

How did the kingdoms of West Africa become so powerful?

<p>Content</p>	<p>This instructional task engages students in content related to the following grade-level expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1.1¹ Produce clear and coherent writing for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> conducting historical research evaluating a primary source determining the meaning of words and phrases from historical texts using technology to research, produce, or publish a written product 6.1.3 Analyze information in primary and secondary sources to address document-based questions 6.2.1 Analyze the relationship between geographical features and early settlement patterns using maps and globes 6.2.7 Summarize key features of ancient West African kingdoms (Ghana, Mali, and Songhai) 6.3.3 Compare and contrast physical and political boundaries of civilizations, empires, and kingdoms using maps and globes 6.6.4 Explain how the development of trade and taxation influenced economic growth in the ancient world
<p>Claims</p>	<p>In this instructional task, students develop and express claims through discussions and writing which examine the impact of relationships between ideas, people, and events across time and place. To accomplish this, they recognize recurring themes and patterns in history, geography, and economics. Students will evaluate the impact that trade had on the kingdoms of Mali, Ghana, and Songhai.</p>
<p>Unit Connection</p>	<p>This instructional task helps students explore and develop claims around the content from unit 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How trading empires grew because of advancing civilizations? 6.2.7

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3	Supporting Question 4
<p>How did geography influence the rise of the West African Kingdoms?</p>	<p>How did the West African Empires become the most powerful of their time?</p>	<p>How was trade important to the development of Ghana?</p>	<p>How did trade influence the success of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai?</p>
<p>Formative Performance Task</p>	<p>Formative Performance Task</p>	<p>Formative Performance Task</p>	<p>Formative Performance Task</p>
<p>Students will examine the major physical features that influenced the rise of the West African Kingdoms.</p>	<p>Students will research the West African Kingdoms of Mali, Ghana, and Songhai.</p>	<p>Students will research information and answer questions on the kingdom of Ghana.</p>	<p>Students will compare and contrast the economies of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai.</p>
<p>Featured Source</p>	<p>Featured Source</p>	<p>Featured Source</p>	<p>Featured Source</p>
<p>Source A: West African Trade Map, Classzone</p>	<p>Source B: Ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhay, BBC</p>	<p>Source C: “The Kingdom of Ghana,” USHistory.org</p>	<p>Source D: Economy of African Kingdoms, Timemaps</p>

<p>Summative Performance Task</p>	<p>Using the sources and your knowledge of world history, write an essay that examines at least 3 factors which led to the rise in power of West African Kingdoms.</p>
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¹ This GLE contains multiple parts, which should be taught over the course of several units in grade 6. The GLE requires students to “produce clear and coherent writing for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.” The parts of this GLE addressed in the task are the second and third bullet.

Formative Performance Task 1

Supporting Question	How did geography influence the rise of the West African Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali and Songhai?
Formative Performance Task	Students examine the major physical features that influenced the rise of the West African Kingdoms.
Featured Source	Source A: West African Trade Map , Classzone
Content and Claims	This formative performance task requires students to analyze the relationship between geographical features and early settlement patterns using maps and globes. 6.2.1

Featured Source

Source A: [West African Trade Map](#), Classzone

Steps

1. Present students with the question: “What are the major physical features that influenced the rise of the West African kingdoms?”
2. Have students complete a brainstorming activity on geography.
 - Have students create a list of physical features.
 - Have students define what *geography* means.
 - Have students create a list of factors of how geography and physical features can affect society.
3. Provide students with an atlas map of Africa, or a physical features map of Africa from the textbook, as well as a [blank outline map of Africa](#). As students complete their outline maps, have them answer the following questions:
 - Which oceans border Africa to the West, East, and North? Have students label their outline map.
 - Why were rivers important to the societies that developed in West Africa? Have students label the Niger and Senegal Rivers on their outline map.
 - Why would people living in the territory below the Sahara have limited contact with people living in the lands to the North? Have students label the Sahara Desert.
4. Provide students with access to Source A: West African Trade Map, either by projecting the map for the whole class or allowing students to access the map on their own on a computer.
5. Have students use the interactive map to complete the following:
 - Read aloud the overview on the map.
 - Click on Ghana. (Note: If students have access to individual computers, direct them to follow these directions on their own computer.) Direct students to color Ghana green on their outline maps. Then ask students to answer the following question: How did Ghana become a thriving trade center?
 - Click on Mali. Direct students to color Mali orange on their outline maps and label the city of Timbuktu. Then ask students to answer the following question: Why was the location of Timbuktu important to trade?

