

Grade 4 History & Geography

Unit 5: Early and Medieval African Kingdoms

8 lessons and a unit quiz. Use this pack with the **Early and Medieval African Kingdoms Student Reader** (print it, or download it once from the course) to teach the whole unit without the internet.

What is in this pack

- A lesson plan for each chapter: the Big Question, words to know, which pages to read, questions to talk over and the activity pages.
- The unit quiz, ready to print.
- Answers for the teacher at the back: every discussion question and the quiz key.

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Lesson schedule

Two or three lessons a week, about 30 minutes each. Tick each one off as you go.

	Lesson	Reader pages	Activity pages
☐	Chapter 1: The Geographic Setting	PDF pages 49–60	AP 1.1, AP 1.4, AP 1.2, AP 1.3
☐	Chapter 2: The Kingdoms of Kush and Aksum	PDF pages 61–68	AP 2.1, AP 2.2, AP 1.4
☐	Chapter 3: Trans-Saharan Trade	PDF pages 69–74	AP 1.4
☐	Chapter 4: Ghana, Land of Gold	PDF pages 75–80	AP 1.4, AP 4.1, AP 4.2, AP 4.3
☐	Chapter 5: Mali and Sundiata Keita	PDF pages 81–86	AP 1.1, AP 1.4, AP 5.1
☐	Chapter 6: Mansa Musa and His Pilgrimage	PDF pages 87–92	AP 1.4
☐	Chapter 7: Songhai and Askia Muhammad	PDF pages 93–102	AP 1.4, AP 7.1
☐	Chapter 8: The Travels of Ibn Battuta	PDF pages 103–112	AP 8.1, AP 8.2
☐	Unit quiz	—	—

Page numbers are the PDF page numbers of the Student Reader file, so they match what your PDF reader shows.

Chapter 1: The Geographic Setting

THE BIG QUESTION

How might the geography of Africa have influenced the development of early African kingdoms and empires?

Words to know

- **cape** — a point of land extending into water *The cape jutted out into the Atlantic Ocean.*
- **oasis** — an area in the desert where there are water and plants *Traders crossing the desert stopped at an oasis for food and water.*
- **ravine** — a small, deep, narrow valley *It was difficult to travel from one side of the ravine to the other.*
- **nomadic** — moving around, often in search of food; not settled in one place *Nomadic people often herd animals and gather plants for food.*
- **sorghum** — a type of grain fed to animals; also used for making a type of porridge for people to eat *The family used sorghum to make a porridge similar to oatmeal.*
- **kingdom** — a country ruled by a king or queen *More than one kingdom emerged on the eastern side of Africa.*
- **empire** — a group of countries controlled by a single authority *The powerful empire conquered the neighboring country.*

Read

Read Chapter 1 in the Student Reader: PDF pages 49–60. Look at the pictures and maps together.

Talk it over

1. Is Africa bigger from north to south or from east to west?
2. What are some of the bodies of water that surround Africa?
3. Why was the name “Cape of Storms” changed to “Cape of Good Hope”?
4. What is the weather like along the northwest coast of Africa?
5. How does the Sahara compare with the other deserts of the world?
6. What is the climate of the Sahara?
7. What is the Sahel, and where is it located in Africa?
8. What type of climate is found in the Sahel?
9. What is the savanna, and where is it located in Africa?
10. What is the climate in the savanna?
11. Why are many different kinds of crops able to grow in the savanna?
12. How do nomadic people survive in the savanna?

13. Where are Africa's rainforests located?
14. What is the climate in the tropical rainforests?
15. What desert is located in southern Africa, and what is its climate?
16. Which river flows through the rainforest?
17. What is Africa's most famous river, and why was it so important to early civilization?
18. How did growing a surplus of food impact the ancient Egyptians?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Check for understanding

- Answer the Big Question in a sentence or two: How might the geography of Africa have influenced the development of early African kingdoms and empires?
- Use one of today's words in a sentence of your own.

Activity pages

- Activity Page 1.1: World Map — Teacher Guide PDF page 164
- Activity Page 1.4: Team Map Challenge: Countries of Africa — Teacher Guide PDF page 168
- Activity Page 1.2: The Five Pillars of Islam — Teacher Guide PDF pages 165-166
- Activity Page 1.3: Geography of Africa — Teacher Guide PDF page 167

Chapter 2: The Kingdoms of Kush and Aksum

THE BIG QUESTION

How did trade contribute to the rise of the Kush and Aksum kingdoms?

