

Ancient and Medieval Africa

Mr. Donn and Maxie's Always Something You Can Use Series

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Preface

I am a teacher. With “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) being the law of the land, and with every teacher required to help raise test scores on standardized tests, we are all looking for ways to improve our teaching. Today there are national Common Core State Standards for teaching, as well as various state standards that students are expected to meet. Maybe your state or school district has exit exams students are required to pass. Your circumstances may be different from mine but we all have the same goal in mind: to help our students reach their goals.

The Mr. Donn and Maxie’s Always Something You Can Use series was written in part because when I went looking for help as a new teacher, there was nothing there. The lessons you are about to use are ones that I have used in the classroom myself, with input from my colleagues, friends, students, and especially my wife.

I currently teach in an urban school with all its challenges and difficulties. I teach both language arts and social studies. I have been in various levels of secondary school, grades 6–12.

Focus: This book, and the rest of the books in the series, are for teaching ancient history. Each book is a separate unit that deals with each of the different ancient civilizations. Within each unit there are various types of lessons. Each unit will contain vocabulary lessons, writing lessons, and activity lessons. The variety will hopefully keep all your students involved, entertained, and learning.

In *Classroom Instruction that Works*, Marzano et al. list ten research based strategies. The ancient history series uses these ten strategies, as well as other concepts, ideas, and strategies, to build lesson plans and instruction around. For those who are unfamiliar with Marzano et al., here is a quick recap of those strategies:

- Identifying Similarities and Differences
- Summarizing and Note Taking
- Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition
- Homework and Practice
- Nonlinguistic Representations
- Cooperative Learning
- Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback
- Generating and Testing Hypotheses
- Cues, Questions and Advanced Organizers

These strategies and concepts are embedded into the lessons. You won't find a place where it says, "We will now use the strategy of Cooperative Learning." Instead you will find cooperative learning within the lesson. An example of this is in the Ancient China unit: students are divided into groups, and each group chooses or is assigned one of the dynasties. That group is given an opportunity to research, create a presentation, and then present their product to the class. Their product is then placed in the classroom for all to see, share, and use. The teacher monitors progress and deadlines. This same project includes Marzano's strategies of "Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition," "Nonlinguistic Representation," and "Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback."

The Mr. Donn and Maxie Always Something You Can Use series also uses ideas and concepts to help make teaching and learning enjoyable—ideas such as "Word Walls," which help build vocabulary, various writing ideas to stimulate interest in writing, and games, pictures and graphic organizers to increase efficiency and retention.

We worked very hard to bring you the best ideas we could to make history a subject that students would want to learn.

Ancient and Medieval Africa

Introduction

Kush—Ghana—Mali—Songhay—Benin

Subject: Civilizations of Ancient and Medieval Africa, and the Trans-Sahara Trade Route

Time Frame: Four weeks

Level/length: The unit below on Kush, Ghana, Mali, Songhay, and Benin was written with seventh graders in mind, but can easily be adapted for grades 5–9. Each civilization is presented as a stand-alone unit. The unit is composed of 12 lessons. Some lessons are mini-units and will take longer than one class period to complete. Lessons are based on a 55-minute class period, or they can be adjusted to fit any time frame. Activities are varied and include classifying, abstracting, map work, dramatizing, writing, reading, speaking, researching, interpreting, cooperative learning, and other higher-level thinking activities.

Unit Description: This unit explores the development of the Trans-Sahara Trade Route beginning with the ancient Kingdom of Kush/Nubia; moving to the Sudanic Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay; and ending with the kingdom of Benin in Nigeria. Lessons include Geography, Government, Daily Life, Religion, Inventions, Sahara Desert, Camels, Caravans, Trans-Sahara Trade Route, Gold for Salt, The Lion's Whisker, Anansi Tales, Fabric Symbols, African Masks, Griots—The Storytellers, Sundiata the Hero, Mansa Musa, Specialized Professions (Witchdoctors, Caravan Traders, Kings), Rise of Islam, African Proverbs, and more!

Rationale: In view of the latest government guidelines on education with “no child left behind,” all units were developed to meet standards applicable in most states. Lessons are designed to address various learning styles and can be adapted for *all* students' abilities. Units are designed to fit into an integrated curriculum.

Ongoing project/graphic organizers: Using bulletin boards or wall space as graphic organizers supports critical-thinking activities and fits the theme of the unit. At the end of the unit, each “board” (graphic organizer) should be completed and will support the final activity. To complete each board, students will need to be directed to add information as it is discovered in your unit study.

Appendixes:

- Appendix One: Sweet Potato Cakes (cookies)
- Appendix Two: Map of the Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, Songhay, and Benin
- Appendix Three: Helpful Web Pages
- Appendix Four: *Portugal Finds a Short Cut to India*. After teaching the unit in this book, if your class is moving next to learn about the rise of the slave trade in Africa, this lesson works well as a transition.

Setting Up the Room

Graphic Organizers:

Word Wall

Design: This is consistent for all units, but each has its own look. An outline map of Africa would work well, as this unit covers several ancient and medieval African kingdoms.

Key Words: Words you will probably wish to include on your word wall as you discover them in your unit of study are: Continent, Africa, Mediterranean Sea, Sahara Desert, Nile River, Niger River, Atlantic Ocean, Red Sea.

Use: Once a week, have your students pick a word, define it, and then use it in a sentence. Use the word wall to fill in short periods of time throughout the unit.

The Oasis Trading Post

Design: Put a sign above an open wall area marked OASIS or TRADING POST.

Use of this area: Use the table and wall area to post papers with no names, and stack copies of reproducibles and homework assignments for pick up by students who were absent.

Doorway Into Class: Trans-Sahara Trade Route

Design:

- Put a sign above your door saying AFRICA.
- Beneath that, place a sign that says: THE TRANS-SAHARA TRADE ROUTE. Make it look like a desert with waves of sand and the colors you use. You might wish to add one small, off-centered oasis to your sign.
- Cut some camels using brown-colored construction paper. Camels need to be facing the same way. (Please see end of this unit for a pattern you can use.) Place camels up one side and down the other side of your doorframe. Every three to four days, reverse your camel direction by leaving your camels in the same location, but flip them, so that they face the opposite direction. Do not mention the camels coming and going along the Trans-Sahara Trade Route. Some students will notice—some will not.
- On the first day of the unit, your doorway should include a sign that says Kush/Nubia. Facing your doorway, this sign should be positioned on the east coast of Africa—the right side of your doorway.
- As you proceed with your unit, add other kingdoms as they are “discovered” on the left side of your doorway. First, add Ghana. Then, add Mali. Add Songhay. Finally, add Benin.

Closing Class Each Day: We like to close class each day with a sentence or two that reminds students what we are studying. With this unit, you might choose to close your class each day with a wise nod, and in a soft voice, say: “Until next time, remember ... (pause) ... (recite an ancient African proverb).” A proverb is suggested at the end of each daily lesson.

Lesson One:

The Geography of Africa

Time frame: One class period (55 minutes)

Includes: Geography of Africa, World Continents and Oceans

Preparation:

- Daily Question. Use overhead projector or write question on the board.
- World Atlas (one per group), maps of the world
- Overheads: Both maps listed below. You will need to copy these reproducibles onto your own transparency paper to create overheads.
- Reproducibles:
 - The Geography of Africa*
 - Blank Outline Map of the Continents of the World (no labels)*
 - Blank Outline Map of Grassland, Rainforest, and Desert Regions of Africa (no labels)*

Daily Question: "Is Africa a country or a continent?"

Open Class: Meet your class at the door.

Say: "Welcome to Africa!"

Activity: Briefly Introduce the Next Unit

- **Ask:** "What pops into your mind when you think of Africa?" (Get some answers.)
- **Say:** "Africa is a huge continent. It's almost four times the size of the United States. It has rainforests, grasslands, miles and miles of coastline on the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and is home to the largest desert in the world, the Sahara Desert. Today, over 1000 languages are spoken in Africa. In ancient times, Africa was the home of some of the most advanced civilizations in the world."

Activity: Is Africa a Country or a Continent?

- **Ask the daily question:** "Is Africa a country or a continent?" (Get some answers.)
- **Say:** "Those of you who said Africa is a continent are right."
- **Ask:** "What is a continent?" (Get some answers. Have one student look up the definition of a continent in the dictionary and read it aloud. Modify the student definition if necessary.)
- **Ask:** "Does anyone remember how many continents there are in the world?"
- **Say:** "The answer is seven: Africa, Asia, Antarctica, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America."
- Handout: *Blank Outline Map of the Continents of the World*
- Hand out atlases or maps of the world, or have students turn to the appropriate page in their textbook. They can work alone or in pairs.

- **Say:** “Your job is to label the seven continents and four oceans of the world.” (Give them some time.)
- Use the overhead projector. As a class, label the seven continents and the four oceans of the world. Make sure students understand that the Atlantic Ocean is on one side of Africa and the Indian Ocean is on the other. (Later on in the unit, your students will learn that the Portuguese discover they can sail down the Atlantic coast of Africa, around the Cape of Good Hope, to reach the Indian Ocean, and from there, the trading seaports of India.)
- Have students compare their answers to the labels added to the overhead projector. Have students make changes on their handout as needed.
- **Ask:** “Ranking the continents by size, which is the largest?” (Asia)
- **Ask:** “Which is the second largest?” (Africa)
- **Say:** “Africa is a big place!”

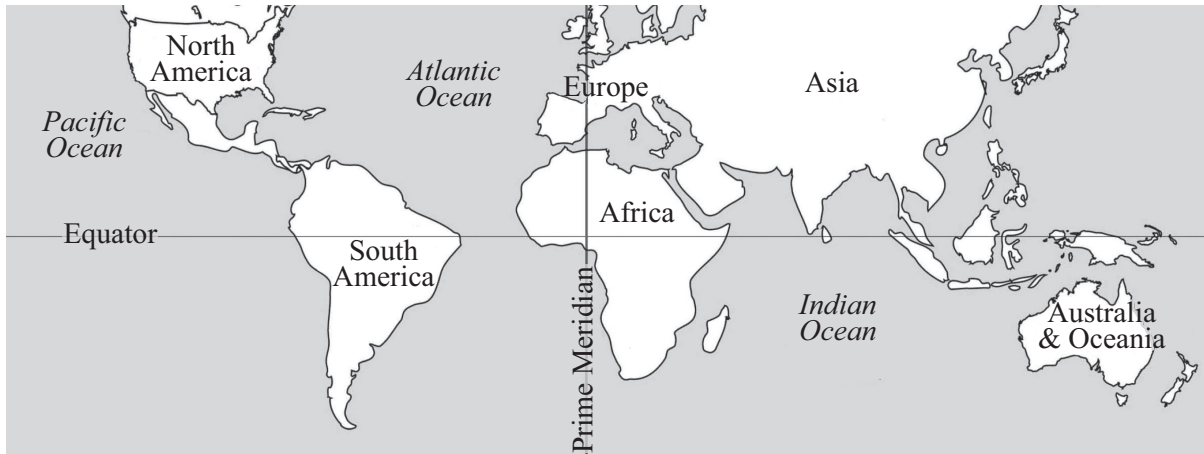
Activity: The Geography of Africa

- Handout: *The Geography of Africa*
- Read and answer questions.
- Use the overhead projector. Place the *Blank Outline Map of Grassland, Rainforest, and Desert Regions of Africa* on the overhead projector.
- Point to various places on the map and ask, “What is this? And this?” Have students identify various vegetation regions of Africa.
- Handout: *Blank Outline Map of Grassland, Rainforest, and Desert Regions of Africa*
- Have students create a map key and color in their maps.

Close Class: “That’s all the time we have today. See you next time on the continent of Africa.”

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Geography of Africa



Africa is the second largest continent: Africa is huge. From north to south, Africa is 5200 miles long. If you started in Alaska, you would have to travel down the coast of the United States, through Mexico, and all the way into Central America to travel 5200 miles. At its widest point, Africa is nearly as wide as it is long. Africa is three times the size of the continental United States. It's the second largest continent in the world. (Asia is the largest.)

Rivers: Africa has five huge river systems. The biggest three, in order of size, are the Nile, the Congo, and the Niger.

Oceans: In spite of its size, Africa has few natural harbors. If you wanted to visit Africa by boat, you would have to hunt for a safe place to land. Without a safe harbor, powerful ocean currents could slam your boat into the rocks along the coastline. The Atlantic Ocean borders Africa to the west, the Indian Ocean borders Africa to the east, and the Mediterranean borders Africa to the north. The Atlantic and Indian Oceans meet to border Africa to the south. Africa is nearly completely surrounded by water.

Neighbors: Africa's closest neighbors are Europe and the Middle East. Until the Suez Canal was built in the 20th century, Africa was connected to the Middle East by a natural land bridge. If you look on some small maps, it looks like Africa is also connected to Europe by a land bridge. This is not so. At its most narrow point, where these two continents are close together, there is still about a 30-mile gap of water at the Strait of Gibraltar, the mouth of the Mediterranean Sea.

Landforms: Africa has rainforests and grasslands, and is home to the largest desert in the world, the Sahara. Africa does have a few mountain ranges, like the Atlas Mountains in the north. These are good-sized mountains, but they would appear to be hills if you put them next to the Alps or the Himalayas. Africa does not have a huge mountain range.

Prime Meridian: The prime meridian, which is the imaginary line that separates the world into Eastern and Western Hemispheres, runs vertically through Africa. Another imaginary line runs horizontally through Africa: the Equator.

Questions:

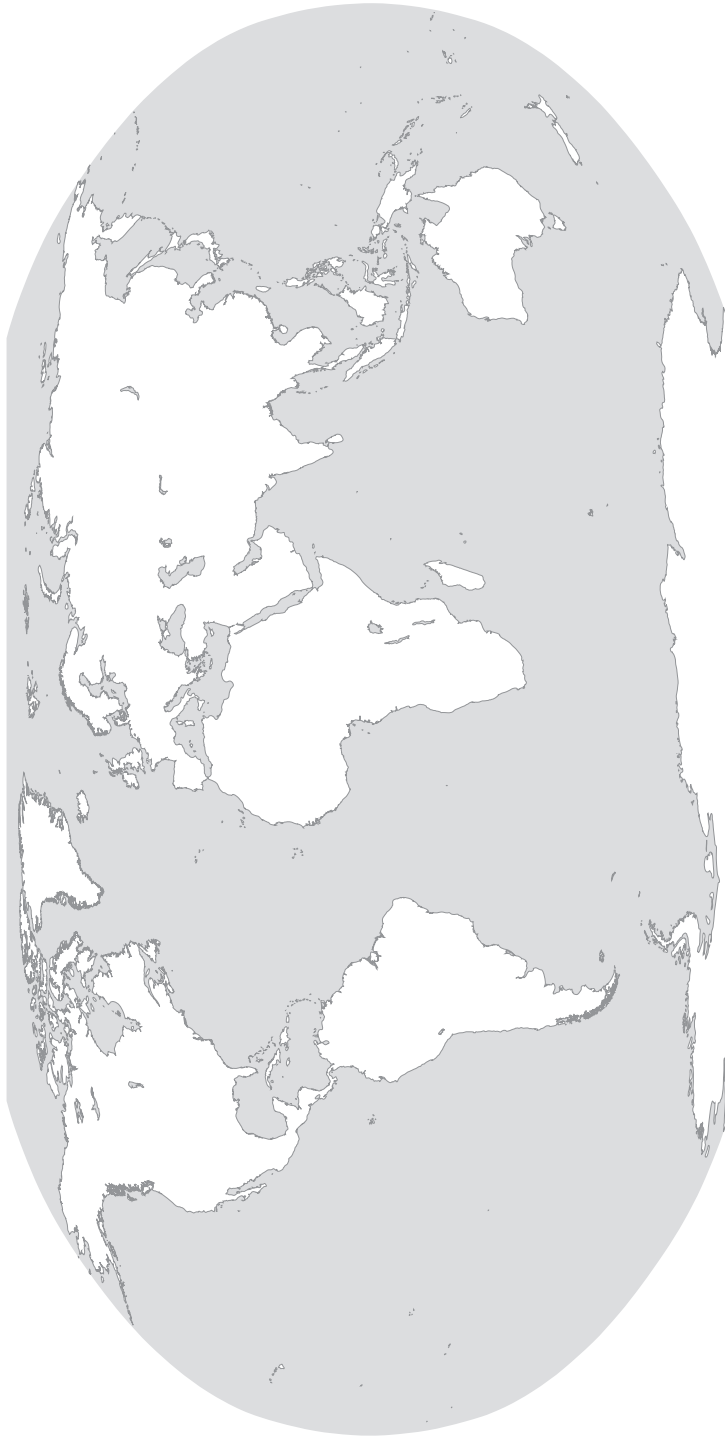
1. What ocean borders the west side of Africa?
2. What ocean borders the east side of Africa?
3. What large desert is located in Africa?
4. Name three rivers in Africa.
5. According to our reading, list Africa's two closest neighbors.
6. What is the prime meridian?

Teacher's Outline Map of the Continents of the World



Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Blank Outline Map of the Continents of the World



Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Teacher's Outline Map of Grassland, Rainforest, and Desert Regions of Africa



Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Blank Outline Map of Grassland, Rainforest, and Desert Regions of Africa



Lesson Two:

The Kingdom of Kush/Nubia

Time frame: Two class periods (55 minutes each)

Includes: Introduction, Geography, Egypt, Kingdom of Kush/Nubia

Teacher Note: To complete this lesson, students **must** have previously studied Egypt. If students have not studied Egypt, skip this lesson and move on to Lesson Three or use what parts of the lesson that work for you, eliminating any mention of ancient Egypt.

