

## Sub-Saharan Africa



### STUDENT WORKBOOK



*The ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani, once a key port in the African trade network along the Swahili Coast. Image by Ron Van Oers via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0.*



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*Unit 3, Cluster 1 Inquiry Chart*

<b>Unit EQ</b>	How do we best tell the stories of ancient African societies and the factors that shaped them?
<b>Cluster SQ</b>	<b>What are the defining aspects of Africa's environment, and how have people adapted to its challenges while using its resources?</b>
<b>What questions will we ask?</b>	

What did we do?	What did we learn that helps us answer our question(s)?
<b>Lesson 2:</b> We analyzed various map projections to better understand how the continent of Africa is depicted and viewed by the world.	
<b>Lesson 3:</b> We completed a digital scavenger hunt by analyzing three-dimensional maps of African ecoregions to understand the diversity of the continent's climates.	



What did we do?	What did we learn that helps us answer our question(s)?
<b>Lesson 4:</b> We analyzed secondary source texts about several African regions to better understand human adaptation to environmental challenges.	
<b>Lesson 7:</b> We conducted research on a chosen African country and created a postcard to demonstrate our new knowledge of the nation and the environmental challenges faced by its population.	
<b>Lesson 8:</b> We made a claim about how African populations have adapted to their environment using evidence from throughout the cluster.	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Gallery Walk Note Catcher*

### Tools for Observing and Discussing Photographs:

- In this photograph, I notice \_\_\_\_.
- This image makes me think about \_\_\_\_.
- The first thing that stands out to me is \_\_\_\_.
- The setting in this picture looks like \_\_\_\_.
- How does this photograph relate to \_\_\_\_?
- What story is this photo telling us about \_\_\_\_?
- What do we need to know to better understand \_\_\_\_ in this image?

### Unit 3 Themes:

- Innovation & technology
- Trade & economy
- Environment & people
- Government
- Women
- Rural life
- Agriculture
- Art & creativity
- Urban life
- Education
- Preserving culture
- Religion

Photograph	Round #1: Observe & Question	Round #2: Connect to Themes
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does this community have a water-based economy?</li><li>• How does fishing play a role in this culture's identity and daily life?</li><li>• Has this population ever experienced issues due to overfishing?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trade &amp; economy</li><li>• Environment &amp; people</li></ul>
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		

Photograph	Round #1: Observe & Question	Round #2: Connect to Themes
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Know and Wonder Chart*

**Unit 3 Essential Question: How do we best tell the stories of ancient African societies and the factors that shaped them?**

What do you already know?	What do you wonder?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Analyzing Historical Maps*

### Part 1: Observe and Discuss

**Directions:** Closely examine the historical map(s) you were assigned. First, brainstorm and discuss each map with a classmate. Then, write shorthand notes using the Describe, Reflect, and Question prompts below.

**Describe** what you see. What do you notice first? What labels do you see? What types of information are shown on the map? What clues tell you when it was made?

- Map A: \_\_\_\_\_
- Map B: \_\_\_\_\_
- Map C: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reflect** on the purpose of the map. Why do you think this map was made? Who do you think might use it? What does this map tell you about what people who made it know and didn't know?

- Map A: \_\_\_\_\_
- Map B: \_\_\_\_\_
- Map C: \_\_\_\_\_

**Question** the map. What is being left out? Whose voice is missing? How is this map influencing the people who use it?

- Map A: \_\_\_\_\_
- Map B: \_\_\_\_\_
- Map C: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 2: Summarize Your Findings**

**Directions:** Reference your notes from the discussion above, then summarize the information for each map using full sentences.

Main Ideas	Map A	Map B	Map C
<b>Setting</b> (time and place)			
<b>Audience</b>			
<b>Purpose</b>			
<b>Perspective</b> (point of view)			

**Text source:** Adapted from [Teacher's Guide: Analyzing Maps](#) from the Library of Congress.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Google Earth Tour: The Geography of Africa*

### Student Information Organizer

**Directions:** As you explore the Google Earth Tour, complete the tasks and answer the questions to record what you learn about the geography of Africa. Use the Word Bank to help write your responses.

View the Google Earth Tour here:

[People First: Key Concepts in the Geography of Africa](#)

Word Bank			
climate	weather	ecoregion	rainfall (precipitation)
rainforest	tributary	savanna	arid
steppe	semiarid	Sahel	desert
oasis	highland	plateau	Mediterranean climate
Swahili coastal climate	Ethiopian Highlands	altitude (elevation)	

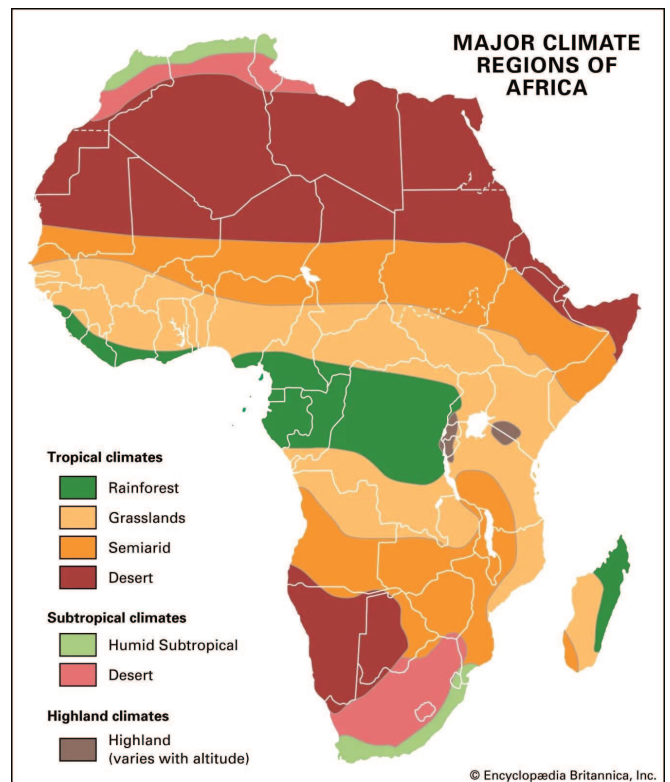
Student Tasks	Student Notes
<p>1. What can a satellite picture tell you about a continent's climate?</p> <p>Carefully look at the colors and textures. How many climate zones can you identify?</p>	

Student Tasks	Student Notes
<p>2. What is the difference between climate and weather?</p> <p>You are here viewing the town of Ain Sefra in Algeria, which is known as the "gateway of the desert" when coming from the north. As you can see from the pictures, in 2016 and in 2018 it snowed in Ain Sefra. Snow is a type of rainfall. So, from this example, what do you conclude about the difference between climate and weather?</p> <p>Learn more: Snowfall in Ain Sefra: "<a href="#">It snowed in one of the hottest places in the world</a>" from CNN</p>	
<p>3. Can you identify six of Africa's climate zones based on this map of annual average rainfall?</p> <p>Circle six climate zones on this map.</p>	 <p>2015 annual rainfall in Africa. Image by Joshua Stevens via Wikimedia Commons is in the public domain.</p>

**Ecoregions and Examples**

4. Climate zones are ecoregions. What is an ecoregion?

How important is latitude in determining climate zones? Use your Africa map as evidence.



Major climate regions of Africa. Image courtesy of Encyclopedia Britannica.



**Ecoregions and Examples****5. Ethiopian Highlands**

How might altitude affect people's athletic performance?

Here you are viewing the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. It is the 5th highest capital in the world and located in the Ethiopian Highlands, which are a plateau (a large, elevated, flat surface) that forms the largest contiguous elevated area in Africa. This is why the Ethiopian Highlands are often called the "Roof of Africa." Two out of the top three male marathon runners in the world are Ethiopian (2020). Pictured here is marathon champion Kenenisa Bekele.

How might altitude affect his performance?

Learn more: A blog post on the science of marathon training and its connection to Ethiopia: "[Why Training with Altitude Can Give You the Competitive Edge](#)" (Polar)

**6. Rainforest: banks of the Congo River (Democratic Republic of Congo)**

The rainforest ecoregion is home to the Congo River Basin, the 2nd longest river in Africa, into which many other rivers (tributaries) flow.

How could the river be a resource to people in the rainforest ecoregion?

Learn more:

- "[The Main Road Through the Heart of Africa Is the Congo River](#)" (National Geographic)
- "[On The Congo, A Floating Marketplace For A Nation](#)" (NPR)

## Ecoregions and Examples

**7. Savanna grassland: baobab tree in Western Madagascar**

The savanna is a grassland area that has fewer trees than the rainforest region. The baobab is an important tree that can be found throughout savanna ecoregions, including on the island of Madagascar.

How is the baobab tree a resource for people in the savanna region?

How do people in the savanna region of Madagascar use the baobab tree?

Learn more about baobabs in the savanna:

- "[Tree of life: Giant baobab turned into living water tank in Madagascar](#)" (New Scientist)
- "[Baobab, Nature's Water Tanks](#)" (Panos pictures)

**8. Semiarid: the Great Mosque of Djenne in Mali**

The Sahel ecoregion is characterized by low average annual rainfall and fewer trees and grasslands. This is why it is semiarid. Here you see the town of Djenne in modern-day Mali. The Great Mosque is the center of life and prayer in Djenne.

How is this mosque an example of a building that draws from semiarid region resources?

Learn more: "[Djenne](#)" (Britannica Kids)

## Ecoregions and Examples

**9. Desert: date palm and its importance**

This is the park of Lala Fatna in Algeria.

What are these trees? In what ways could they be of importance to people?

Learn more:

- [Learn how dates are cultivated in Morocco](#) (Marocopedia English)
- [Dates: The Sticky History of a Sweet Fruit](#) (National Geographic)

**10. Swahili Coast: Lamu Island, Kenya**

This is a view of mangrove forests on the island of Lamu, in Kenya, on the long Swahili Coast, which stretches from Somalia to Mozambique. Mangroves are trees with roots that arch above and into the water and can be found on tropical coastlines. Lamu is an island on the Swahili Coast. Examine the pictures of the buildings from the Swahili Coast. Look at the picture of the ceiling of the Swahili house in Lamu, Kenya.

How might the environment of the Swahili Coast determine how houses were made?

Learn more: [Swahili House Museum, Lamu Kenya](#) (Zamani Project)

**Source:** This activity was developed by the African Studies Center at Boston University's Pardee School of Global Studies and is used with permission.

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Analyzing Regional Environments Packet

**Cluster 1 Supporting Question:** *What are the defining aspects of Africa’s environment, and how have people adapted to its challenges while using its resources?*

Part 1: Background Information

- **Title of article:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Context of the article:**

Region of Africa	Group(s) of People	Country or Countries Involved

- **Determine the main idea:** Was your article primarily (mostly) about an environmental challenge or an environmental advantage of this region? State your answer in a sentence below.  
*The environmental challenge described in this region was...*  
*OR*  
*The environmental advantage described in this region was...*

- **Craft a conclusion:** Explain how the African community you read about either adapted to this challenge or used the environment for their benefit.

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**Part 2: “Give One, Get One”**

Kenya	Maasai
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmental conditions:</li><li>• Adaptation(s):</li><li>• Conclusion:</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmental conditions:</li><li>• Adaptation(s):</li><li>• Conclusion:</li></ul>
Equatorial Africa	South Africa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmental conditions:</li><li>• Adaptation(s):</li><li>• Conclusion:</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmental conditions:</li><li>• Adaptation(s):</li><li>• Conclusion:</li></ul>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *The Mosquito Menace in Equatorial Africa*

### Key Terms

<b>millennia</b>	plural of millennium; thousands of years
<b>equatorial</b>	at the latitude of the equator
<b>breed</b>	give birth to; reproduction in animal, fish, and plant species
<b>insecticide</b>	a chemical or substance that kills a particular insect

The equator stretches in a band from east to west across the center of the African continent. For **millennia**, the climate of this region has brought moist hot air and abundant rainfall to the green forest areas of central Africa. That's been great news for one particular creature—the mosquito! But mosquitos have been a notable challenge for human life in this region.