Read

Read Chapter 2 in the Student Reader: PDF pages 61–68. Look at the pictures and maps together.

Talk it over

1. What natural resources did the Kush kingdom have?
2. Whom did the Kushites trade with? What did they trade?
3. Starting in 1500 BCE, how did the struggle between the Egyptians and the Kush change over time?
4. Why might Kush be called the “Land of Wonders”?
5. What caused the fall of Kush?
6. What made Aksum an important kingdom?
7. What caused the fall of Aksum?
8. How are the geographies of Kush and Aksum similar or different from one another?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Check for understanding

- Answer the Big Question in a sentence or two: How did trade contribute to the rise of the Kush and Aksum kingdoms?

Activity pages

- Activity Page 2.1: The Kingdoms of Kush and Aksum — Teacher Guide PDF pages 169–170
- Activity Page 2.2: Eyewitness to History: Egypt, Kush, and Aksum — Teacher Guide PDF page 171
- Activity Page 1.4: Team Map Challenge: Countries of Africa — Teacher Guide PDF page 168

Chapter 3: Trans-Sahara Trade

THE BIG QUESTION

How did trade help spread ideas?

Words to know

- **caravan** — a group of travelers journeying together, often across a desert *While crossing the desert, the caravan stopped at an oasis for water and food.*
- **mosque** — a place of worship for Muslims *The Muslim travelers stopped to pray at the mosque before continuing on their way.*
- **quarry** — a place where stone or minerals are taken from the earth *The salt quarry was located in the middle of the Sahara.*
- **splay** — to spread out *The camel's toes splay, making it easier to walk in the hot sands of the desert without sinking.*
- **cowrie shell** — a type of shell found in the Indian and Pacific oceans that was used as money in some cultures *The trader paid for the slabs of salt with cowrie shells.*
- **kola nut** — the fruit of the kola tree found in tropical regions of Africa *The trader bought kola nuts in the market of Saleh.*

Read

Read Chapter 3 in the Student Reader: PDF pages 69–74. Look at the pictures and maps together.

Talk it over

1. How was trade carried on in medieval Africa?
2. What goods were being transported by the camels in this caravan and why?
3. What physical characteristics of camels made them particularly well-suited for long trips across the hot desert?
4. What were some of the challenges that traders crossing the Sahara might have faced?
5. What did traders get from oases? What did they get from western Africa?
6. Why were traders willing to risk crossing the dangerous Sahara?
7. What did traders carry and trade that could not be seen, felt, smelled, or tasted?
8. What effect do you think the exchange of ideas and culture had?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Check for understanding

- Answer the Big Question in a sentence or two: How did trade help spread ideas?
- Use one of today's words in a sentence of your own.

Activity pages

- Activity Page 1.4: Team Map Challenge: Countries of Africa — Teacher Guide PDF page 168

Chapter 4: Ghana, Land of Gold

THE BIG QUESTION

Why was salt almost as valuable as gold during this time?

Words to know

- **tax** — money that people are required to pay to support the workings of the government *Salt traders from the desert paid a tax to pass through the kingdom of Ghana.*
- **quill** — the central part of a bird's feather, often used as a tool for writing *The scribe used the quill to write a letter for the king.*

Read

Read Chapter 4 in the Student Reader: PDF pages 75–80. Look at the pictures and maps together.

Talk it over

1. What was Ghana's nickname? How did it get this name?
2. How specifically did the kings and kingdom of Ghana become so wealthy?
3. How valuable was salt in western Africa?
4. Why do you think salt was considered so precious during the time of the kingdom of Ghana?
5. What natural resources were found in the kingdom of Ghana?
6. What new religion was brought to Ghana, and how did it spread?
7. Why did Muslims from the north invade Ghana?
8. Why did the kingdom of Ghana never regain its former power?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Check for understanding

- Answer the Big Question in a sentence or two: Why was salt almost as valuable as gold during this time?
- Use one of today's words in a sentence of your own.

Activity pages

- Activity Page 1.4: Team Map Challenge: Countries of Africa — Teacher Guide PDF page 168
- Activity Page 4.1: Islamic Art and Architecture — Teacher Guide PDF pages 172–173
- Activity Page 4.2: Timeline of the Kingdom of Ghana — Teacher Guide PDF page 174
- Activity Page 4.3: Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 1–4 — Teacher Guide PDF pages 175–176

Chapter 5: Mali and Sundiata Keita

THE BIG QUESTION

Why might legendary stories have sprung up around Sundiata?