Preparation:

- Daily Question. Use overhead projector or write question on the board. (This is a student writing activity. Students are to write answers to daily questions in their notebooks upon arrival.)
- Ribbon and scissors for the ribbon-cutting activity.
- Reproducibles:
 - The Kingdom of Kush/Nubia*
 - Outline Map of Africa* (no labels). Includes the tip of the Iberian Peninsula, Mediterranean, Red Sea, and enough of Eastern Asia to include the holy city of Mecca. This is the map students will be using during the rest of the unit.
 - The Lion's Whisker*
 - The Aswan Dam*
 - Compare Ancient Egypt and Kush*

Daily Questions:

- What is a continent?
- The Kingdom of Kush was located on what continent?

Open Class: Meet your class at the door.

Say: "Welcome to Ancient Africa!"

Activity: Activate Pre-Knowledge

- Have students brainstorm a list of what they know about ancient Egypt.
- **Say:** "Today we will learn about a kingdom that was a lot like Egypt."

Activity: Introduce the Kingdom of Kush

- Handout: *The Kingdom of Kush/Nubia*
- Read and answer questions.

Activity: Map of Africa

- Handout: *Outline Map of Africa*
- Use the overhead projector. Point to places on the map they need to label today: Nile River, Egypt, Kush, Red Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Sahara Desert
- Warn students that they will need to hang on to this map. Tell them they will be adding to their maps several times during this unit.
- Direct students to put their maps safely away in their notebooks.

Activity: The Lion's Whisker

- **Say:** "Like the people of Egypt, (in fact, like people everywhere), the people of Kush, also called Nubia, loved stories."
- **Say:** "A story called *The Lion's Whisker* is an old tale from the Nubia region of Africa. It tells us a lot about life in ancient Nubian villages."
- Handout: *The Lion's Whisker*
- Read and answer questions.

Activity: Fact vs. Assumption

- Use the overhead projector or the board to make a list of what your students believe this story tells us about daily life in ancient Nubia. (Belief in magic, men worked the fields, women stay home, the importance of elders, how they are married, divorce is possible, separate homes, lions, the river, raw meat, forest)
- **Ask:** "What is the definition of a fact?" (Get some answers. Have one student look up the definition in the encyclopedia. Compare the dictionary definition with the student definition and ask if it needs to be modified.)
- **Say:** "Using the list we created, which items on this list are facts?"
- **Ask:** "What is an assumption?" (Get some answers. Have one student look up the definition in the encyclopedia. Compare the dictionary definition and ask if your student definition needs to be modified.)
- **Say:** "Using the list we created, are any items on this list assumptions?"
- **Say:** "Let's look at the story again. What assumptions can we make about daily life in ancient Nubia based on the information in this story combined with our reading about The Kingdom of Kush/Nubia?"
- Use the board or overhead projector to develop an example.
- **Say:** "Fact (source: story): These ancient people lived near or in the forest."
- **Ask:** "What assumptions can we make from this?" (Possible assumptions: These forests were made up of trees. These people chopped and burnt wood. For heat? To make something?)
- **Say:** "Fact: (source: reading): It takes charcoal from burned wood to make iron."
- **Say:** "Fact: (source: reading): Archaeologists found remains of iron tools."
- **Ask:** "What assumptions can we make from this?" (Assumption: These ancient people made iron tools.)
- **Say:** "This is one way an archaeologist recreates the past. There is a lot of guesswork in archaeology. The more they find, the more they understand, the better their guesses. We can tell a lot about a culture from the stories they handed down from one generation to another."

Transition: Ask: “What is another way we can find out about an ancient civilization?” (Get some answers.) **Say:** “Right. We can go to Africa and start digging and looking around to see what we find. But, if you plan on digging up the land that was once ancient Nubia, you will need to be a very good diver.”

Activity: The Aswan Dam

- Handout: *The Aswan Dam*
- Read and answer questions.
- **Ask:** “Do the needs of modern people compensate for the destruction of the past?” (Get some answers.)
- If you are of Nubian descent trying to visit your ancestral land, you might think the dam was unfair.
- If you are an Egyptian citizen, turning on a light in your house, you might not even think of the dam. It is simply there. You enjoy the comforts it provides.
- If you are an archaeologist, I imagine you’ll be upset about losing a potentially important ancient site forever.
- **Say:** “There is no right answer. The answer to the question is that it is a matter of opinion.”
- **Ask:** “What is an opinion?” (Get some answers. Have one student look up the definition in the encyclopedia. Compare the dictionary definition with the student definition and ask if it needs to be modified.)

Activity: Graphic Organizer—Compare Civilizations of Egypt and Kush

- Handout: *Compare Ancient Egypt and Kush*
- Using the overhead, fill out this organizer with your class.

Transition: The people of Africa used stories to teach. They also used proverbs.

Activity: What is a Proverb?

- **Ask:** “What is a proverb?” (Get some answers. Have one student look up the definition in the encyclopedia. Compare the dictionary definition and ask if your student definition needs to be modified.)
- **Say:** “A proverb is rarely explained to the listener. The ancient Africans, like many people around the world, used proverbs to teach good behavior. If you can’t understand the proverb I am about to tell you, it is now that you need to spend time listening to the elders in your village. ‘Until lions have their own historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the “hunter.”’”

Close Class: “See you next time, right here, on the continent of Africa.”

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

The Kingdom of Kush/Nubia

The Kingdom of Kush (also called Nubia—the Land of Gold) was located on the Nile River, to the south of ancient Egypt. Nubia used to be known as the Land of the Bow. Nubian archers were expert and fierce. The army of archers kept the Nubian people safe. It was important for them to be strong. Many kingdoms wanted to control Nubia.

Nubia was a land of natural wealth. It had gold mines, ivory, incense, and iron ore. Unlike Egypt, the Nubians were not dependent upon the flooding of the Nile for good soil to grow crops and long growing seasons. They enjoyed tropical rainfall all year long.

Common People/Daily Life: The common people lived in farming villages. Each village worked together as a unit for the common good of the village. There was a division of labor. For the common people in ancient Kush, daily life was village life.

There was a place inside each village where the villagers would collect, and there was a place where many villages collected. When there was a festival, the people in individual villages knew where the festival would be held if they were invited—it would be held at the place where many villages collected.

Nobles/Daily Life: For many hundred of years, the nobles of ancient Kush thought of themselves as Egyptians; they dressed like Egyptians, their homes were similar. The kings and nobles lived in riverside palaces. There were sailboats on the Nile. Their daily life was very much like the people they envied: the ancient Egyptians. As in ancient Egypt, many of their leaders were great queens, not kings.

When the capital of the Kushite kingdom was moved further south along the Nile, they began to act less like Egyptians and more like other civilizations in South Saharan Africa. Their jewelry changed. They began wearing anklets and ear studs.

Religion: In the beginning, they worshipped the same gods as the ancient Egyptians, with a few extras throw in, like the three-headed Lion God. They mummified their dead. They built pyramids. Kushite pyramids looked a little different—they had flat tops, but they served the same purpose as tombs. In the sixth century CE, many became Christians because of the Bible stories they heard from passing traders.

Kush—The Iron Capital of the Ancient African World: Although they were two different kingdoms, Egypt and Kush were linked by the Nile River, by a shared past, and by the economics of the day. Kush had something other kingdoms wanted: iron. This time in history

was known as the Iron Age. From about 1000 BCE to about 1000 CE, iron was critically important. Iron was used to make tools and weapons. Kush was the iron center of ancient Africa. Kush was also one of the major gold producers in the ancient world.

Trade: Trade was very important to Kush. It established flourishing ports on the Red Sea and tried to work out trade agreements with Egypt that would allow it free access to the Mediterranean via the Nile River. Egyptians depended on Kush for iron, gold, and for exotic goods like incense and ebony. Kush wanted Egyptian manufactured goods, especially its cotton, an export for which Egypt is still famous today.

Supply and Demand: As the demand for iron grew, Kush ran into a problem. To make iron, they needed wood to burn. Their land had wood, lots of wood. But the Kush burned so much wood and used up supplies so fast in the process of making iron that the forests could not keep up. Trees did not grow fast enough to replace those that had been chopped down for firewood. This led to deforestation. The land began to lose its fertility. Without as much wood to burn, Kush could not produce as much iron as it had in the past, yet demand for iron was growing. Traders began to look elsewhere for iron. As trade dwindled, the country began to weaken.

Kush looked around for new avenues of trade. It had incense, it had ivory. Certainly someone would want these wonderful products. The leaders of Kush turned their eyes toward the vast Sahara Desert. They had heard tales of wonderful civilizations on the other side of the desert.

Questions:

1. Kush was the _____ center of ancient Africa.
2. Name two products Kush had to trade.
3. Name two products Kush wanted in payment.
4. Why did iron production slow down in Kush?

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Outline Map of Africa



Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Compare Ancient Egypt and Kush

	Egypt	Kush
Geography 2 unique features		
Government Head of government?		
Religion		
Nobles Daily Life		
Common People Daily Life		
Achievements		

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

The Lion's Whisker

Once upon a time, there lived a young husband and wife in a small village in Africa. For a long time now, the husband had not been happy with his marriage. He began to come home late from working in the fields. His wife thought he was the most wonderful man, but she was unhappy, too. His behavior was making her miserable.

Finally, she went to the oldest man in her village, the village elder. The elder was sad to hear that her marriage was not a happy one. He had married them only two years before. At the time, he was sure that the marriage would be a good one.

"Of course I will end your marriage if that is what you want," he told the young wife, after listening patiently for a while. "You will be free to marry again. But is that really what you want?"

"I want my husband to be loving," she said. "I want to be loving. We are both miserable."

"I think I can help you," the elder said slowly. "I can prepare a secret potion that will change your husband into a loving man."

"Prepare this magic potion at once!" the young wife cried out excitedly.

"I could make it," he said sadly. "But I am missing an important ingredient. I am too old to get this ingredient for you. You must bring it to me."

"What do you need?" the young wife asked eagerly. "I'll bring it today."

"I need a single whisker taken from a living lion to make the potion work."

Her eyes widened in alarm. She bit her bottom lip. She straightened her shoulders. "I'll get it for you," she nodded.

The next morning, the young wife carried a huge piece of raw meat down to the river where lions sometimes came to drink. She hid behind a tree and waited. After waiting many hours, a lion ambled down to the river to have a drink. He sniffed at the raw meat. In three bites, the meat was gone. He raised his mighty head. He knew she there. The young wife held her breath. The mighty lion moved slowly back into the forest and disappeared.

The next day, the young wife came again. This time, the lion appeared quite quickly. This continued for many days. Days became weeks. Each day, the woman crept from her hiding place behind the tree, moving closer and closer to the lion. At the end of four weeks, she moved quietly next to the lion and sat silently while he ate.

Her hand shaking, she reached slowly out and pulled a whisker from his chin. Holding her prize firmly in one hand, she sat frozen until the lion had disappeared back into the forest.

She ran to the elder, waving her whisker. “I have it,” she shouted. “I have it!”

The elder was in awe when he heard her story. “You do not need magic to change your husband back into the loving man he once was. You are brave enough to pull a whisker from the chin of a living lion. It took cleverness and bravery to do what you have done. Can you not use that same patience and courage and wit with your husband?”

“But the potion,” the young wife said eagerly. “Wouldn’t that work as well?”

“Perhaps,” the elder told her. “But it would not last. Trust me, my child, trust me. Show your husband each day that you love him. Share his problems. Make him feel welcome. Make him feel wanted and needed. Give him time to change and see what happens.”

The young wife went home and followed the elder’s advice. Slowly, her husband began to return from the fields with the other men of the village. He began to look glad to see her. Within a year, their life was a happy one.

They lived happily ever after.

Questions:

1. What is the moral of this story?
2. List four things this story tells us about daily life in ancient Nubia.

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

The Aswan Dam

About 50 years ago, the modern-day country of Egypt built a dam. A dam is a huge concrete structure that controls the flow of water. The Aswan Dam was designed to control the flow of the Nile River.

The construction of the Aswan Dam was very important to many people in Egypt and in the Sudan. Thanks to the Aswan Dam, there is no danger of flood or of drought. The power plants that were built to harness the power of the Nile supply electricity to Egypt's growing population.

Another effect of the Aswan Dam is that it backed up the waters of the Nile. Thanks to the engineering skill of the Egyptian people, this backup was controlled. They used the backup to create a huge and splendid man-made lake called Lake Nasser. This lake was not built without cost. The 100,000 or so people who lived in the region had to be relocated to new homes. Many of these people did not wish to move; they had no choice. Once the dam was built, their homes would be under water forever.

At the time, many people petitioned and lobbied and screamed and protested that this was not right, but the many protests did not stop the construction of the Aswan Dam. The dam was needed.

Today, the Lake region is extremely popular; there are beautiful hotels and wonderful restaurants. But if you are traveling to the lake region to see the ancient lands of Nubia, you are out of luck. The ancient lands of Nubia are at the bottom of the lake. Any artifacts that archaeologists might have found that would tell us more about this ancient culture are gone, buried in water, at the bottom of Lake Nasser.

Questions:

1. Who built the Aswan Dam?
2. What river does the Aswan Dam control?
3. How did the construction of the Aswan Dam help modern-day people live a more comfortable life?

Lesson Three:

The Sahara Desert and the Trans-Sahara Trade Routes

Time frame: One class period (55 minutes)

Includes: Sahara Desert (Sea of Sand), Camels (Ships of the Sahara), Five Pillars of Islam, Trans-Sahara Trade Route

Preparation:

- Daily Question. Use overhead projector or write question on the board. (This is a student writing activity. Students are to write answers to daily questions in their notebooks upon arrival.)
- Extra copies on hand of the *Blank Outline Map of Grassland, Rainforest, and Desert Regions of Africa*, which was distributed to students in Lesson One
- Scissors for students to use for the map activity
- Ribbon and one pair of large scissors for the ribbon-cutting activity
- Reproducibles:
 - The Sahara Desert—Sea of Sand*
 - Outline Map of the United States* (same scale as the map in Lesson One: *Blank Outline Map of Grassland, Rainforest, and Desert Regions of Africa*)
 - What is a Muslim? What is Islam? What is Islamic Culture?*
 - The Five Pillars of Islam*

Daily Question: "What is a proverb?"

Open Class: Meet your class at the door.

Say: "Welcome to Ancient Africa!"

Activity: Activate Pre-Knowledge (Natural Barriers)

Ask each of the following questions:

- If a river ran across the path you were on and there was no bridge, what would you do? What if it was a really big, deep, fast-moving river?
- Have you ever been in the desert?
- What is something you must bring with you in the desert?
- How does a person get across the desert?
- How about mountain climbing?
- How do you cross a mountain range?
- If you have an opponent who doesn't want you to cross the river, desert, or mountain, could they make it even more difficult for you?

- **Say:** “Rivers, deserts, mountains, and seas are called natural barriers.” (Put “natural barriers” on your word wall.)
- **Say:** “As we know from our opening lesson on Africa, Africa does **not** have the huge mountain ranges that are found on some of the other continents. For example, the continent of Europe is home to the Alps. The continent of Asia is home to the Himalayas. The continent of Africa does have the Atlas Mountains in the north, along the north shore, and they are good-sized mountains. But most of Africa is a plateau situated at least 500 feet above sea level, which is great for farming. There are many lakes and rivers. Three of the rivers are huge: the Nile, the Congo, and the Niger. Lake Victoria is the second largest lake in the world. Be they large or small, each of Africa’s many lakes and rivers provide opportunities for irrigation, drinking water, and water with which to bathe.”
- **Ask:** “What would stop someone from walking across Africa?” (Get some answers.)
- **Say:** “That’s right. Dangerous animals. Dangerous tribes of people. And, oh yes, the Sahara Desert, which is the largest desert in the world.”

Activity: Sahara Desert

- Handout *The Sahara Desert—Sea of Sand*
- Read and answer questions.

Activity: How Big is the Sahara Desert?

- Direct students to get out the map they were given in Lesson One—*Blank Outline Map of Grassland, Rainforest, and Desert Regions of Africa*. You may need to have some extra copies on hand for students who cannot find their maps.
- Handout: *Outline Map of the United States*
- Direct students to cut out the outline of the United States from the outline map provided.
- Direct students to place the cutout outline of the United States on the *Blank Outline Map of Grassland, Rainforest, and Desert Regions of Africa*.
- Ensure that students understand scale. Show that the two maps are done in the same scale.
- Talk about size again. The Sahara Desert is **huge**.
- Have them take out the *Outline Map of Africa* they worked on last time you met (the map distributed in Lesson Two). Make sure that the students’ maps have the Sahara Desert labeled in the right place.

Transition: Say: “I need two volunteers.”

Activity: Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

- Use two students. Have each student hold one end of the ribbon.
- Call a third student to the front of the class.
- Announce: “Today marks an historic event. Today, these brave men (or women) on their wondrous camels will attempt to cross the Sahara Desert to find new worlds. I hereby decree that the Trans-Sahara Trade Route is open!”
- Have one student cut the ribbon.

Activity: What Is a Muslim? What Is Islam? What Is Islamic Culture?

- **Ask:** “Does anyone remember the Silk Road in China? Goods were carried along the Silk Road through the deserts of China. What else was carried?” (Get some answers.)
- **Say:** “Right—ideas. If you remember, some of the ideas that were brought along the Silk Road in China were related to religion—Buddhism, and the teachings of Buddha.”

“In Africa, the caravans that crossed the Sahara brought goods and ideas with them. In Africa, because the caravans were organized and led by Muslim traders, the ideas they brought along were Muslim ideas. They brought their Islamic culture with them.”

