

MJ World History

Grade 6 / Week 9

Your Week at a Glance
<input type="checkbox"/> The Rise of African Civilizations

Name

Teacher

NOTE: If you have any difficulty completing this lesson, contact your teacher.

LCS 6th Grade World History Distance Learning Assignment

Week 9: Parent Notes

Students previously learned about ancient civilizations in Mesopotamia, Greece, Rome, India, and China. This week, students will use materials from the workbook of their adopted textbook, McGraw-Hill's *Succeeding in Early World History* to take a closer look at the ancient civilizations of Africa. The following state standards are addressed in this week's lesson:

SS.6.W.3.18: Describe the rise and fall of the ancient African kingdoms.

SS.6.G.2.1: Explain how major physical characteristics, natural resources, climate, and absolute and relative locations have influenced settlement, interactions, and the economies of ancient civilizations.

SS.6.G.2.3: Analyze the role of physical geography to the development of ancient river valley civilizations.

SS.6.G.2.6 Explain cultural diffusion, and identify the influences of different ancient cultures on one another.

Learning Activities: Students should read pages 508-513 from the workbook and—to the best of their ability--answer the questions in the margin to guide their reading and understanding.

Assessment: Once students have completed the reading and made notes in the margin, they should answer the questions below. This will serve as an assessment of their understanding. Students may write their answers on notebook paper or answer in a Word document. All answers should be in complete sentences.

- (1) Study the map on page 508. What are the four climate zones in Africa?
- (2) If you lived in Africa, which of the four zones would you want to live in and why? Use evidence from the text (pages 508-509) to support your answer.
- (3) Why were camels such an important part of trade between North Africa and West Africa in A.D. 200? Use evidence from the text in your answer.
- (4) What popular item was mined in the Sahara Desert? Why was it so popular?
- (5) What popular item was mined in West Africa? How did the kings of Ghana take advantage of this resource?
- (6) What religion was introduced to the people of Ghana through trade?
- (7) How was the empire of Mali able to overthrow Ghana's empire?
- (8) Based on the reading and the table on page 511, what were the three empires of West Africa between A.D. 400 – 1600? What is something they had in common?
- (9) Re-read the passage on page 512 about the kingdom of Axum. Study the map on page 508 to determine where Axum would have been located. Using information from the map and the reading, explain how Axum's location promoted trade among its people.
- (10) Why did traditional African religious beliefs diminish in East African in A.D. 300 – 334?
- (11) Re-read the section called "The Rise of Zimbabwe" on pages 512 and 513. Locate the Indian Ocean and the coast of African on the map on page 508. According to the text, how did the practice of selling enslaved Africans get started in this region?

OPTIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES:

African Kingdoms from Studies Weekly <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDtnc06woyg>

Trading Gold for Salt: Ancient Africa from Studies Weekly <https://youtu.be/Uz0SjZYAL4>

LESSON 1 SUMMARY, *continued*

Grasslands and Deserts

Africa’s second zone is made up of tropical grasslands called **savannas**. Dotted with small trees and shrubs, they expand north and south of the rain forest. Savannas make up about 40 percent of Africa’s land. Their climate is hot with uneven rains. However, there is enough rain for farming and herding cattle. Some farmers can even grow grains, like millet and sorghum.

The savannas in northern Africa connect to a drier expanse of grasslands named the Sahel. These lands do not provide good conditions for farming. In the Sahel, many people were traditionally hunters and herders.

Deserts make up Africa’s third geographic zone. The world’s largest desert, the Sahara, covers most of North Africa. Another desert, the Kalahari, is in the southwest. These deserts limited travel and trade in Africa for many years. People would travel along the coast to avoid them.

Small areas of mild climate make up the fourth and smallest geographic zone—the Mediterranean. This zone is found at Africa’s northern coast and southern tip. These areas have warm temperatures, adequate rainfall, and rich land. This zone produces abundant crops that can support large populations.