No one enjoys an itchy mosquito bite. But mosquitoes can present much greater threats. Some species of mosquito carry disease to human populations by hosting bacteria or parasites. In **equatorial** Africa, the *Anopheles* mosquito carries the parasite that spreads a dangerous disease called malaria. Equatorial Africa is one of the ideal environments for this mosquito to live.

The African people who inhabit these areas have been managing mosquito exposure and its related health risks since long ago. Modern researchers are studying the traditional ways that equatorial people have protected themselves from insect-carrying disease. For centuries, if not longer, people in this region have collected and cultivated a variety of insect repellent plants. Typically they dry the leaves, then burn them in the early evening when mosquito activity is at its height. The smoke scatters mosquitoes away from the areas where people have gathered to cook, talk, and put children to bed. This traditional scientific knowledge should be better known since it could be an inexpensive and sustainable way to help more equatorial people today.

Settlement patterns and housebuilding choices were another ancient practice to meet the challenge of mosquito-borne diseases. Equatorial people knew that they should place their homes in drier areas away from large puddles of standing water where mosquitoes **breed**. This practice reduced the exposure of families and communities to malaria from mosquito bites. It also protected their valuable cattle and other domestic animals from disease. When Europeans first arrived to colonize this region, they did not understand this choice. They were eager to take land along rivers and ponds; this was considered the best land in Europe. When malaria began to strike the newcomers, they did not recognize its connection to the insects that surrounded them.



Insecticide-treated bed nets. Image by Maggie Hallahan courtesy of the CDC is in the public domain.

Today there are widespread practices to fight malaria. Modern African healthcare and hospitals are saving lives. So too are laboratory-developed medicines called antimalarial drugs. But preventing disease before it happens is still the best policy, rooted in ancient wisdom. Governments in this region distribute **insecticide**-treated bed nets to protect people sleeping at night. Scientists believe this innovation has been the number one weapon to fight malaria.

In all these ways, people in the nations of equatorial Africa are meeting the environmental challenge of disease exposure and protecting life.

#### Text sources:

- Stonely, Avery. 2023. "[Prevalence of Malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)." Ballard Brief, Winter.
- Karunamoorthi, Kaliyaperumal and Teklu Hailu. 2014. "[Insect repellent plants traditional usage practices in the Ethiopian malaria epidemic-prone setting: an ethnobotanical survey](#)," *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*. February 12.
- Parker, John and Richard Rathbone. 2007. *African History: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, pp. 10-16.

Further learning for students: [What is malaria?](#) (Khan Academy)

## *Planting a Better Future for Kenya's Land and People*

Wangari Maathai always had an attachment to trees. As a child, she learned from her grandmother that a large fig tree near her family home in central Kenya was sacred and not to be disturbed. She gathered water for her mother at springs protected by the roots of trees. In the mid-1970s, Maathai started a campaign to help the land and meet the basic needs of rural women in Kenya. They began planting trees together—millions of them. Her Green Belt Movement has now planted more than 51 million trees across Kenya, many of which still stand. In 2004 her work was internationally recognized with the Nobel Peace Prize.



Wangari Maathai. Image by Martin Sotelo via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0 IGO.

### Key Terms

<b>degrade</b> (past tense, <b>degraded</b> )	in science, to break down, make worse
<b>degradation</b>	in science, the act or condition of being made worse
<b>attain</b>	to achieve or accomplish
<b>replenish</b>	to renew or refresh

### Putting the Pieces Together

In large parts of Africa, the natural state of the soil is poor for farming. The soil of Kenya needs to be respected and carefully treated in order to stay healthy for producing.

In the mid-1970s, Maathai became aware of Kenya's environmental decline: watersheds drying up, streams disappearing, and the desert expanding south from the Sahara. Vast forests had been cleared for farms or plantations of fast-growing exotic trees. These plantations drained water and **degraded** the soil.

Maathai began making connections others hadn't. "Listening to the women talk about water, about energy, about nutrition, it all boiled down to the environment," she said. "I came to understand the linkage between environmental **degradation** and the felt needs of the communities."

### A Groundbreaking Leader

As a girl, Wangari Maathai worked hard to **attain** an education. She had to overcome bias against women when she chose to earn a degree in biological science. She trained as a scientist but still had trouble getting male scientists to respect her.

Eventually she had the idea of using trees to overcome the environmental challenges her nation faced. Trees **replenish** the soil, provide fuel wood, protect watersheds, and promote better nutrition (by growing fruit). Maathai set up a tree nursery in a forest on the outskirts of Nairobi, later shifting it to her backyard. But the idea did not catch fire. She needed help.

Eventually she thought of asking rural women to be her tree farmers. In 1977, the Green Belt Movement was born. Government foresters initially resisted. They didn't believe uneducated rural women could plant and tend trees. Women, too, didn't think they could do it. But Maathai showed them how, building on skills they already had.

### The Trees Grow—and Branch Out

Over the years, the Green Belt Movement has built other community activities into tree-planting efforts. Among these are cultivation of more nutritious indigenous foods and low-tech but effective ways to collect and store rainwater. The Green Belt Movement also fought for political democracy in Kenya. Maathai noted that a community cannot protect its environment if it does not have a political voice.

Fifty-one million trees later—and growing!—the Green Belt Movement is famous around the world. Sadly, Dr. Wangari Maathai died of cancer in 2011. But she lived to see her idea take root. Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and other African countries have integrated the Green Belt Movement's approach. These female foresters showed that working together, regular people can heal the environment and improve their communities.

#### Text sources:

- Macdonald, Mia. 2005. "[The Greenbelt Movement, and the Story of Wangari Maathai](#)" *YES! Magazine*, March 26; adapted.
- Birch, Izzy. 2018. "[Agricultural productivity in Kenya: barriers and opportunities](#)" *K4D*, UK Department for International Development, December.
- Green Belt Movement. "[National Tree Planting Initiative](#)."

Further learning for students: [Wangari Maathai: Defender of the Earth, Fighter for Democracy](#) (video; The Nobel Prize website)



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Africa Geography Scavenger Hunt*

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.
11.	12.
13.	14.
15.	16.
17.	18.
19.	20.

Questions I have:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Postcard from Africa Packet*

Congratulations! Your social studies teacher entered you into a contest, and you won!

You get to travel to any country of your choice in Africa. Sadly, your teacher can't join you but would appreciate a postcard!

To show your new knowledge of the country, include interesting aspects that you have learned about the country's geography, environment, and people. Touch on the following topics in your postcard (in any order):

- Where you are (country and region): Put this in your greeting.
- What is one important language you hear spoken?
- What is the environment/physical geography like?
- What kind of souvenir will you bring back to your teacher?
  - Your souvenir must relate to some aspect of your country's human geography.

### **Additional Guidelines:**

### **Answer Our Supporting Question:**

*What are the defining aspects of Africa's environment, and how have people adapted to its challenges while using its resources?*

### **Front of the Postcard:**

- Draw and color a picture of your country or of a specific place in your country.
- Consider the ecoregion of your country and its specific geographic features.
- Relate your picture to what you learned.

**Back of the Postcard:**

The back of the postcard will include a note to your teacher and a postage stamp design related to your country. Be sure to address the following questions:

- Where you are (country and region): Put this in your greeting.
- What is one important language you hear spoken?
- What is the environment/physical geography like?
- What kind of souvenir will you bring back to your teacher?
  - Your souvenir must relate to your country's human geography.

## EXAMPLE POSTCARD

Front of Postcard:

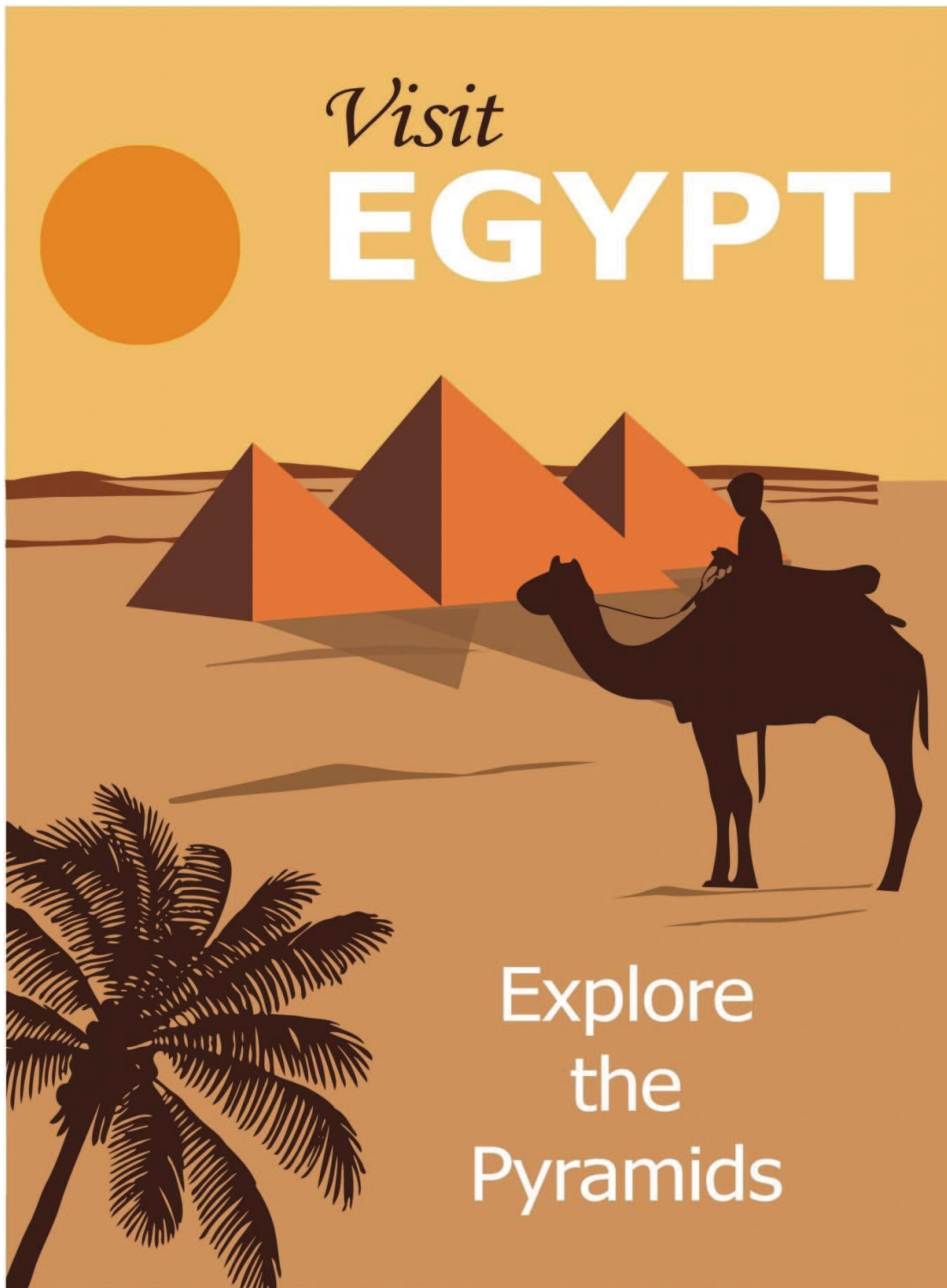


Image created by Primary Source.

**Back of Postcard:**

Hello!

Greetings from Egypt! I'm in Cairo, the capital city, and it's so full of life. The streets are busy with cars, markets, and the sound of people speaking Arabic, which is the main language here.

Did you know that Egypt is in North Africa? And part of Egypt is technically in Asia? Egypt is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the north and the Red Sea to the east.

I visited the pyramids near Giza, and they're even more amazing than I imagined. These ancient wonders were built thousands of years ago, showing how skilled and determined the people of ancient Egypt were. They adapted to life in the desert by using the Nile River for farming and transportation. Even today, the Nile is still the heart of the country, helping people grow crops and build their lives.

