

Unit Two: Early African Kingdoms and Arabic Trade Routes, 7-16th centuries

Grade Level: Grades 6-12

National World History Standards:

Era Four: Standard 5A

The student understands state-building in . . . West Africa . . .

- Explain how the contrasting natural environments of West Africa defined agricultural production, and analyze the importance of the Niger River in promoting agriculture, commerce, and state-building.
- Explain how Ghana became West Africa's first large-scale empire.
- Assess the importance of labor specialization, regional commerce, trans-Saharan camel trade, and Islam in the development of states and cities in West Africa.

Standard 7A

The student understands major global trends from 300-1000CE.

- Trace major changes in the religious map of Eurasia and Africa between 300 and 1000 and account for the success of . . . Islam in making converts among peoples of differing ethnic and cultural traditions. (Analyze the influence of ideas)
- Describe maritime and overland trade routes linking regions of Afro-Eurasia and analyze the importance of international trade for African and Eurasian societies. (Draw evidence from historical maps)
- Explain the importance of Muslims and Muslim civilization in mediating long-distance commercial, cultural, intellectual, and food crop exchange across Eurasia and parts of Africa. (Analyze the influence of ideas)

Era Five: Standard 4

The student understands the growth of imperial states in West Africa . . .

- Analyze the importance of agriculture, gold production, and the trans-Saharan caravan trade in the growth of the Mali and Songhai empires.
- Explain how Islam expanded in West Africa and assess its importance in the political and cultural life of Mali and Songhai.

Standard 7

The student understands major global trends from 1000-1500 CE.

- Account for the continuing spread of Islam and explain the importance of Muslims and Muslim civilization in mediating long-distance commercial, cultural, and intellectual exchange.

New Jersey Social Studies Standards:

6.2.8.A.4.a Analyze the role of religion and other means rulers used to unify and centrally govern expanding territories and diverse populations.

6.1.8.B.4.a Explain how geography influenced the development of the political, economic and cultural centers of each empire as well as the empire's relationships with other parts of the world.

6.2.8.B.4.b Assess how maritime and overland trade route (African caravan) impacted urbanization, transportation, communication and the development of international trade centers.

6.2.8.B.4.d Explain why the Arabian Peninsula's physical features and location made it the epicenter of Afro-European trade and fostered the spread of Islam into Africa, Europe and Asia.

6.2.8.D.4.a Explain how contact between nomadic peoples and sedentary populations had both positive and negative political, economic and cultural consequences.

6.2.8.D.4.b Analyze how religion both unified and divided people.

6.2.8.D.4.c Analyze the role of religion and economics in shaping each empire's social hierarchy, and evaluate the impact these hierarchical structures had on the lives of various groups of people.

6.2.8.D.4.i Explain how and why Islam spread in Africa, the significance of Timbuktu to the development and spread of learning, and the impact Islam continues to have on African society.

Objectives:

1. Compare the location of the African Kingdoms to countries on a current African map.
2. Compare and contrast the three empires that developed in West Africa between the 5th and 16th centuries.
3. Identify the resources from Ghana, Mali and Songhai that were exchanged for goods carried by camel caravans of North African Arab traders.
4. Describe how ideas were spread and how Islam influenced the culture of the West African Kingdoms.
5. Identify reasons for the decline of each of the empires.

Lesson Length: three to five class periods

Materials:

Poster board or laptops for Power Point presentations

Assessment rubric

Access to computer lab or laptop computers

Outline maps--http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/pd/afr_asia_pol.pdf

Rand McNally Historical Atlas of the World or

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/gold/hg_d_gold_d1map.htm Trans-Saharan Gold Trade (7-14th century) map

Lesson Overview:

Teachers should familiarize themselves with the history of the African Kingdoms and peruse the suggested websites before beginning the lesson. Note: the ancient empire of Ghana was not geographically or ethnically related to the modern African country of Ghana. Use the introductory map work to clarify this point with students.

The African Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali and Songhai were destined to become significant places because of the resources within their regions and the outsiders who traveled to acquire these resources. It was only a matter of time before Arab traders came down from North Africa to trade salt for gold, kola nuts and slaves (salt mining used slave labor to mine the mineral). The major salt mines were located at Taudenni, 500 miles north of Timbuktu, with nothing but the Sahara Desert in between. With close access to the Senegal and Niger Rivers, the leaders of the African Kingdoms could ship salt, a commodity worth its weight in gold, to other parts of Africa. The salt trade created movement of people, information and ideas across the Sahara. As Arab traders interacted with West African leaders and merchants, they spread their Islamic religious beliefs, their business acumen, and their love of literacy. The Saharan trade routes linked

the African empires to the European world. The Ghana, Mali and Songhai kingdoms eventually established universities and other havens of learning that equaled and, in some cases, surpassed those found in Europe and the Middle East. Each kingdom reached a zenith and then fell into decline. Students will research the rise and decline of each of the three kingdoms.

