cities like Timbuktu and Djenné were known for their universities and libraries, writing was never very common in West Africa. In fact, none of the major early civilizations of West Africa developed a written language. Arabic was the only written language they used. Many Muslim traders, government officials, and religious leaders could read and write Arabic.

The lack of a written language does not mean that the people of West Africa didn't know their history, though. They passed along information through oral histories. An **oral history** is a spoken record of past events. The task of remembering West Africa's history was entrusted to storytellers.

The Griots West African storytellers were called **griots** (GREE-ohz). They were highly respected in their communities because the people of West Africa were very interested in the deeds of their ancestors. Griots helped keep this history alive for each new generation.

The griots' stories were entertaining as well as informative. They told of past events and of the deeds of people's ancestors. For example, some stories explained the rise and fall of the West African empires. Some griots made their stories more lively by acting out events from the past like scenes in a play.



Oral Traditions

West African storytellers called griots had the job of remembering and passing on their people's history. In this photo, everyone wears their best clothes and gathers around a griot to listen.

In addition to stories, the griots recited **proverbs**, or short sayings of wisdom or truth. They used proverbs to teach lessons to the people. For example, one West African proverb warns, "Talking doesn't fill the basket in the farm." This proverb reminds people that they must work to accomplish things. They can't just talk about what they want to do. Another proverb advises, "A hippopotamus can be made invisible in dark water." It warns people to remain alert. Just as it can be hard to see animals in a deep pool, people don't always see the problems they will face.

In order to recite their stories and proverbs, the griots memorized hundreds of names and events. Through this memorization process the griots passed on West African history from generation to generation. However, some griots confused names and events in their heads. When this happened, specific facts about some historical events became distorted. Still, the griots' stories tell us a great deal about life in the West African empires.

West African Epics Some of the griot poems are epics—long poems about kingdoms and heroes. Many of these epic poems are collected in the *Dausi* (DAW-zee) and the *Sundiata*.

The *Dausi* tells the history of Ghana. Intertwined with historical events, though, are myths and legends. For example, one story is about a terrifying seven-headed snake god named Bida. This god promised that Ghana would prosper if the people sacrificed a young woman to him every year. One year a mighty warrior killed Bida. But as the god died, he cursed Ghana. The griots say that it was this curse that caused the empire of Ghana to fall.

Reading Check
Draw Conclusions
Why were oral traditions important in West Africa?

Like the *Dausi*, the *Sundiata* is about the history of an empire, Mali. It is the story of Sundiata, Mali's legendary first ruler. According to the epic, when Sundiata was still a boy, a conqueror captured Mali and killed Sundiata's father and 11 brothers. He didn't kill Sundiata because the boy was sick and didn't seem like a threat. However, Sundiata grew up to be an expert hunter and warrior. Eventually he overthrew the conqueror and became king.

Visitors Write Histories

The people of West Africa left no written histories of their own. Visitors to West Africa from other parts of the world, however, did write about the region. Much of what we know about early West Africa comes from the writings of travelers and scholars from Muslim lands such as Spain and Arabia.

One of the first people to write about West Africa was an Arab scholar named al-Masudi (ahl-mah-soo-dee). He visited the region in the 900s. In his writings, al-Masudi described the geography, customs, history, and scientific achievements of West Africa.

About 100 years later, another writer, Abu Ubayd al-Bakri, wrote about West Africa. He lived in Córdoba, Spain, where he met many people who had been to West Africa. Based on the stories these people told him, al-Bakri wrote about life in West African kingdoms.

More famous than either of these two writers was Ibn Battutah, a tireless traveler who described most of the Muslim world. From 1353 to 1354, Ibn Battutah traveled through West Africa. His account of this journey describes the political and cultural lives of West Africans in great detail.

DOCUMENT-BASED INVESTIGATION Historical Source

A Description of Mali

In the 1300s, Ibn Battutah traveled through much of Asia and Africa. This passage describes the people of Mali, one of the places he visited in Africa.

"[They] possess some admirable qualities. They are seldom unjust, and have a greater abhorrence [hatred] of injustice than any other people. Their sultan [ruler] shows no mercy to anyone who is guilty of the least act of it. There is complete security in their country. Neither traveler nor inhabitant in it has anything to fear from robbers or men of violence. . . . They are careful to observe the hours of prayer, and assiduous [careful] in attending them in congregations [gatherings], and in bringing up their children to them."