- **Say:** “That opens up some questions.” Write on the overhead projector or board these three questions: What is a Muslim? What is Islam? What is Islamic culture?
- Break your class into groups. Allow students to use their textbooks, a dictionary, or anything you have brought to class for this purpose. Working together, have each student write down the answers to the three questions above in the form of a definition.
- Handout: *What is a Muslim? What is Islam? What is Islamic Culture?*
- Read this handout aloud.
- Ask students if their definitions agree with the ones on the handout. (Get some responses.)

Activity: Five Pillars of Islam

- **Ask:** “When someone says, ‘We are a community of people,’ what does that mean?” (Get some answers.)
- **Say:** “Right. We’re people, not lions or leopards.”
- **Ask:** “When someone says, ‘We are a community of students, what does that mean?’” (Get some answers.)
- **Ask:** “When someone says, ‘We live in the community of (your town),’ what does that mean?” (Get some answers.)
- **Ask:** “So, if you were asked to define the word *community*, how would you define it?” (Get some answers. Assign one student to look up the word *community* in the dictionary. Read the definition. Ask your class if their definition needs some modifying to match the dictionary definition.)
- **Say:** “As we have learned today, Islam is a religion. A Muslim is someone who follows Islam. There are millions of Muslims in the world today. Many live right here in the United States.”
- Handout: *The Five Pillars of Islam*
- Read and answer the questions.
- Close this activity by saying: “I wish we had more time to explore the teachings of Islam. Some people misunderstand these teachings. Islam teaches ‘good action.’ Most early traders were Muslims. They spoke Arabic, and many knew how to read and write. They wrote letters back home about their trip. Letters were carried on the next caravan going back. We know quite a bit about the caravans that crossed the Sahara because the traders knew how to read and write.”

Activity: Arabic Proverbs

- **Say:** "Another way to learn more about a culture is through its proverbs."
- Ask the daily question: "What is a proverb?" (Get some answers.)
- **Ask:** "Where is Persia?" (Ancient Mesopotamia, modern-day Iran, home of some of the Muslim traders who crossed the Sahara.)
- **Say:** "This is an ancient Arabic proverb: *'Among the walnuts, only the empty one speaks.'*"
- **Ask:** "What might that mean?" (Get some answers.)
- **Ask:** "What does that proverb tell us about the Arabic people?" (They had walnuts. They respected the concept of "thinking before you speak.")

Close Class: "That's all the time we have today. Here is a proverb an old Muslim Arab trader once told me: *'Trust in God but tie your camel.'*"

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

The Sahara Desert— Sea of Sand

The use of camels as a transportation vehicle changed everything in Africa.

The Sea of Sand: In ancient times, Egypt and Kush did very little trade with West Africa. They had heard that West Africa had wonderful things: gold, salt, and ivory. They knew that West Africa needed iron. The problem was they could not get there. The Sahara Desert was in the way, and it is huge.

The Sahara Desert is the largest desert in the world. It covers about one-third of the continent of Africa (which is the second largest continent in the world). The Sahara Desert is about the same size as the 48 consecutive states in the continental United States. Can you imagine a desert that runs from New York City to Los Angeles? Or one that runs all the way from Maine to Mexico?

The Sahara Desert is one of the hottest places on earth. During the day, the temperature can reach 130 degrees Fahrenheit. As miserable as you would be from the heat, it's the dryness that makes it a desert. There is so little water. It hardly ever rains. The Sahara perhaps enjoys three inches of rain a year, and even that is speckled. It might rain in one place and not rain again in the same place for years. It's no wonder that the Sahara Desert is called the Sea of Sand.

Oasis: An oasis is a wet rest stop. It's a small section of desert that is fed by underground streams of water. In these tiny sections of the desert, there are green plants and cool water. Even though there are many oases in the Sahara, the Sahara is so big that you might have to travel a day or even weeks to reach one. In the meantime, you are exposed to very hot shifting sand dunes that seem to go forever.

Desert Life: In spite of the horrible conditions for humans, there is life in the desert. There are poisonous snakes and poisonous spiders. There are many animals and plants in the desert, but the Sahara is not a geographically friendly place for humans. You can see why people were a bit reluctant to cross the Sahara in search of trading partners.

Camels—Ships of the Desert: Around 750 CE, everything changed when Islamic traders began to use camels to transport goods across the desert. The use of camels made it possible to get from Kush to West Africa. Camels were the perfect answer. Camels can carry heavy loads, keep their footing in sliding sand, and go a long time without water. If treated well, they're patient beasts. On flat ground, they can run very fast. In fact, they run so fast that if you stopped at an oasis, you might find a camel race in progress. Every trader knew his camels were the best! Camels soon were nicknamed the "Ships of the Desert."

Caravans—The Trans-Sahara Trade Route: Caravans of camels were loaded with trade goods. They carried many wonderful products, including spices from India and iron tools and weapons from Kush. The day the first caravan of camels headed west into the Sahara Desert was the day that marked the opening of the Trans-Sahara Trade Route.

Questions:

1. What huge desert is located in North Africa?
2. What is an oasis?
3. What is a "Ship of the Desert"?
4. What is known as the "Sea of Sand"?
5. What is a caravan?

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Outline Map of the United States



Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

What is a Muslim? What is Islam? What is Islamic Culture?

What is a Muslim?

A Muslim is a person who is a follower of Islam. “Islam” means “one who submits,” implying complete submission to the will of Allah (God).

What is Islam?

Islam is a religion based on the teachings of the prophet Muhammad who lived around 700 CE. Islam is also a way of living your life by certain rules, just as Buddhism is a religion based on the teachings of the Buddha. Buddhism is also a way of life.

About 1400 years ago, the prophet Muhammad said, “All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black over a white—except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim that belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not therefore do injustice to yourselves. Remember that one day you will meet Allah and answer for your deeds. So beware: Do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.”

What is Islamic Culture?

Islamic culture is a behavior—it is a way of behaving so that you stay on the path of righteousness, as defined by the prophet Muhammad.

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

The Five Pillars of Islam

Muslims from all over the world may never meet, but they are still members of the worldwide Muslim community. This community is made up of millions of people in hundreds of countries all over the world. To help pull the worldwide community of Muslims together, each Muslim has five duties.

Here are the five duties for which every Muslim is responsible. They are called the Five Pillars:

1. **SHAHADAH. This Pillar has to do with believing.**

You must believe and say this every day, “There is no god except Allah. Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.”

2. **SALAH: This Pillar has to do with praying.**

Five Prayers a Day: You must pray five times each day. These are set prayers. You do not make up the words. People all over the world say the same words.

Face Mecca: All people should face Mecca when praying.

Kneel on a Prayer Mat: You must kneel with your forehead on the ground or prayer mat. There is a set way of moving, kneeling, and saying each prayer. You need to learn the exact way this is done and follow it precisely to be a good Muslim.

3. **ZAKAH: This Pillar has to do with giving.**

Each year, each Muslim in the world is supposed to give a fixed portion of his savings for good works. For example, you might give money to help the poor.

4. **SAWM: This Pillar has to do with personal sacrifice.**

As a good Muslim, you cannot eat or drink during daylight hours during the month of Ramadan, one of the Islam holidays.

5. HAJJ: This Pillar has to do with pilgrimage.

Each Muslim in the world should make a pilgrimage to the city of Mecca at least once in his or her life, if possible—if it can be afforded and if you are physically capable. Not everyone gets to Mecca. But all Muslims are expected to do his or her very best to accomplish this duty.

Questions: Answer the questions with the correct Pillar(s).

1. What two Pillars must be practiced every day?
2. What Pillar must be practiced for an entire month?
3. What Pillar must be practiced at least once each year?
4. What Pillar must be practiced at least once in each Muslim's lifetime?

Lesson Four:

The Kingdom of Ghana: Gold for Salt

Time frame: Two class periods (55 minutes each)

Includes: Kingdom of Ghana, Graphic Organizer Activity, Map Activity, Trans-Sahara Trade Route Game

Preparation:

- Daily Question. Use overhead projector or write question on the board. (This is a student writing activity. Students are to write answers to daily questions in their notebooks upon arrival.)
- Pieces of cardboard or heavy paper, crayons or colored pencils, scissors
- Reproducibles:
 - The Kingdom of Ghana*
 - Ghana Graphic Organizer*
 - Map of the Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, Songhay* (see Appendix Two)
 - The Trans-Sahara Trade Route Game*

Daily Questions:

- What is the Sea of Sand?
- What are the Ships of the Desert?

Open Class: Meet your class at the door.

Say: “Welcome to West Africa!”

Activity: Quick History of Ancient Ghana

- **Ask:** “Have you ever heard of the Gold Coast of Africa?”
- Use the overhead projector. Show the position of ancient and modern Ghana on your *Outline Map of Africa*. (If you need to refresh your memory on the location of the Kingdom of Ghana, see Appendix Two.)
- **Say:** “The ancient Kingdom of Ghana was located on the Niger River in West Africa. The modern African country of Ghana is located here. (Show position on the map.) The modern country of Ghana is not geographically or in any way related to the ancient Kingdom of Ghana. They just liked the name and the history, so they named their country after these ancient people. Let’s find out more about ancient Ghana on the Niger River.”
- Handout: *The Kingdom of Ghana*
- Read and answer questions.

Activity: Graphic Organizer

- **Ask:** “What is a graphic organizer?” (Get some answers.)
- Handout: *Ghana Graphic Organizer*
- **Say:** “From your reading, create your own graphic organizer that answers as many of these questions as you can. You may work in groups to help you work more effectively but you must each create your own graphic organizer.”
- Give them some time.
- Ask for volunteers. Use the overhead projector or board to write the answers to these questions.
- **Say:** “As we proceed in our study of ancient Ghana, you will be able to add to your graphic organizer. For now, please put your organizer safely away in your notebooks with your map. Remember—you will need it again.”

Activity: Map Activity

- Direct students to please get out their *Outline Map of Africa*.
- Use the overhead projector.
- Point to places on the map they need to label today: Ghana, Niger River, and Atlantic Ocean.
- Warn students that they will need to hang on to this map. Tell them they will be adding to their maps several times during this unit.
- Direct students to put their maps safely away in their notebooks.

Activity: Trans-Saharan Trade Route Game

- **Ask:** “With a show of hands, how many of you think you would be really good traders?”
- Break the class up into five groups. If you wish, assign at least one person who thought they would make a good trader to each of your five groups.
- Refer to the handout *Trans-Saharan Trade Route Game* for instructions on how to proceed.

Close Class: “That’s all the time we have today. Until next time, remember, ‘*One goat cannot carry another goat’s tail.*’”

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

The Kingdom of Ghana

A long, long time ago, the Kingdom of Ghana was made up of many villages. Each village had its own chief. One day, when all the chiefs were at a meeting, a beautiful stool dropped out of the sky and landed gently at the feet of one of the chiefs. The chief was wearing a wonderful robe of striped colors in orange, green, and brown. His mouth fell open in surprise.

“It is a sign,” everyone said, “A sign to become one people.”

That’s how the people in the Kingdom of Ghana found their first king. The gods found him. All kings after that time wore beautiful robes, woven in stripes of orange, green, and brown.

The people of Ghana had much to admire. They were simple people, very smart and very creative.

Government: The king, ably assisted by his council of elders, headed the government. The kingdom was divided into districts. A district leader gently guided each district. They had laws that people mostly obeyed.

Army: Ghana was a great military power. Legend says the king commanded 200,000 warriors and 40,000 more with bows and arrows—that’s a lot of manpower. It might even be true.

Daily Life: The people were farmers, miners, and artists. They made the most wonderful fabrics. They made designs with mud on dyed cloth that was then set in the sun. The sun baked the mud and created a design in the cloth. They had fresh fruit and sweet potatoes. They had the Niger River, which provided water for farming, washing, and bathing, and fish and waterfowl to eat. They worked very hard, but their life was good. They had ample food, they were protected, they sang, they laughed.

Griots: The griots were the storytellers. Kids did not go to school as we know it. Rather, people collected in the evening to hear the wonderful stories of the griots, who were responsible for passing on stories and traditions from one generation to another.

Gold Mines: The Kingdom of Ghana had lots of gold mines. They had so much gold that miners were allowed to keep all the gold dust they found. Only the nuggets had to be turned in to the king. Artists used gold to make beautiful statues and jewelry. They made gold drinking glasses, plates, and decorative objects. Ghana was dripping with gold.

Gold for Salt: Thousands of years before Ghana became a kingdom, the Sahara was fertile and green. Rivers flowed through the Sahara. Over time, the rivers began to dry up. The land became a desert. During the time that the Sahara was fertile, the water created huge salt deposits underground. Salt was very important to these early people. They used salt as a seasoning and to preserve food.

Ghana had many natural resources, but it did not have salt. The people of Ghana began to trade with the kingdoms to the north; the kingdoms to the north had lots of salt mines but did not have gold. The kingdoms made very good trading partners. They each had something the other wanted. Trades were even—an ounce of gold for an ounce of salt.

Ghana Gets Rich: With the arrival of camel trains, the caravans, the Kingdom of Ghana began to trade its gold for spices and other luxury goods as well as salt. But it was not gold that made Ghana rich, it had something that made them even wealthier.

Tax: The King of Ghana was a very wise man. He did three things that he felt would protect his people. The first thing he did was charge a tax (a.k.a. a tribute, a tariff) on all people entering and leaving Ghana. This tax was paid in salt, iron, peacock feathers, fine silk, spices, and other luxury goods. In exchange, Ghanaian warriors kept the trade routes open and protected from raiders. As long as they paid their tax, traders could pass in peace. It was the tax that made Ghana rich.

The System of Silent Barter: The second thing the King of Ghana did was to establish a system of silent barter. Rather than meet and argue a price, gold would be left at a special place for the traders to take. If ample goods were not left in exchange, all trade ceased. The traders of Ghana did not speak the language of many of the new traders who crossed the Sahara via the Trans-Sahara Trade Routes. This system of silent barter worked very well. Traders were afraid to leave too little. They knew Ghana would stop trading. If anything, they left more than they normally would, to keep relations good and trade flowing.

Second City: The King of Ghana did not wish traders to enter his city on a routine basis or in an uncontrolled manner. The traders were Muslims; they acted differently. They had different beliefs. They did not worship the many gods and goddesses that the king believed were watching his people.

To protect his people from the strange ways of the traders, he built a second city for the traders, located about six miles from the main capital. The capital remained a city for the king and his people. The new part of the city was reserved for Muslim traders, merchants, and foreigners.

This system worked very well. It allowed the people of Ghana to continue to worship in a way that was familiar and comfortable to them. It encouraged the traders to worship in their way, in the many mosques that they built in the new city. The people of Ghana were very religious. They knew you had to treat the gods with respect unless you wanted big trouble.

The people of Ghana were ready for trouble. They had squabbles with their neighbors from time to time. They had a huge army, but they really didn't want trouble. They wanted their life to continue as it always had, only more comfortably. The king wanted to conduct public prayer in the big open plazas of his city. The people in the villages wanted to hear the griots, the storytellers, telling the stories they loved so much about Anansi the Spider. All people, common and noble, wanted to dance at the festivals in the masks they so loved to make and wear, accompanied by the drums for which they were famous.

As more and more traders braved the Trans-Saharan Trade Routes, bringing spices and silks and salt to Ghana, and taking gold in trade, the Kingdom of Ghana flourished. Ghana and other West African kingdoms soon became collectively known as *The Gold Coast*.

Questions:

1. Who was the head of government in Ghana?
2. What river provided water for farming, washing, and bathing?
3. What is a griot?
4. How were gold and salt traded?
5. Why did the Kingdom of Ghana want salt?
6. What is silent barter?
7. Why did the king of Ghana build a second city for the traders near his capital?
8. Why was the Kingdom of Ghana nicknamed "the Gold Coast"?

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

The Trans-Sahara Trade Route Game

Divide your class into five groups. (Select two students to monitor trades.)

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
Gold: 5 Food: 10	Salt: 7 Food: 3	Food: 10	Spices: 7 Food: 3	Silk: 5 Food: 10

The goal is for each group to end up with 1 gold, 1 (or more) salt, 1 (or more) spices, and 1 silk.

a position in a straight line. Group 1 is Kush. Groups 2, 3, and 4 are trading posts along the Trans-Sahara Trade Route. Group 5 is Ghana.

Have each group create their own “goods.” Distribute pieces of cardboard or heavy paper. Keep the size relatively small but large enough to trade easily. Prior to the start of the game, check to make sure all goods have been created in the right quantity and category.

The Rules:

- Each group can only trade with the group next to it. Example: Group 1 can only trade with Group 2. Group 2 can only trade with either Group 1 or Group 3.
- Each turn, every group must throw away 1 food. (Food markers are collected by the trade monitors.) If any group runs out of food, they starve, and the game ends.
- Items can only pass via trade. They cannot be given as gifts.
- Each group can trade once each way with Groups 1 and 5 only trading once, as they only have one direction to go. Groups 2, 3, and 4 can trade once with each side.
- Every third turn, the teacher (playing the bandits) interrupts one trade so that trade does not occur. Nothing is taken away from the two groups involved, but no exchange of goods occurs.
- This game takes no more than seven turns before a group dies or wins. If they think ahead, they should be able to win.

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Ghana Graphic Organizer

Time Period	
Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map of civilization • Three unique physical features important to development • Identify countries located in this region today 	
Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure • Who held positions of power? • How was power handed down? 	
Religion	
Daily Life Describe the daily life of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper class/nobles/royals • Common people 	
Specialized Professions Identify three specialized professions	
Trade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imports • Exports 	
Inventions/achievements Describe at least two major achievements	
Decline List two things that contributed to the decline of Ghana	

Lesson Five:

The Kingdom of Ghana: African Masks and Fabric Designs

Time frame: One to two class periods (55 minutes each)
Includes: Ancient African Masks, Fabric Symbols.