- Click on Songhai. Direct students to color Songhai purple on their maps. Then ask students to answer the following question: What did the Songhai Empire do when they broke away from Mali?
- Click on trade routes on the map key. Then ask students to answer the following question: Besides gold and salt, what else was carried on the trade routes?
- Finally, click on gold and salt. Ask students to answer the following questions: Which resource was found in the north and which resource was found in the south? What is the significance of people living in the north and people living in the south?

Student Look-Fors

1. Students should determine in their brainstorm that geography influences trading patterns. Some examples may include rivers, oceans, and deserts. Students should be able to determine that geography was a major factor in the development of West African societies. The Sahara is a desert; therefore, it is not suitable for farming due to lack of water. South of the Sahara however, was suitable for farming. Rivers, such as the Niger and Senegal, served as trade routes and water sources for farming.
2. Student maps should be checked for accuracy.
3. Students should recognize that Ghana became a thriving trade center due to salt from across the Sahara and gold from the south. Timbuktu was an important center for the gold and salt trade, as well as a center of learning. Songhai broke away from Mali and controlled the salt mines in the north. Besides gold and salt, language and religion spread as well. Gold was found in the south and salt was found in the north.

Formative Performance Task 2

Supporting Question	How did the empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhai become the most powerful empires of their time?
Formative Performance Task	Students will research the West African Kingdoms of Mali, Ghana, and Songhai.
Featured Source	Source B: Ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhay , BBC
Content and Claims	This formative performance task requires students to summarize key features of ancient West African kingdoms (Ghana, Mali, and Songhai). 6.2.7

Featured Source

Source B: [Ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhay](#), BBC

Steps

1. Engage students in a lesson of how three major civilizations flourished in West Africa.
2. Divide the class into cooperative groups and have the groups independently research information on the three civilizations using Source B: [Ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhay](#).
3. Have the groups organize their research using split-page notes to outline the most important information from their research. A split-page notes handout is provided on the next page.
4. Review answers as a whole group.

Split-Page Notes for Research on Ancient Ghana, Mali, and Songhai

Civilization	Notes (Focus: Rise of empire, leaders, trade, decline)
<p>Ghana 200 BC-1230 AD</p>	
<p>Mali 1230-1350 AD</p>	
<p>Songhay (Songhai) 1450-1618 AD</p>	

Student Look-Fors

- From A.D. 700 to 1600 the ancient empires of Ghana (700-1100), Mali (800-1550) and Songhai (1300-1600) controlled vast areas of West Africa (see map and time line). Although each empire rose to assert its power, they coexisted independently for centuries. At its peak (1200-1300), the Mali Empire covered an area that encompasses significant portions of the present-day country of Mali, southern and western Mauritania and Senegal. Note that the old kingdoms of Mali and Ghana are not the present-day countries of Mali and Ghana. Also, there were strong levels of trade with the Arabs. The trade was primarily concentrated on gold and salt, however while physical products were being traded, ideas also were being traded.
- A sample completed organizer is included below.

Civilization	Notes (Focus: Rise of empire, leaders, trade, decline)
Ghana 200 BC-1230 AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soninke people came together under a leader with semi-divine status, called DingaCisse • The Empire derived power and wealth from gold. • Introduction of the camel in the Trans-Saharan trade boosted the amount of goods that could be transported. • Slaves, salt and copper, in exchange for textiles, beads and finished goods • The King lost his trading monopoly. Drought • Pressure and invasion from outside forces • Ghana was totally eclipsed by the Mali Empire of Sundiata
Mali 1230-1350 AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerged as Ghana declined • 1235 Mansa Musa is leader of Mali • Mansa Musa transformed Timbuktu into a center for trade and scholarship. • Mansa Musa showed off his wealth by building mosques • Mali extended from the coast of West Africa, both above the Senegal River and below the Gambia River, taking in old Ghana, and reaching southeast to Gao and northeast to Tadmekka. • Gold and salt were its two most important products for trade • Exported gold dust and agricultural products to the North. • Used cowrie shells as a form of currency for trading and taxation purposes • Mali was taken over by the Songhai Empire
Songhay (Songhai) 1450-1618 AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rose to power in the fifteenth century under Sonni Ali the Great • Military forces consisted of a cavalry of expert horsemen, and fleets of canoes. He was a great military leader, with a keen understanding of tactics on land and water. He had the added advantage of being regarded as a leader with magical powers • Sonni Ali the Great expanded the territory of Songhai across the Niger valley, west to Senegal and east to Niger • Gold, kola nuts and slaves (exports) • Textiles, horses, salt and luxury goods (imports) • In the late 16th century Songhai enters into civil war. Environmental change causing droughts and diseases took over • The Moroccans invaded and took control the gold trade.