—Ibn Battutah, from *Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354*

Analyze Historical Sources

Why may Ibn Battutah have been particularly interested in security within Mali?

Reading Check
Form Generalizations
Why were the written histories of West Africa written by people from other lands?

The last of the major Muslim visitors to West Africa was a young man called Leo Africanus (LEE-oh af-ri-KAY-nuhs), or Leo the African. Born in what is now Spain, Leo traveled through northern and western Africa on missions for the government. On his way home, however, pirates captured Leo and brought him to Rome as a prisoner. Although he was freed, he stayed in Rome for many years. There he wrote a description of what he had seen in Africa. Because Leo lived and wrote in Europe, for a long time his work was the only source about life in Africa available to Europeans.

West Africans Value Arts

Like most peoples, West Africans valued the arts. The art they produced took many forms. Common West African art forms included sculpture, mask making, cloth making, music, and dance.

Sculpture Of all the visual art forms, the sculpture of West Africa is probably the best known. West Africans made ornate statues and carvings out of wood, brass, clay, ivory, stone, and other materials.

Most statues from West Africa are of people—often the sculptor’s ancestors. In most cases, these statues were made for religious rituals, to ask for the ancestors’ blessings. Sculptors made other statues as gifts for the gods. These sculptures were kept in holy places. They were never meant to be seen by people.

Link to Today

Music From Mali to the United States

Did you know that the music you listen to today may have begun with the griots? From the 1600s to the 1800s, many people from West Africa were brought to America as slaves. In America, these enslaved people continued to sing the way they had in Africa. They also continued to play traditional instruments such as the *kora* played by Senegalese musician Soriba Kouyaté, the son of a griot (right). Over time, this music developed into a style called the blues, made popular by such artists as Buddy Guy. Some newer musicians, like Gary Clark, Jr., and Rhiannon Giddens, continue to make blues music. Over time, the blues shaped other styles of music, including jazz, rock, and hip-hop. So, the next time you hear a popular song, listen for its ancient African roots!

Analyze Information

How did West African music affect modern American music?



Because their statues were often used in religious rituals, many African artists were deeply respected. People thought artists had been blessed by the gods.

Long after the decline of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, West African art is still admired. Museums around the world today display African art. In addition, African sculpture helped inspire some European artists of the 1900s, including Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso.

Masks and Clothing In addition to statues, the artists of West Africa carved elaborate masks. Made of wood, these masks bore the faces of animals such as hyenas, lions, monkeys, and antelopes. Artists often painted the masks after carving them. People wore these masks during rituals as they danced around fires. The way firelight reflected off the masks made them look fierce and lifelike.

Many African societies were also famous for the cloth they wove. The most famous of these cloths is called kente (ken-TAY). **Kente** is a hand-woven, brightly colored fabric. The cloth was woven in narrow strips that were then sewn together. Kings and queens in West Africa wore garments made of kente for special occasions.

Like West African music and dance, many West African crafts have been handed down for generations. This woman in the modern nation of Ghana is weaving traditional baskets.



Reading Check

Summarize
Summarize how traditions were preserved in West Africa.

Music and Dance In many West African societies, music and dance were as important as the visual arts. Singing and dancing were great forms of entertainment, but they also helped people honor their history and were central to many celebrations. For example, music was played when a ruler entered a room.

Dance has long been a central part of African society. Many West African cultures used dance to celebrate specific events or ceremonies. For example, they may have performed one dance for weddings and another for funerals. In some parts of West Africa, people still perform dances similar to those performed hundreds of years ago.

Summary and Preview The societies of West Africa never developed written languages, but their histories and cultures have been passed on through traditions and customs. In the next lesson, you will read about the cultures of the African peoples who lived in southern Africa.

Lesson 4 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

- Summarize** What is oral history?
 - Form Generalizations** Why were griots and their stories important in West African society?
 - Evaluate** Why may an oral history provide different information than a written account?
- Identify** Name one writer who wrote about West Africa.
 - Make Inferences** How do you think these writers' views of West Africa may have differed from the views of West Africans?

- Identify** What were two forms of visual art popular in West Africa?

Critical Thinking

- Categorize** Create a chart like the one here. Use it to describe the *Dausi* and the *Sundiata*.

Great Epics of West Africa	
Dausi	Sundiata

Literature in History

African Oral Traditions

Word Help

rampart a protective bank or wall

colossal gigantic

provisions supplies

assailants attackers

① *Soumaoro* is another name for Sumanguru. Noumounkeba is one of his assistants.