Preparation:

- Daily Question. Use overhead projector or write question on the board. (This is a student writing activity. Students are to write answers to daily questions in their notebooks upon arrival.)
- Picture of an American bald eagle
- Pictures of African masks
- Construction paper, crayons, scissors, and glue
- Teacher Note: If you have time or interest in making elaborate African masks, see Appendix Three: *Helpful Web Pages*
- Reproducible:
African Fabric Symbols

Daily Question: "What are the 'Ships of the Sahara'?"

Open Class: Meet your class at the door.

Say: "Welcome to West Africa!"

- Ask the daily question: "What are the "Ships of the Sahara?" (Camels)
- Get some answers.
- Say: "We use nicknames and symbols for fun and for explanation. So did the people of Ghana."

Activity: Fabric Symbols

- Use the overhead projector. Show a picture of a bald eagle. Ask: "What comes to mind when you see this picture?" (Get some answers.)
- Ask: "What is a symbol?" (Get some answers. Have one student look up the definition of a symbol. Compare the dictionary definition with the class definition. Have students modify their definition if needed to better fit the one in the dictionary.)
- Say: "One of the symbols of the United States is a bald eagle. It is our national bird."
- Use the overhead projector. Show *African Fabric Symbols*. Cover up the meanings listed below each picture. Ask: "What do you think these symbols mean?"
- Show the meanings. Ask: "Did we guess right?"
- Say: "Sometimes you need to know the meaning. For example—Ships of the Sahara—would you have guessed camels if you did not know? Probably not, but maybe."

- **Say:** “The people of Africa used symbols in fabric to teach good behavior. Why do you think the ancient Africans did this?” (It’s colorful, fun, but also they had no written language, and it was probably a tradition.)
- **Ask:** “Do you think it worked? Do you think kids and adults were reminded of certain things by noticing the designs in the fabrics they and others were wearing?” (Certainly. It’s rather like an advertising campaign.)
- **Ask:** “Do we use symbols in our fabrics today to teach good behavior?” (Not often. Perhaps that is something we should do.)

Transition: “Fabric symbols were not the only symbols used in Ghana.”

Activity: Make Your Own Mask

- **Ask:** “Have you ever worn a mask? What was your mask? What was the occasion?”
- **Say:** “Wearing a mask can protect you. Wearing a mask can make someone laugh or become scared. When you put on a mask and look at yourself in the mirror, you do not look like yourself. A mask or a headdress changes you into someone else. African people also used masks to make someone laugh, feel better, or feel scared. They were used to teach, to honor, and to celebrate. Today, we are going to make our own African masks.”

Directions:

- First, direct students to create a card, explaining what their mask celebrates and what each color in the mask means. They must think out the purpose of their mask before they make it.
- Choose from Birthday, Wedding, Funeral, Harvest Celebration, New Moon, Planting, or Successful Hunt.
- Example: Two stripes on a mask might stand for two people getting harmed or two elephants that were killed.
- Using colored construction paper and crayons, make a mask. Your individual mask will celebrate an important event from the list provided.
- Give students times to complete mask and card.
- Ask for volunteers to share their mask and its purpose.
- Remind students to sign the inside face of their mask, not the side that shows.
- Collect all masks and cards. Hang all masks with each pertinent explanation card along the hallway corridor outside your room. Get permission first from the office.

Transition: “Fabric symbols and masks were two ways the people in Ghana used symbols to record their daily life, triumphs, and important events. They used these symbols to remind themselves about good behavior. They used these symbols to teach their children. They also used stories. Since they did not write things down, they used oral storytelling. Many of their stories were about a little spider named Anansi. Anansi had a wife and two strong sons. Anansi was very kind, usually, and very clever, almost always. But even the best of us make mistakes now and then. Tomorrow we’ll learn more about a delightful little spider with a big personality named Anansi.”

Close Class: “See you next time. And remember, *‘A tiger does not have to proclaim its ‘tigritude.’*”

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

African Fabric Symbols



Call to arms; willingness to take charge



Patience and endurance; take heart



I am not afraid of you; defiance



Learning from the past; wisdom

Lesson Six:

The Kingdom of Ghana: Griots—The Storytellers

Time frame: One class period (55 minutes)

Includes: Oral Traditions, Ancient Ghana Storytellers, Anansi Fable, Storytelling Guidelines, Storyboard

Preparation:

- Daily Question. Use overhead projector or write question on the board. (This is a student writing activity. Students are to write answers to daily questions in their notebooks upon arrival.)
- Reproducibles:
The Griots—Storytellers
Why Anansi Hides in Corners, A Tale From Ghana
Storytelling Guidelines

Daily Question: "What commodity did Ghanaians trade for salt?"

Open Class: Meet your class at the door.

- **Say:** "Welcome to West Africa!"
- **Say:** "The people in ancient Ghana worked very hard. When they came home from the field or from the gold mines, they wanted something to eat and they wanted to sleep. But their children wanted to play. It wasn't fair that the children should be ignored; the people of Ghana did not ignore their children. So everyone in the village gathered together to listen to the storyteller."

Activity: Storytellers in Ancient Ghana

- Handout: *The Griots—Storytellers*
- Read and answer questions.

Activity: Read an Anansi Fable to your Class

- Handout: *Why Anansi Hides in Corners, A Tale From Ghana*
- Read and answer questions.
- The moral of this story is: "We must be careful how we treat our friends."
- **Say:** "This is great story. We did a good job reading it. The ancient Ghanaian storytellers would have done better. That's because they worked at it. Telling stories was an important part of daily life. They used stories to teach their children good behavior. They used stories to remind themselves of past glories and current triumphs. They used stories to record important events in their lives."

Transition: “Being a storyteller involves your senses: taste, sight, smell, and hearing. It involves communication skills: voice, body, gesture, eye contact, concentration, listening, and observing. It involves the tradition of using spoken or oral language”

Activity: Storytelling Guidelines

- Handout: *Storytelling Guidelines*
- Go over the guidelines.
- **Say:** “As a class, using the story you just read (*Why Anansi Hides in Corners*), do exactly what the guideline says to do. Use the overhead projector. Continually get suggestions from your class on how the story could be improved.”
- Make notes on these suggested improvements on the overhead projector or board, or assign several students as class secretaries to take notes. Working as a class, make the story better.
- When you have finished, read the story again as a class activity. Get tips and advice from students who have acted as class secretaries. Keep asking them if they have noted any suggestions for improvement for the next paragraph or story section.
- If the class has added music or dance, you’ll need to add it. Have students use their imagination to find items in the room to use as instruments or sound makers. Select students to perform the dance without first practicing.

Close Class: “Until next time, remember, *‘The family is like the forest. If you are outside, it is dense, if you are inside, you see that each tree has its own position.’*”

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

The Griots—Storytellers

After a good evening meal, with the moon shining down, the people of the village might hear the sound of a drum and a rattle of music and a voice that shouted, “Come hear, come hear!” These were the sounds of the griot, the storyteller.

When they heard the call, the children would get so excited. They knew that meant they were going to hear a wonderful story with music and dancing and song! Perhaps tonight the story would be about Anansi, the little spider. Everyone loved Anansi. Anansi could weave the most beautiful webs. He was the one who taught the people of Ghana how to weave the beautiful mud cloth. Anansi had a good wife, strong sons, and many friends. He got into many predicaments and used his wits and the power of humor to escape.

Everyone loved stories about Anansi. There were also other stories they loved to hear over and over. Some of their stories were about the history of the tribe. Some were about great wars and battles. Some were about everyday life.

There was usually only one griot per village. Should one village attempt to steal another village’s storyteller—that was cause for war. But the griots were not the only ones who could make up a story and tell it if they had the talent. Anyone could shout, “Come hear, come hear!” New stories about new battles and new triumphs and new adventures of the little spider Anansi are still being told today.

Today, a thousand years later, Anansi has many names. He is called Anancy, Brer Nancy, and Brer Rabbit. Anansi stories are so good that we still tell them today. The reason the stories are so good is a matter of legend. Legend says that one day Anansi visited the Sky God. The Sky God liked him so much that he gave Anansi, and only Anansi, the gift of storytelling, so that Anansi could spin him stories about life on earth.

Questions:

1. Who could tell stories in ancient Ghana?
2. Who is Anansi?
3. Why is Anansi such a great storyteller?

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Why Anansi Hides in Corners

Once upon a time, a long time ago, Rabbit came by to visit his friend, Anansi the Spider. The first thing Rabbit saw when he stepped inside his friend's house was a magnificent goatskin hanging on the wall.

"My, my," said Rabbit with envy. "What a beautiful goatskin!"

"It is nice, isn't it?" Anansi's wife smiled, stirring peanut stew in a big pot. Leaning against the wall at her feet was a big axe.

"Rabbit!" cried Anansi happily. "Come in, come in. Welcome to our house."

It was the custom in those days to always make visitors feel welcome. Anansi's wife gave Rabbit some stew.

Rabbit could not take his eyes off the wonderful goatskin hanging on the wall. But good manners work two ways. He knew it was his job to ask Anansi about local issues and politics. But the whole time he was asking and nodding, he was thinking about the goatskin on the wall.

Rabbit could be quiet no more. "Enough about politics!" Rabbit said. "I have an idea! I could not help but notice your wonderful goatskin! We could use that goatskin to make a great drum!"

"It would make a fine drum," Anansi agreed, trying not to yawn.

"Let's go into the forest and chop down a tree right now!"

"Now?" blurted Anansi. He rubbed his eyes.

"We could use your fine axe," Rabbit said excitedly. His eyes shone thinking about the fine drum they would make.

"I don't think so, Rabbit," said Anansi. "I can't play the drum. And besides, I'm too tired."

"Tired? Can't play a drum? What silly excuses! You're just lazy," said Rabbit.

"Lazy!" Anansi leaped to all his eight legs. "I'm not lazy. I'm sick!"

Just then, Anansi's two sons arrived home for dinner, carrying sweet potatoes for the next night's supper.

"Your boys can help me chop down the tree," Rabbit said, forgetting all about his moment of anger and disappointment.

"My boys are sick, too," yelled Anansi.

"Fine. I'll cut down the tree myself." Rabbit started towards Anansi's big axe, propped up against the wall.

"My axe is sick, too," shouted Anansi.

Rabbit sighed. "Then why don't you let me have that beautiful piece of goatskin doing nothing on your wall so I can use it to make a drum that everyone can enjoy."

"Oh, didn't I tell you? My goatskin is sick, too," replied Anansi.

"YOU," shouted Rabbit, "are a very BAD and HORRIBLE, HORRIBLE FRIEND." Rabbit furiously stomped out of Anansi's house.

Anansi laughed and ate his supper happily. Anansi's wife shook her head at him, but wisely kept her silence.

The next day, Anansi heard a drumming coming from the direction of Rabbit's house. Anansi quickly looked at his wall. The goatskin was doing nothing but hanging there.

"What a beautiful drumming," Anansi the Spider said to himself. Anansi was very curious.

"I'm going to go see what it is," said Anansi's wife.

"Me, too," said his two sons.

"Well, I had best come with you to keep you out of trouble," signed Anansi, secretly delighted of course, as that is just what he had wanted to do, too.

There, beside Rabbit's house, next to the drinking well, was a huge drum. Anansi walked over to it. Before long, he was dancing on top of it, along with his wife and his two sons. They were making such a racket that Rabbit heard them.

"Who is playing my drum?" Rabbit asked the forest. He hurried home to find out what was going on. When he saw Anansi, he was furious. "YOU!" he shouted. "You who were too sick to come over and help me. You whose axe was too sick, and whose sons were too sick—here you are, playing my drum!"

Rabbit summoned all the animals in the village so that he could make a complaint. He told the animals all that had happened. The animals in the village did not have to voice their opinion. Hanging his head in shame, Anansi backed his family into the corner. They hid their faces in shame. And that's why spiders hide in corners, even to this day.

Questions:

1. Who is Anansi?
2. Who is Rabbit?
3. Why does Rabbit want the goatskin?
4. Why does Rabbit think Anansi would freely give him the goatskin?
5. What does the last paragraph of this story tell us about how villages in the Kingdom of Ghana handled disagreements between people?
6. What is the moral of this story?

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Storytelling Guidelines

1. Choose a story that you like.
2. Perform the following tasks on a card:
 - a. Outline the story sequence—beginning, middle, and end.
 - b. Write down the main theme of the story.
 - c. List and describe the main characters.
 - d. Write down any key songs, chants, phrases, or words.
 - e. Write down the main problems and resolutions.
3. Tell someone what the story is about, but do so in your own words.
4. Draw out a map of the plot. Use a storyboard.
5. What is the mood of the story? Serious? Funny? Sad?
6. Read the story aloud at least three times, picturing the story in your mind. Picture the colors, the places, the sounds, and the events.
7. Now, tell a section of the story out loud to your group. Let your group give you some feedback.
8. Maintain EYE CONTACT with the audience.
9. Tell the story with ENERGY AND EXPRESSION in your voice and face. Use your normal voice for narration and include simple lively gestures.
10. Work on STRONG BEGINNINGS and ENDINGS.
11. Work on pacing. Do not rush through your story.
12. Add audience participation—singing, chanting, and sounds. How will you involve your audience?
13. Add some instruments if you like and your own sound effects.

Lesson Seven:

The Kingdom of Ghana: Anansi Tales

Time frame: Two to three class periods (55 minutes each)

Includes: Oral Traditions, Ancient African Fables—Anansi Tales

Preparation:

- Daily Question. Use overhead projector or write question on the board. (This is a student writing activity. Students are to write answers to daily questions in their notebooks upon arrival.)
- Copies of Anansi tales (five different tales to distribute). Tales can be found at the public library and possibly in your school library. Pick any five you choose. Please see Appendix Three, *Helpful Web Pages*, located at the end of this book for a list of Web addresses of Anansi tales.
- Reproducible:
African Fable Storyboard

Daily Questions:

- The major trade route on land from Kush to Ghana crossed what desert?
- What is an oasis?
- Is Africa a continent or a country?

Open Class: Meet your class at the door.

- **Say:** “Welcome to West Africa!”
- **Say:** “Today, it’s your turn to become the performers. You are the griots. All the people of Africa depend on you to teach their children about the wonderful history and engaging characters that make up African history and the triumphs of daily life.”

Group Activity: Prepare to Tell an Anansi Story

- **Say:** “Working in groups, you have one day to prepare to tell your story. At the end of your story, tell your audience the moral of your story. Props can include drawings, drums, or other percussion instruments if you can find them and wish to use them. None will be provided.”
- Distribute five Anansi Tales, one to each group.
- Give students the *African Fable Storyboard* handout. Tell groups they must complete their storyboard prior to planning their story presentation. Good storytelling needs clarity of thought and careful planning.
- They must create a moral for their story. Tell them to write down the moral of their story at the bottom or on the back of their storyboard handout.
- Give them some time to practice.

- Each group will present their skit to the class. If they are busy working, you can give them more time to prepare if you wish. However, at least one group should present on the second day, if you wish to keep this activity at three days or fewer.

Activity: Day 2 and 3 Presentations

- At the end of each presentation, lead the class in a round of applause.
- **Say:** “The moral of the story has been given to you. Does anyone see another possible moral to this delightfully presented story?”
- Emphasize that the people who lived in the Kingdom of Ghana used stories to entertain, to teach, and to remember.

Close class each day with one African proverb. **Say:** “Until next time, remember ...

- *“One should never rub bottoms with a porcupine.”*
- *“The rain wets the leopard’s spots but does not wash them off.”*
- *“If a blind man says ‘let’s throw stones,’ be assured that he has stepped on one.”*

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

African Fable Storyboard

Key Point 1	Key Point 2
Key Point 3	Key Point 4
Key Point 5	Key Point 6
Key Point 7	Key Point 8

Lesson Eight:

The Kingdom of Mali: Sundiata the Hero

Time frame: One to two class periods (55 minutes each)

Includes: History of Ancient Mali, Sundiata the Hero, Timbuktu

Preparation:

- Daily Question. Use overhead projector or write question on the board. (This is a student writing activity. Students are to write answers to daily questions in their notebooks upon arrival.)
- Reproducibles:
 - Kingdom of Mali—Sundiata the Hero*
 - Mali Graphic Organizer*
 - Map of the Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, Songhay* (Appendix Two)

Daily Question: "What ocean borders the Gold Coast of Africa?"

Open Class: Meet your class at the door.

Say: "Welcome to West Africa!"

Activity: Quick History of Ancient Mali

- Handout: *Kingdom of Mali—Sundiata the Hero*
- Read and answer questions.

Activity: Mali Map

- Direct students to get out their outline map of Africa.
- Use the overhead projector.
- Point to places on the map they need to label today: Mali. (If you need to refresh your memory on the location of the Kingdom of Ghana, see Appendix Two.)
- Warn students that they will need to hang on to this map. Tell them they will be adding to their maps several times during this unit.
- Direct students to put their maps safely away in their notebooks.

Activity: Graphic Organizer

- Handout: *Mali Graphic Organizer*
- Say: "From your reading, create your own graphic organizer that answers as many of these questions as you can. You may work in groups to help you work more effectively, but you must each create your own graphic organizer."
- Give them some time.

- Ask for volunteers. Use the overhead projector or board to write the answers to these questions.
- **Say:** “As we proceed in our study of the Kingdom of Mali, I encourage you to add to your graphic organizer. For now, please put your organizer safely away in your notebooks with your map. Remember—you will need it again.”