The environment here can be tough-the deserts are hot and dry-but the people of Egypt have always found ways to thrive. They use irrigation from the Nile to water their fields, just like their ancestors did.

I'm sending you a papyrus bookmark as a souvenir. Papyrus is an ancient plant that grows along the Nile, and Egyptians used it to make paper thousands of years ago. It's a reminder of how people here have always used the resources around them wisely.

See you soon!



## Resource List:

- [CountryReports.org — Countries in Africa](https://countryreports.org/)
- [BBC News — Country Profiles, Africa](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa)
- [National Geographic Kids](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids/)
- [UNESCO](https://www.unesco.org/)

## Notes

Name of your country and region:

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Official or main spoken languages of your country:

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Climate and important physical features of your country:

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Supporting Question: *What are the defining aspects of Africa's environment, and how have people adapted to its challenges while using its resources?*

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Facts about the people of your country, their customs, traditions, and ways of life (human geography):

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Anything else you discover about your country that is special or important:

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Bibliography/resources used:

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**Final Postcard Paragraph:**

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Distinguishing Opinions from Facts*

**Directions:** Read each statement below about a place on the African continent. Decide if the author of this statement was writing an **opinion** or a **fact**. The statement you need to judge is in **bold type**. Explain your conclusion with an annotation (note) in the sidebar panel.

Remember these definitions:

- Fact: a statement that can be checked or proven true by research using evidence
- Opinion: an expression of belief about something based on point of view or values; it cannot be proven.

Statement	Fact or Opinion?	Annotation—How did you decide?
<b>I think the yummiest street food in Accra is a meat skewer called chichinga.</b> Sadly, my friend from Ghana could not eat it because he is a vegetarian.		
<b>Lake Victoria is the largest lake in the African continent, with a surface area of 23,146 square miles.</b> I loved seeing that because I love water!		
<b>Dar Es Salaam is the most beautiful city in Tanzania;</b> I saw it with my own eyes, so I know it is true.		
<b>Dar Es Salaam has the biggest population of any city in Tanzania,</b> according to data from several websites.		



Statement	Fact or Opinion?	Annotation—How did you decide?
You will die happy if you get to see the lions on safari in Botswana.		

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Postcard Project: Self Evaluation and Peer Review*

### Self-Evaluation

**Directions:** Review your postcard carefully.

- Use the rubric below to assess your work in a number of areas.
- Reflect on your strengths and areas for improvement.
- Score yourself in each category by circling the level (4, 3, 2, or 1) that best matches your work. Then total up your scores.

Criteria	Exemplary (4 Pts)	Proficient (3 Pts)	Developing (2 Pts)	Beginning (1 Pt)	Points:
<b>Research &amp; Accuracy</b>	Includes accurate, detailed, and well-organized information from multiple sources; directly answers the Supporting Question	Includes mostly accurate and relevant information from multiple sources; addresses the Supporting Question	Includes some information but lacks accuracy, relevance, or organization; partially answers the Supporting Question	Includes little or inaccurate information; does not answer the Supporting Question	
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Clearly distinguishes fact from opinion; connects research to conclusions thoughtfully and critically	Mostly distinguishes fact from opinion; makes some connections between research and conclusions	Attempts to distinguish fact from opinion, but connections are unclear or underdeveloped	Does not distinguish fact from opinion or connect research to conclusions	

Criteria	Exemplary (4 Pts)	Proficient (3 Pts)	Developing (2 Pts)	Beginning (1 Pt)	Points:
<b>Writing Quality</b>	Writing is clear, organized, and engaging; effectively communicates ideas with appropriate tone and vocabulary	Writing is mostly clear and organized; communicates ideas with some appropriate tone and vocabulary	Writing is unclear or disorganized; uses minimal appropriate tone or vocabulary	Writing is incomplete, unclear, or lacks effort; does not communicate ideas effectively	
<b>Visual Illustration</b>	Illustration is creative, detailed, and visually enhances the postcard; clearly connects to the text	Illustration is neat and enhances the postcard; connects to the text	Illustration is incomplete or lacks detail; connection to the text is minimal	Illustration is missing or unrelated to the text	
<b>Total Points:</b>					

**Peer Review**

**Directions:** Exchange postcards with a partner.

- Review their postcard using the same rubric, and score their work honestly.
- Provide feedback by writing 1–2 positive comments and 1 suggestion for improvement.
- Then, return the postcard and review form to your partner.

Criteria	Exemplary (4 Pts)	Proficient (3 Pts)	Developing (2 Pts)	Beginning (1 Pt)	Points:
<b>Research &amp; Accuracy</b>	Includes accurate, detailed, and well-organized information from multiple sources; directly answers the Supporting Question	Includes mostly accurate and relevant information from multiple sources; addresses the Supporting Question	Includes some information but lacks accuracy, relevance, or organization; partially answers the Supporting Question	Includes little or inaccurate information; does not answer the Supporting Question	
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Clearly distinguishes fact from opinion; connects research to conclusions thoughtfully and critically	Mostly distinguishes fact from opinion; makes some connections between research and conclusions	Attempts to distinguish fact from opinion, but connections are unclear or underdeveloped	Does not distinguish fact from opinion or connect research to conclusions	
<b>Writing Quality</b>	Writing is clear, organized, and engaging; effectively communicates ideas with appropriate tone and vocabulary	Writing is mostly clear and organized; communicates ideas with some appropriate tone and vocabulary	Writing is unclear or disorganized; uses minimal appropriate tone or vocabulary	Writing is incomplete, unclear, or lacks effort; does not communicate ideas effectively	

Criteria	Exemplary (4 Pts)	Proficient (3 Pts)	Developing (2 Pts)	Beginning (1 Pt)	Points:
<b>Visual Illustration</b>	Illustration is creative, detailed, and visually enhances the postcard; clearly connects to the text	Illustration is neat and enhances the postcard; connects to the text	Illustration is incomplete or lacks detail; connection to the text is minimal	Illustration is missing or unrelated to the text	
<b>Total Points:</b>					

Feedback
Positive comments (+):
Suggestion for improvement (-):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cluster 1 Formative Assessment Task

Part 1—Gather Evidence

**Part 1 Directions:** Use provided resources (readings, maps, or videos) to gather evidence on two specific examples of Africa's environment, the associated challenges, and how populations adapt to these challenges.

Country or Region in Africa	Environmental Conditions	Challenge	Adaptation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Egypt</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Harsh desert environment</li><li>Hot climate</li><li>Drought and flooding conditions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Creating a sustainable food system</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Egyptians built canals and basins to manage the Nile River's flooding and direct water to their crops during the dry season.</li><li>This allowed them to cultivate fertile land even in arid conditions.</li></ul>

**Part 2—Form a Claim**

**Part 2 Directions:** Review the evidence you listed above, and think about the question: *How have people in Africa adapted to challenges of the environment while using its resources?*

Write a claim that summarizes your answer in one clear sentence.

**Claim:**

**Part 3—Write a Paragraph**

**Part 3 Directions:** Use your claim, evidence, and reasoning to construct a paragraph in response to the Cluster 1 Supporting Question: *What are the defining aspects of Africa's environment, and how have people in Africa adapted to challenges of the environment while using its resources?*

Follow this structure:

- **Topic sentence:** Introduce the topic.
- **Claim:** Use the claim you drafted above in Part 2.
- **Evidence & reasoning:** Provide two examples from your notes, and explain how the evidence supports your claim.
- **Conclusion:** Summarize how people's adaptations show their ability to overcome challenges.



**Part 4—Develop Guiding Questions**

In this cluster, you investigated the following Supporting Question: *What are the defining aspects of Africa's environment, and how have people adapted to its challenges while using its resources?*

**Part 4 Directions:** If you were to continue researching, what would you still want to know? Brainstorm two new questions below that are related to your learning from this cluster.

1.
2.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Unit 3, Cluster 2 Inquiry Chart*

<b>Unit EQ</b>	How do we best tell the stories of ancient African societies and the factors that shaped them?
<b>Cluster SQ</b>	<b>How do stories, artifacts, and written records help us understand the unique features of ancient African societies?</b>
<b>What questions will we ask?</b>	

What did we do?	What did we learn that helps us answer our question(s)?
<b>Lesson 9:</b> We explored how Eurocentric bias and diverse perspectives influence the writing of African history by comparing two views on the subject, helping us better understand the role of artifacts and records in studying ancient African societies.	
<b>Lesson 10:</b> We compared and contrasted archaeological sites and artifacts from four regions of sub-Saharan Africa.	

What did we do?	What did we learn that helps us answer our question(s)?
<p><b>Lesson 14:</b> We examined how knowledge was preserved and shared in African societies through the roles of scribes, storytellers, and other cultural traditions. By analyzing oral histories, written records, stories, and artifacts, we explored how historians use a variety of sources to understand and interpret the past, culminating in a primary source analysis that highlighted how knowledge was passed down through generations.</p>	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *One of Africa's Best Kept Secrets—Its History*

### Observe

Look at the title above. Answer the following questions:

- What do you think this article will be about? What does the phrase "best kept secret" suggest?
- What does it suggest about African history?

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### Read

**Directions:** Follow along as your teacher reads the text below aloud. Underline or highlight important phrases, and take notes in the margins. Focus on finding evidence of the following in the text:

- The author's reasons for learning African history
- Her point of view about African history

The Great Pyramid of Giza in Cairo is rightly considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. But travel further south along the River Nile, and you will find a thousand pyramids that belonged to the Kingdom of Kush, in what is now Sudan.

Kush was an African superpower. Its influence extended to what is now called the Middle East. The kingdom lasted for many hundreds of years. In the 8th century BC, it conquered Egypt and governed for the best part of a century. What remains of the kingdom is equally impressive. More than 300 of these pyramids are still intact. They are almost untouched since they were built nearly 3,000 years ago.

Some years ago I visited these pyramids. On my return to the UK, I asked my parents what they knew of their country's historic sites. Not much, it turned out.

This was odd since both of them could tell you a lot about key points in British history. My own Sudanese parents were fluent in English and highly educated. But by and large, they were taught according to a Western curriculum. Even when they looked at their own history,

it would have been through the perspective of Western scholars.

I wondered why my parents did not know enough about their own country's history. Was this true of many other Africans? As I talked to people, I discovered that this was indeed the case.

A few years later, at UNESCO's Paris headquarters, I saw on the bookshelves of the Ethiopian-born director a set of books. It was called the [\*General History of Africa\*](#). It turned out that this is one of UNESCO's and the continent's best kept secrets: Africa's history written by African scholars.

The *General History of Africa* is a good start. UNESCO plans to incorporate this research into schools across the African continent. Hopefully, future generations will have a better idea of their history. They will see there is much for them to be proud of from their past—a past which provides the foundation for an even greater future.

## Exit Ticket

### Connect

**Directions:** Write a paragraph (4–6 sentences) comparing and contrasting the two perspectives that we have studied today (see Trevor-Roper's quote below). Use evidence from the texts to support your ideas. Address the following questions:

- What does Zeinab Badawi believe about the history of Africa?
- How is her point of view different from the quote you read at the start of class (see below)? In what ways is it similar?
- Why do you think it's important for us to learn about Badawi's point of view?

### Quote from Hugh Trevor-Roper:

"[Students today] demand that they be taught the history of black Africa. Perhaps in the future there will be some African history to teach. But at present there is none, or very little: there is only the history of Europe in Africa. The rest is largely darkness."

### Text sources:

- Badawi, Zeinab Badawi. 2017. "[One of Africa's Best Secrets – Its History](#)." BBC, June 30; slightly adapted
- Trevor-Roper, Hugh. 1963. *The Rise of Christian Europe*. Harcourt, Brace & World.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *My Archaeology Log*

### Compare Four Complex African Societies

Congratulations! You will be traveling to four archaeological sites in Africa to learn more about the complex societies of Aksum, Mapungubwe, Kilwa, and Djenné-Djeno. In each archaeological site, you will be responsible for finding artifacts and information to help answer some very important questions about each society.