② *Sogolon Djata* is another name for Sundiata. *Imagine that you are one of Sundiata's warriors. How do you feel as you look down on the city of Sosso?*

③ A *sofa* is a warrior.

④ The Mandingoes were the people of Mali.

About the Reading For almost 900 years, West African griots have been telling the story of Sundiata, king and founder of the Mali Empire. Like other ancient epics, this one is a blend of history and legend. Some parts of the story are based on fact—such as Sundiata's defeat of the tyrant-king Sumanguru, which took place in about 1235. Other elements, though, were added over time for dramatic effect. In the following episode, for example, an almost superhuman Sundiata swoops down upon Sumanguru's capital city, Sosso, vowing to destroy it in a single morning.

As You Read Imagine the sequence of events.

From *Sundiata*

by D. T. Niane, as told by Djeli Mamoudou Kouyaté, translated by G. D. Pickett

Sosso was a magnificent city. In the open plain her triple rampart with awe-inspiring towers reached into the sky. The city comprised a hundred and eighty-eight fortresses and the palace of Soumaoro loomed above the whole city like a gigantic tower. Sosso had but one gate; colossal and made of iron, the work of the sons of fire. Noumounkeba ① hoped to tie Sundiata down outside of Sosso, for he had enough provisions to hold out for a year.

The sun was beginning to set when Sogolon Djata appeared before Sosso the Magnificent. ② From the top of a hill, Djata and his general staff gazed upon the fearsome city of the sorcerer-king. The army encamped in the plain opposite the great gate of the city and fires were lit in the camp. Djata resolved to take Sosso in the course of a morning. . . .

At daybreak the towers of the ramparts were black with sofas. ③ Others were positioned on the ramparts themselves. They were the archers. The Mandingoes were masters in the art of storming a town. ④ In the front line Sundiata placed the sofas of Mali, while those who held the ladders were in the second line protected by the shields of the spearmen. The main body of the army was to attack the city gate. When all was ready, Djata gave the order to attack. The drums resounded, the horns blared and like a tide the Mandingo front line moved off, giving mighty shouts. With their shields raised above their heads the Mandingoes advanced up to the foot of the wall, then the Sossos began to rain large stones down on the assailants. From the rear, the bowmen of Wagadou shot arrows at the ramparts. The attack spread and the town was assaulted at all points. . . . On one knee the

Word Help

surmounting rising above

razing tearing down

5 Fakoli, Soumaoro's nephew, had rebelled against his uncle.

6 Manding Bory is Sundiata's half-brother and best friend.

archers fired flaming arrows over the ramparts. Within the walls the thatched huts took fire and the smoke swirled up. The ladders stood against the curtain wall and the first Mandingo sofas were already at the top. Seized by panic through seeing the town on fire, the Sossos hesitated a moment. The huge tower surmounting the gate surrendered, for Fakoli's smiths had made themselves the masters of it. 5 They got into the city where the screams of women and children brought the Sossos' panic to a head. They opened the gates to the main body of the army.

Then began the massacre. Women and children in the midst of fleeing Sossos implored mercy of the victors. Djata and his cavalry were now in front of the awesome tower palace of Soumaoro. Noumounkeba, conscious that he was lost, came out to fight. With his sword held aloft he bore down on Djata, but the latter dodged him and, catching hold of the Sosso's braced arm, forced him to his knees whilst the sword dropped to the ground. He did not kill him but delivered him into the hands of Manding Bory. . . . 6

Just as he had wished, Sundiata had taken Sosso in the course of a morning. When everything was outside of the town and all that there was to take had been taken out, Sundiata gave the order to complete its destruction. The last houses were set fire to and prisoners were employed in the razing of the walls. Thus, as Djata intended, Sosso was destroyed to its very foundations.



This blanket was woven by the Fulani people of modern Mali, the descendants of Sumanguru and his subjects.

Connect Literature to History

1. **Analyze Motives** West African epics sometimes included both elements of truth and fictional embellishments. Which details in this excerpt sound like they could be true? Which were probably invented later? What makes you think that?

2. **Make Inferences** Griots had to commit to memory hundreds of events in order to tell their stories. They would sometimes act stories out like plays. If you were a griot, how might you bring the action in this excerpt to life?



Sub-Saharan Cultures

The Big Idea

The movement and interaction of cultures and peoples created unique ways of life in sub-Saharan Africa.