Group Activity: Billboards

- **Say:** “Timbuktu was a famous center of learning and of commerce. But if the city elders in Timbuktu had to entice caravans into stopping at their city, they could have posted a billboard along the Trans-Saharan Trade Route that said something like—*This way to Timbuktu U—Greatest University in the World.*”
- The question you must answer is this: How are you going to entice caravans into stopping at your city or village?

Directions for teachers:

- First, students need to come up with things for which their city or town is famous. For example, a billboard might say, “Home of the Greatest High School Football Team,” or “Home of the Museum of Tinfoil,” or “Birthplace of Bill Crosby,” or “Greatest Fishing in the World.”
- Then, have students create a billboard that makes sense for a town along the Trans-Saharan Trade Route, such as “Most Beautiful Mud Fabrics” or “Cleanest Water on the Trans-Saharan.” Billboards must contain both an illustration and a slogan.

Directions to your students:

- Say, “Working in groups, first create something in your town that will entice caravans your way. Timbuktu has a university. What do you have to offer?”
- Say, “Then, create a billboard that advertises what you have created. I want you to actually make a sketch of the billboard that you would give to the artists in your village to produce. Your billboards must contain at least one illustration and a slogan.”
- **Ask:** “Does everyone understand what we are doing? Go for it.” (Give them some time.)
- Have each group present their idea and their billboard to the class.

Close Class: “Tomorrow, we’ll take a better look at the famous Mansa Musa. Until next time, remember: *‘The frog does not jump in the daytime without reason.’*”

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

The Kingdom of Mali— Sundiata the Hero

Mali means “hippopotamus” or “where the king resides.” Mali began as one of the districts in the Kingdom of Ghana. Around 1230 CE, Ghana collapsed and Mali took over. In time, it grew to be larger than Ghana.

The new king, Sundiata, was young and strong and courageous. He was also very clever. He was a very good king. He kept the drums and storytellers busy with tales of his achievements and accomplishments.

The first thing he did was to get trade going again. During the war with Ghana, trade had just about disappeared. This had to be fixed. Trade was the way to wealth and he knew it. He sent messengers out across Africa saying, “The invaders are gone! Let us open up the trade routes!” And they did. Muslim merchants and scholars began to come to Mali.

Sundiata was soon nicknamed the Lion King. He was a leader. He built a strong military to protect the routes. He had his army clear farmland to help the people get back on their feet. He introduced cotton. He was a Muslim. He believed in one god, Allah, but he offered his people religious freedom. He allowed his people to worship many gods in the traditional African way. He allowed slaves to work for their freedom and to become an important part of the new Kingdom of Mali. If you were bright, capable, hardworking, and honest, then he wanted you on his team. He took a kingdom and made it an empire. He ruled for 25 years, and his people loved him.

His son Wali continued his good works and expanded the borders of the empire even more. His grandson, Mansa Musa, has intrigued people for hundreds of years. Mansa Musa loved knowledge and poetry. Under his leadership, the borders of Mali continued to grow. Timbuktu became one of Mali’s cities. Timbuktu was an important stop on the Trans-Sahara Trade Route. Under the direction of Mansa Musa, a university was built at Timbuktu. This university became a famous center of learning. People came from all over to study there.

One of the effects of the rise of Islam in West Africa can be seen in the kings. The kings of Mali were Muslims. They believed that the throne was handed down from father to son. In the villages, however, and in the earlier Kingdom of Ghana, the people believed in the old ways, the traditional African ways. They handed down power from the chief to the son of the chief’s sister. In African society, women were important; they could be queens, and they could be elders.

These two systems of inheritance are called:

- Matrilineal—a system of tracing descent through the females of the family
- Patrilineal—a system of tracing descent through the males of the family

A Quick Look at the Kingdom of Mali

Natural resources: Water (Niger River); gold (nearby mines controlled by Mali, guarded by the Malian army)

Industries: Farming, mining, trading, and defense (army)

Agricultural crops: Beans, rice, onions, sorghum, millet, papaya, gourds, cattle, sheep, goats, poultry, cotton, and peanuts

Major export: Gold

Government: Patrilineal

Economic specialization: Traders, miners, farmers, blacksmiths, and soldiers (army)

People: The common people worked very hard, but they made time for music, art, fun, festivals, and of course, time to thank their many gods and goddesses. Their homes were comfortable. Their clothing was colorful. There was plenty of food and water. No life is perfect, but things were much better than they had ever been before.

Questions:

1. Mali was located on what continent?
2. What river was important to Mali?
3. Name four important specialized professions in the kingdom of Mali.
4. What goods did Mali export?
5. How was power handed down? (When a king died, who took over the job of king in the Kingdom of Mali?)

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Mali Graphic Organizer

Time Period	
Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Map of civilization• Three unique physical features important to development• Identify countries located in this region today	
Government <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure• Who held positions of power?• How was power handed down?	
Religion List two ways that Islam assisted in cultural development	
Daily Life Describe the daily life of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upper class/nobles/royals• Common people	
Specialized Professions Identify three specialized professions	
Trade <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imports• Exports	
Inventions/achievements Describe at least two major achievements	
Decline List two things that contributed to the decline of Mali	

Lesson Nine:

The Kingdom of Mali: Mansa Musa

Time frame: Three class periods (55 minutes each)
Includes: Mansa Musa, Cairo, Mecca, the Mali Reporter

Preparation:

- Daily Question. Use overhead projector or write question on the board. (This is a student writing activity. Students are to write answers to daily questions in their notebooks upon arrival.)
- Copies of the handout *The Five Pillars* to give to students who have lost their copy of this handout from Lesson Two, or use an overhead of this handout
- Overhead of the labeled map: *Mansa Musa's Trip to Mecca*
- Reproducibles:
 - Mansa Musa*
 - Map Mansa Musa's Trip to Mecca (through Cairo)*
 - Mansa Musa's Trip to Mecca (Labeled Map)*
 - The Mali Reporter*

Daily Questions:

- What is a Muslim?
- What is Islam?
- What is a pilgrimage?

Open Class: Meet your class at the door.

Say: "Welcome to West Africa!"

Transition: "Today, we are going to learn more about a very famous king in the Kingdom of Mali. This king's name was Mansa Musa."

Activity: Mansa Musa

- Handout: *Mansa Musa*
- Read and answer questions.

Activity: Putting Mecca on the Map

- Direct students to pull their map of Africa out of their notebooks.
- Using an atlas, have one student find Mecca on the map.
- Use the overhead projector to show students the location of Mecca on their maps. Have students mark and label Mecca on their personal maps.
- Direct students to put their maps back in their notebooks. Remind them that they will need their maps again and not to lose them.

Activity: Activate Pre-Knowledge

- Put an overhead of your map of Africa on the overhead projector. Add the location of Mecca to the overhead projector.
- Say (as if confused), “Why do you think Mansa Musa wanted to visit Mecca?” (Quickly point out on the map the distance from the Kingdom of Mali to Mecca.)
- Get some answers. Someone might say because it’s part of his religion. Then again, they might not.
- **Say:** “According to our reading, Mansa Musa was a devout Muslim.”
- **Ask:** “What is a Muslim?”
- **Ask:** “Who remembers the Five Pillars of Islam?” (Get some answers.)
- Direct students to pull the handout they were give in Lesson Three—*The Five Pillars of Islam*—from their notebooks. Some students may have lost their copies by now. To handle this, you can direct them to share, you can hand out extra copies as needed, or you can use the overhead projector.
- Review the Five Pillars. Pay special attention to Pillar Five. Make sure your students understand that Mansa Musa’s religion, Islam, requires every Muslim to travel to Mecca at least once in their lifetime.
- **Say:** “Mansa Musa was a devout Muslim, so of course he wanted to make a pilgrimage to Mecca.”
- **Ask:** “What is a pilgrimage?” (Get some answers. Direct one student to read the definition of a pilgrimage from the dictionary. Modify your students’ answer as needed.
- “What are some of the other reasons that Mansa Musa wanted to travel to Mecca?” (He wanted to encourage Muslim scholars to come to Timbuktu. He wanted Timbuktu to become the finest center of learning in the world. He wanted people to know and respect the wisdom and wealth of the Kingdom of Mali.)

Transition: “The trip to Mecca was not an easy one.”

Activity: Map Mansa Musa’s Trip to Mecca

- Handout: *Map Mansa Musa’s Trip to Mecca (through Cairo)*
- Together, find places on the map to label that your students already know: Atlantic Ocean, Niger River, etc. Have them label their individual maps.
- When you a reach a point where they do not know what to add (the actual route Mansa Musa took, for example), put the labeled map on the overhead projector.
- Point to places on the map they need to label: Trans-Sahara Trade Route, Cairo, and Mecca.
- Point out the legend. Ask why a different line design was use to identify Mansa Musa’s route from the actual Trans-Sahara Trade Route. Why not use two identically designed lines (for example, two solid black lines)?
- Have them add Mansa Musa’s trip line to their maps.
- Direct them to write a paragraph or two on some of the hazards and hardships Mansa Musa and his caravan might have encountered on the trip. Tell students that they may use the back of their handout for this purpose if they wish.
- Give them some time.

- Discuss the hazards and hardships they described. Ask for volunteers to share what they have written.
- Use the board to make a list.

Transition: Point to the list you have made and say, “Obviously, Mansa Musa was willing to suffer a great deal of hardship to travel to Mecca.”

Activity: Positives and Negatives of Putting Mali on the Map

- Discuss the positives and negatives of putting Mali on the map.
- **Ask:** “Now that Mansa Musa is back home, what do you think will happen next as a result of his trip?” (Get some answers.)
- **Say:** “Mansa Musa realized his dream. Muslim scholars came to Timbuktu. They were enticed there by promises of wealth and by the promise of the company of other scholars of merit. Mansa Musa impressed them. The stories he had told of his kingdom intrigued them. They came to see and they stayed. As a result, Timbuktu became one of the finest, perhaps even *the* finest, university in the world.

With the influx of Muslim scholars and students, another thing happened. The traders could read and write, so they taught the nobles in the Kingdom of Mali to read and write. The language they wrote and spoke at Timbuktu was Arabic. Part of African society was moving from a tradition of oral history to the more formal tradition of written history.”

- **Ask:** “What other changes occurred because Mansa Musa traveled to Mecca?” (Get some answers.)
- **Say:** “That’s right. His kingdom became famous in Africa, Europe, and Asia. Although certainly many countries would have liked to conquer Mali and keep the gold for themselves, Mansa Musa kept his army strong. Students from noble families came from all over the world to study at Timbuktu. Sons of nobles in some parts of Africa were becoming literate—they could read and write.”
- **Ask:** “Did Mansa Musa’s trip to Mecca have any effect on the common people?” (Get some answers.)
- **Say:** “The answer is that it had some effect. Certainly the people were impressed that their king would travel such a long way for his religion. The common people were not invited to study at Timbuktu, but most did not want to study.

Mansa Musa continued to support religious freedom in his kingdom. His people were happy worshipping their many gods and goddesses in the traditional African way of song, dance, and story. They lived in villages and listened to the stories of the griots.

What were some of the other results of his trip?” (Get some answers. New trading partners. Old traders had new respect for the kingdom. The gap between the common people and the nobles was widening.)

Transition: “If you were going to select a newspaper headline that would represent something that happened on this trip or as a result of this trip, what would it be? Name another. And another.” (Get some answers)

Activity: The Mali Reporter

- **Ask:** “When writing a news story, what do you think the word ‘angle’ might mean?” (Angle means how you approach the story.)
- Handout: *The Mali Reporter*
- As you give this handout to each group, check off the angle you wish that group to use.
- **Say:** “I’m going to give each group an angle. Working in groups, your job is to write an article about Mansa Musa’s trip from your angle. You must edit your own article, so proofread it carefully. Be sure to give your article a **headline**. Don’t forget your **byline**—put your names on your article.”
- **Say:** “Before we start, do you like this title for your newspaper? Do you have a better title in mind?”
- Have them come up with suggestions. It’s important that they title their own newspaper. They’ll do a better job if the title is theirs.
- Give them some time.
- Put the stories together like a newspaper.
- Make copies.
- The following day, give one copy to each student.

Angles:

- Editorial: Story that expresses an opinion
- Feature: Story with human interest, “soft news”
- Hard news: A story that just reports the facts
- Entertainment: Reviews, advice column
- Sports
- Obituary: Who died? (Plant, animal)

Close Class: “Until next time, remember ...

- *Wisdom is like a baobab tree; no one individual can embrace it.*
- *When you are eating with the devil, you must use a long spoon.*

Close class on the last day of this lesson by presenting students with the reasons that led to the end of the Kingdom of Mali as follows:

The End of the Kingdom of Mali

- **Say:** “After Mansa Musa, things in Mali fell apart. The kings who followed Mansa Musa were not as wise. They began spending wildly. They paid little attention to their people or to the kingdom itself. They were too busy spending. The empire started to crumble. This gave one of the larger, more powerful districts in Mali a chance to take over. As Mali weakened, Songhay grew. Songhay finally grew strong enough to go to war with Mali. They won. Mali was no more.”
- **Say:** “First Ghana, then Mali, and now Songhay—each kingdom growing up from the ruins of the kingdom before it. Tomorrow, we’ll take a look at the Kingdom of Songhay and see how it fared as the controller of rich gold mines in West Africa.
- Until next time, here’s a tip from ancient Africa: *‘If you don’t wish to have rags for clothes, don’t play with a dog.’*”

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Mansa Musa

The empire of Mali had its heyday from about 1200 CE through the end of the 1400s. This kingdom had a great start under the wise direction of Sundiata, the Lion King. His son, Wali, also ruled wisely. Mansa Musa, Sundiata's grandson, continued the family tradition. Under Mansa Musa, the Mali Empire doubled in size. But Mansa Musa accomplished much more than simple expansion: He put Mali on the map.

Under Mansa Musa, the empire was broken into provinces, each ruled by a governor. Each village had a mayor. Most villages followed the traditional religions of Africa: they believed in many gods, in witch doctors, and in magic charms. Most village people could not read or write; they received education and training orally. They were very bright and creative people. They worked hard. They were not poor. The common people were given some luxury goods; goods were given to the elders and distributed as they saw fit. Mansa Musa was a great believer in spreading wealth around.

The Kingdom of Mali was rich. The army guarded the gold mines. It also guarded the section of the Trans-Sahara Trade Route that passed by Mali. Legend says there were usually 90,000 warriors on foot, 10,000 warriors on camels, and a few on Arabian horses that worked together to keep the trade route safe for travel. Traders always stopped at Mali. They knew they would find safety, culture, and richly rewarding trade.

Like his grandfather Sundiata, Mansa Musa ruled for 25 years. He continued the tradition of religious freedom in Mali. He was a devout Muslim. Mansa Musa worshiped one god: Allah. He was the one who actually ordered an impressive university to be built at Timbuktu. He wanted scholars to come to Mali, and they did.

The Muslim scholars who came to Mali were somewhat startled at the appearance of the people who called themselves Muslims. The climate was very hot. Rather than being heavily veiled in black garments, the women were unveiled and wore cool, colorful clothing. This was not the look to which they were accustomed. But Mansa Musa was such a good host and such a devout Muslim that the scholars who came to the kingdom brought with them not only learning but also understanding. Having never left Mali, Mansa Musa really did not know that the appearance of his people was anything out of the ordinary in the Muslim world.

Mansa Musa did things you would expect a very rich king to do. When he left his palace, 300 guards and his special musicians who played music continuously, always accompanying him. His people would gather along the road and chant, "Hail Mansa Musa, King of Mali!"

Since things were going so well at home, Mansa Musa decided now was the time to see the holy city of Mecca. Muslim law requires that all the faithful visit Mecca at least once. With a huge number of guards and attendants—along with camels carrying comforts, luxury, and bagsful of gold nuggets—Mansa Musa set out across the desert toward Mecca. Along the way, everywhere he went, he freely gave away gold. You can imagine the excitement he generated as he traveled from one oasis to the next.

His caravan stopped in Cairo, Egypt. Word of his incredible wealth spread quickly through the city. Mansa Musa was amazed at how expensive things were. They were expensive because merchants increased their normal prices. Mansa Musa did not care. Even though he had given away so much gold on the trip to Cairo, he had bagsful left to spend, and spend he did. Mansa Musa left so much gold behind him in Cairo that it was rumored it took 12 years for prices in Egypt to get back to normal. (This is probably an urban legend, but certainly it took some time for things to get back to normal.)

He distributed so much gold on his way to Mecca that he had to borrow money for his return trip home. Everyone with money was eager to be of service to such a wealthy man. True to his nature, Mansa Musa repaid the loans most generously.

His journey took about a year. He traveled around 3000 miles by camel. No one attempted to take over his kingdom while he was gone. Mansa Musa was a very smart man. To reduce the likelihood of a takeover, he had brought with him on his trip most of the powerful people in his kingdom. He left the army in charge. They did a great job.

His people were impressed. They thought it amazing that he was willing to make such a long trip with so many dangers, just to see a faraway holy place. His trip had other results. Scholars poured into Timbuktu, making it the most prestigious university in the land. Trade prospered.

Mansa Musa literally put Mali on the map—both European and Muslim maps.

Questions:

1. Why did Mansa Musa wish to visit the holy city of Mecca?
2. What did Mansa Musa freely distribute on his trip?
3. Why did Mansa Musa bring so many powerful people with him on this trip?
4. What happened when he returned home?

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Map of Mansa Musa's Trip to Mecca (through Cairo)



Map (labeled)

For teacher reference

Map of Mansa Musa's Trip to Mecca (Labeled Map)



Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

The Mali Reporter

Angles:

- Editorial: Story that expresses an opinion
- Feature: Story with human interest, “soft news”
- Hard news: A story that just reports the facts
- Entertainment: Reviews, advice column
- Sports
- Obituary: Who died? (Plant, animal)

Beware of libel (damaging someone’s reputation with what you print)!