Formative Performance Task 3

Supporting Question	How was trade important to the development of Ghana?
Formative Performance Task	Students will research information and answer questions on the kingdom of Ghana.
Featured Source	Source C: The Kingdom of Ghana, USHistory.org
Content and Claims	In this formative performance task, students will analyze information in a primary or secondary sources to address document-based questions 6.1.3

Featured Source

Source C: "The Kingdom of Ghana,"² USHistory.org

7a. Kingdom of Ghana



Penny Tweedie/Oxfam
 Traditions more than 1,000 years old still thrive in Ghana. Ghanaian boys are perfectly at home with traditional masks.

Between the 9th and 11th centuries C.E., the kingdom of Ghana was so rich that its dogs wore golden collars, and its horses, which were adorned with silken rope halters, slept on plush carpets. Based on animal luxuries alone, it is no wonder that foreigners touted Ghana's kings as the richest men in the world.

Certainly they were living the high life ... but how did they do it? Located within the present-day borders of Mauritania, Mali, and Senegal, medieval Ghana literally sat on a gold mine. The land's abundance of resources allowed Ghana's rulers to engage in years of prosperous trading. Strategic governing coupled with great location led to the rapid emergence of a very wealthy empire.

Gold in Wagadugu

Most of what we know about ancient Ghana — which is more accurately called Wagadugu — is based on writings of Arab travelers who came in contact with the nation's peoples. "Ghana" was actually the title given to Wagadugu kings and was used by the Islamic "reporters" to describe the rich and mysterious place they observed.

Evidence of Ghana's occupation dates back to the 4th century, but it was several hundred years later that it became established as a nation by a tribe known as the Soninke, whose leaders have been credited with the early strengthening of the Wagadugu state and the expansion of its territories.

² Source: [USHistory.org](https://www.ushistory.org) shared through [Creative Commons license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

By 1000 B.C.E., the nation had undergone strategic expansion and taken control of a large pocket of land between the upper Niger and Senegal Rivers. The region was rich in gold, and its acquisition meant that Ghana would become a leading force in the trans-Saharan trade network.

Ghanaian Politics

The leader of all leaders was the king, who was also known as the *ghana*, or war chief. His word was law. He served as the commander in chief of a highly organized army, the controller of all trade activities, and the head administrator of justice. Mayors, civil servants, counselors, and ministers were appointed by the king to assist with administrative duties — but at all times, the king was in charge.

Each day, the king assembled his court and allowed people to publicly voice their complaints. Beating drums that resounded throughout the area signaled the courts assemblage and people gathered to speak their minds. Whether they were neighborly conflicts, or cases of violated rights, the king listened to the complaints and gave his judgment.

Such hearings were reportedly peaceful, unless they involved issues of criminal nature. Two of the most serious criminal offenses were the denial of debt and the shedding of blood. These crimes were tried by ordeal.

According to Islamic reports, the criminally accused was given a foul concoction to drink that consisted of sour and bitter-tasting wood and water. If he vomited after tossing back the nasty brew he was declared innocent and was congratulated for passing the test. If he did not vomit, and the beverage remained within, he was considered guilty as charged and suffered the king's wrath.

Ghanaian citizens were not the only ones put to the king's test. Inhabitants of its conquered lands were examined for their good behavior and loyalty as well. In territories where order and obedience prevailed, and taxes were properly paid, autonomy was granted. But in areas which struggled for independence or defied the king's laws, Ghanaian governors were appointed as watchdogs and little went unreported to the king.