Main Ideas

- African customs blended with Christian religious beliefs to create a new form of Christianity in Ethiopia.
- Some historians think the migration of the Bantu caused one of the most significant cultural transformations in African history.
- Sub-Saharan Africans and Muslim merchants, among others, traded precious metals and cattle.

Key Terms and People

Ethiopia
Coptic Christianity
Bantu
Great Zimbabwe
Swahili

If YOU were there . . .

You are a traveler passing through the kingdom of Ethiopia. As you approach a town, you see a huge crowd gathered around what appears to be a hole in the ground. Walking closer, you see that there is a building in the hole. The entire building has been carved out of the rock on which you are standing. Never in your travels have you seen anything like this.

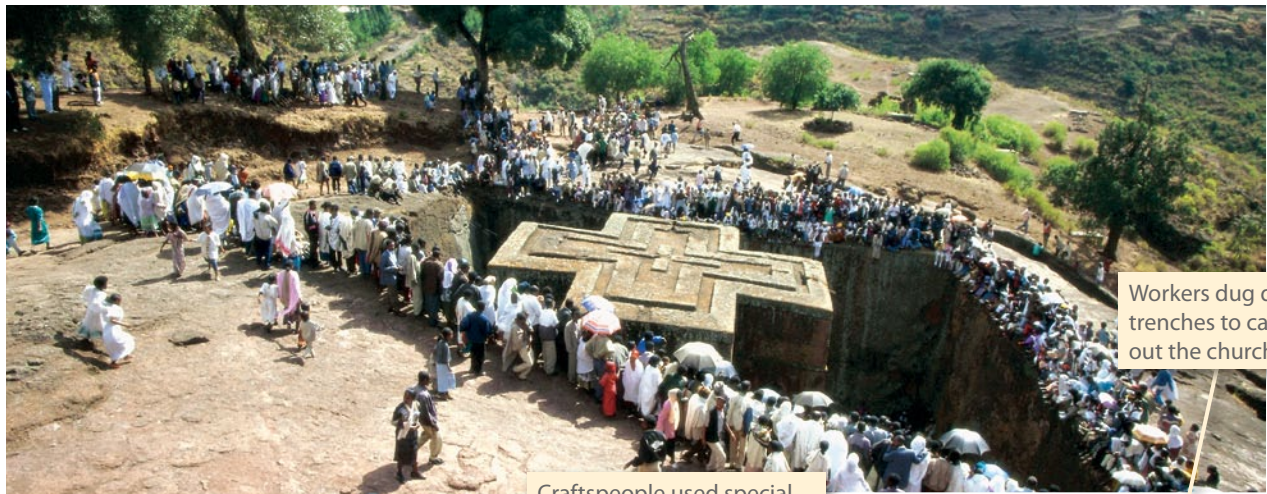
What do you think of this new building style?

The Ethiopian Kingdom

At the same time that Ghana was declining and Mali was rising to take its place, another great kingdom existed on the other side of the continent. In East Africa, the descendants of the people of Aksum, who had fled to the mountains, formed a new kingdom, Ethiopia. By about 1150, **Ethiopia** had become one of Africa's most powerful kingdoms.

The most famous of Ethiopia's rulers was King Lalibela, who ruled in the 1200s. He is famous for the 11 Christian churches he built, many of which still stand. The churches of Lalibela were carved into solid rock, many of them set into the ground. Worshippers had to walk down long flights of steps to get to them. Impressive feats of engineering, these churches also show the Ethiopians' devotion to Christianity. This devotion to Christianity set the Ethiopians apart from their neighbors, most of whom were Muslim.

Shared beliefs helped unify Ethiopians, but their isolation from other Christians led to some changes in their beliefs. Over time, some local African customs blended with Christian teachings. This resulted in a new form of Christianity in Africa called **Coptic Christianity**. The name *Coptic* comes from an Arabic word for "Egyptian." Most Christians who live in North Africa today—including many Ethiopians—belong to Coptic churches.