Words to know

- **Mandinka** — the group of people living in West Africa who ruled the Mali Empire *The Mandinka people built a powerful empire on the salt and gold trade.*
- **legend** — an old, well-known story that is usually more entertaining than truthful *The legend about Sundiata Keita was well-known among the people of the empire of Mali.*
- **mansa** — the title used by kings in the Mali Empire *Mansa Musa made a pilgrimage to Mecca.*
- **university** — a school where advanced learning is taught *Many students go to a university after they finish high school.*

Read

Read Chapter 5 in the Student Reader: PDF pages 81–86. Look at the pictures and maps together.

Talk it over

1. Who was Sumanguru?
2. The text describes Sundiata as having “a strong will.” What evidence from the text shows that this was the case?
3. Why did the Mandinka look to Sundiata to rescue them from Sumanguru?
4. How reliable do you think the legends about Sundiata are?
5. Why is it significant that so many legends about Sundiata are still told today, even if they are not factual?
6. How did Mali grow to become the most powerful kingdom in West Africa?
7. What were some of Sundiata’s greatest accomplishments off the battlefield?
8. How and why did Islam become the most powerful religion in the Mali Empire?
9. For what aspects did Timbuktu become most famous?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Check for understanding

- Answer the Big Question in a sentence or two: Why might legendary stories have sprung up around Sundiata?
- Use one of today’s words in a sentence of your own.

Activity pages

- Activity Page 1.1: World Map — Teacher Guide PDF page 164

- Activity Page 1.4: Team Map Challenge: Countries of Africa — Teacher Guide PDF page 168
- Activity Page 5.1: Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 4-5 — Teacher Guide PDF page 177

Chapter 6: Mansa Musa and His Pilgrimage

THE BIG QUESTION

What was so extraordinary about Mansa Musa's pilgrimage to Mecca?

Words to know

- **pilgrimage** — a journey undertaken for a religious purpose *Many Muslims go on a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca.*
- **lavish** — rich or expensive *The king served a lavish feast with dozens of different dishes.*
- **captive** — a prisoner *During the battle, the soldier was taken as a captive by the enemy.*

Read

Read Chapter 6 in the Student Reader: PDF pages 87–92. Look at the pictures and maps together.

Talk it over

1. What were some important ways Mali benefited from Mansa Musa's rule?
2. Why did Mansa Musa make a pilgrimage to Mecca?
3. What impact did Mansa Musa's generosity have on the city of Cairo in Egypt?
4. The first page of this chapter said that Mansa Musa was very famous, even outside of Mali. How and why do you think tales of Mansa Musa spread from Africa and the Middle East to Europe and Asia?
5. What were some ways Mali benefited from Mansa Musa's rule?
6. How did the Mali Empire weaken during Mansa Maghan's reign?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Check for understanding

- Answer the Big Question in a sentence or two: What was so extraordinary about Mansa Musa's pilgrimage to Mecca?
- Use one of today's words in a sentence of your own.

Activity pages

- Activity Page 1.4: Team Map Challenge: Countries of Africa — Teacher Guide PDF page 168

Chapter 7: Songhai and Askia Muhammad

THE BIG QUESTION

As Askia Muhammad expanded his empire, how did Islam grow within it?

Words to know

- **dynasty** — a series of rulers who are all from the same family *The Sonni dynasty ruled Mali for more than 150 years.*
- **sack** — to destroy and steal things in a city or building, usually with an army *When an army captures a city, the soldiers often sack it as well.*
- **siege** — a battle strategy in which enemy soldiers surround a building or place so that those under attack cannot receive supplies *If a city has enough food and water, a siege can last for years.*
- **queen mother** — the mother of the current king; often seen as a person with power in African kingdoms *The queen mother advised the king on how to govern.*
- **social system** — how a society is organized in terms of who is given power and respect *The king of Songhai was at the top of the empire's social system.*
- **devout** — showing deep religious feelings *Mansa Musa was a devout Muslim who traveled on a pilgrimage to Mecca.*
- **sacred** — related to religion; holy *The city of Mecca is sacred to Muslims.*

Read

Read Chapter 7 in the Student Reader: PDF pages 93–102. Look at the pictures and maps together.