#### Before you travel:

Other archaeologists around the world have compiled a list of questions they'd like you to answer as you research each society.

1. What kinds of technology did each society use? (tools, materials, methods)
2. How did the environment affect how people in each society lived? (climate, conditions, temperature, natural disasters, desert, rainforest)
3. How did each society protect people's well-being? (food, shelter, safety)

#### Brainstorm three of your own questions:

What are your additional questions about the characteristics of Africa's complex societies and the ways they were organized? Think about your questions using at least two of these categories (or others that you can think of):

Categories		
government	trade	communication
religion	natural resources	other?

Example: *What religions did people in each society follow?*

Your questions:

1.
2.
3.

As you travel to each archaeological site, keep in mind the three questions of other archaeologists as well as your own questions. If you find the answers to any of them, record them in your log on the next page. Use **artifacts** and **architecture**, as well as written information, to help you in your hunt for answers!

**Observe**

First, study images of artifacts, ruins, and landscapes from each society.

- Sketch an artifact or site that stands out to you.
- Describe the materials used and what the artifact tells you about daily life.

**Read**

Research the history of each society using texts and artifacts.

- Look for answers to the guiding questions using your Ancient African Artifacts Packet.
- Take notes in your Archaeology Log.



Aksum (Axum)

Region and time period:

Climate/environment:

Archaeologist's question (choose one from the first page):

Question:	Answer:	Evidence/Artifact:

Other relevant information about this society:

Sketch your favorite artifact:

Mapungubwe

Region and time period:

Climate/environment:

Archaeologist's question (choose one from the first page):

Question:	Answer:	Evidence/Artifact:

Other relevant information about this society:

Sketch your favorite artifact:

Kilwa

Region and time period:

Climate/environment:

Archaeologist's question (choose one from the first page):

Question:	Answer:	Evidence/Artifact:

Other relevant information about this society:

Sketch your favorite artifact:

Djenné-Djeno (Jenne-Jeno)

Region and time period:

Climate/environment:

Archaeologist's question (choose one from the first page):

Question:	Answer:	Evidence/Artifact:

Other relevant information about this society:

Sketch your favorite artifact:

- Connect:**
- Compare and contrast the complex societies based on your findings.
  - Identify patterns and make connections to other civilizations or modern societies.

Compare and Contrast Complex African Societies	
List key <u>differences</u> between the societies.	List key <u>similarities</u> . Star the most important one and explain why.

Summarize Your Findings

As an archaeologist, it is your job to summarize your findings so that people can learn about these great societies.

- In 5–7 sentences, write an archaeological report (a summary using evidence) about what you’ve learned and about the answers to your questions.
- Use your notes to support your points.
- Include one similarity and one difference between the societies.
- Summarize how these societies adapted to their environments and developed unique cultures.

Word Bank		
similar / unlike	same / different	while
something they shared was	on one hand / on the other hand	in contrast with

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Writing Systems in Ancient Africa*

In the diverse societies of ancient sub-Saharan Africa, people used many different types of scripts and writing systems. Writing was used for learning and prayer, commerce and law, and the recording of history. Read about three of these ancient writing systems below. As you read, annotate the article:

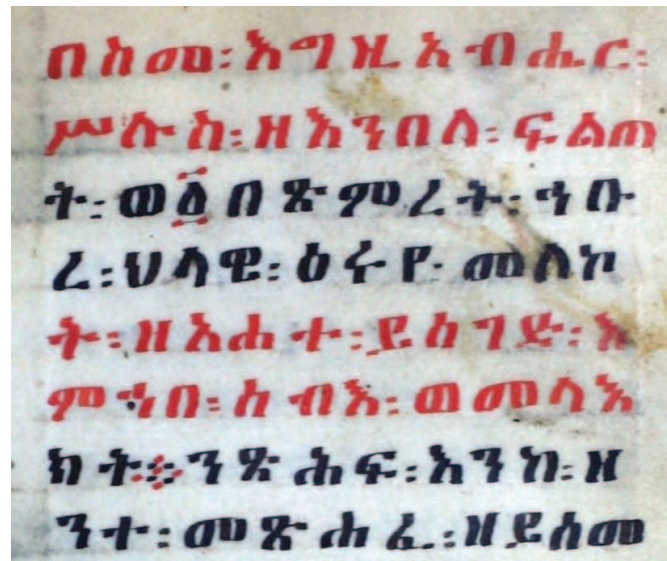
1. Single underline information about **who** used this type of writing.
2. Double underline information about **what the writing was used for**.
3. At the end, go back and explain one of your annotations with a note in the margin.

### #1: Ge'ez

Ge'ez is an early ancient script from Ethiopia. It is an alphabetic script. Inscriptions in Ge'ez were found at many archaeological sites from the Kingdom of Aksum. They told the histories of kings and praised their accomplishments.

Scribes were specially trained to write Ge'ez. They were respected individuals who created Christian holy books and healing scrolls with this writing. These books were valued by the community.

In ancient times, Ge'ez was related to the daily language spoken in Ethiopia. In modern Ethiopia, people no longer speak Ge'ez in daily life. But Ge'ez is still used in Ethiopian Christian prayer books and rituals.



Sample of Ge'ez writing (detail). Image from Miami University Libraries via Wikimedia Commons is in the public domain.

**#2: Nsibidi**

Nsibidi is an ancient system of writing used by several ethnic groups of West Africa. There are hundreds of symbols, and each represents an idea, an action, or a thing.

Nsibidi symbols do not connect to any particular spoken language. Instead they helped people communicate in symbols across several different languages.

In ancient times, knowledge of how to write or draw these symbols was specialized knowledge. The knowledge belonged to secret societies of elite men.

They used the symbols for trade and in religious ceremonies and rituals.

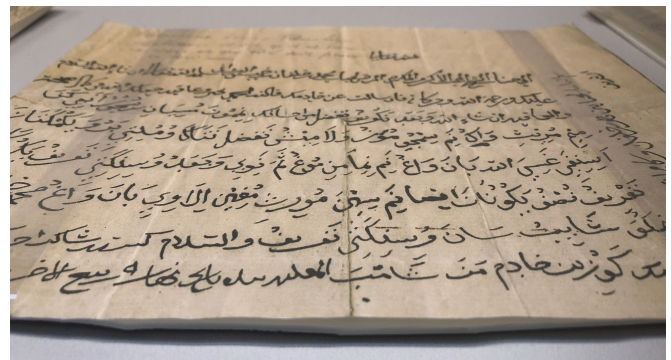
The beautiful geometric designs of Nsibidi writing can still be seen on fabrics, houses, artwork, and body tattoos in West Africa today.



Nsibidi ideographic characters on Ukara cloth. Image by Ukabia via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 3.0.

**#3: Arabic**

Arabic is an alphabetic writing system that is used by about a billion people throughout the world today. This includes many millions of African people. Originally Arabic script was developed to write the Arabic language. Later the script was adapted to write other languages. The African languages of Kiswahili and Hausa use Arabic writing.



Document in Kiswahili, Arabic alphabet. Image by Hispalois via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.

Arabic writing was brought to sub-Saharan Africa in ancient times by Arabic-speaking traders and travelers. African merchants began to use Arabic writing for contracts and trade. Later, when they converted to Islam, merchants used Arabic for prayer and study. African Muslim teachers and imams (religious leaders) used Arabic writing to teach and inspire others.

During the 14th century, the West African city of Timbuktu developed as a great center for learning. Here, scribes and scholars used Arabic writing to preserve valuable knowledge about science, mathematics, medicine, nature, poetry, and religion.



**Text sources:**

- Smithsonian Institute, National Museum of African Art. 2020. "[In-Scribing Meaning: Writing and Graphic Systems in African Art](#)." December 20.
- Mark, Joshua. 2011. "[Writing](#)." *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, April 28.
- National Park Service. 2015. "[Nsibidi Symbols](#)." November 10.
- Abu-Haidar, Farida. 1997. "Introduction: Arabic Writing in Africa," *Research in African Languages*, vol 28, autumn, pp. 1–4.
- Jarus, Owen. 2013. "[Timbuktu, Historical Centre of Learning](#)," *LiveScience*, January 21.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Role of Oral Tradition

## Part 1: Think-Pair-Share

**What is something you learned to do at home from a family member or in your community from an “elder?”**

Brainstorm this question by adding notes in the Graphic Organizer below. You will choose your best idea and bring it to class for an activity. Please note:

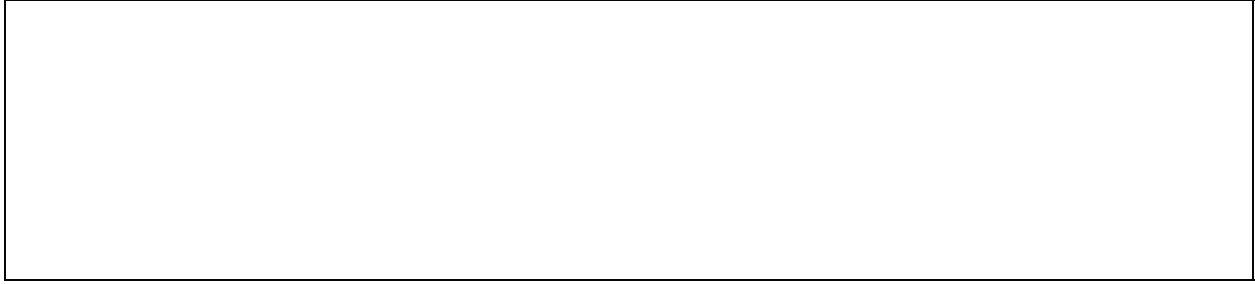
- It could be something you learned how to make, something you learned to do, or a tradition you keep that’s important to you.
- Keep in mind that an “elder” does not have to be old in years. It is someone who is older than you and has knowledge and experience.

Make a list here:

Things an elder taught you to do (skills, how to complete a task, creative projects, special interests, etc.):	The person who taught you (family member, teacher, coach, family friend, community leader, counselor, etc.):

Describe your best idea from the list above to share with the class:

Create a sketch or illustration of your best idea from the list above to share with the class:



## Part 2: Interview Your “Elder”

If possible, interview the person who taught you something valuable. If you cannot interview the specific person who taught you, try to talk with someone who also knows your elder and can help you answer these questions.

### Suggested questions for the interview:

- You taught me \_\_\_\_\_. (how to make.../how to...) Why was it important to you that I learned how to do this?
- How did you teach me to do this?
  - What was the hardest part of teaching this to me?
  - What was the most enjoyable part of teaching this to me?
- What is your favorite part about doing this activity?
- Is this skill or activity something that has been passed down in our family or community?
- How has this skill changed over time, if at all?
- Are there any stories or memories connected to teaching or doing this activity?
- Why do you think it's important for me (or others) to learn this?

**Your notes and takeaways:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *West African Oral Tradition One-Pager*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Present-to-Past Connection**  
A person similar to a griot today is:  
  
because:

One **SIMILARITY**  
between griots  
and scribes

One **DIFFERENCE**  
between griots  
and scribes

**Griots and  
the West  
African Oral  
Tradition**

An insight I gained about the  
Cluster 2 Supporting Question

Draw a picture or symbol  
for a griot (or import one  
from an online search).



A griot was powerful because...

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Cluster 2 Formative Assessment Task***Part 1:** Observe and Analyze

**Directions:** Analyze the two primary sources below. Using bullet points for all sections, take general notes in the Graphic Organizer below, then answer a few analysis questions.