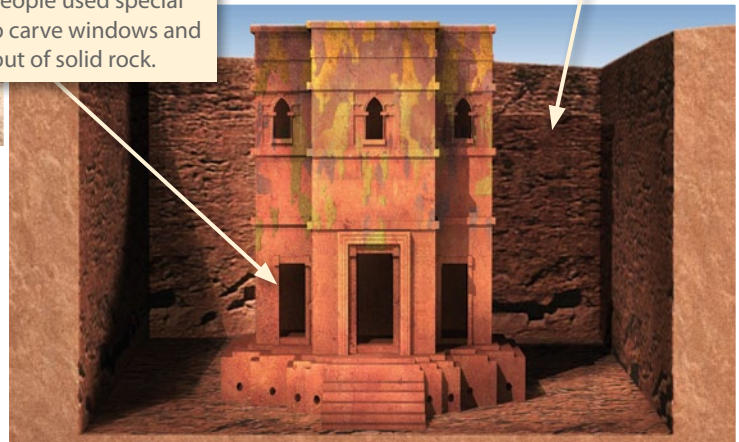


Workers dug deep trenches to carve out the church.

Craftspeople used special tools to carve windows and doors out of solid rock.

Lalibela, Ethiopia

In the 1200s, highly skilled Ethiopian architects and craftspeople built this Christian church at Lalibela.



Analyze Visuals

What Christian symbol does the church resemble?

Reading Check

Analyze Events
How did Christianity take hold in parts of Africa?

Although most people in Ethiopia were Christian, not everyone was. For example, a Jewish group known as the Beta Israel lived there. Although some Christian rulers tried to force the Beta Israel to give up their religion and adopt Christianity, they were not successful. Ethiopia's Jewish population remained active for centuries.

The Bantu Migration and Great Zimbabwe

Historians use the name **Bantu** as a way to discuss 400 different ethnic groups that come from the eastern, central, and southern regions of Africa. The word *bantu* means “people” in many of the native languages that these groups spoke.

The Bantu Migration Between 5,000 and 2,000 years ago, the Bantu people began spreading out from parts of West Africa. This movement of people is sometimes called the Bantu Expansion or the Bantu Migration. Some historians think the migration of the Bantu caused one of the most significant cultural transformations in the history of Africa.

No one is certain why the Bantu migrated. There are probably a few reasons. Some experts believe people left their homes because the Sahara was drying out and becoming a desert. Others think population growth and new crops, like the banana, led people to search for new land. Most Bantu were farmers or herders who raised large groups of cattle. They made and

used iron tools. They needed pasture areas where they could raise animals and fields where they could grow crops like millet, beans, rice, and melons. The Bantu were migrating into regions where the people were hunter-gatherers. These people could not hold back the Bantu. By about AD 300, Bantu had conquered and settled much of Africa south of the Sahara.