Talk it over

1. Even though Ali Kolon was a prisoner of Mali, Mansa Musa gave him some unusual responsibilities and freedoms. What did Mansa Musa ask Ali Kolon to do during his captivity as a prisoner?
2. How did Ali Kolon finally manage to escape?
3. What happened to Ali Kolon after he escaped?
4. What happened to the city of Timbuktu that was part of the Mali Empire?
5. Why was Timbuktu such a prize for the Songhai Empire?
6. How was the capture of Jenne different from the capture of Timbuktu?
7. Why do you think Sonni Ali Ber decided to marry the queen mother? How do you think this decision impacted his rule in Jenne?
8. What was the social system of the Songhai Empire like?
9. Why do you think Askia Muhammad started a new dynasty in Songhai rather than continue the Sonni dynasty?

10. How did Askia Muhammad spread Islam throughout the Songhai Empire?
11. What factors led to the downfall of the Songhai Empire?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Check for understanding

- Answer the Big Question in a sentence or two: As Askia Muhammad expanded his empire, how did Islam grow within it?
- Use one of today's words in a sentence of your own.

Activity pages

- Activity Page 1.4: Team Map Challenge: Countries of Africa — Teacher Guide PDF page 168
- Activity Page 7.1: Puzzling Out the Songhai Empire — Teacher Guide PDF page 178

Chapter 8: The Travels of Ibn Battuta

THE BIG QUESTION

Why were the travels of Ibn Battuta so extraordinary for the time in which he lived?

Words to know

- **steppe** — grassland plain *The steppe in central Asia is very flat.*
- **sultan** — a king or ruler of a Muslim country *The sultan decided which laws to make.*
- **tunic** — a long shirt that extends below the hips, often to the knees *The sultan wore a ceremonial tunic decorated with beads and gold thread.*
- **crater** — a large hole in the ground made by an explosion or something falling out of the sky *The crater was created by an asteroid that struck Earth.*

Read

Read Chapter 8 in the Student Reader: PDF pages 103–112. Look at the pictures and maps together.

Talk it over

1. What are some of the places that Ibn Battuta traveled to?
2. Do you think Ibn Battuta would have been interested in traveling to as many parts of the world as he did if he had not made his pilgrimage to Mecca?
3. What kind of work did Ibn Battuta do during his travels?
4. How did Ibn Battuta's stay in Mecca help him when he started his many years of travels?
5. Why is Ibn Battuta's book, *Rihlah*, such a valuable source of information about the Muslim world in the late 1300s?
6. Why were world travelers so rare in Ibn Battuta's time?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Check for understanding

- Answer the Big Question in a sentence or two: Why were the travels of Ibn Battuta so extraordinary for the time in which he lived?
- Use one of today's words in a sentence of your own.

Activity pages

- Activity Page 8.1: The Travels of Ibn Battuta — Teacher Guide PDF page 179
- Activity Page 8.2: Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 5–8 — Teacher Guide PDF page 180

UNIT QUIZ

Early and Medieval African Kingdoms

Name: _____ Date: _____

Circle the letter of the best answer.

1. Which of the following best describes the size of Africa?
 - a) Africa is smaller than the United States
 - b) Europe, the United States, China, and India could all fit inside Africa.
 - c) All of North America and Asia could fit inside Africa.
 - d) Africa is larger than Asia.
2. Which ocean borders Africa on the east?
 - a) Pacific
 - b) Indian
 - c) Southern
 - d) Mediterranean
3. Which of the following statements is not true about the Sahara?
 - a) The Sahara is nothing but sand.
 - b) The Sahara is the largest desert on Earth.
 - c) The Sahara experiences large changes in temperature.
 - d) There are lots of oases in the Sahara.
4. What is the Sahel?
 - a) a desert to the south of the Sahara
 - b) a semi-dry rolling plain south of the Sahara
 - c) the Arabic word for desert
 - d) a rainforest in central Africa
5. Which are important rivers in Africa?
 - a) Nile, Amazon, Congo
 - b) Yellow, Niger, Nile
 - c) Nile, Congo, Niger
 - d) Victoria, Niger, Congo
6. What contributed the most to Aksum's power?
 - a) war
 - b) its many oases
 - c) trade
 - d) slaves
7. In what way was salt used in northern Africa?
 - a) as a building material
 - b) to flavor and preserve food
 - c) as a medicine
 - d) all of the above