Artifact #1:	Artifact #2:
 <p>A griot performs in Diffa, Niger. Image by Roland via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0.</p>	 <p>Tombstone of Princess Aisha of Kilwa, c. 1360. Image courtesy of African History Extra.</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> A modern-day griot performs at Diffa, Niger, West Africa. His instrument is likely a gurmi. Griots pass knowledge down from one generation to the next by memorizing and sharing oral histories, songs, and traditions.</p>	<p><b>Description:</b> Tombstone of princess Aisha of Kilwa, c. 1360. The Swahili stone-carved tombstone, bearing Arabic inscriptions, showcases the use of written records to record important history.</p>

General Observations:	Inferences (Conclusions):
Artifact #1:	Artifact #1:
Artifact #2:	Artifact #2:

Analysis Questions:

1. What do these artifacts show about the different ways history was preserved in sub-Saharan Africa?

2. How might someone living in these societies view the importance of oral and written traditions?

3. How might an outsider (e.g., an Arab trader or European explorer) view these traditions? Distinguish between fact and opinion in these perspectives. Use the artifacts as evidence.

[illegible]



**Part 3:** Continue the Inquiry

**Directions:** If you were to continue researching, what would you still want to know? Brainstorm two new questions below that are related to your learning from this cluster.

1.

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2.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Unit 3, Cluster 3 Inquiry Chart*

<b>Unit EQ</b>	How do we best tell the stories of ancient African societies and the factors that shaped them?
<b>Cluster SQ</b>	<b>Which role—the ironsmith, the farmer, or the king—do you think had the greatest influence on ancient West African societies?</b>
<b>What questions will we ask?</b>	

What did we do?	What did we learn that helps us answer our question(s)?
<b>Lesson 15:</b> We looked at pictures of an ironsmith, a farmer, and a king and shared our ideas about which one would be most important in starting a new civilization.	
<b>Lesson 16:</b> We investigated evidence about the roles of ironsmiths, farmers, and kings in ancient West African societies to determine which was most significant while also recognizing how these occupations were interconnected and essential for a complex society to thrive.	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence: Occupations and Society in Ancient Ghana

**Question #1:** What did occupational specialization and social structure look like in ancient West African societies?

As you read, underline any evidence that might answer the inquiry supporting question. Begin to think: What are some of the specialized occupations you find evidence for here?

Evidence #1:

“Kumbi Saleh [a city in the ancient West African empire of Ghana excavated by archeologists] had at least two large cemeteries, which archaeologists have used to estimate the city’s population. They think the town had 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants... When the archaeologists excavated the cemeteries, they found iron objects including knives, lances, nails, farming tools, and a pair of scissors.”

**Text source:** Conrad, David. 2005. *Empires of Medieval West Africa: Ghana, Mali, and Songhay*. Facts on File, p. 72.

From the above paragraph, list:

Possible Specialized Occupations	Evidence

Evidence #2:

Al-Bakri [an Arab geographer who lived at the time of the Ghana empire] said the king had a palace and a number of domed dwellings that were surrounded with an enclosure, like a city wall...The biggest and best building was for the king, who was the head of a very large family with many wives and concubines (women who lived much like wives but were not legally married to the king), scores of children, and dozens of relatives. Some buildings would be for individual wives, each with her children, relatives, servants, and slaves. There would be quarters for guests, palace guards, messengers, and for other servants and slaves. There would also be granaries, stables, toilet and bath enclosures, places to cook in wet weather (otherwise they cooked outside), and other storage and utility buildings. Before Islam came to the Ghana Empire, the kings practiced only the traditional Soninke religion.

**Text source:** Conrad, David. 2005. *Empires of Medieval West Africa: Ghana, Mali, and Songhay*. Facts on File, p. 72–73.

From the above paragraph, list:

Possible Specialized Occupations	Evidence

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

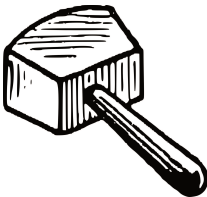
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence: The Benefits of Occupations

Question #2: How did ironsmiths, farmers, and kings benefit their societies?

Remember, a *benefit* does something *good* for the community or helps the community in some way.

How did ironsmiths *benefit* their societies?



Read:	In a few words, describe how ironsmiths benefited their societies:	List evidence from the text to back up your statement:
<p>“For centuries, tools made from iron have helped Africans forage, hunt, and farm the soil, making prosperity possible through efficient and effective management of household and agricultural chores. Knives, hoes, plows, sickles, machetes, and axes have long been among the blacksmith’s most valuable creations. In particular, short- and long-handled hoes for cultivating and sickles for harvesting have enabled African peoples to survive and thrive. Hoe blade designs vary widely from culture to culture depending upon climate, terrain, soil type, and crop.”</p>		

Text source: Smithsonian National Museum of African Art. "[Striking Iron: The Art of African Blacksmiths](#)." (adapted quote)

How did farmers *benefit* their societies?



Read:	In a few words, describe how farmers benefited their societies:	List evidence from the text to back up your statement:
<p><b>Source #1:</b> “African rice has been cultivated for 3,500 years. Between 1500 and 800 BCE, <i>Oryza glaberrima</i> (the scientific name for African rice) was spread from its original center, the Niger River delta, and extended to Senegal...African rice helped Africa conquer its famine of 1203.”</p> <p><b>Source #2:</b> [Farming in ancient West and Central Africa] “brought an increase in the scale of food production and in its quality...One of the most valuable of the tree crops was the oil palm...The preparation of palm fruits to make cooking oil enhanced the nutritional quality of the diet with both proteins and vitamins, further enhancing health and leading to population growth.”</p>		

**Text source:** Birmingham, David. 1998. “[Central Africa: Early society and economy](#).” Britannica Online. Updated April 13, 2025.

How did kings *benefit* their societies?



Read:	In a few words, describe how kings benefited their societies:	List evidence from the text to back up your statement:
<p><b>Source #1:</b> Al-Idrisi [an Arab visitor to the empire of Ghana] was impressed by the “righteousness” of Ghana’s ruler, who by that time had become a Muslim. Al-Idrisi describes a daily procession to uphold justice in which the king and his corps of army commanders went on horseback every morning through the streets of the town. Anyone who has suffered injustice or misfortune confronts [the king] and stays there until the wrong is remedied.”</p> <p><b>Source #2:</b> The civil government [of Ghana] was backed by a large, powerful army...It is said that the king of Ghana could put 200,000 soldiers into the field. Of these, 40,000 were archers, and some of the troops rode small horses...Other weapons included swords, long spears, and short throwing javelins.</p>		

**Text source:** Conrad, David. 2005. *Empires of Medieval West Africa: Ghana, Mali, and Songhay*. Facts on File, p. 76.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Evidence: Reputations of Three Occupations*

Use the **artifacts** to find **evidence** for the *reputations* of the ironsmith, farmer, and king.

### **Artifact: The Ironsmith**

Bronze metal staff from the Yoruba people of West Africa



A leader with a high reputation would hold a staff like this one for ceremonies or other important occasions. This staff shows Ogun, the god of iron in several ancient West African cultures. In ancient Yoruba myth, Ogun brought ironmaking to humans. The iron tools of Ogun were associated with a successful hunter, a powerful leader, and a good harvest for the farmer.

Staff Finial of Ogun. Image courtesy of New Orleans Museum of Art.



## Examining Artifacts: The Ironsmith

<b>Describe what you see:</b>	<b>Do you see...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Objects?</li><li>• Text?</li><li>• Symbols?</li><li>• Facial expressions?</li><li>• Natural materials?</li></ul>
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<b>Use the description to write what you <i>think</i> this artifact represents:</b>	<b>What was the <i>reputation</i> of the ironsmith, according to this artifact?</b>
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## Artifact: The Farmer

Carved wooden headdress of the Bamana people of West Africa, worn at a harvest festival

To the Bamana people of West Africa, “farming is the most important and noblest profession.” A dancer would wear this headdress on her head at a harvest celebration. The long horns symbolize the tall stalks of the millet crop. The mythical creature, similar to an antelope, is a *chi wara*. In ancient Bamana myth, the *chi wara* taught agriculture to humans. The female *chi wara* is carrying a baby on its back the way a female farmer would carry her baby in the fields.



Female Headdress (Chiwara). Image courtesy of The Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia. Used with permission.

**Text source:** The Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia. [African Art: Aesthetics and Meaning](#).

## Examining Artifacts: The Farmer

<b>Describe what you see:</b>	<b>Do you see...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Objects?</li><li>• Text?</li><li>• Symbols?</li><li>• Facial expressions?</li><li>• Natural materials?</li></ul>
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<b>Use the description to write what you <i>think</i> this artifact represents:</b>	<b>What was the <i>reputation</i> of the farmer, according to this artifact?</b>
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## Artifact/Cultural Practice: The King

Burial of a king in ancient Ghana, Soninke people of West Africa

“When their king dies, they construct over the place where his tomb will be an enormous dome of saj wood. Then they bring him on a bed covered with a few carpets and cushions and place him inside the dome. At his side they place his ornaments, his weapons, and the vessels from which he used to eat and drink, filled with various kinds of food and beverages. They place there too the men who used to serve his meals. They close the door of the dome and cover it with mats and furnishings. Then the people assemble, who heap earth upon it until it becomes like a big hillock.”

**Text source:** Birmingham, David. 1998. “[Central Africa: Early society and economy](#).” Britannica Online. Updated April 13, 2025.

## Examining Artifacts: The King

<p><b>Describe the artifacts and actions (practices) you read about from this first-hand primary source observation:</b></p>	<p><b>Did this writer observe...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Objects?</li><li>• Text?</li><li>• Symbols?</li><li>• Emotions?</li><li>• Natural materials?</li></ul>
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<p><b>Use the description to write what you <i>think</i> this set of cultural practices represents:</b></p>	<p><b>What was the <i>reputation</i> of the king, according to these practices?</b></p>
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Who Had the Most Significant Role in West African Society?*

**Directions:** Using bullet points, fill out the Graphic Organizers below in order to prepare for a short-answer response.

**Reflect on what you have learned about ancient West African society.**

1. How was society structured? What occupations did people have?

2. How did the occupations of farmer, ironsmith, and king benefit society?

3. What was the reputation of the farmer, the ironsmith, and the king?

**Think about what made someone essential in ancient West Africa. Brainstorm your own criteria for judging their importance:**

- What made someone essential in ancient West Africa?
- What criteria will you use to judge?

What evidence do you have that the farmer, ironsmith, or king followed the criteria above?

Occupation	Criteria <i>(Why are they important?)</i>	Evidence <i>(What shows their importance?)</i>
farmer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
ironsmith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
king	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

Use your notes to make an argument in response to this analysis question:

- Who played the most significant role in the development of ancient West African societies: the ironsmith, the farmer, or the king?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Cluster 3 Formative Assessment Task (Sentence Starters)*

**Directions:**

At the end of this lesson, think about what you learned about different jobs in ancient West African societies: ironsmiths, farmers, and kings.

Choose one job that you think was the most important in shaping society. Then write one short paragraph using the sentence starters below.

**1. Topic Sentence:**

*In ancient West Africa, people had different important jobs like ironsmiths, farmers, and kings.*

**2. Claim—State your opinion clearly:**

*I think the most important role in ancient West African society was the (ironsmith/farmer/king) because...*

**3. Evidence & Reasoning—Support your opinion with examples:**

*One reason is that...*

*This job helped society by...*

*Another example is...*

*This shows that...*

**4. Conclusion—Restate your main idea:**

*Because of these reasons, the (ironsmith/farmer/king) had the greatest influence on society.*



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Cluster 3 Formative Assessment Task*

**Directions:** At the end of this lesson, reflect on what you have learned about the roles of different occupations in ancient West African societies. Your task is to think about which role—the ironsmith, the farmer, or the king—you believe had the greatest influence on the organization and values of society.

Based on what you have learned, which role—the ironsmith, the farmer, or the king—do you think had the greatest influence on ancient West African societies? Defend your answer with at least two pieces of evidence from the lesson or resources we’ve used.

- Your response should be one short paragraph.
- Explain your reasoning and provide evidence to support your choice.