Headline:

Article:

Lesson Ten:

The Kingdom of Songhay

Time frame: One class period (55 minutes)

Includes: History of Songhay; Specialized Professions; Comparison of the Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay; How to Write a Letter of Interest

Preparation:

- Daily Question. Use overhead projector or write question on the board. (This is a student writing activity. Students are to write answers to daily questions in their notebooks upon arrival.)
- Teacher Note: If you want more information on how to write a letter of interest, this Web site is a good source of information:
http://www.k-state.edu/hr/employment/emp_ltr_of_inter.html
- Teacher Note: A sample letter of interest can be found here:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/681/01/>
- Reproducibles:
 - The Kingdom of Songhay*
 - Map of the Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay* (see Appendix Two)
 - How to Write a Letter of Interest for a Job*
 - Apply for a Job*
 - The End of the Kingdom of Songhay*
 - Songhay Graphic Organizer*

Daily Question: "Who was Mansa Musa?"

Open Class: Meet your class at the door.

Say: "Welcome to West Africa!"

Activity: Quick History of the Kingdom of Songhay

- Handout: *The Kingdom of Songhay*
- Read and answer questions.

Activity: Songhay Map

- Direct students to get out their outline map of Africa.
- Use the overhead projector.
- Point to the place on the map they need to label today: Songhay. (If you need to refresh your memory on the location of the Kingdom of Ghana, see Appendix Two.)
- Remind students that they will need to hang on to this map. Tell them they will be adding to their maps several times during this unit.
- Direct students to put their maps safely away in their notebooks.

Transition: “In the Kingdom of Songhay, the king was all-powerful. The people were not mistreated, but they did not enjoy the comforts that were routine to the nobles and privileged craftsmen. The people in the Kingdom of Songhay did not expect their king to pass out wealth, as did the famous King Mansa Musa in the Kingdom of Mali. In the Kingdom of Songhay, it was important to have a good job.”

Activity: Apply for a Job

- Handout: *How to Write a Letter of Interest for a Job*
- Go over the handout with your students
- Handout: *Apply for a Job*
- Review the instructions with your students.
- Once written, ask if anyone would like to share his or her letter of interest.

Activity: Graphic Organizer for the Kingdom of Songhay

- Handout: *Songhay Graphic Organizer*
- **Say:** “From your reading, create your own graphic organizer that answers as many of these questions as you can. You may work in groups to help you work more effectively but you must each create your own graphic organizer.”
- Give them some time.
- Ask for volunteers. Use the overhead projector or board to write the answers to these questions.

Activity: The End of the Kingdom of Songhay

- Handout: *The End of the Kingdom of Songhay*
- Read and answer questions.

Transition: “The Kingdom of Songhay was never actually conquered. Although many people survived, Morocco had leveled the kingdom. The day of Songhay being a great kingdom was over. The people who were left were absorbed into other tribes in the area.”

Close Class: “Next time we meet, we’ll learn more about the daily life of the people who lived in the village societies of West Africa. Until next time, here is an ancient African proverb for you to consider: ‘*There is no medicine to cure hatred.*’”

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

The Kingdom of Songhay

(Also Spelled Songhai)

Songhay started as a fishing community. The people traded fish for the goods they wanted and needed. At one time, they were part of Mali. Mali tried to get them to pay taxes, but they never would. Songhay was always stubbornly independent. Mali let the people of Songhay get away with it because they wanted the fish.

As Mali weakened, Songhay started to take over. It was easy for them. Songhay was a strong Muslim kingdom. It was organized. It had a central government and a well-trained army. The people were not greedy, but they were proud. They were especially proud of Sonni Ali the Great (a hero to the Songhay people).

Sonni Ali the Great: Sonni Ali the Great (the new king) was a wonderful leader. He put warriors in canoes and started taking over city after city. He sent warriors to march on landlocked cities such as Timbuktu. Songhay kept growing until it grew into the largest kingdom in all of West Africa. It grew so big that it controlled the gold mines to the south and the salt mines to the north. That made it very powerful indeed. At its height, Songhay stretched over 2000 miles.

Trade: Trade flourished and made the Songhay rich. They exported gold, salt, kola nuts, and slaves. They imported textiles, horses, and luxury goods. Songhay was an active member of the slave trade. Children, women, and men would be sold into slavery without question or interest.

Daily life: Books were important. Any traders that brought books found them quickly purchased for vast amounts of gold. Doctors, judges, priests, and other educated men were maintained at the king's expense; these were important people. The homes of the nobles and kings were magnificent. The homes of the poor, however, were not. The leaders of Songhay did not spend time or money on the homes of workers. Privileged craftsmen were the exception. They lived quite well. Everyone else farmed the land and worked in the mines. Their life was not full of luxury.

Religion: The people of Songhay followed the African religions that included witch doctors, spirits, and magic. They believed in many gods. But the leaders of Songhay were Muslim, their religion was Islam.

Questions:

1. How did the people of Songhay first gain wealth?
2. Who was Sonni Ali the Great?
3. What kind of government did Sonni Ali have?
4. What religion did the leaders of the Kingdom of Songhay practice?

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

How to Write a Letter of Interest for a Job

Always

- Type your letter. (For purposes of this assignment, please handwrite your letter.)
- Avoid the appearance of a photocopied letter.
- Address your letter.
- Begin with a salutation.
“Dear Elders,” “Dear Muslim Brother,” “Dear Noble King of Songhay” are options for a salutation. (In real life, you would say: “To Whom It May Concern.”)
- Be sure there are no errors in your letter. Proofread it and have others proofread it for you too.
- Sign your letter.

Never

- Exceed one page.
- Include irrelevant personal information such as age or marital status.
- Lie.

Name:
Date:
Class:
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Apply For a Job

The drums have spread the word that there are three important job openings in the Kingdom of Songhay! Apply for one of the jobs listed below and your fortune will be assured! Your letter of interest must include your qualifications and experience.

King	Witch Doctor	Caravan Merchant
<i>Must be able to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make appointments• Settle disputes• Listen to reports• Collect gold nuggets• Conduct ceremonies	<i>Must be able to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk to gods• Make rain• Protect against sorcerers• Conduct funerals	<i>Must be able to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solve problems• Capture many slaves• Speak many languages• Ride a camel• Conduct trades

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Songhay Graphic Organizer

Time Period	
Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Map of civilization• Three unique physical features important to development• Identify countries located in this region today	
Government <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure• Who held positions of power?• How was power handed down?	
Religion List two ways that Islam assisted in cultural development	
Daily Life Describe the daily life of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upper class/nobles/royals• Common people	
Specialized Professions Identify five specialized professions	
Trade <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imports• Exports	
Inventions/achievements Describe at least two major achievements	
Decline What one thing contributed the most to the decline of Songhay? Justify your answer.	

Name:
Date:
Class:
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The End of the Kingdom of Songhay

The people of Songhay followed the African religions that included witch doctors, spirits, and magic. They believed in many gods. But the leaders of Songhay were Muslim, their religion was Islam. They did not expect the Kingdom of Songhay to be attacked by another Muslim kingdom.

The downfall of Songhay was its wealth. Everyone wanted the gold mines. Morocco's Sultan sent an army to Songhay in the late 1500s. The Moroccan army had cannons and muskets the Songhay army had spears and knives. In spite of this, Morocco could not conquer Songhay, although it did level the cities. The fighting continued long after the government was destroyed.

After about 10 years, the Sultan of Morocco lost interest, abandoned his army in Songhay, and forgot about them. The Moroccan soldiers who were left behind were either killed or were absorbed into the local Songhay population.

Even though Morocco did not really win the war, it totally destroyed Songhay, along with the cities and rest stops in the region that made it of interest to the traders who traveled the Trans-Saharan Trade Route. Although some of the people survived, the Kingdom of Songhay was no more.

Questions:

1. Who attacked Songhay?
2. Why did they attack?
3. Who won the war?
4. How was the Kingdom of Songhay destroyed?

Lesson Eleven:

Village Societies in West Africa

Time frame: One class period (55 minutes)

Includes: Comparison of the Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay, Daily Life in the Village Societies of West Africa

Preparation:

- Daily Question. Use overhead projector or write question on the board. (This is a student writing activity. Students are to write answers to daily questions in their notebooks upon arrival.)
- Reproducibles:
 - Daily Life in the Village Societies of West Africa*
 - Why the Rabbit Is Alert*
 - Copies of The Lion's Whisker* (from Lesson Two)
 - The Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, Songhay, and Village Societies* (graphic organizer)

Daily Question: "List three specialized professions that existed in all three of the powerful West African kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay."

Open Class: Meet your class at the door.

Say: "Welcome to West Africa!"

Activity: Quick Review

- **Say:** "We have looked at three great trading kingdoms in West Africa."
- **Ask:** "What are the names of these three kingdoms?" (Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay.)
- **Say:** "In each case, these kingdoms had a strong central government. A king ruled them. They had a strong army. They had laws that had to be obeyed by all the people, whether they lived in the cities or in the villages."
- Place your *Map of Africa* on the overhead projector.
- Point to each as you say: "First there was Ghana, then Mali, then Songhay. Each kingdom rose to power as the previous kingdom died. You can see that these kingdoms partially overlap."

Transition: "But not everyone who lived in West Africa lived in the great trading kingdoms of the day."

Activity: Village Societies in West Africa

- Handout: *Daily Life in the Village Societies of West Africa*
- Read and answer questions.
- The answer to Question Six is that no one lived in the palace. The chief had the same lifestyle as everyone else. Villagers worked together and looked after each other.

Activity: Why the Rabbit Is Alert

- **Say:** “This is an old African story about a rabbit who lived in a village hundreds of years ago.”
- Handout: *Why the Rabbit Is Alert*
- Read and answer questions.
- **Ask:** “What does this story tell us about life in a village?” (Get some answers.)

Activity: Activate Pre-Knowledge. The Kingdom of Kush

- **Ask:** “Who remembers where the Kingdom of Kush is located?”
- Use the overhead projector. Point out the location of the Kingdom of Kush on your *Outline Map of Africa*.

Transition: “When we studied the Kingdom of Kush, we read a story called *The Lion’s Whisker*.”

Activity: Compare Village Life in East and West Africa

- **Ask:** “What does the word ‘alike’ mean?” (Get some answers. Have one student look up the definition in the dictionary. Modify the student definition if necessary.)
- Direct students to get out their copy of the story *The Lion’s Whisker* from their notebooks. Have some copies on hand for students who have misplaced their copy.
- Working in groups, have students compare these two stories to find examples of daily life in the villages that are alike and different.
- **Say:** “Let’s see what you can find.”
- Give them some time.
- Have each group share what they have discovered.
- Use the overhead projector or board to create a list.
- Close the activity by saying: “The griots are still telling stories in the villages of Africa. Many of these stories have been written down in modern times and collected together in books. As your time permits, I encourage you to check a book out of the library on African stories and fables. I think you’ll like these stories, and I know you’ll learn something. Like African proverbs, African stories are rich with wisdom.”

Transition: “Next, we are going to take a look at the advantages and disadvantages of being part of a large, powerful kingdom, rather than a village that is governed locally.”

Activity: Central Government vs. Local Government

- Arrange your students in groups.
- Each group appoints a recorder for their group.
- Direct the recorders to each get out a piece of paper.
- Have the recorder divide the paper into two columns. Title one column “Central Government” and one column “Local Government.”
- Working in groups, give students five minutes to write down all the positive things they think of for each column. Then give them five minutes to write down all the negatives.
- Ask each group in turn for one positive or negative. Make sure each group clearly states their listing. Give them an example: Central Government negative—addresses the needs of people in groups, not as individuals.
- Make a list on their responses on the board or overhead projector.
- **Ask:** “How important do you think it is to have a central government? Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?” (Get some answers. There is no right answer. Allow them to briefly express their opinions.)
- “How can we fix some of the disadvantages of central government?” (By breaking the country into regions—state government, city government.)
- “Do you believe the government in your town knows you personally? Can you visit the mayor in your town and ask for help for your specific problem?” (Probably not.)
- **Say:** “That’s one of the reasons kinship was important in rural West Africa. People who lived in rural villages were members of a clan.”
- **Ask:** “What does clan mean?” (Get some answers. Have someone look up “clan” in the dictionary and read the definition aloud. Modify your student definition if needed.)
- **Ask:** “Do you remember the story about Anansi, entitled *Why Anansi Hides in Corners*? Rabbit wanted to use the goatskin to make a drum the entire village could enjoy. Anansi wanted to keep the goatskin for himself. Later, when Rabbit caught Anansi and Anansi’s wife and two sons dancing on top of the drum Rabbit had made from other materials, what happened?”
- Pull out *Why Anansi Hides in Corners*. Read the last paragraph to your class.
- **Say:** “Rabbit summoned all the animals in the village so he could make a complaint. He told the animals all that had happened. The animals in the village did not have to voice their opinion. Hanging his head in shame, Anansi backed his family into the corner. They hid their faces in shame. And that’s why spiders hide in corners, even to this day.”
- **Ask:** “What does this tell us about law and order in the rural villages of West Africa?” (Get some answers.)
- **Say:** “The people in the rural villages of Africa enjoyed a family system of cooperation. What they did, they did for the good of all. In the villages of West Africa, everyone had a job to do: some worked in the fields; some stayed home with the children and cleaned and cooked; some were elders and wise men; some were griots, or storytellers. Everyone did what was best for the clan. If your clan had a debt to pay to another clan, your clan might pay that debt by having you work as a slave, but they would not force you to go. You would want to go, it was an honor to go. You were helping the whole clan. When you came home, you would be a hero. The drums would sing your praises, and the storytellers would tell legends of your deeds.”

- **Ask:** “What are some of the disadvantages of local government?”
- **Ask:** “How do you think the villagers protected themselves from aggression?” (They banded together.)

Activity: Comparison of Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay

- Handout: *Comparison of Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay*
- Tell students that this is a quiz. They can use their notebooks; they can use their textbooks; they can use other graphic organizers and notes they have taken during the unit. They may not ask another student for help. They will need to look up some things such as the time periods of each kingdom. The time period for the rural village societies in Africa is BCE to today.

Close Class: “Next time we meet, we are moving south, to the incredible Forest Kingdom of Benin. Until next time, remember, *‘When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.’*”

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Daily Life in the Village Societies of West Africa

Agriculture: Early West Africans lived along the river and in the grasslands. Different villages grew different crops. The crops you grew depended on where you lived in West Africa. If you lived along the river, you grew rice and fished. If you lived in the grasslands, you grew millet. People in the south, near the rainforests, grew peanuts and sweet potatoes.

Trade: People in different villages traded each other for the foods they wanted and needed.

Natural disaster: Because they were an agricultural society, a storm or a flood or an outbreak of disease could wipe them out. The whole village could die. It is no wonder that they worked hard to please their many gods and goddesses so that their village would be safe from harm.

Religion: The people in the villages believed that one god ruled the world but that many gods were in charge of daily life. They believed in two worlds: the world on Earth and the world of the gods. Their religion was designed to bring these two worlds together so that the elders and their religious leaders could talk to the gods of daily life and receive advice. To encourage these gods to drop by, they danced, sang, rattled noisemakers, made masks, and feasted. Certainly, the gods would not wish to miss such a joyous time.

Ancestor worship: They also asked their ancestors to talk to the gods on their behalf. They did many things to please their ancestors so that they would intercede on their behalf—things like storytelling, music, song, dance, and feasting.

Magic: They believed in magic amulets. People would visit the village witch doctor in hopes of finding help for their problems. The witch doctor might make them a magic amulet; this could be a bag tied tightly with instructions not to open it, it could be anything. You might wear it around your neck, you might bury it and dance over it, you might give it to someone. The witch doctors had a good understanding of the many herbs that could heal. They also had a good understanding of the hearts of people. It was no wonder the people believed in magic.

Kinship and the common good: People who lived in villages were members of a clan, a family group. Everyone worked together for the common good. Their first thought was not supposed to be, “I want to do this my way.” Rather, their first thought was supposed to be, “I want to do what is best for the people in my village.” Villagers collectively worked the land, took care of the children, tended livestock, administered justice, and worshipped their ancestors. The community as a whole raised the children.

Villages were broken up into 50 or 100 or 500 duplicate homes. Each individual family had its own home, but the homes looked alike. Villagers worked together as a team. The chief was the leader, but his home looked like other homes. There were no palaces in the villages. Villages were close-knit communities. Although each villager had a job to do, all jobs were designed to help each other. If something could be used for the betterment of the whole tribe, it was not right to keep it for yourself.

Government: Each village ruled itself. Clan government was based on kinship. In some cases, the head of government was a group of village elders. In others, the head of the village was the chief. Either way, the head of the village made decisions for the village. However, all villagers were able to express their opinion prior to a ruling.

Griots (storytellers): Most nights after the evening meal, the village would collect together to hear the stories of the griots, the storytellers. Each village was proud of its achievements, ancestors, and gods. The griot put that pride into the form of fabulous stories that told of the noble history and the many happenings of their clan.

Today: In many parts of Africa today, villagers still live as they did in ancient times. Tribesmen still live as part of immense “families” that collectively own the land. They are a living record of the way things were. The community as a whole raises the children. Homes are built alike and are built from the materials around them. Even today, homes in a village might be built of thick mud walls decorated with designs. They are smart homes for the area in which they are built. Thick mud cools the home in blazing summer heat. Homes on stilts protect homes from flooding. Tribesmen still keep a close eye on nature.