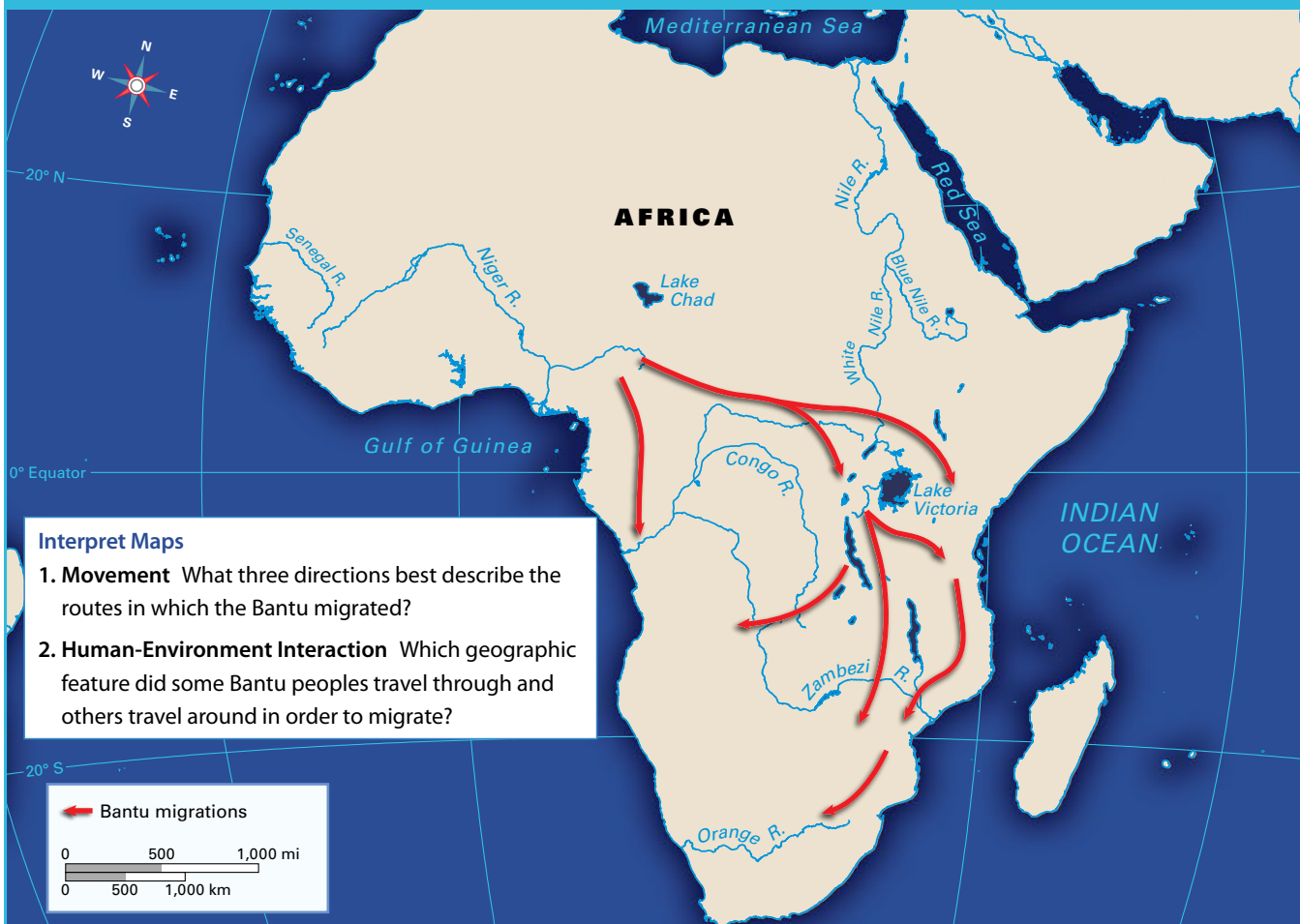
No matter what the location, chiefs usually led the Bantu. These chiefs had great political power in their communities. They were thought to be greater than the common people. The chiefs did not have total power, however.

Bantu society had strong social structures. The old were also considered to be of higher standing than the young. Men were socially above women, and the rich were over the poor. Kinship systems were strong in Bantu society. Children were taught to value family and community. The Bantu also had great respect for their deceased family members because they believed their ancestors could influence the events of people's lives.

Great Zimbabwe **Great Zimbabwe** was a Bantu kingdom founded in about the year 1000. The Bantu ethnic group known as the Shona founded it. Zimbabwe was a trading city. It was located between two rivers, east of the Kalahari Desert. The city thrived for about four hundred years, until

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The Probable Spread of Early Bantu-Speaking People, c. 1500 BC–AD 300





The ruins of Great Zimbabwe include the Conical Tower and Circular Wall, shown here.

Reading Check

Analyze Causes
What do historians believe caused the Bantu Migration?

the 15th century. Not much is known about the people who lived in Great Zimbabwe or of other aspects of their society. No written records exist about the kingdom of Great Zimbabwe. However, archeologists have found three important sets of ruins. These ruins appear to be the remains of granite buildings or structures. The name *Zimbabwe* comes from a Shona term that means “stone houses.”

Archeologists think that a structure known as the Hill Complex was a temple or served some religious purpose. It sits in the oldest part of the city on a steep, raised hill.

Another set of ruins is known as the Great Enclosure. It is the largest ancient structure in sub-Saharan Africa. Some researchers believe the Great Enclosure might have been constructed to separate the royal families from the rest of the community. This would mean that Great Zimbabwe had both a social structure and a political structure for governing the city. The last set of ruins is called the Valley Complex. Many experts believe that this is where average citizens lived.

Some historians disagree with these theories about the ruins. They believe that each set of ruins was built one after the other when new rulers took power. According to this theory, each structure was the place where a particular ruler lived.

Sub-Saharan Trade

The people who lived south of the Sahara traded across long distances. This trade helped many people to prosper. Trade also helped change the cultures of the sub-Saharan region.

Cattle, Crops, and Metals Throughout the Bantu Migration, people were involved in trade. For example, the Bantu had become skilled at working with iron. This led to the development of iron tools that they used for farming, but iron also became an important trade item. The Bantu traded iron tips for weapons with the hunter-gatherers in exchange for plants used for medicine or wild game the hunter-gatherers had killed.