#### **Example Structure for Student Responses:**

- **Topic Sentence:** Introduce the topic of the paragraph.
- **Claim:** Make a solid argument in response to the Supporting Question.
- **Evidence & Reasoning:** Provide two examples from your learning during the In-Depth Inquiry, and explain how the evidence supports your claim.
- **Conclusion:** Summarize how people’s adaptations show their ability to overcome challenges.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Unit 3, Cluster 4 Inquiry Chart*

<b>Unit EQ</b>	How do we best tell the stories of ancient African societies and the factors that shaped them?
<b>Cluster SQ</b>	<b>How did Africa's geography influence local and global trade?</b>
<b>What questions will we ask?</b>	

What did we do?	What did we learn that helps us answer our question(s)?
<b>Lesson 18:</b> We studied a series of maps in order to predict why certain trade routes developed while considering geography and modes of transportation.	
<b>Lesson 19:</b> We completed readings on major ancient African trade networks using the 3 reads strategy while categorizing our notes.	

What did we do?	What did we learn that helps us answer our question(s)?
<b>Lesson 20:</b> We took on the role of an ancient consumer and completed a “product review” to better understand the importance of trade in ancient sub-Saharan Africa.	
<b>Lesson 21:</b> We completed a reading on the slave trade that was prominent on the Swahili Coast and reflected on our emotions with this new knowledge.	
<b>Lesson 22:</b> We completed a webquest to learn about the reliance on camel caravans as a part of the trans-Saharan trade network.	
<b>Lesson 23:</b> We analyzed two contrasting sources, noticing differences of purpose and perspective, in order to identify effects of the ancient sub-Saharan trade on the Empire of Ghana/Wagadou.	
<b>Lesson 24:</b> We made a claim to explain how Africa's geography influenced its trade networks and the effects on local and global societies.	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The Geography of African Trade Networks

1. Red Sea Trade Network

 Adulis (Eritrea)	Berenice (Egypt)	Berbera (Somalia—ancient name was Malao)	Aksum (Ethiopia)
---	---------------------	--	---------------------

**Directions:** Pin these locations on your map. Then take notes in the Graphic Organizer below.

Observations	Inferences	Ideas & Questions
What do you notice or observe about this starred African trading center?	What do you think or infer would make it a good place for trade?	List out any additional insights and/or questions below.

Make a Prediction
How do you predict this trade network functioned to meet the needs or wants of communities?

2. Swahili Coast (Indian Ocean) Trade Network


 Mogadishu (Somalia)	Mombasa (Kenya)	Kilwa (Tanzania)	Madagascar	Calicut Port (Kerala State, India)
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**Directions:** Pin these locations on your map. Then take notes in the Graphic Organizer below.

Observations	Inferences	Ideas & Questions
What do you notice or observe about this starred African trading center?	What do you think or infer would make it a good place for trade?	List out any additional insights and/or questions below.

Make a Prediction
How do you predict this trade network functioned to meet the needs or wants of communities?

3. Trans-Saharan Trade Network

 Awdaghust (nearby modern location to look up is Kiffa, Mauritania)	Bambuk Goldfields (nearby modern location is Bakel, Senegal)	Djenne (Mali)	Tadmakka (nearby modern location is village of Essouk, Mali)	Sijilmasa (Morocco)
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**Directions:** Pin these locations on your map. Then take notes in the Graphic Organizer below.

Observations	Inferences	Ideas & Questions
What do you notice or observe about this starred African trading center?	What do you think or infer would make it a good place for trade?	List out any additional insights and/or questions below.

Make a Prediction
How do you predict this trade network functioned to meet the needs or wants of communities?

## *Reading: African Trade Networks*

### Primary Document #1: The Red Sea Trade Network

#### Background about the author and text:

This account of the Red Sea trade routes was written by a Greek sailor or ship captain living in the 1st century CE. It is the oldest detailed description of African trade that has been found so far. The name of the author is unknown, but historians think he was a Greek person living in Egypt. The original name of the book is the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*. That is what ancient Greeks called the Red Sea. A “periplus” is an account of sea voyages in foreign lands. This author described daily life and trading customs along the Red Sea coast in northeast Africa.

#### Adapted Text

1. On the mainland, opposite Mountain Island, lies Adulis. It is a fair-sized village. From Adulis to the city of the Aksumites is a 5-day journey. African traders bring all the ivory from the lands beyond the Nile to Aksum, and from there to Adulis.

Before the harbor lies Mountain Island. Ships coming to Adulis now anchor here because of attacks from the land.

Items that are imported into Adulis for Africans to buy are plain cloth made in Egypt, sheets of soft copper used for cooking utensils, bracelets and anklets for the women, small axes and swords, wine from Italy (not much), and olive oil (not much). For the king, gold and silver plates are also **imported**. Items that are **exported** out of Adulis are ivory, tortoiseshell, and rhinoceros horn.

2. Beyond Adulis, following the coast to the south, is the Cape of Spices. African farmers produce cinnamon and frankincense there to sell and export.
3. To the south there is another market-town called Opone. The same things are imported as already mentioned. And from Opone, slaves of the better sort are exported, which are brought to Egypt in increasing numbers. Also a great quantity of tortoiseshell is exported, better than that found elsewhere.

**Text source:** [The Voyage Around the Erythraean Sea](#) by Silk Road Seattle.

## Primary Document #2: The Swahili Coast/Indian Ocean Trade Routes

### Background about the author and text:

This account of trade on the Swahili coast was written by Ibn Battuta. Ibn Battuta was a scholar, judge, and traveler from Tangiers, Morocco, in North Africa. He lived in the 14th century. He was a Muslim, and his special reason for traveling was to learn how Muslims lived in other parts of the Islamic world. Historians consider him one of the greatest travelers of history because he went to so many places and wrote a detailed book about his experiences. Although he did not engage in trade as a career, he traveled with merchants and observed the customs of trade in those places. Ibn Battuta traveled down the East African coast by ship around 1330 and later wrote this account.

### Adapted Text

1. We sailed for 15 days and came to Maqdashaw. (The modern name is Mogadishu, Somalia.) This is a town of enormous size. Its inhabitants are merchants possessed of vast resources. They own large numbers of camels and quantities of sheep. In this place, African people make excellent woven fabrics named for the town that are unequaled. These fabrics are exported to Egypt and elsewhere.

The people of Maqdashaw have a custom. When a vessel reaches the harbor, small boats come out to it. In each small boat, there are young men of the town, each one bringing a covered platter containing food. One of the young men presents it to one of the merchants on the ship, saying, "This is my guest." The merchant, when he leaves the boat, goes to the house of his host.

2. We came to the island of Mambasa, a large island 2-days journey. (The modern name is Mombasa, Kenya.) The island has banana, lemon, and citron trees. Their food consists mostly of bananas and fish. They are Muslims, pious, honorable, and upright, and their mosques are of wood, admirably constructed.
3. We stayed one night on this island and sailed on to the city of Kulwa, a large city on the seacoast. (Today it is a historic site called Kilwa.) The city of Kulwa is one of the finest and most substantially built towns. [Their sultan (or local ruler) is known for] the multitude of his gifts and acts of generosity. The items that he and his subjects trade away are mostly ivory; they seldom give gold.

**Text source:** Gibb, H.A.R. (ed.) 1962. *The Travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325-1354*. Cambridge University Press.



## Primary Document #3: The Trans-Saharan Trade Network

### Background about the author and text:

This account of trade networks in West Africa and across the Sahara Desert was written by a geographer and historian known as al-Bakri. He was from a Spanish Arabic family who lived his whole life in Islamic Spain. Though he did not travel himself, historians believe he talked to many travelers and merchants and collected their accounts. In 1068 he published an important book called *Book of Highways and Kingdoms*. It is the most detailed contemporary account that historians have of the West African empire of Ghana written during the medieval period. Here he describes the market in one large West African town.

### Adapted Text:

In Awdaghust there is one main mosque and many smaller ones. All are well attended. West African people grow wheat there by digging with hoes and watering with buckets. Only the kings and the rich eat wheat. The rest of the people eat **sorghum**. They also produce excellent cucumbers, and there are a few small fig trees and some vines. There are plantations of **henna** that produce a large crop to sell.

Awdaghust possesses wells with water. Cattle and sheep are so numerous that for a mithqal one may buy 10 rams or more. (A mithqal was a coin used in the Islamic world.) Honey too is very abundant, brought from the land of the Sudan and sold in the market. The people of Awdaghust enjoy extensive benefits and huge wealth. The market there is at all times full of people. Due to the great crowd and the noise of voices, it is almost impossible for a man to hear the words of one sitting beside him. Their sales are in gold, and they have no silver. There are handsome buildings and fine houses.

- **sorghum**: a nutritious grain first grown in Africa (also called millet)
- **henna**: a plant that makes a beautiful red dye used for hair and body paint since ancient times

**Text source:** [Kingdom of Ghana - Primary Source Documents](#). Boston University Pardee School of Global Studies.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Ancient African Trade Analysis Sheet***3 Reads Activity****Directions:** Follow the steps of Observe, Read, and Connect.**Observe:** Read the document once through for an overall understanding (the “gist”).**Read:** Read again, and record your answers for the “what, who, why, and how” questions.**Connect:** Read once more, and connect the excerpt to the larger historical context, taking relevant notes. Use the last box to write any of your own thoughts, questions, or observations that do not fit into these boxes.

	What?	Who?	Why & How?	Observations & Questions
	<p>List all items you found that were produced, sold, or traded in this African region.</p> <p>If possible, mark (I) for import and (E) for export.</p>	<p>List individuals or groups of people who were involved in the trade of this African region.</p>	<p>Explain why these trades took place and how they were supported by factors like transportation, communication, money, etc.</p>	<p>List any additional observations, inferences, or questions below.</p>
<b>#1: Red Sea Trade Network</b>				

	What?	Who?	Why & How?	Observations & Questions
	<p>List all items you found that were produced, sold, or traded in this African region.</p> <p>If possible, mark (I) for import and (E) for export.</p>	<p>List individuals or groups of people who were involved in the trade of this African region.</p>	<p>Explain why these trades took place and how they were supported by factors like transportation, communication, money, etc.</p>	<p>List any additional observations, inferences, or questions below.</p>
<b>#2: Swahili Coast/ Indian Ocean Trade Routes</b>				

	What?	Who?	Why & How?	Observations & Questions
	<p>List all items you found that were produced, sold, or traded in this African region.</p> <p>If possible, mark (I) for import and (E) for export.</p>	<p>List individuals or groups of people who were involved in the trade of this African region.</p>	<p>Explain why these trades took place and how they were supported by factors like transportation, communication, money, etc.</p>	<p>List any additional observations, inferences, or questions below.</p>
<b>#3: Trans-Saharan Trade Network</b>				

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Ancient African Goods: Consumer Product Reviews*

### Part 1: Generating Questions

**Directions:** Imagine you are an ancient world customer (in other words, a **consumer**) who bought a product and really liked it...a lot! Now it's your turn to come up with creative questions to help others think about why this product is important. Generate three questions prior to beginning your research.

### Part 2: Researching Your Product

**Directions:** We want to know where you live, why you need or want this product, and what you like best about it. Use information from the article you read to answer the question prompts below.

#### African Trade Goods: Topics and Links

<a href="#">Ivory in the Ancient World</a> from World History	<a href="#">Rhino Horn Use: Fact vs. Fiction</a> from PBS Nature (Note: Use first four paragraphs.)	<a href="#">Woven Fabrics from East Africa</a>
<a href="#">What Are Frankincense and Myrrh?</a> from How Stuff Works (Note: Begin reading under the section heading, "A Brief History of Frankincense and Myrrh")		<a href="#">Tortoiseshell</a>

Your assigned good	Who were the consumers?	Why was this good in demand?	Sketch or illustrate your assigned good/product

### Part 3: Acting as Consumers

1. What is your **society or civilization**?

2. Why were you **interested** in this product? Does it exist where you live?

3. How is this product **used** where you live?

4. What do you like **best** about this product?

**Wait until you complete the class concept map to fill this next question out:**

1. Which *other* product would you most likely purchase, and why?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Reading: The Slave Trade and the Swahili Coast*



Contemporary Engraving of Zanzibar Slave Market. Image by Adam Jones from Kelowna, BC, Canada via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0.