Questions:

1. Who ruled the villages?
2. What crops did they grow?
3. Why did clans trade?
4. What is an amulet?
5. Who raised the children?
6. Who lived in the palace?

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Why the Rabbit Is Alert

Once upon a time, there lived a rabbit with four long legs. The rabbit was a beautiful creature. Everyone said so. Rabbit might be beautiful, but he was not perfect. He was a very lazy creature.

One sunny day, Rabbit went in search of a comfortable place to laze. It was such a perfect day. Rabbit looked at the sunlight sparkling off the water in the river. "How cool that looks," Rabbit said to himself. He jumped in, but his legs got tired of pushing him along and keeping him afloat. Rabbit wiggled his nose. "This is too much trouble," he sighed.

He kicked back to land and looked around. "This looks nice," he told himself, looking at the earth. He dug a very shallow hole and climbed in.

Soon, other animals hurried by, busy with jobs that had to be done. "You have to dig a deeper hole," they each shouted in turn. "Your hole is too shallow," said the ant. "The earth must breathe," said the mole.

"It's too much work," Rabbit kept calling back. Soon, he tired of answering at all, but it would be rude not to answer. Rabbit looked up at the trees. "Now that looks like a peaceful place," Rabbit said to himself.

Using his strong and straight back legs, he easily climbed up the tree. He sighed happily. Now this was perfect. There was food. The monkeys did not disturb him. He lay down on a branch of the tree and sighed happily.

When the breeze picked up and became a strong wind, the monkeys swung by on their way to whatever it is that monkeys do. Each monkey said, "Rabbit, move to a stronger tree branch. That branch is too weak to hold you when the wind is howling."

"Later, perhaps," Rabbit yawned.

Suddenly, the wind picked up even more. It cracked the branch he was resting on in two pieces. One piece stayed on the tree. The other piece, the piece holding Rabbit, fell to the ground, carrying Rabbit with it. His two back legs were broken.

"Go to the healer," the monkeys suggested. "The healer will set your legs so that they heal correctly."

“Maybe tomorrow. Not today,” Rabbit said. “It doesn’t hurt that much, really. And besides,” Rabbit yawned. “It’s peaceful here, under the trees.”

Rabbit lazed at the bottom of the trees for at least a week. The monkeys, the ants, and the moles all brought him food to eat. They dropped off food as they scurried around doing whatever ants and monkeys and moles do. Rabbit was quite content.

The god of the tree looked down at Rabbit. Something had to be done to teach Rabbit that being lazy all the time is not such a good idea. The god of the tree smiled to himself. He had found the answer.

When a week had gone by, Rabbit stretched and moved to stand up. His eyes widened in surprise. His legs would not straighten. They had healed themselves beautifully. But they had healed in a crooked way.

“God of the tree,” Rabbit cried. “I need your help.”

“I cannot help you,” the tree god whispered, sounding like the wind. “You have done this to yourself.”

There was no talking with the god of the tree. Rabbit knew that. He knew he deserved his punishment. He *had* been incredibly lazy, letting others do all the work.

Ever since that time, all rabbits are born with crooked hind legs, this was the punishment of the tree god. But Rabbit had learned a valuable lesson. Rabbit put away his lazy ways. He became very quick, he hopped very fast, and he never waited. If he had something to do, he did it immediately.

All Rabbit’s children and their children and their children all learned from Rabbit’s example. “If you have something to do,” Rabbit would tell them. “Do it now!”

Questions:

1. Why did the other animals bring Rabbit food to eat while Rabbit lazed at the bottom of the tree?
2. Why didn’t Rabbit try to reason with the god of the tree?
3. What is the moral of this story?

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

The Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, Songhay, and Village Societies

	Ghana	Mali	Songhay	Villages
Time Period				
Geography Two unique features				
Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of government? • How was power handed down? 				
Religion				
Professions List three specialized professions				
Achievements List two achievements				

Lesson Twelve:

The Kingdom of Benin: African Proverbs

Time frame: Two class periods (55 minutes each)

Includes: Forest Kingdoms—the Kingdom of Benin; Sun, Moon, and Water; Ancient African Proverbs

Preparation:

- Daily Question. Use overhead projector or write question on the board. (This is a student writing activity. Students are to write answers to daily questions in their notebooks upon arrival.)
- Overhead transparencies or pictures of Nigerian art (if included in the lesson).
- CD of Nigerian music, plus an appropriate player. Try to find some thumb piano music if you can. If you own a thumb piano, bring it in. We found one on eBay.
- The night before class, make Sweet Potato Cookies. A recipe has been included in Appendix One.
- Reproducibles:
 - The Kingdom of Benin*
 - Sun, Moon, and Water*
 - Ancient African Proverbs*
 - Create Your Own Ancient African Proverb*
 - Sweet Potato Cookies* (Appendix One)

Daily Question: "What is the definition of matrilineal?"

Open Class: Meet your class at the door.

Say: "Welcome to the African rainforest and the Kingdom of Benin!"

Activity: The Kingdom of Benin—Map

- **Say:** "We have looked at three huge kingdoms on the Gold Coast of Africa: Ghana, Mali, and Songhay. But these were not the only kingdoms in medieval Africa; there were many great kingdoms, one of which was the Kingdom of Benin."
- **Teacher note:** It is important for students to understand that the Kingdom of Benin was located in what is today the country of Nigeria (in southern Nigeria). The capital city of the Kingdom of Benin was Benin, often referred to as Benin City for clarity. Still, it's confusing because there is a modern-day country called Benin to the east of Nigeria. The distinction is important if for no other reason than the Kingdom of Benin did not participate in the slave trade with Portugal, no matter what you might read on the Internet. The tribes around them, however, did participate. For more information

on the Kingdom of Benin, see the Library of Congress Web site:

<http://www.countrystudies.us/nigeria/7.htm>

- Direct students to pull out their maps of Africa.
- Using the overhead projector, point out the Kingdom of Benin on the map. (If you need to refresh your memory on the location of the Kingdom of Ghana, see Appendix Two.)
- Have students label the Kingdom of Benin on their individual maps.
- **Say:** “Let’s take a closer look at the people who lived in the Kingdom of Benin, which was located not in the modern day country of Benin, but in the modern-day country of Nigeria.”

Activity: The Kingdom of Benin—Quick History

- Handout: *The Kingdom of Benin*
- Read and answer questions.
- **Say:** “You may see sites on the Internet that talk about Benin and the huge benefits it received from participation in the slave trade as traders. This is not so. Either these writers are mistaken, or they are referring to the tribes who settled in the area of the modern-day country of Benin.

The tribes that made up the Kingdom of Benin did not opt into the slave trade with Portugal, although they had slaves for their own use. The King sent some of his people to Portugal and to Rome to study European ways. The King of Portugal sent some of his people to Benin to study art and music.

The people of Benin were not like their neighbors. In those days, you had to have a strong army unless you wanted to end up being captured and sold as a slave. But after their initial expansion period, unless someone attacked the people in the Kingdom of Benin, they lived pretty peacefully. They did not need to sell slaves to participate in rich trading markets. They had their art—bronze statues, designed fabrics, carved masks—along with palm oil, pepper, rubber, timber, and sweet potatoes.”

- At the end of or during the reading, if possible, enrich this activity by:
 1. Showing overheads, pictures, or slides of various masks from Benin.
 2. Playing African music on CD for students to hear.
 3. For either of the above, ask students their opinion. “Did you like it? What did you like about it?”

Activity: Sun, Moon, and Water

- **Say:** “Africa is a country of oral tradition.”
- **Ask:** “What does that mean?” (Get some answers.)
- **Say:** “Right. They use storytelling, song, dance, fabric design, and fables to remember their history and to remind themselves as well as teach others lessons of behavior.”
- Handout: *Sun, Moon, and Water*
- Read and answer questions.
- “What does this story tell us about how ancient Africans treated their guests?”

- “Do you think Sun thought his invitation would result in such a problem for himself and for his wife?” (Of course not.)
- What is the moral of this story?” (Be careful who you invite into your home.)

Transition: “Stories were told by griots and by anyone who could tell a good story. Stories were told to the whole village. Stories had to be very clever. They had to be interesting to adults as well as children, each of whom might take away a different understanding from the same tale. That is one of the reasons African stories and fables have stood the test of time. They’re just plain good.”

Activity: Ancient African Proverbs

- **Ask:** “Can you think of another method of oral teaching that the African people used to teach and to entertain?” (Answer: Poems, epics, proverbs)
- Review. **Ask:** “What is a proverb?” (Get some answers.)
- **Say:** “Here’s an example of a proverb from Ghana: ‘The river fish game is no safe game.’”
- **Ask:** “Would we be able to figure out the meaning of their proverbs from the proverb itself?” (Possibly, possibly not.)
- **Say:** “Proverbs in Africa were and are used as they are used all over the world—to teach. Proverbs reflect the geography, culture, and daily life of the people who create them.”
- **Say:** “We have closed each day of this unit with a proverb. Now, let’s see if you can figure out what these proverbs mean. What clues do African proverbs give us about the animals, daily life, religion, and philosophy of ancient Africa?”
- Handout: *Ancient African Proverbs*
- **Say:** “A proverb is never explained to the listener. If you cannot understand these proverbs, you need to spend time listening to the elders in your village.”
- Direct them to move to their groups.
- **Say:** “Since we have no elders in this classroom (expect a chuckle as your students may, of course, think of YOU as an elder), you can work in groups and help each other figure out the possible meaning of the proverbs.”
- Direct them to write down their answers. (Give them some time.)
- Read each proverb. Call on one group to explain the proverb you have just read. Ask the other groups if they agree with this interpretation.
- **Ask:** “Is there a right answer? Or do you bring your own knowledge and limits to each proverb. If you have never seen or heard of tigers, can you understand a proverb about a tiger? Why or why not?”

Activity: Write Your Own Proverb

- **Ask:** “How do people think of proverbs? How does this process work?” (Get some answers.) **Say:** “Let’s see if we can write a proverb.”
- Write on the board or overhead projector the following: “You can’t catch an airplane with flypaper.” **Ask:** “What does this mean?”

- Class activity: “Let’s put this into terms that someone in ancient Africa could understand.” Direct students to return to their desks and write their own proverb. Their proverb can be based on a real modern-day saying or a made-up saying.
- Handout: *Create Your Own Ancient African Proverb*
- While students are working, hand each student a Sweet Potato Cookie. Remind students that sweet potatoes are still one of the major exports of Africa from crops grown in the rainforests of Africa.
- Tell students to make sure they fill in all the blanks. (Give them some time.)
- Ask for volunteers who wish to share what they created.

Close Class: “If you have forgotten where your village is, remember this: *‘Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable.’*”

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

The Kingdom of Benin

The Kingdom of Benin was one of the Forest Kingdoms of ancient and medieval Africa. Around 1400 CE, Benin rose to become a powerful kingdom, with its own unique style and personality. Benin began in ancient times and was not conquered until the late 1800s, so it enjoyed quite a run. The Kingdom of Benin should not be confused with the modern day country of Benin. The Kingdom of Benin (along with its capital, Benin City) was located in what is today southern Nigeria.

The Middle Ages: In the north, the Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay were each influenced by the Muslim merchants. These merchants brought with them the Arabic language, Islamic religion, and Islamic culture, including a system of reading and writing, formal education, currency, credit, and civil bureaucracy. All of this greatly affected the development of the great Sudanese empires, but the people in the forest regions of Africa were not affected by the Muslim culture or the religious teachings of Islam. The first Muslim merchants did not push their way south for a very long time, probably not until the 1600s. The religion and society of the Kingdom of Benin had developed its own style by then. The kingdom was wholly African in government, religion, and culture.

Religion: The people in the Kingdom of Benin believed in many gods and goddesses, spirits, magic, and the power of witch doctors. They believed that many festivals were necessary to honor their gods. They knew their gods loved music and dance and song and storytelling. All the gods loved to hear tales of their splendor. The people, if the truth were to be told, rather loved hearing the tales themselves.

Trade: The Kingdom of Benin traded with other African kingdoms and with the Dutch and Portuguese traders who came by sea. The kingdom offered woven striped garments that were popular on the Gold Coast, blue fabric, pepper, jasper stones, rubber, timber, palm oil, and leopard skins. In exchange, the king wanted red and silver fabrics—cotton, velvet, embroidered silk, coarse flannel—as well as candied oranges and lemons, mirrors, and iron bars for his people and for himself. Jewelry was traded on both sides.

Benin traders were very shrewd. They had a certain way of trading. If you didn't trade their way, they wouldn't trade. They might negotiate for days, weeks, or even months before they would trade for goods. It was not easy to trade with the Benin people, but it was profitable. The artists of Benin were quite talented, and the demand for Benin striped fabrics, bronze statues, and carved masks was high.

The people of the Kingdom of Benin did not tolerate mistreatment during trade or at any time, actually. If a foreign trader was rude, or if something was stolen, all trade came to an abrupt halt. The boycott would continue for all traders from all nations until restitution and/or an apology was made and accepted.

Government: The government consisted of a king, ably assisted by a council composed of invited representatives from noble families, major artist guilds (groups), and professions. It was not a representative government, as people did not vote for someone to represent them, but the council members did represent the various people in the kingdom.

Kinship: Kinship is the relationship between family members. If you are cousins, you are “kin.” Kinship in the villages was the basis of local government. The village chief was the head of the village. The chief made daily life decisions in the village. The chief married people. Quite often, the chief was the village religious leader. Even though Benin had a king that the people recognized as their king, village rule was also important. Families stuck together and helped other families; there was a unity in purpose and in culture that kept the kingdom together. But the various villages did recognize that their king was the head of their nation.

Army: There was a strong army whose job was to protect the people. There were laws that everyone followed—no one was above the law. The Kingdom of Benin could go to war and was forced to on occasion, but their warriors were fierce and capable. Their leaders were wise, their people worked together as a team, and thus their normal state was a peaceful one.

Benin City: The kingdom and the capital city were both called Benin. City life was very different than village life. In the city, although family was important, the people in the city knew they had a king. He left the palace on occasion, but always carefully guarded.

When the Portuguese and Dutch traders saw the city, they wrote home and told their families that this city was very much like the cities at home. The city of Benin was laid out in a system of huge straight streets. These streets were very wide, very long, and well maintained, although they were not paved. You could travel on foot in a straight line for 15 or 20 minutes and not see the end of the street. Other streets opened from the main streets. They were also wide. Houses were built in rows along all of the streets.

On the street-front side, houses had covered porches to keep people dry as they sat outside. The Dutch and Portuguese traders who came to Benin by sea were not invited into the homes of nobles or artists, so we don’t know how their homes were arranged or what the backs looked like. But we do know about the palace.

The palace: Dutch and Portuguese traders were invited into the king’s palace, and thus we have written records of what the palace looked like. *“The king’s court is very big, having within it many wide squares with galleries round them where watch is always kept. I went so far within these builds that I passed through four such squared, and wherever I looked, I still saw gate after gate which opened into other places.”* (Description of Guinea, compiled by Pieter de Marees from the accounts of many travelers, 1602.)

Art and music: If there were such a thing as an artist colony in Africa, that colony would have been the Kingdom of Benin. However, people did not come from all over the world to live in the kingdom to learn about art and bronze making. Rather, the people of the Kingdom of Benin sent their art out all over the world. They produced some of the most wonderful art in Africa. Their sculptures were playful and fun. Their carved wood masks are still world famous.

Their musical instruments included sticks, drums, and thumb pianos. If you have never seen a thumb piano (also called a finger harp), imagine a small wooden box with a hole on top and on both sides. Across the top hole, metal strips are fastened loosely down. To play, you press the tip of a metal strip and slide off gently. You can make an echo sound by covering the holes on either side. You can tap the holes on either side or both sides for additional effects. It's a simple instrument with a beautiful sound.

Other specialized professions: Witch doctors, warriors, magicians, farmers, weavers, and builders

School: Children did not go to school in a building. Mothers and fathers taught kids at home. Those practicing a trade would accept children as students to teach them their trade. Children learned from the elders of the village who used proverbs to teach good behavior. There is a wonderful African proverb that states, "*It takes a whole village to raise a child.*" Certainly, that was true in the village life of Benin. (It is still true today in village life all over Africa.)

Written language: We don't know much about the early days of the Kingdom of Benin, as the people did not have a written language until the Portuguese arrived. They learned Portuguese from the traders, both how to speak it and how to write it.

Social life: The chief of the kingdom (the king) wore ceremonial robes to the annual festivals given in honor of various gods and goddesses. He always carried a sword, which was a symbol of his authority. There were many festivals. The people stopped working every month for several days to attend a festival. They believed that work had to be balanced with play for a healthy life. They might be in the middle of a most important trade, yet still, things came to a halt when it was festival time, no matter how important the trade.

Slavery: The nobles in the Kingdom of Benin did have slaves, but they did not choose to sell slaves to the traders who visited their shores. In the Kingdom of Benin, slaves were well treated. It did not occur to them that other people might treat slaves differently. In the Kingdom of Benin, slaves could work their way out of slavery by paying their master the price of their purchase. They could marry the daughter of the household in which they served and then would no longer be slaves.

No one knows why the Kingdom of Benin did not participate in the slave trade. It is possible that they did not wish to go to war with their African neighbors. In order to have slaves to sell, you had to go out and capture some. Since few people were willing to be sold into slavery, people had to be captured. The nobles in the Kingdom of Benin might trade an occasional woman to the slavers, but for whatever reason, they never traded men.