Introduction/Anticipatory Set:

Look at the physical map of Africa (use the map on page 9 or one of the on-line maps or Rand McNally maps suggested in Unit One), pointing out especially the Sahara Desert and the Niger River. Between the 7th and 14th centuries, Arab traders crossed the Sahara Desert with camel caravans, first from North Africa (today's Morocco), then from the area of Mecca and Medina (today's Saudi Arabia) and finally from Egypt. What would motivate someone spend many days in unremitting dry heat to cross a big desert? Gold! Why did the Africans trade their gold? They needed salt which is found farther north in northwestern Africa.

Access the website or distribute copies of the historical maps of Africa found at http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/gold/hg_d_gold_d1map.htm. Students should also have available maps of modern Africa to compare locations of the kingdoms to modern countries. We are going to look at some early historical maps of Africa. Then we'll look at the trade routes from the 7th to 14th century that crisscrossed the Sahara Desert from the Middle East to North Africa and into West Africa. Finally, we will be look at maps that show the three major African Kingdoms—Ghana, Mali, and Songhai.

Compare the historical maps with the modern African map. In what modern African countries would the Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai be located? What landform separates the kingdoms from North Africa? How was this area traversed? Which kingdom occupied the largest area? Why do you think the kingdoms overlap each other? Why is each kingdom successively larger than its predecessor? See the maps of the Arab Trade Route and the three African kingdoms on pages 17 and 18 or use the maps at the website cited above.

Activities:

1. Conduct research. Divide the class into four groups. Using the jigsaw strategy of inquiry, assign group one to research the Niger River and Timbuktu's past and present; group two to research the Ghana Empire; group three to research the Mali Empire; group four to research the Songhai Empire. Each group will display its research on poster board or in a power point presentation that will be used to inform the rest of the class of their findings.

Each group should include in their display:

1. a map of their area (a blank outline map of Africa at the website listed in "Materials" can be given to each group);
2. the time frame of their empire;
3. the resources used for trading purposes;
4. the goods from North Africa that were exchanged for their resources;
5. the influential rulers and their legacy;
6. the influences on the kingdom from outside contact with traders;
7. how these influences were (or were not) assimilated into the culture;
8. the changes these ideas brought;
9. examples of art, music and artifacts from the period; and
10. the reasons for the decline of the empire.

Students should end their presentation with a reflection piece explaining what they learned from their research. Students will present their group projects and teach classmates about their area of research. The ten elements of research should be covered in each presentation.

2. Compare and contrast kingdoms. While each group is presenting, the other students will take notes documenting similarities and differences among the kingdoms. The following websites, as well as others students may find, will assist in their research.

http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=508 (Very extensive "Trek to Timbuktu" Lesson Plans)

<http://www.historychannel.com/classroom/unesco/timbuktu.html> (UNESCO --world's most endangered sites: Timbuktu, Mali—includes history, maps, timeline, vocabulary information)

<http://www.pbs.org/wonders/index.html> ("The Road to Timbuktu"--Public Broadcasting Series by Harvard professor, Henry Lewis Gates, Jr.)

<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/splash.htm> (Timeline of Art History, maps, three kingdoms information)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/> (British Broadcasting Company historical radio program with written summaries and audio clips about the three kingdoms)

<http://members.tripod.com/worldupdates/islamintheworld/id26.htm> ("Spread of Islam in West Africa," article by Professor Rahmen I. Doi includes accounts of the three kingdoms)

<http://library.thinkquest.org/13406/sh/> ("SaharanTrade: A Link between Europe and Africa," description of kingdoms and trade route maps)

"Civilizations in Africa" by University of Wisconsin professor, Richard Hooker

<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/CIVAFRCA/GHANA.HTM>

<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/CIVAFRCA/MALI.HTM>

<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/CIVAFRCA/SONGHAY.HTM>

<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/CIVAFRCA/ISLAM.HTM>

http://www.ghana.co.uk/history/history/ancient_ghana.htm

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghana_Empire

Africa: Arts & Architecture Links:

http://www.africa.upenn.edu/About_African/ww_art.html (University of PA site)

<http://www.aodl.org/curtin.php> (Phil Curtin collection of photos, 1969)

Closure:

When the presentations are finished, the class will develop a chart listing the similarities and differences they noted among the kingdoms. Teacher should encourage discussion about the importance of the three kingdoms and their effect on the culture of West Africa.