Copper was another metal important to sub-Saharan trade. There was high demand for it in coastal **Swahili** (swah-HEE-lee) markets. The term *Swahili* refers to the blended African-Arab culture that had become common in East Africa. A steady supply of copper came from the head of the Congo and Zambezi rivers to eastern Africa. Places like Kilwa and Lamu, in what later would become Kenya, prospered because of the copper trade. These cities became thriving markets.

Great Zimbabwe was also a trading city. Archeologists have found Chinese pottery, a Persian bowl, and an Arabic coin from the city of Kilwa in the ruins of Great Zimbabwe. Some archeologists also believe that Great Zimbabwe was built on top of a gold mine and that it was an important part of the gold trade. Others say evidence from the site does not support this claim.

East African Trade and Islamic Influence East Africa was heavily influenced by its involvement with trade. While Islam came to North Africa through conquest, the religion’s arrival in East Africa was less violent.

Located on the Indian Ocean, East Africa had been a destination for traders from Asia for centuries. Among these traders were Muslims from India, Persia, and Arabia. They came to Africa in search of African goods and new markets for products from their homelands.

One of the goods that Muslims discovered in Africa was coffee. An Ethiopian tribe called the Galla ground up coffee beans, added animal fat, and formed the mixture into balls. The Galla ate this food during trips. Other Ethiopian tribes ate porridge or drank a wine made from coffee beans. Coffee became popular in the Islamic world because it was considered to be both a powerful medicine and a religious potion that could help keep people awake during prayer.

Muslim traders searching for coffee and other African goods settled down in many coastal trading cities like Mogadishu, Mombasa, Kilwa, and Sofala. Trade was easy and profitable in these locations. As a result of the traders' presence, the cities developed large Muslim communities. Africans, Arabs, and Persians lived near one another and worked together. One result of this closeness was the spread of Islam through East Africa. People at all levels of society, from workers to rulers, adopted Islam. As a result, mosques appeared in cities and towns throughout the region.

The contact between cultures also led to other changes in East Africa. For example, the architecture of the region changed. People began to build houses that mixed traditional materials, such as coral and mangrove trees, with Arab designs, such as arched windows and carved doors.

As the cultures grew closer, their speech began to reflect their new relationship. Some Africans, who spoke mostly Bantu languages, adopted many Arabic and Persian words. In time, the languages blended into the new language of Swahili. The name *Uganda* comes from a Swahili term.

Summary In this lesson, you learned about people in East Africa and the great migration of Bantu people into southern Africa.

Reading Check

Summarize

How did Islam change African society?

Lesson 5 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Analyze** What led to the creation of Coptic Christianity in Africa?

b. Describe Why did Christianity serve as a unifying factor for the people of Ethiopia?
- a. Summarize** How did the Bantu influence the way people lived in southern Africa?

b. Form Opinions Which theory do you agree with about the purpose of the ruins at Great Zimbabwe?
- a. Define** What does *Swahili* mean?

b. Contrast How did the arrival of Islam in North Africa differ from its arrival in East Africa?

- c. Predict Effects** How might life in East Africa have been different if the people there had not accepted the presence of Muslim traders?

Critical Thinking

- 4. Analyze** Use the graphic organizer to examine how the arrival of Christianity and Islam in Africa influenced local culture and led to changes in the two religions.



Social Studies Skills

Make Decisions

Define the Skill

Making a decision can be a complicated and difficult skill to learn. However, it is an important skill that people use in most areas of daily life. Making a decision involves knowing and understanding options, predicting what might happen with each option, selecting an option, and acting based on that option.

Learn the Skill

In this module, you learned about the silent barter process. Salt traders and gold miners had to make decisions when they were doing business. Both groups had to think about things like amounts of gold and salt. They also had to decide if and when those amounts made them happy. The salt traders and the gold miners had to consider their options to help them make a decision.

1. *Know and understand the options.* An option is a choice. Understanding the options means that you are aware of what these choices can help you do (or not do).
2. *Think about what might happen.* Each option has a consequence. Options and consequences are like causes and effects. An option will cause you to do (or not do) an action. The effect is the consequence of doing (or not doing) the action. Consequences can be positive or negative.
3. *Pick an option.* This is the step where you are making the decision.
4. *Do (or don't do) an action based on the choice that you picked.*

Practice the Skill

Imagine you are one of the rulers of Ghana. Expanding the empire means making it grow larger. One of the ways to do that is to send your army into nearby areas. Since you are in charge of the army, you have several decisions to make before you can tell your people what to do (or not do). Create a plan of action using the following questions. Think about the options that you have and the consequences of each option. After that, make a decision about how to handle your army and defend the decision that you make.