Africa’s Landforms and Rivers

Africa has many **plateaus**. A plateau is an area of high land that is flat on top. Mountains, valleys, and lakes cross the plateau in East Africa. The Great Rift Valley was created by the movement of Earth’s crust millions of years ago. This created deep cuts in the plateau, forming the valley. The Great Rift Valley is where some of the earliest human fossils have been found.

Africa has many large river systems. In North Africa, both the Egypt and Kush civilizations arose along the fertile banks of the Nile River. In West Africa, the major river system is along the Niger River. As a result of farming and trade, villages and towns sprung up in the Niger River area.

Trading Empires in Africa

The Sahara isolated North Africa from the rest of the continent for thousands of years. In 400 B.C., North Africa’s Berber people discovered new ways to cross the Sahara into West Africa. Soon, trade opened between these two areas.

2. MAKING CONNECTIONS

Underline details about the climate of savannas and the Sahel. How did climate conditions affect how people lived in these areas?

3. PREDICTING CONSEQUENCES

How might Africa’s many river systems affect where civilizations and empires began on the continent? What kinds of interactions would you expect along the Niger River?

LESSON 1 SUMMARY, *continued*

Trade through Ghana came at a price, however. Ghana’s kings demanded that traders pay taxes, leaving traders with little choice but to pay. For one thing, salt was extremely valuable. It was used to flavor and preserve food. People were willing to pay any price for it. In addition, Ghana controlled the West Africans who owned the gold mines. Finally, Ghana had iron ore to make iron weapons and a well-trained army to enforce the kings’ wishes.

Ghana’s power and influence in trade reached its height in the A.D. 800s and 900s. During this time, Muslim Arabs and Berber traders introduced Islam to Ghana.

Rise of Mali

Ghana’s empire fell during the A.D. 1100s. Invaders from North Africa disrupted Ghana’s trade. Local groups broke off and formed new trading states in West Africa. A small state named Mali conquered Ghana in A.D. 1200s. Mali created its own empire.




West African **griots**, or storytellers, credit Sundiata Keita with uniting the people of Mali. Sundiata Keita was known as the “Lion Prince.” As king, Sundiata ruled Mali from 1230 to 1255. He conquered territory from the Atlantic coast inland to Timbuktu. He took control of the gold mines in West Africa. Mali too had built its wealth and power from gold and salt. Mali had more territory, more people, and more extensive trade than Ghana.

5. SPECULATING

How did Ghana’s kings take advantage of the geographic location of their kingdom? How might their actions have negatively affected trade?

ANALYZING VISUALS

6. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS Refer to the chart of West African trading empires. Why would rulers want to control gold mines and salt mines in West Africa? What role did control of the mines play in the rise and fall of trade empires?

WEST AFRICAN TRADING EMPIRES A.D. 400–1600			
Location			
Time Period	c. 400–1200	c. 1200–1450	c. 1000–1600
Goods Traded	iron products, animal products, salt, gold	salt, gold	salt, gold
Key Facts	Taxes from traders passing through made Ghana rich.	King Mansa Musa built mosques and libraries.	Songhai gained control of West African trade by conquering Timbuktu.

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LESSON 1 SUMMARY, *continued*

They offered silk, glass beads, carpets, and pottery. They bartered for minerals, ivory, and coconut oil. They also purchased enslaved Africans to sell to countries overseas.


Zimbabwe was a key trading state in southeastern Africa. Its large empire reached from the south of Zambezi River to the Indian Ocean during the 1400s.



REVIEW LESSON 1

1. Fill in the chart with information about Africa’s four geographic zones. Include the location and physical characteristics of each zone and the effect each had on the development of trade.

Zone			Deserts	Mediterranean
Location				
Physical Characteristics			hot, vast, and barren landscape	mild climate, rich soil, adequate rainfall
Farming and Trade				produced abundant crops; supported large populations

2.  **MAKING CONNECTIONS** Use the chart to help you write an essay on a separate piece of paper to answer the following: How did Africa’s varied geography influence the rise of civilizations on the continent? Consider the civilizations that emerged in different zones and how each zone limited or invited interaction with other cultures.