- 8.** Which qualities do not help camels survive in the desert?
- a) They hiss and spit.
 - b) They have broad, splayed feet.
 - c) They store fat in their humps.
 - d) They have a double row of eyelashes.
- 9.** What did Muslim scholars call Ghana?
- a) King Tunka's land
 - b) Kumbi-Saleh
 - c) Land of Gold
 - d) Land of Salt
- 10.** How was Ghana's location important for its success?
- a) It was located on the Mediterranean Sea.
 - b) It was located in the middle of many trade routes.
 - c) It was located where the Nile and Congo rivers meet.
 - d) It was surrounded by mountains and protected from its neighbors.
- 11.** Why was salt so valuable?
- a) It kept food from spoiling.
 - b) It was a good fertilizer for crops.
 - c) It was used in gold mining.
 - d) all of the above
- 12.** Why didn't Sumanguru kill young Sundiata?
- a) Sumanguru thought Sundiata was weak.
 - b) Sumanguru couldn't find Sundiata.
 - c) Sumanguru was afraid of Sundiata.
 - d) Sumanguru could not recognize Sundiata.
- 13.** For what was Timbuktu not famous?
- a) its universities
 - b) its great army
 - c) its mosques
 - d) its libraries
- 14.** Why did Mansa Musa make a pilgrimage to Mecca?
- a) His family lived there.
 - b) As a Muslim, he was required to.
 - c) He was invited to visit Mecca.
 - d) He was forced to leave Mali by the new king.
- 15.** Why is Mansa Musa remembered in African history?
- a) because Mansa Musa defeated the kingdoms of Kush and Askum
 - b) because Mansa Musa traveled widely throughout Africa and Asia
 - c) because Mansa Musa's reign in Mali was so long and successful
 - d) because Mansa Musa was the first Islamic king in Africa

16. What happened in the years after Mansa Musa's death?

- a) Mali became the strongest empire in Africa.
- b) Mali had a civil war.
- c) Mali was taken over by the Songhai Empire.
- d) There was an earthquake, and Mali was destroyed.

17. In what important way was Askia Muhammad different from Sonni Ali Ber and other Sonni kings?

- a) He was a devout Muslim.
- b) He believed in democracy.
- c) He was fierce and brave.
- d) He came from a different country.

18. Which place did Ibn Battuta not visit?

- a) Arabia
- b) China
- c) India
- d) England

19. What did Ibn Batutta call his book?

- a) Koran
- b) Rihlah
- c) Africa
- d) autobiography

Answers

Chapter 1: The Geographic Setting

1. **Is Africa bigger from north to south or from east to west?**

Africa is bigger from north to south. The text says it is about 5,000 miles long and about 4,600 miles wide at its widest part.

2. **What are some of the bodies of water that surround Africa?**

Several bodies of water surround Africa, including the Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, and Red Sea.

3. **Why was the name “Cape of Storms” changed to “Cape of Good Hope”?**

The name was changed to make the location sound more peaceful.

4. **What is the weather like along the northwest coast of Africa?**

Along the northwest coast of Africa, the summers are hot and dry, and the winters are warm and rainy.

5. **How does the Sahara compare with the other deserts of the world?**

The Sahara is the world’s largest and hottest desert.

6. **What is the climate of the Sahara?**

The Sahara has a very dry climate and rarely gets any rain. The temperatures can reach as high as 120°F during the day and then drop as low as 32°F at night.

7. **What is the Sahel, and where is it located in Africa?**

The Sahel is a large plain located in the northern part of the continent that stretches east to west from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean.

8. **What type of climate is found in the Sahel?**

It is described as semi-dry or partially dry. There is some rain but usually only in the rainy season. So only plants and grasses that do not need much rain grow there.

9. **What is the savanna, and where is it located in Africa?**

The savanna is a large grassy region in Africa that extends from the Atlantic Ocean into present-day Ethiopia. The area has some trees and is the home to different animals.

10. **What is the climate in the savanna?**

The savanna has a wet season and a dry season. It rains constantly during the wet season but is very hot and very dry during the dry season.

11. **Why are many different kinds of crops able to grow in the savanna?**

There is plenty of rain in the savanna.

12. **How do nomadic people survive in the savanna?**

Nomadic people raise herds of animals such as sheep, goats, and cattle on the savanna.

13. **Where are Africa’s rainforests located?**

Africa’s rainforests are located in the central part of the continent.