What happened to the kingdom of Benin? The British conquered the Kingdom of Benin in the very late 1800s. That was the end of the Kingdom of Benin, but it was not the end of the people. In time, the people in the region of the Kingdom of Benin were able to establish independence as part of the modern-day country of Nigeria. Nigeria is famous for its bronze statues, carved wood masks, and expertly woven fabrics, and two of its exports are pepper and sweet potatoes.

Questions:

1. Who ruled the Kingdom of Benin?
2. List three products the Kingdom of Benin had available to trade.
3. List three products the Kingdom of Benin wanted as payment.
4. List three specialized professions.
5. What modern country includes the region of the Kingdom of Benin today?

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Sun, Moon, and Water

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there lived a young couple; their names were Sun and Moon.

Sun's good friend was Water. One day, while Sun fished from the shore, he said to his friend Water, "I visit you nearly every day. But you never visit me. Why is that?"

Water wiggled with excitement. His wiggle sent a wave full of fish crashing down on Sun's feet. "I would love to visit you, Sun. I would love to meet your beautiful wife, Moon." Water stilled. "But I cannot do so. Your house is too small for all those who come with me wherever I flow."

Sun and Water sat quietly, thinking things over.

Water had an idea. "I know! If you would build a fence that would hold me, I could come and visit! I would so love to visit!"

"I'll build a HUGE fence," Sun said to his friend. "One big enough to hold even you!"

Sun rushed home to tell Moon about his plan. They built and built until the very high fence that surrounded their home stretched as far as their eyes could see. Sun rushed down to the shore.

"It's ready," Sun shouted. He took off running. He needed to be at home, to greet his friend properly, when Water arrived.

"Here I am," cried Water, rushing toward the home of his friend Sun. "What a beautiful place you have built for me! What a beautiful wife you have," Water gushed excitedly.

Already, Sun and Moon were ankle deep in water. Fish leaped everywhere. Moon beamed. Never had she seen so much food so easily reached. She leaped for a basket and started loading her basket with fish.

"Are you sure you have room for me?" Water asked, as the water rose higher and higher.

"Of course," said Sun. "You are welcome, my friend!"

"Sun," Moon whispered fearfully. "I do believe Water is filling our home."

“Are you sure?” Water screamed over the noise of the rushing water.

“There is room for everyone,” Sun shouted back. Sun knew as host he had to welcome his guest no matter how difficult. The water was rising rapidly, though. Sun grabbed Moon’s hand and dragged her with him to the top of his hut.

To escape, holding Moon’s hand tightly, Sun leaped as high as he could. His leap took them far into the sky. That’s where you’ll find Sun and Moon, looking down at Water from their safety high in the sky.

Questions:

1. Who was Sun’s good friend?
2. Why did Water cover Sun’s house?
3. How did Sun save his wife Moon from drowning?

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Ancient African Proverbs

“It takes a village to raise a child.”

“Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable.”

“There is no medicine to cure hatred.”

“When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.”

“The frog does not jump in the daytime without reason.”

“One goat cannot carry another goat’s tail.”

“The family is like the forest: if you are outside, it is dense; if you are inside, you see that each tree has its own position.”

“The hunter does not rub himself in oil and lie by the fire to sleep.”

“Even the mightiest eagle comes down to the treetops to rest.”

“A tiger does not have to proclaim its tigritude.”

“If a blind man says, ‘Let’s throw stones,’ be assured that he has stepped on one.”

“Until lions have their own historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter.”

“One should never rub bottoms with a porcupine.”

“The rain wets the leopard’s spots but does not wash them off.”

“If you don’t wish to have rags for clothes, don’t play with a dog.”

“If a monkey is amongst dogs, why won’t it start barking?”

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Create Your Own Ancient African Proverb

Create a made-up proverb:

What does your proverb teach?

Change your proverb so that people in ancient Africa can understand the meaning of your proverb, if applicable.

Appendix One:

Sweet Potato Cakes (Cookies)

Sweet potatoes are a common ingredient in African cooking. They add nutrition, flavor, and coloring. This is a delicious, authentic African recipe.

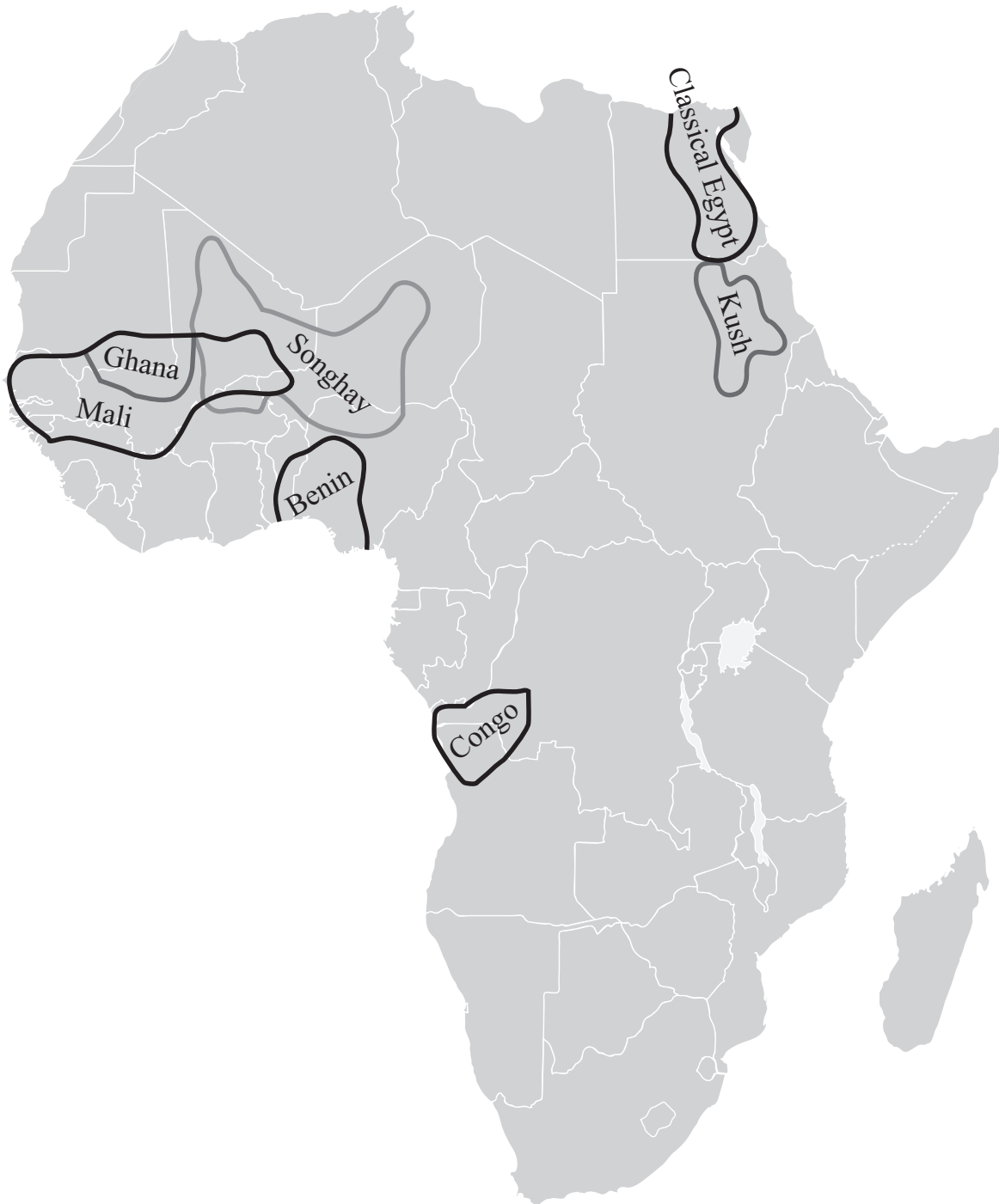
Ingredients

- 10 tablespoons butter, melted
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup honey
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 cup grated raw sweet potato
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

Directions: Mix all ingredients well. Arrange cookie dough on ungreased cookie sheets using single scoops from a teaspoon. Bake at 350 degrees for 6 to 8 minutes. Makes 60 cookies.

Appendix Two:

Map of the Kingdoms of Kush, Egypt, Ghana,
Mali, Songhay, Benin, and Congo



Appendix Three:

Helpful Web Pages

Anansi Tales

- Why Anansi Has Eight Thin Legs
<http://africa.mrdonn.org/anansi.html>
- Anansi Tries to Steal All the Wisdom in the World
<http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/africa/literature/anansiwisdom.htm>
- Anansi and the Turtle
<http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/africa/literature/anansiturtle.htm>
- Anansi and Firefly
<http://www.everythingjamaican.com/jamaican-jokes/anansi-firefly-and-tiger-28/>
- How Anansi Came to Own All Tales
http://www.paramotors.info/crown_thistle/stories.html
- Swahili Folk Tale (PBS Kids)
<http://pbskids.org/africa/tale/index.html>

African Masks

- African Masks (PBS Kids)
<http://pbskids.org/africa/mask/>
- Make an African Mask
http://www.dltk-kids.com/world/africa/make_an_african_mask.htm
- African Masks
<http://www.my-ecoach.com/resources/masks/>

African Music and Musical Instruments

- Thumb Piano Tunes (PBS Kids)
<http://pbskids.org/africa/piano/haveflash.html>

Islam—World Map and the Five Pillars

- World Map of Islam and More About Islam (Teacher's Edition)
<http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/students/curriculum/m14/activity3.php>

Maps of Africa

- Interactive Map
<http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/students/curriculum/m4/activity1.php>
- Africa's Vegetation Map
http://fga.freac.fsu.edu/pdf/africa/africa_veg.pdf
- Landforms of Africa
<http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/aflndcn.htm>
- Africa's Rivers
<http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/students/curriculum/m6/activity2.php>
- Africa Political Map
<http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/students/curriculum/m6/activity4.php>
- Countries of Africa (outline map, unlabeled)
<http://fga.freac.fsu.edu/pdf/africa/africa.pdf>
<http://fga.freac.fsu.edu/pdf/africa/africa2.pdf>
- Countries of Africa (outline map, labeled)
http://fga.freac.fsu.edu/pdf/africa/africa_wnames.pdf
- Sub-Saharan Countries
http://fga.freac.fsu.edu/pdf/subsahara/subsahara_regions.pdf

Graphic Organizers

- Movement of goods, people, and ideas
<http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/curriculum/exploreafricapics/earlyafricanhistory.gif>

Lesson Plans, Activities, Webquests

- Lesson plans and activities
<http://africa.mrdonn.org/>

Appendix Four:

Portugal Finds a Short Cut to India

Teacher note: After teaching the unit in this book, if your class is moving next to learn about the rise of the slave trade in Africa, this lesson works well as a transition. Introducing the slave trade can be difficult. This lesson makes the transition smooth. We hope it is helpful for you!

Preparation:

- Daily Question. Use overhead projector or write question on the board. (This is a student writing activity. Students are to write answers to daily questions in their notebooks upon arrival.)
- Overhead: Map of Africa that includes Portugal and India
- Make a copy to use in class of the letters from the King of Kongo to the King of Portugal asking for help in stopping the capture of the people of Kongo by Portuguese traders to sell as slaves.
http://dev.prenhall.com/divisions/hss/app/BW_TEST/Western_History/documents/Letters_from_the_Kings_of_Portugal_to_the_King_of_Kongo.htm
- Reproducible:
Portugal Finds a Short Cut to India

Daily Question: "What was the most popular export offered by the Kingdoms along the Gold Coast of Africa?" (Answer: gold)

Open Class

Say: "Things are about to change dramatically in Africa."

Activity: A New Route to India Is Discovered That Can Bypass the African Coastal Kingdoms of Songhay, Benin, and Others

- Handout: *Portugal Finds a Short Cut to India*
- Read and answer questions.

Activity: Map the Route

- Bring out your *Map of Africa*. Use the overhead to show the route Portuguese sailors traveled by water from Portugal, down the Atlantic Ocean, around the Cape of Good Hope, and up through the Indian Ocean to India.

Activity: Kingdom of the Kongo

- To finish this day's lesson, you might wish to choose the Kingdom of Kongo as your first example. (The modern-day country is spelled Congo.) The people of Kongo were intelligent, educated, creative, and gentle. Many people from Kongo, including nobles, were captured and sold as slaves.

- First, use the overhead projector and find the Forest Kingdom of the Kongo on a map of Africa.
- **Ask:** “What is a primary source? What is a secondary source?”
- Get student definitions. Direct a student to look up the definition in the dictionary, compare definitions, and modify the student definition as needed. Before you move on, be sure all students understand the definition of a primary source.
- Read the letters from the King of Kongo to the King of Portugal asking for help. They are powerful letters and clearly show the state of the Kongo at the time (1500s). We also encourage you to check your library for information about the Kingdom of Kongo and the growth of the slave trade in Africa.
- Ask your students to get a piece of paper.
- **Say:** “The King of Kongo has told of a major problem in his country. Please write down what you think the problem is, based on the letter I have just read to you.” (Give them a minute to write down their answer.)
- **Ask:** “What has the King of Kongo asked his friend, the King of Portugal, to do to help solve this problem? Please write down your answer.” (Give them a minute to write down their answer.)
- Ask for a volunteer to answer the first question. Discuss the answer.
- **Ask:** “What is going on in the Kingdom of Kongo?” (Get some answers. Answer: People are being kidnapped to sell into slavery.)
- **Ask:** “Aren’t there laws to stop this? Can’t the King of Kongo send his army to stop this? How about the United Nations? Can’t it help? How about us? Why won’t the United States help? This is terrible. People are being kidnapped and sold into slavery.” (Get some answers.)
- Keep throwing questions at them until someone says (and it may have to be you): “When is this happening? What year is it? Has America even been discovered yet? Are we a country yet? Is there a United Nations yet?”

Close Class: “Tomorrow, we’ll take a closer look at what is going on in Africa and why.”

Teacher note: Depending upon your grade level, this lesson may be all you use to teach about the slave trade and the Colonial Era. If so, rather than closing as stated above, you may wish to complete your lesson by saying something like this, prior to closing class:

Say: “European slavers captured millions of African people. They sold these people as slaves to plantation owners in the New World. Slaves were sold in North, South, and Central America. To be able to capture so many people, Europeans traders were able to convince some of the African tribes to help them. That meant that African tribes were at war with each other. Families were separated; villages were destroyed. Africans were chained and thrown into cramped dark spaces. Many people died on the trip. It was a horrible time. The last legal slave ship left Africa in the late 1800s.

Even after slavery was outlawed, Europeans still wanted Africa's riches. They sent armed soldiers to Africa. They sent administrators to rule the people. Just as we had to fight European control of what became the modern-day United States, the tribes in Africa had to fight European control to gain their independence.

In some parts of Africa, this fight is still going on. But for many people in Africa, independence has been achieved. Some countries in Africa are very modern. Some are more tribal. But for all of Africa, this is a new time, one that holds great promise for Africa's people."

Close class.

Teacher Note: It is a good idea to check/review all web links before you start a lesson. The Internet is always changing, and a website that worked fine a few months ago may have moved or ceased to exist in the interim.

Name:
Date:
Class:
Period:

Portugal Finds a Short Cut to India

At this time in history, in the 1400s, Portugal ruled the seas. The Portuguese were the best seafarers. Portuguese sea captains were capable and brave. They turned their boats into the unknown and sailed away in search of adventure.

At this same time in history, the king of Portugal had a really neat son. His name was Prince Henry. Prince Henry's nickname was "The Navigator." Prince Henry loved the sea. He loved adventure. More importantly, he loved Portugal. He wanted to see Portugal become the most powerful and wealthiest country in the world. He knew that one way to accomplish this goal was for Portugal to find a short cut to India.

The costs of traveling overland to India to trade for silk, gold, spices, and gems were high. The trip was long and dangerous. Prince Henry dreamed of finding a shortcut to India by sea.

He was fascinated by Africa, the huge continent to the immediate south of Portugal. It was such a vast place. He had been there during the wars with Morocco in 1415. He had a hunch that his wonderful sailors could find a way around Africa by sea. It had never been done. It might not even be possible, there might not be a river through or a waterway around Africa. Yet he had a hunch that Portugal's future was to the south.

Around 1434, under the able guidance of Prince Henry, several well-organized explorations left Portugal and sailed down the west coast of Africa in search of a short cut to India, where they knew they would find gold, gems, spices, and silk. Prince Henry went with his men on several trips. Each time, they pushed a bit further south, following the West African coastline.

It was a good hunch. Prince Henry was right—there was a way round Africa. Around 1488, Captain Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Ten years later, Vasco da Gama, probably the most famous of the many famous Portuguese explorers, rounded the Cape of Good Hope and continued on to India.

You can imagine the excitement! The Portuguese had found a shortcut to India. That discovery marked the beginning of the end of the powerful African kingdoms. The African kingdoms had built their wealth on trade; this meant they lost their trade exclusivity. The Portuguese no longer needed to stop and trade with them for gold, silks, gems, and spices. The Portuguese traders could simply sail directly to India.

Cities like Timbuktu felt the heat. When the Portuguese showed that it was easier to sail around the coast of Africa than travel through the desert, Timbuktu began to decline in influence. The city was leveled at the end of the 1500s by the war with Morocco.

Trade did not stop. Many things happened at about the same time in history: the Portuguese sailed around Africa and Columbus discovered America. Soon after, a source of cheap labor was added to the demand for gold and luxury goods. Interest in another commodity—slaves—rose rapidly. Slaves had always been traded, but never in such numbers.

Questions:

1. Who ruled the seas in the 1400s?
2. Who was Prince Henry the Navigator?
3. What was his dream?
4. Why did Portugal wish to find a shortcut to India?
5. What commodity rose in importance after the discovery of America?