The Swahili Coast was a place where traders from Asia, the Middle East, and Africa all met to trade. They traded ivory, cloves, spices, and textiles. The marketplaces were, and still are, bustling places. There, goods were traded for other goods and for currency. Ideas, rules, laws, and religions were also traded in East Africa. So was language.

But something else was traded in the colorful markets of East Africa: people to be used as enslaved workers.

People have been traded back and forth into enslavement in many societies and civilizations from the ancient period forward. In North and East Africa, trading human beings became widespread in the 7th century. This was many centuries before Europeans began bringing West African people as enslaved workers across the Atlantic Ocean.



Before traders from the Middle East and Asia came to East Africa, many African ethnic groups traded people they had captured through wars. In many African societies, there were no prisons. If someone broke the law, they were enslaved by their own people, or sold to others. These enslaved people were a recognized part of the community. They typically had rights in law and society.

As the centuries went on, Arab merchants from the Middle East noticed the slave trade in East Africa. They began to participate in it. The island of Zanzibar (off the coast of what is now Tanzania) became the largest slave market in East Africa. The slave market was a place of great injustice. Human beings were chained and often mistreated, whether they had committed a crime or not. They were sold to places like the Middle East, India, Persia, and East Asia. Three out of four people bound for slavery died before they reached their destination.



Dried cloves, used as a spice for cooking, baking, and in tea. Image by Brian Arthur via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.5.

Most of these enslaved people were brought to Egypt and Saudi Arabia. There they worked in the households, farms, and businesses of elite members of society. Many were brought to Oman, across the Red Sea, to work on clove plantations.

By the late 1800s, countries around the world began to outlaw the African slave trade. They signed documents and treaties that made it illegal to bring enslaved workers from Africa. However, it was not until 1909 that slavery was officially abolished in East Africa.

The impact of the slave trade in Africa was devastating to East African societies and people. It created an atmosphere of insecurity and fear. Even now, over 100 years after slavery was abolished, people still remember how slavery affected their communities.

**Part 1:** Comprehension Questions

**Directions:** Answer each question below, referring back to the reading. There is no need for full sentences, just bullet point notes.

1. What goods were traded on the Swahili Coast?

2. What else was traded or exchanged besides goods?

3. How did practices of enslavement change over time?

4. When was slavery officially abolished in East Africa?

5. Based on the reading, what was the most significant impact of the East African slave trade on societies? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

**Part 2:** Personal Reflection

**Directions:** Review the list of emotions in the box below, then select one emotion (circle it) that best describes how you feel after reading about the slave trade.

**Emotion Box**

sad	angry	confused	aware	sorrowful
crushed	heavy	curious	uncertain	wondering

Why do you feel this way? What did you read that caused you to feel this emotion? (Answer in 2–3 sentences.)

Authored by Primary Source

**Text sources:**

- Frohlich, Slija. 2019. "[East Africa's Forgotten Slave Trade](#)." Deutsche Welle, August 22.
- Holloway, Joseph. "[Slavery as an Ancient World Institution](#)." The Slave Rebellion.
- Wright, John. 2007. *The Trans-Saharan Slave Trade*. NY: Routledge.

## *Reading: Trading Gold for Salt*



Camel caravan in Mauritania. Image by Valerian Guillot via Wikimedia Commons is in the public domain.

If you could choose between a pile of salt and a pile of gold, you would probably choose the gold. After all, you know that you can always buy a container of salt for about 45 cents at the local supermarket. But what if you could not easily get salt, and without it you could not survive? In fact, throughout history, salt has been very difficult to obtain in many parts of the world, and people feared a lack of salt the way we in the industrialized world fear a shortage of fuel oil.

Once cultures began relying on grain, vegetable, or boiled meat diets instead of mainly hunting and eating roasted meat, adding salt to food became an absolute necessity for maintaining life. Because the Akan lived in the forests of West Africa, they had few natural resources for salt and always needed to trade for it. Gold, however, was much easier to come by. Every Akan knew how to find tiny grains of gold sparkling in the river beds after a rainfall. The people who lived in the desert of North Africa could easily mine salt but not gold. They craved the precious metal that would add so much to their personal splendor and prestige. These mutual needs led to the establishment of long-distance trade routes that connected very different cultures.

Camel caravans from North Africa carried bars of salt as well as cloth, tobacco, and metal tools across the Sahara to trading centers like Djenne and Timbuktu on the Niger River. Some items for which the salt was traded include gold, ivory, slaves, skins, kola nuts, pepper, and sugar.

**Text source:** Smithsonian Center for Education and Museum Studies. Essay, part 2: [Trading Gold for Salt](#).

**Part 1:** Comprehension Questions

**Directions:** Answer each question below, referring back to the reading. There is no need for full sentences, just bullet point notes.

1. Why did the Akan people need to trade for salt?

2. Why did the people in North Africa want gold?

3. What items did camel caravans carry across the Sahara?

4. Name two cities where trading took place.

**Part 2:** Camel Webquest

**Directions:** Answer each question below as you explore various websites and watch a video clip. There is no need for full sentences, just bullet point notes.

- **Stop #1:** How did the skills and knowledge of North African cameleers (people who train and manage camels) make caravans successful and profitable?

- **Stop #2:** Why were camels the breakthrough solution for trans-Saharan trade?

- **Stop #3:** How did technology (such as camel saddles) make caravans successful and profitable?

### Part 3: Reflection

**Directions:** Answer the question below using complete sentences. Give your three most convincing reasons.

Why do historians say camels made the gold and salt trade possible?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Kingdom of Ghana Note Catcher*

### Part 1: Video Clip

**Directions:** Watch the BBC News Africa video clip "[Episode 10: Desert Empires](#)" [18:42–21:50], and answer the questions about the Soninke people's history and lifestyle.

1. Why are the Soninke people important in the history of the Ghana Empire (Wagadou)?

2. From the film, what is one thing you learned about the lives or lifestyles of Soninke people in the ancient world?

3. From the film, what is one thing you learned about the lives of Soninke people today?

### Part 2: Article Comprehension Questions

**Directions:** Read each section of the article "[Kingdom of Ghana](#)," and answer the questions based on what you learned.

#### Section 1 (Paragraphs 1–3)

For Section 1, search for and write down 3–5 words related to money. Add them to this box.

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According to the author, strategic (carefully planned) governing plus great location led to **what**?

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## Section 2 (“Gold in Wagadugu”)

What were the accomplishments of the Soninke people, as described in this section?

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## Section 3 (“Ghanaian Politics”)

What is the main theme of this section?

Is this section strongly or weakly related to trade? Explain what makes you think so.

## Section 4 (“Trans-Saharan Trade”)

What is a positive consequence of trade described in this section?

What is a negative consequence of trade described in this section?



**“Brain Teaser” (If you have extra time at the end!)**

**Directions:** If you finish early, answer the fun fact questions below to learn more.

What is one interesting “fun fact” from the article that is not relevant to the topic of trans-Saharan trade? (There is more than one potential answer to this question; choose the one you liked learning about the best!)

Summarize it here:

Why do you think the author chose to include this fact? Share your best guesses:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cluster 4 Formative Assessment Task

Step 1: Observe and Analyze

**Directions:** Analyze the primary source below. Using bullet points for all sections, take general notes in the Graphic Organizer below, then answer a few analysis questions.

**Primary Source:**  
Excerpt from Ibn Battuta's travels in the city of Mogadishu in East Africa (14th century)

"I sailed from Aden in a small vessel belonging to the people of Sawahil [the Swahili Coast], and after 15 days or so arrived at the city of Mogadishu, which is a town of enormous size. Its inhabitants are merchants engaged in trade and are possessed of vast resources; they own large numbers of camels, of which they slaughter hundreds every day, and have quantities of sheep. In this city are manufactured the woven fabrics named after it, which have no rival, and are exported from it to Egypt and elsewhere."

**Text source:** Fordham University. 1996. "[Internet Medieval Sourcebook, Ibn Buttuta](#)." April 14, 2025.

General Observations:	Inferences (Conclusions):

**Analysis Questions:**

1. Who created this source? What do we know about the author and what might impact their perspective?

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2. What facts can we learn from this source about trade on the Swahili Coast at this time?

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3. What do you think was Ibn Battuta's opinion about trade in this region, and how do you know?

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**Step 3:** Continue the Inquiry

**Directions:** If you were to continue researching, what would you still want to know? Brainstorm two new questions below that are related to your learning from this cluster.

1.

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2.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Unit 3, Cluster 5 Inquiry Chart*

<b>Unit EQ</b>	How do we best tell the stories of ancient African societies and the factors that shaped them?
<b>Cluster SQ</b>	<b>How did religious traditions develop, adapt, and interact with one another in ancient sub-Saharan Africa?</b>
<b>What questions will we ask?</b>	

What did we do?	What did we learn that helps us answer our question(s)?
<b>Lesson 25:</b> We practiced making a claim using evidence from our research on the development of various religions in Africa.	
<b>Lesson 26:</b> We annotated a reading and took notes on the history of indigenous religions in Africa.	
<b>Lesson 27:</b> We compared anecdotes about religious tolerance in two different African empires and evaluated the actions of their prominent leaders.	

What did we do?	What did we learn that helps us answer our question(s)?
<p><b>Lesson 28:</b> We observed various religious artifacts from Africa in a Gallery Walk and discussed our inferences in a Concentric Circles discussion.</p>	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *From Trade to Tradition: The Journey of Christianity and Islam in Africa*

The Christianity and Islam in Africa Student Slide Deck will help you explore the development of two major religions in ancient Africa: **Christianity** and **Islam**. Today you will take on the role of an investigator, gathering evidence as you read and analyze each slide.

- Record your findings below as you browse the Student Slide Deck.

Throughout your learning, keep this question in mind:

How did Islam and Christianity develop in ancient Africa, and how did African people adapt the religions to their own circumstances and environments?

Christianity in Africa (†)		
Slide # and Topic	Question or Focus	Your Notes (Key Ideas/Information)
<b>Slide 3:</b> The Beginning of Christianity in Africa	Why do you think Christianity came to North Africa so early?	
<b>Slide 4:</b> The Spread of Christianity in Africa	How do you think ancient trade routes helped spread Christianity into Africa?	
<b>Slide 5:</b> Christianity in Aksum	Who helped spread Christianity in Africa, and what methods did they use?	
<b>Slide 6:</b> The Development of Ethiopian Christianity	How did African people both <b>preserve</b> and <b>adapt</b> religious traditions?	



Christianity in Africa (✝)		
Slide # and Topic	Question or Focus	Your Notes (Key Ideas/Information)
<b>Slide 7:</b> The Churches of Lalibela	How do geography and environment affect how people practice their religion?	
<b>Slide 8:</b> Ethiopian Christian Art	How did African people both <b>preserve</b> and <b>adapt</b> religious traditions?	

Islam in Africa (🕌)		
Slide # and Topic	Question or Focus	Your Notes (Key Ideas/Information)
<b>Slide 9:</b> The Beginnings of Islam in Africa	Who helped spread Islam into sub-Saharan Africa, and how did they do it? Why do you think trade routes were important in spreading Islam to new regions?	
<b>Slide 10:</b> Islam in West Africa	What is one way West African Muslims preserved religious tradition? What is one way West African beliefs influenced Islam?	

Islam in Africa (🇹🇵)		
Slide # and Topic	Question or Focus	Your Notes (Key Ideas/Information)
<b>Slide 11:</b> Learning Islam Through Literacy	How could the manuscripts in an ancient library help make a society strong?	
<b>Slide 12:</b> Mosques of West Africa	How does the design of the Djenné mosque, and the annual festival to care for it, show West African Muslims adapting religious traditions to their environment?	
<b>Slide 13:</b> Islam in East Africa	What evidence does the film share of how Muslim communities on the Swahili coast adapted their practices to local conditions or traditions?	
<b>Slide 14:</b> Mosques of the Swahili Coast	Compare the Great Mosque of Kilwa with the Great Mosque of Djenné. What is one way they are similar and one way they are different?	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Using Evidence to Support a Claim*

**Directions:** Reference your notes on Islam and Christianity in Africa to answer the question below in 4–6 sentences:

*Was preserving religious traditions, or adapting and changing them, the bigger story of how Islam and Christianity developed in sub-Saharan Africa?*

### Step 1: Choose Your Claim

First, select one of the following claims before gathering evidence to support it.