1. Do you have enough people to send away from Ghana, or do you only have enough to protect the empire? Can the entire army be sent away, or do some soldiers have to remain at home?
2. What kind of weapons do your people have to defend themselves? Do they have enough weapons to fight safely? What happens if any of your people are injured or captured?
3. If your army finds and conquers another people, will you demand that they pay a tribute to Ghana? What will the tribute be and how much of it will you ask for as payment?

Module 14 Assessment

Review Vocabulary, Terms, and People

Imagine that these terms and people from the module are correct answers to items in a crossword puzzle. Write the clues for the answers. Then make the puzzle with some answers written down and some across.

1. silent barter
2. kinship system
3. Swahili
4. Mansa Musa
5. animism
6. Askia the Great
7. oral history
8. griots
9. proverbs
10. kente
11. Ethiopia
12. Sahel

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

Lesson 1

13. a. **Identify** Along what river did great civilizations develop in early West Africa?
b. **Analyze** How does Africa's climate affect vegetation?
c. **Identify** What are the two main purposes of age-sets?

Lesson 2

14. a. **Identify** What were the two major trade goods that made Ghana rich? Where did they come from?
b. **Summarize** How did Ghana's rulers use taxes and tributes to generate income? What is income?
c. **Evaluate** Who do you think was more responsible for the collapse of Ghana, the people of Ghana or outsiders? Why?

Lesson 3

15. a. **Describe** How did Islam influence society in Mali and Songhai?
b. **Elaborate** How did Mali's growth and power help lead to its downfall?
c. **Evaluate** Which do you think played more of a role in Songhai's society, warriors or traders? Why?

Lesson 4

16. a. **Describe** Who were the griots? What role did they play in West African society?
b. **Make Inferences** Why do you think music and dance were so important in West African society?
c. **Evaluate** Which do you think is a more reliable source about life in the Mali Empire—a story told by a modern griot or an account written by a Muslim scholar who had spoken to travelers from Mali? Defend your answer.

Module 14 Assessment, continued

Lesson 5

17. a. **Contrast** How did Coptic Christianity set Ethiopians apart from the rest of Africa?
b. **Explain** Why is Great Zimbabwe a significant site in Africa?
c. **Draw Conclusions** Why were coastal cities like Kilwa among the first to be influenced by Islam?

Review Themes

18. **Geography** How did the location of the West African empires affect their success at trade?
19. **Society and Culture** How do oral traditions reflect the culture of West African civilizations?
20. **Science and Technology** What evidence in the text shows that West African civilizations benefited from technological innovation?

Reading Skills

Organization of Facts and Information Use the Reading Skills taught in this module to answer the questions about the reading selection below.

“Other resources were minerals. People who live mainly on plant foods, like many early Africans, must add salt to their diets. The Sahara was a source of this precious mineral. Gold was another mineral resource of West Africa. Although gold is soft and therefore useless for tools or weapons, it makes beautiful jewelry and coins.”

21. What structural pattern did the writer use to organize the information in the passage?
22. What signal words helped you determine the structural pattern of the information?

Social Studies Skills

Make Decisions Use the Social Studies Skill taught in this module to answer the question about the chart below.

23. Imagine you are a member of an extended family of West Africa. Consider the tasks and responsibilities of each family member, and then decide what role you will play—mother, father, elder, teenager, or young child. Then imagine a challenge that your family must face, such as a dangerous wild animal, crop failure, or loss of hunting grounds. With a partner, discuss how your family will face the problem by using decision-making and planning skills. Then, on your own, write 4–5 sentences explaining the problem and how you and your partner decided to deal with it. You may want to use a chart like this one to help you organize your thoughts.

Problem	Possible Action (Option)	Result (Consequence)

Focus On Writing

24. **Write a Journal Entry** Choose an imaginary character who might have lived during the time period covered by this module. You might choose, for example, a Berber caravan leader, a member of the Bantu who raises cattle in sub-Saharan Africa, or a woman or man living in Ghana, Mali, or Songhai. Then match that person with a specific place. Finally, write five to six sentences as your journal entry. Include details on what the character sees, feels, and does on a typical day.