Trans-Saharan Trade

When the king was not busy enforcing his power among the people, he was spreading it internationally through trade. At its peak, Ghana was chiefly bartering gold, ivory, and slaves for salt from Arabs and horses, cloth, swords, and books from North Africans and Europeans.



The golden stool of the Ashanti kings of Ghana, a symbol of their power, has not been seen by the general public for 300 years. Its location is kept secret, and a replica is used for public display.



This is a map of the ancient kingdom of Ghana, displaying its location well north of present-day Ghana. Today this area is part of the countries of Mali and Mauritania.

As salt was worth its weight in gold, and gold was so abundant in the kingdom, Ghana achieved much of its wealth through trade with the Arabs. Islamic merchants traveled over two months through the desert to reach Ghana and "do business." They were taxed for both what they brought in and what they took out.

With this system, it is no wonder that Ghana got rich quickly. The wealth that the kingdom acquired did not, however, serve in its favor forever. Competition from other states in the gold trade eventually took its toll.

Jealousy, fear, and anger of Ghana's power prompted its neighbors to stand up against the kingdom. Their efforts were at first weak and insignificant, but eventually, in the mid-11th century, a Muslim group known as the Almoravids launched a devastating invasion on the capital city of Koumbi Saleh. Though territories were seized, and a tribute tax was enforced, Ghana recovered and forced the invaders to withdraw.

A little less than 200 years later, however, Ghana was not so lucky. Weakened by subsequent attacks, and cut-off from international trade, the kingdom was vulnerable and unable to prevent defeat. In 1240 C.E., Ghana was absorbed into the growing nation of Mali, which would soon become the next great empire.

Steps

1. Provide students with Source C: "The Kingdom of Ghana."
2. Ask students to work with a partner to complete the following tasks.
 - Read the introduction under "Kingdom of Ghana" and answer the following questions on notebook paper.
 - Why did foreigners think Ghana's kings were the richest kings in the world?
 - How was the location of Ghana important to its success?
 - What two factors led to the emergence of such a wealthy empire?
 - Read the section "Gold in Wagadugu" and answer the following questions on notebook paper.
 - How do we know so much about ancient Ghana today?
 - Which tribe helped to strengthen and expand Wagadugu?
 - What was so important about the land between the Upper Niger and the Senegal Rivers?
 - Read "Trans-Saharan Trade" and answer the following questions on notebook paper.
 - Other than enforcing his power amongst his people, how did the king spread his power elsewhere?

- What were some items that Ghana would barter from Arabs, North Africans, and Europeans?
 - How did Ghana achieve much of its wealth? Why was so quick?
 - What caused the decline of Ghana?
3. Conduct a whole-class discussion to review and discuss the answers to the questions.

Student Look-Fors

1. Students' answers should consist of the following information after completing the activity.
2. Ghana's kings were the richest in the world because it sat on a gold mine and had an abundance of resources that allowed for them to engage in trading. Strategic governing and location led to Ghana's success.
3. We know much about Ghana today because Arab travelers wrote things down and described Ghana as being rich and mysterious. The Soninke tribe helped to expand and strengthen Ghana. The land between the Upper Niger and Senegal Rivers was rich in gold, which allowed Ghana to become a leading force in the trans-Saharan trade network.
4. The king of Ghana spread his power through trade. Gold, ivory, and slaves were bartered for salt from the Arabs. Horses, cloth, swords and books were bartered from North Africans and Europeans. Ghana achieved much of its wealth by trading with the Arabs. Islamic merchants traveled over 2 months across the desert and were taxed by Ghana for anything they brought in or took out. Ghana declined and was weakened by attacks from invaders and was eventually cut off from trade and absorbed into the Kingdom of Mali.

Formative Performance Task 4

Supporting Question	How did trade influence the success of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai?
Formative Performance Task	Students will compare and contrast the economies of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai.
Featured Sources	Source D: Economy of African Kingdoms , Timemaps
Content and Claims	Students will explain how the development of trade and taxation influenced economic growth in the ancient world 6.6.4

Featured Sources

Source D: [Economy of African Kingdoms](#), Timemaps

Steps

1. Have students define imports and exports to set up for an understanding of the source reading.
2. Provide students with access to Source D: Economy of African Kingdoms, either by projecting the text and reading it aloud or by allowing students to access the source on a computer.
3. Instruct students to click on the each economy link and read the information about each of the economies.
4. Provide students with a copy of the chart on the next page and direct them to complete the chart with a partner.
5. Have students answer the following questions once the chart is complete:
 - What were some similarities between each of the empires' economies?
 - What were some differences between each of the empires' economies?
6. Review information in the chart and discuss student answers to the questions.