14. What is the climate in the tropical rainforests?

The climate of the tropical rainforest is the same all year; the temperature averages between 70°F and 80°F; it receives up to four hundred inches of rain each year and is very humid.

15. What desert is located in southern Africa, and what is its climate?

The Kalahari Desert, which is very hot and very dry, is located in southern Africa.

16. Which river flows through the rainforest?

The Congo River flows through the rainforest.

17. What is Africa's most famous river, and why was it so important to early civilization?

Africa's most famous river is the Nile River. In ancient times, its banks flooded once a year, leaving fertile soil necessary for early Egyptians to farm.

18. How did growing a surplus of food impact the ancient Egyptians?

Growing a surplus of food meant that not everyone had to be a farmer. Instead, people began to specialize in different trades and professions.

Chapter 2: The Kingdoms of Kush and Aksum

1. What natural resources did the Kush kingdom have?

The Kush kingdom had minerals, including iron.

2. Whom did the Kushites trade with? What did they trade?

The Kushites traded with the ancient Egyptians and with people from Central Africa. They traded items they made with iron and gold in exchange for food, ebony, and ivory.

3. Starting in 1500 BCE, how did the struggle between the Egyptians and the Kush change over time?

Beginning in 1500 BCE, the Egyptians became stronger and stronger. The Kush seemed to be absorbed by Egyptian civilization until around 730 BCE, when the Egyptian civilization grew weak. Kush fought the Egyptians and seized control for about 150 years. The ancient Egyptians ultimately reconquered the Kush, leading the Kush to move further south along the Nile.

4. Why might Kush be called the "Land of Wonders"?

Kush had many impressive sights, including great pyramids that were steeper than those built in Egypt. According to Herodotus, the pyramids looked like they were covered in gold when they shone in the sun.

5. What caused the fall of Kush?

Kush was attacked by its neighbor, Aksum, and destroyed.

6. What made Aksum an important kingdom?

Because Aksum had access to the Red Sea, it could encourage trade by sea and increase trade with northern Africa and the Sahara. With its widespread trade, Aksum became the strongest power in eastern Africa.

7. What caused the fall of Aksum?

Muslims gained control of much of the land along the shores of the Red Sea and took

over many of the trade routes. Eventually, the Muslims took over the seaport of Adulis on the Red Sea, leading to the fall of Aksum.

8. **How are the geographies of Kush and Aksum similar or different from one another?**

Aksum was located on the coast of the Red Sea, while Kush was located along the Nile River. Both used trade routes that relied on water rather than land.

Chapter 3: Trans-Sahara Trade

1. **How was trade carried on in medieval Africa?**

Caravans crisscrossed the vast Sahara, carrying goods to and from west African kingdoms and the northern coast of the continent.

2. **What goods were being transported by the camels in this caravan and why?**

The caravan was carrying salt from salt quarries. The salt was very valuable and used for many things, including building mosques.

3. **What physical characteristics of camels made them particularly well-suited for long trips across the hot desert?**

Camels had splayed feet that enabled them to walk on the hot sands without sinking. Their long eyelashes prevented sand from getting in their eyes, while their large humps stored fat that allowed the camels to travel long distances without eating. They could also go days without any water.

4. **What were some of the challenges that traders crossing the Sahara might have faced?**

Traveling across the desert was very dangerous. Traders could have gotten caught in sandstorms or lost in the desert.

5. **What did traders get from oases? What did they get from western Africa?**

Traders got water, dates, and figs from oases. They got gold, enslaved workers, kola nuts, shea butter, leather, ivory, and cloth from western Africa.

6. **Why were traders willing to risk crossing the dangerous Sahara?**

Even though the trip across the Sahara was dangerous, the traders could become very wealthy from trading the goods they gathered.

7. **What did traders carry and trade that could not be seen, felt, smelled, or tasted?**

The traders carried ideas, culture, poetry, music, art, and religion. They spread these things with them as they traveled from place to place carrying actual goods.

8. **What effect do you think the exchange of ideas and culture had?**

Student responses will vary. Students should note that the exchange of ideas and culture led to a number of positive effects, including increased understanding of different peoples and places. Cultural exchange also led to changing ways of life for many people.

Chapter 4: Ghana, Land of Gold

1. **What was Ghana's nickname? How did it get this name?**

Ghana was called the "Land of Gold" because it controlled the gold trade from the gold

mines to the south. By taking advantage of its location on the trade route between salt traders and gold traders, Ghana became incredibly wealthy.