The Saharan trade extended from the sub-Saharan West African kingdoms across the Sahara Desert to Europe and linked the Ghana, Mali and Songhai Empires to the European world and the middle east. The **Empire of Ghana** (part of present day Senegal, Mali and Mauritania) possessed a large amount of gold but lacked adequate salt for its population. The desert regions of present day Morocco and Algeria, however, contained large salt resources. The Arab desert merchants from northern Africa began a gold-salt trade with the tribes or clans in this region of West Africa, which helped to create the wealth for the Empire of Ghana (300-1200). By 1068, Ghana was the largest and wealthiest empire in West Africa.

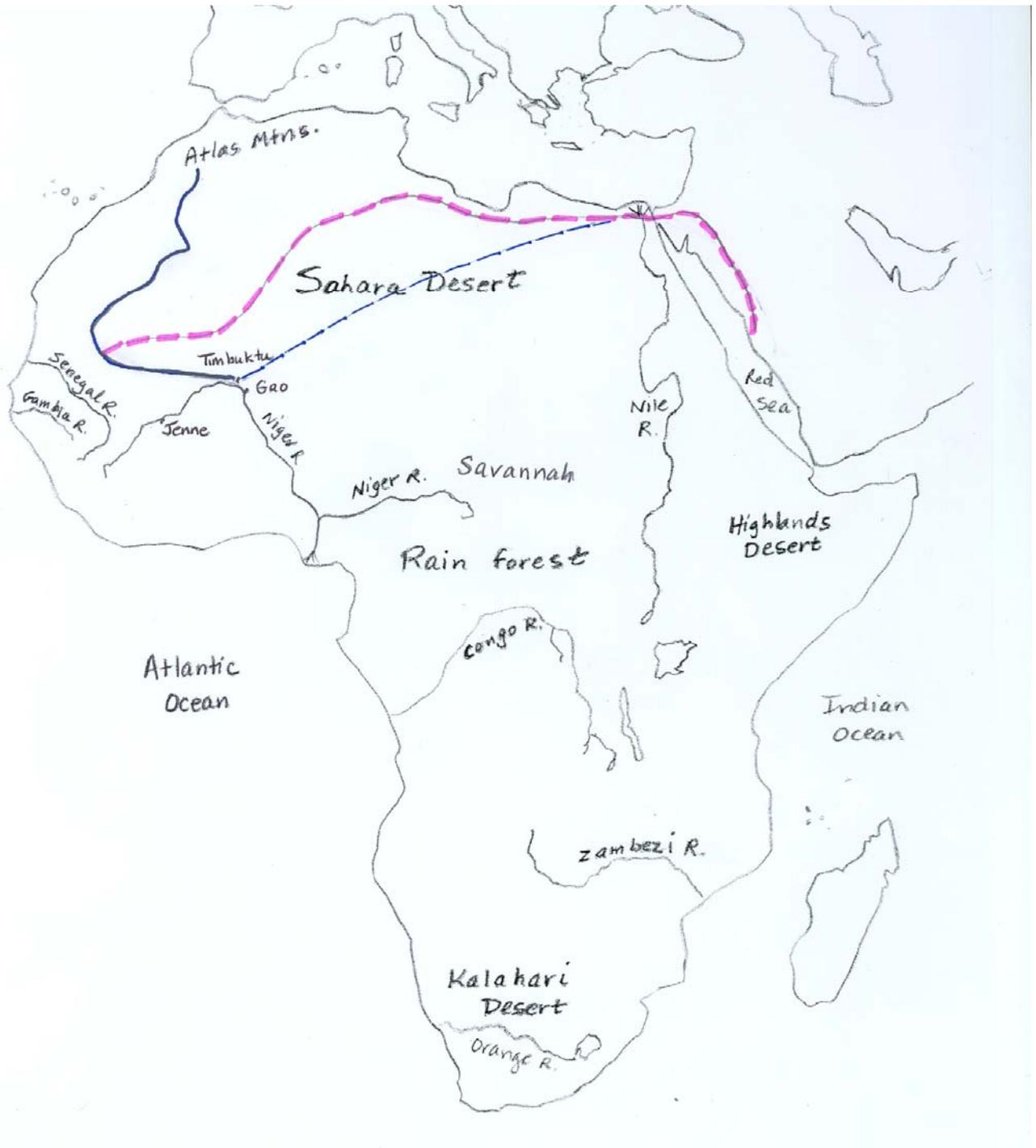
Mali was founded in 1235 by a prince from the Mandinka (Mande) tribe, who was heir to the Ghana Empire and the **Mali Empire** became the largest and wealthiest empire in West Africa for the next two centuries (1235-1430). It included a larger area than the Ghana Empire, extending north and south along