Economies of West African Empires

West African Empire	Economy
Ghana	
Mali	
Songhai	

Student Look-Fors

1. Definition of import- a good brought in to a country from another place for sale
2. Definition of export- a good sent to another place for sale
3. A sample completed chart is included below.

Economies of West African Empires

West African Empire	Economy
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghana was trading center, but had no gold mines • Merchants had to pay taxes on imports and exports of salt • Little is known about the way it used taxation • Imports- textiles, ornaments • Center of Mali trade was Koumbi Saleh • King claimed all of the gold nuggets • People only received gold dust • The camel was key to efficient trading across the Sahara Desert • The economy remained powerful, rich and stable and lasted for several centuries
Mali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprised of 3 gold mines • Taxed every ounce of gold and salt that entered the empire • Was the source of half of the old world's gold exported through its mines • There were trading posts for the caravan trade throughout the kingdom exchanging salt, copper, and gold • Gold nuggets were the property of Mansa Musa • All gold given to him, people only received gold dust • Salt was very valuable and rare in the South and used to purchase goods • Copper was mined in the North and traded for gold in the South
Songhai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic trade was successful because of the army that was stationed throughout the empire • Gold found in gold fields • Very strong trading kingdom • Successful trade partnerships were established • Crafts and religious artifacts • Economy based on clans • Job depended on caste system • Metal workers, fishermen, carpenters were most common • At the top of caste system were the noblemen and direct descendants of original Songhai people • At the bottom were war captives and slaves

4. Students responses should include the following:
 - In both Ghana and Mali the king kept all of the gold and the people only received gold dust, all three empires depended on gold for trade and had established laws of taxation
 - Ghana was only a transit place of trade and exchange, it did not have its own gold mines, Mali had 3 gold mines, Ghana and Mali both used measures of gold (dinar and mithqal) Ghana did not have salt, Mali had salt and copper, Songhai had gold fields and a clan system
 - Trade was an integral part of each of these empires and allowed for them to become powerful through controlling the imports and exports of each

Summative Performance Task

Compelling Question	How did the kingdoms of West Africa become so powerful?
Summative Performance Task	Using the sources and your knowledge of world history, write an essay that examines at least 3 factors which led to the rise in power of West African Kingdoms.

Teacher Overview

In this summative performance task, students are asked to write a response to the compelling question using evidence from the sources they explored throughout the four formative performance tasks.

Throughout this instructional task, students have explored how trade impacted the development of the West African Kingdoms of Mali, Ghana, and Songhai. Before the summative performance task, it may be helpful for students to review the sources provided and the writing/graphic organizers created during the formative assessment tasks. Doing so should help them to develop their interpretations and to highlight the appropriate examples and details to support their writing.

Student Prompts

Using the sources and your knowledge of world history, write an essay that examines at least 3 factors which led to the rise in power of West African Kingdoms.

Student Look-Fors

1. Scoring Notes

- An exemplar response may include but is not limited to:
 - In the A.D. 700s empires based on trade began to form in Western Africa.
 - Geography was a major factor in the development of West African societies; waterways were critical for use to transport goods to be traded.
 - In addition to benefitting from the trade itself, rulers also implemented taxes on items brought into and taken out of their empires.
 - Trade was primarily concentrated products such as ivory, gold and salt.
 - In addition to the physical products that were being traded, ideas and different aspects of various cultures were also were being traded.

2. A strong response:

- References documents appropriately.
 - Geography influenced the rise of West African Kingdoms. (Source A)
 - West African kingdoms both gained and lost power and control over the course of history. (Source B)
 - Ghana's power derives from controlling its gold and salt trade. (Source C)
 - Trade in these kingdoms influence economic growth. (Source D)
- Applies the provided evidence as well as additional information about Africa.

- Background information from teacher lecture on how the people of Africa traded with one another. Trade networks developed in many parts of Africa. These networks linked up with other nations and traded.