- **Claim A:** Preserving religious traditions was a big part of the history of Christianity and Islam in sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Claim B:** Adapting and changing religious traditions was a big part of the history of Christianity and Islam in sub-Saharan Africa.

### Step 2: Gather Your Evidence

Use the space below to gather evidence from today's activity that supports your claim.

**Claim (A or B):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evidence:**

1.

2.

3. (Optional)

**Step 3: Write Your Paragraph**

Using your evidence, write a paragraph (4–6 sentences) answering the prompt. Be sure to:

- Clearly state your claim.
- Include at least two pieces of evidence from your notes.
- Explain how your evidence supports your claim.
- Use complete sentences and proper punctuation.

**Your Response:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Reading: African Indigenous Religions*

**Directions:** As you read, you'll be prompted to annotate the text. At the end, you'll be asked to create a list of at least five important features of African indigenous religions.

Africa is a large continent with diverse ways of experiencing religion. Africa's indigenous religions are not a single unified religion but many different religions. They vary depending on where their followers live and what their ethnic or cultural backgrounds are. But although the religions are diverse, scholars who study them find some important features that many or most have in common.

**Underline an idea about indigenous religions in the above paragraph. Then underline its opposite idea.**

In African indigenous religions, the word *religion* doesn't just refer to "traditions, rituals, and beliefs." It is also about how people behave and what they do in daily life. These actions and behaviors have been passed down from generation to generation. For followers of indigenous religions in Africa, religious beliefs can affect how they work, treat illnesses, educate their children, and many other actions.

**Underline the most important sentence in the paragraph above.**

Two features shared by African indigenous religions are belief in God and belief in spirits. Each religion recognizes an all-powerful, all-knowing God, who created people and the world. Each religion also features other lesser spirits or deities that are actively connected to a person's life, actions, and habits. Some but not all African indigenous religions also recognize spirits in the natural world and in natural forces such as rain, water, or fire.

**Underline the two most important sentences in the paragraph above.**

Another common belief is the belief in ancestors. Ancestors were people in a family or community who recently died or who passed away a long time ago. Most African indigenous religions teach great respect for ancestors. Followers show their respect by building shrines, by communicating with their ancestors, and by living in a way that would make their ancestors proud. Many African indigenous religions believe that ancestor spirits stay near their families or communities to assist in daily life and to help them communicate with God.

**Underline the most important sentence in the paragraph above.**

Most indigenous religions in Africa have religious leaders such as priests and healers. These leaders perform specific tasks, duties, and rituals to honor God, spirits, and ancestors. Women as well as men can become religious leaders. This is their profession, and they train for a long time to become trusted leaders. They might hold ceremonies for new births or deaths or for good fortune. People also go to healers and priests for advice.

**Underline the most important sentence in the paragraph above.**

Maybe most importantly, African indigenous religions help people understand the differences between right and wrong and how to live in a way that is beneficial to the community and to themselves. These religions teach their followers to behave in ways that are appropriate and, through ancestors, priests, and deities, communicate how people should behave.

**Underline the most important sentence in the paragraph above.**

**Text source:** Exploring Africa. "Indigenous African Religions," by Michigan State University; adapted with permission by Primary Source.

**Directions:** Now review the sentences you've underlined, and create a list of at least five important features of indigenous religions in Africa. Write them in the box below:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## Historical Evidence of Indigenous Religion

**Directions:** Read and annotate the background information and primary source text.

**Background of Text:** This description was written around 1068. The author was a geographer and historian known as al-Bakri. He was from a Spanish Arabic family and lived his whole life in Islamic Spain. Though he did not travel himself, historians believe he talked to many travelers and merchants and collected their observations. It is the most detailed account that historians have of the West African empire of Ghana written during that time.

### Key Terms

<b>paganism</b>	an old word that monotheistic people sometimes used to describe religions they found strange or different
<b>idols</b>	images of a god, used as an object to worship
<b>sorcerers</b>	witches
<b>tombs</b>	gravestones

**Text:** Al-Bakri Describes Religion in the Kingdom of Ghana, 1068 CE

The king of Ghana practices his Soninke religion [the religion of his ethnic group]. The people follow the king's religion. Their religion is **paganism** and the worship of **idols**.

Around the king's palace are domed buildings and a sacred forest of trees. That is the place where the **sorcerers** of these people live. They are the men in charge of the religious practices.

The sacred forest is also the place for the **tombs** of their ancestor kings. They make sacrifices to their ancestors and make offerings of special drinks.

**Text source:** Levtzion, Nehemia and J.F.P. Hopkins, eds. 1981. *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 63–64.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Religious Tolerance in Ancient Africa: Two Historical Anecdotes*

Historical Anecdote #1: Ghana Empire

In the empire of Ghana, Tunka Manin rose to be king in the year 1063 CE. The ruler before him was King Bassi, the uncle of Tunka Manin. King Bassi was widely praised because he loved justice and expressed friendship for Muslims.

King Tunka Manin practiced the indigenous religion of his Soninke people. But he brought many Muslims to work for him. The official in charge of his treasury, his interpreters, and most of his government officials were Muslims.

The king’s capital city was made up of two towns connected by houses and neighborhoods. The king’s palace was in one town. Beside his palace a mosque had been built. Muslims who were visiting the king’s court were welcomed to pray there. The other town was set up for Muslim travelers and traders who came to Ghana for a longer stay. They had wells for water and gardens to grow food. In this town there were 12 mosques, and imams were hired to lead them. (Imams are spiritual leaders of the Muslim faith.)

**Text source:** al-Bakri, The Book of Roads and Kingdoms.

How did Ghana’s rulers act toward religious outsiders? Identify three actions.	Did these actions express religious tolerance or not? Explain your thinking.
1.	
2.	
3.	



## Historical Anecdote #2: Kingdom of Axum

The kingdom of Axum was ruled by King Armah in 615 CE. Like most of the Axumite kings before him, he was a Christian.

At that time, early Muslim followers of the prophet Muhammed were receiving harsh treatment by the rulers of Arabia. The Muslims believed that the kings of Axum had a reputation for generosity and fairness.

More than 70 Muslims crossed the Red Sea by boat and asked for shelter in the kingdom of Axum. King Armah welcomed them, offering protection.

The leaders of Arabia did not like these Muslims to be living abroad in a powerful African kingdom. They worried this could threaten their political power and hurt their reputation. Soon they sent messengers to the king of Axum. The messengers spread negative stories about the Muslims and urged the king to expel them.

The king refused. Instead he called a hearing. He asked the Muslim migrants to teach him about their beliefs. He listened, and found their words wise and sincere. The king of Axum ruled the Muslim migrants were free to live in Axum for as long as they wished.

**Text source:** Safieddine, Shahnaze. "[Migration to Abyssinia](#)." Al-Islam.org.

How did Axum’s rulers act toward religious outsiders? Identify three actions.	Did these actions express religious tolerance or not? Explain your thinking.
1.	
2.	
3.	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Gallery Walk Note Catcher*

**Directions:** When directed, circulate the room to observe and read a series of artifacts related to religious tradition in sub-Saharan Africa. Identify key religious traditions, rituals, and interactions.

During Round #2, use the chart below to track your observations. Then answer the reflection questions to the best of your ability.

Artifact	Region/Kingdom	Religion Involved	Key Religious Traditions, Rituals, and Practices	Interactions and Influences
1	Inside of the Great Enclosure, Great Zimbabwe ruins	Indigenous, ancestor worship, possible burial site for chiefs	Offerings and sacrifices to ancestors	Connection to trade and wealth, influenced by regional traditions
2				
3				
4				

Artifact	Region/Kingdom	Religion Involved	Key Religious Traditions, Rituals, and Practices	Interactions and Influences
5				
6				
7				
8				

**Reflection Questions:**

1. How did trade influence religious interactions in the regions studied?

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2. In what ways did indigenous religious beliefs persist despite the introduction of new religions?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Cluster 5 Formative Assessment Task

### Step 1: Observe and Analyze

**Directions:** Analyze the two primary sources below. Using bullet points for all sections, take general notes in the Graphic Organizer, then answer a few analysis questions.

#### Primary Source #1: A Kanaga mask of the Dogon people, Mali



**Description:** The so-called Kanaga mask is one of the many mask types known to the Dogon. Much more than other masks, it is highly abstracted. There are many different interpretations of the meaning: it is regarded as a female ghost, a (crane) bird, a lizard, or a hand.

Most masks are now seen as part of dualistic opposites. For example, the Kanaga mask is seen as the female counterpart of the male sirige mask.

Usually, a few Kanaga masks dance in a row in which a huge sweep of the head is made rhythmically so that the masks scrape the ground; that can probably be seen as a communication with earth spirits. Dogon masks, and therefore kanaga masks as well, traditionally dance especially at large collective funeral rituals called dama. Dama lasts six days and is held once in a fixed number of years, every 13 years on average. Dama is in fact a kind of farewell ritual in which the spirits of the people who have died in the previous years take leave of the community of people and pass into the community of ancestors.

**Image and description source:** A Kanaga mask of the Dogon people. Image courtesy of the National Museum of World Cultures via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0.

**Primary Source #2:**  
**Al-Bakri's Description of the Kingdom of Ghana (11th Century)**

**Description:** Al-Bakri's 11th-century account describes the city of Ghana as comprising two towns: one inhabited by Muslims with twelve mosques and another where the king resides, six miles away. This highlights the coexistence of indigenous beliefs and Islam.

Between these two towns are continuous habitations... In the king's town, and not far from his court of justice, is a mosque, where the Muslims who arrive at his court pray. Around the king's town are domed buildings and groves and thickets, where the sorcerers of these people, men in charge of the religious cult, live. In them, too, are their idols and the tombs of their kings.

These woods are guarded, and none may enter them and know what is there... The king's interpreters, the official in charge of his treasury, and the majority of his ministers are Muslims. Among the people who follow the king's religion, only he and his heir apparent (who is the son of his sister) may wear sewn clothes. All other people wear robes of cotton, silk, or brocade, according to their means. All of them shave their beards, and women shave their heads. The king adorns himself like a woman, wearing necklaces round his neck and bracelets on his forearms, and he puts on a high cap decorated with gold and wrapped in a turban of fine cotton. He sits in audience or to hear grievances against officials in a domed pavilion around which stand 10 horses covered with gold-embroidered materials. Behind the king stand 10 pages holding shields and swords decorated with gold, and on his right are the sons of the kings of his country, wearing splendid garments and their hair plaited with gold.

The governor of the city sits on the ground before the king, and around him are ministers seated likewise. At the door of the pavilion are dogs of excellent pedigree who hardly ever leave the place where the king is, guarding him. Round their necks they wear collars of gold and silver studded with a number of balls of the same metals. The audience is announced by the beating of a drum, which they call duba, made from a long, hollow log. When the people who profess the same religion as the king approach him, they fall on their knees and sprinkle dust on their head, for this is their way of greeting him. As for the Muslims, they greet him only by clapping their hands...

Their religion is paganism and the worship of idols...

**Text source:** Boston University Pardee School of Global Studies, African Studies Center. [Writings of al-Bakri](#).

General Observations	Inferences (Conclusions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>

**Analysis Questions:**

1. Who created this source? What do we know about the author and what might impact their perspective?

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2. What facts can we learn from these sources about the presence of religion and religious tolerance in ancient African societies?

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3. What do you think was al-Bakri's opinion about religious practices in this region, and how do you know?

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### Step 2: Continue the Inquiry

**Directions:** If you were to continue researching, what would you still want to know? Brainstorm two new questions below that are related to your learning from this cluster.

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2.

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