2. **How specifically did the kings and kingdom of Ghana become so wealthy?**

Ghana became wealthy from taxes collected from merchants passing through the kingdom. The king also kept any gold nuggets that were found in the mines; the traders were permitted to keep only the gold dust.

3. **How valuable was salt in western Africa?**

Salt was as valuable as gold.

4. **Why do you think salt was considered so precious during the time of the kingdom of Ghana?**

Student responses will vary. Students may answer that salt is vital for various functions of the body, including staying properly hydrated. They may also note that salt was used to preserve and flavor food.

5. **What natural resources were found in the kingdom of Ghana?**

Gold and iron ore were found in the kingdom of Ghana.

6. **What new religion was brought to Ghana, and how did it spread?**

Muslim traders began to share their religion with the people living in Ghana. Some of the Ghanaians converted to Islam as a result.

7. **Why did Muslims from the north invade Ghana?**

They wanted to control Ghana's gold trade.

8. **Why did the kingdom of Ghana never regain its former power?**

The supply of gold from the south ran low, and trade routes were no longer under its control. Ghana was conquered by Sundiata Keita.

Chapter 5: Mali and Sundiata Keita

1. **Who was Sumanguru?**

Sumanguru was the cruel leader of the Soso people. He conquered and briefly ruled Mali.

2. **The text describes Sundiata as having “a strong will.” What evidence from the text shows that this was the case?**

The text explains that Sundiata overcame many obstacles with his strong will. Even though Sundiata had a sickness that had prevented him from walking, Sundiata didn't give up. He learned to walk with, and eventually without, a cane. He even learned to ride horses.

3. **Why did the Mandinka look to Sundiata to rescue them from Sumanguru?**

The Mandinka had heard of Sundiata's bravery, accomplishments, and determination.

4. **How reliable do you think the legends about Sundiata are?**

Some students may say that oral history is unreliable because people forget things and stories get exaggerated through retelling. Others may believe that, lacking a written language, West Africans preserved their history accurately through the stories they passed along.

5. **Why is it significant that so many legends about Sundiata are still told today, even if they are not factual?**

The fact that people still share legends about Sundiata today shows what an impressive leader he was. His achievements were so great that they are still considered important to discuss today.

6. **How did Mali grow to become the most powerful kingdom in West Africa?**

Mali leaders were fair. They created a strong government and used trade and farming to help Mali become rich.

7. **What were some of Sundiata's greatest accomplishments off the battlefield?**

Sundiata created a central government that brought peace and order to Mali. He also gained control of trade routes that helped Mali prosper.

8. **How and why did Islam become the most powerful religion in the Mali Empire?**

At the end of the 1200s, under a Muslim king, Islam and the Muslim holy book, the Koran, became the basis for new laws, the tax system, and education in Mali.

9. **For what aspects did Timbuktu become most famous?**

Timbuktu became a center for learning, with a Muslim university, mosques, and libraries, as well as a center for trade.

Chapter 6: Mansa Musa and His Pilgrimage

1. **What were some important ways Mali benefited from Mansa Musa's rule?**

The kingdom grew larger, increased trade made it wealthier, and the arts and education flourished.

2. **Why did Mansa Musa make a pilgrimage to Mecca?**

Mansa Musa was a devout Muslim. According to the religion of Islam, followers who are physically able and can afford to travel must make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

3. **What impact did Mansa Musa's generosity have on the city of Cairo in Egypt?**

Mansa Musa gave away so much gold that he caused the price of gold in Cairo to drop. It had less value.

4. **The first page of this chapter said that Mansa Musa was very famous, even outside of Mali. How and why do you think tales of Mansa Musa spread from Africa and the Middle East to Europe and Asia?**

Seeing all the gold and the lavish way that Mansa Musa spent it could not fail to impress people. Traders and other travelers likely spread stories about Mali's wealth far and wide.

5. **What were some ways Mali benefited from Mansa Musa's rule?**

Mansa Musa increased the size of the Mali empire as well as trade with other countries. He also built mosques, exchanged ambassadors with other Muslim countries, and started schools to teach about Islam. He still allowed his people, however, to choose which religion they wanted to follow.

6. **How did the Mali Empire weaken during Mansa Maghan's reign?**

The Mali Empire lost control of the city of Timbuktu. Mansa Maghan also let two captive princes escape; they went on to form the Songhai Empire.