the Niger River in Mali. Timbuktu (now spelled Tombouctou in current-day Mali), which had been founded around 1100 as a seasonal camp for nomads, was incorporated into the Mali Empire probably in the late 13th century. The most famous ruler of the Mali Empire, Mansa Musa, made a pilgrimage to Mecca, stopping also in Egypt in 1324-35, which drew the attention of the Islamic and European worlds because of his generosity with gold. The image of Mansa Musa bearing nuggets of gold was commemorated in maps of the African continent (See the image on page 19 or on the website). He built a tower for the Great Mosque (Djingereyber) and a royal residence in Timbuktu, as the city became the focus of the gold-salt trade and a major, cultural, intellectual and spiritual capital for the spread of Islam. Djenné (today Jenne, Mali), located in the inland delta of the Niger River, began as a trading post for salt, gold, slaves and ivory. A monumental mosque was constructed in Djenné around 1320 (See the image of the Djenné mosque on page 19 or on the website).

After the death of Mansa Musa, the power of Mali began to decline. In 1430, Tuareg Berbers in the north seized much of Mali's territory, including Timbuktu. Ten years later, the Mossi kingdom seized much of Mali's southern territories and then the kingdom of Gao gave rise to the **Songhai Empire**. The Songhai Empire and Timbuktu attained the height of their commercial and intellectual development during the period 1493-1591. The city's scholars at the prestigious Koranic university attracted students from a wide area. In 1591, Morocco conquered the city after destroying Songhai's hold on the region. The city began to decline in influence when the Portuguese showed that it was easier to sail around the coast of Africa than to travel through the deserts. New European trading stations were established in the West African coast. Timbuktu was repeatedly attacked by Moroccan and West African groups until 1893 when the French captured the city. In 1960, the area became part of the newly independent Republic of Mali. See the map on page 20 for the regions of Africa that are predominantly Muslim today (as of 1970).

Assessment:

The teacher will develop a rubric that incorporates the ten elements of research to assess a grade for the presentations. An online quiz covering the three kingdoms can be found at <http://www.historychannel.com/classroom/unesco/timbuktu/quiz.cgi>



Arabic Trade Routes

Earliest—solid blue—from northwestern Africa

Broken blue—from Egypt

Pink—from Saudi Arabia

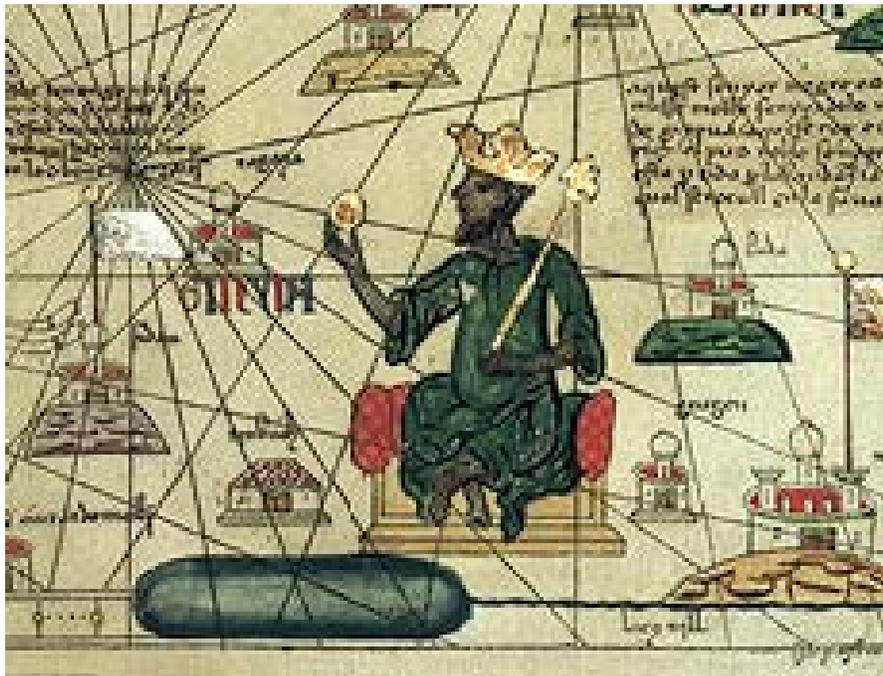


Map of the Ghana, Mali, and Songhai Empires

Ghana Empire (300-1200) striped pink

Mali Empire (1235-1430) dotted blue

Songhai Empire (1430-1591) green



This is a facsimile of a map drawn in Spain and dated to 1375, showing the King of Mali holding a gold nugget.

From the British Library

The original is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, in Paris.



The Djenné Mosque, c.1320, in Jenne, Mali (reconstructed on the same site in 1907) is a UNESCO World Heritage Site
Today Djenné (Jenne) is an agricultural trade center for fish, coffee and kola nuts.
The mosque is the site of a trade market.