Chapter 7: Songhai and Askia Muhammad

1. **Even though Ali Kolon was a prisoner of Mali, Mansa Musa gave him some unusual responsibilities and freedoms. What did Mansa Musa ask Ali Kolon to do during his captivity as a prisoner?**

Mansa Musa recognized that Ali Kolon was a fierce warrior, so he asked Ali Kolon to lead military expeditions and battles on behalf of Mali.

2. **How did Ali Kolon finally manage to escape?**

Each time he was released from captivity to lead a military expedition, he secretly hid the food and weapons he would need for an escape.

3. **What happened to Ali Kolon after he escaped?**

He became the new chief of Gao, part of the Songhai Empire. The Mali and Songhai Empires continued to battle one another.

4. **What happened to the city of Timbuktu that was part of the Mali Empire?**

The people living in Timbuktu were not happy with the rule of the nomadic Chief Akil. They sent a letter to the Songhai chief offering him their city if he would get rid of Chief Akil. The Songhai king, Sonni Ali Ber, agreed and sent his army into Timbuktu. The army sacked the city.

5. **Why was Timbuktu such a prize for the Songhai Empire?**

As an important trading center, Timbuktu was a famous and prosperous city, a source of wealth for any conquering group. Because the city had also been a center of Muslim religion and learning, universities, books and, the ideas contained in them also came under Songhai rule.

6. **How was the capture of Jenne different from the capture of Timbuktu?**

Unlike Timbuktu, which was sacked, Jenne was held under siege for seven years.

7. **Why do you think Sonni Ali Ber decided to marry the queen mother? How do you think this decision impacted his rule in Jenne?**

Sonni Ali Ber greatly admired the bravery of the people of Jenne. Marrying their queen mother may have been a sign of respect. By marrying a person native to Jenne, Sonni Ali Ber helped make the village more a part of his empire.

8. **What was the social system of the Songhai Empire like?**

The Songhai had a very strict social system. The descendants of the original Songhai Empire at the top of the system had special rights and privileges. Enslaved workers were at the bottom, with few rights. In between were traders, merchants, and soldiers, followed by farmers and craftspeople.

9. **Why do you think Askia Muhammad started a new dynasty in Songhai rather than continue the Sonni dynasty?**

Many people in Songhai were unhappy with the rule of Sonni Ali Ber because he was not a devout Muslim. When Askia Muhammad overthrew Sonni Ali Ber's son, he

established a new dynasty to separate himself from the Sonni dynasty and mark his loyalty to Islamic teachings. Askia Muhammad also belonged to a different family from the leaders of the Sonni dynasty.

10. How did Askia Muhammad spread Islam throughout the Songhai Empire?

Askia Muhammad spread Islam throughout the Songhai Empire by appointing Muslim judges in each district. Traditional laws were replaced by Muslim law. Askia Muhammad's tomb is an important historical site in the country of Mali today.

11. What factors led to the downfall of the Songhai Empire?

Askia Muhammad was overthrown by one of his sons. In the later years of the empire, slave traders from North Africa began to invade and capture the people of Songhai.

Chapter 8: The Travels of Ibn Battuta

1. What are some of the places that Ibn Battuta traveled to?

Ibn Battuta traveled to many places, including Africa, Arabia, Turkey, India, and China.

2. Do you think Ibn Battuta would have been interested in traveling to as many parts of the world as he did if he had not made his pilgrimage to Mecca?

Student responses will vary. Some students may say that if Ibn Battuta had seen nothing of the rest of the world, his curiosity may have been limited. Others may think that a person with such an interest in the rest of the world would probably have wanted to travel anyway.

3. What kind of work did Ibn Battuta do during his travels?

While in Delhi and the Maldives, Ibn Battuta worked as a judge.

4. How did Ibn Battuta's stay in Mecca help him when he started his many years of travels?

His pilgrimage to Mecca and his studies there proved that he was a devout Muslim, so other Muslims were willing to feed and shelter him as he traveled. He also became a judge, a skill he used during his travels.

5. Why is Ibn Battuta's book, Rihlah, such a valuable source of information about the Muslim world in the late 1300s?

Ibn Battuta visited nearly every Muslim country. He recorded specific details in his book about the people he met and what he saw.

6. Why were world travelers so rare in Ibn Battuta's time?

Travel was so difficult and expensive that few people attempted to journey far from home.

Unit quiz key

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