
Sample Item Set
West African Kingdoms
Grade 6

Standard 2 – Key Events, Ideas, and People: Students examine key historical events, ideas, and people that contributed to the growth of civilizations from ancient times through the Middle Ages, which led to the development of the modern world.

Standard 4 – Culture and Environment: Students identify and analyze the influence of the environment on migration, cultural diffusion, and human settlement in world history.

GLE 6.2.7 Summarize key features of ancient West African kingdoms (Ghana, Mali, and Songhai)

GLE 6.4.3 Explain the connection between physical geography and its influence on the development of civilization

Use the two sources and your knowledge of social studies to answer questions 1–4.

Source 1

Medieval West African Kingdoms



Source: National Park Service.

Source 2

Equestrian Figure

This clay sculpture of an equestrian¹ figure was discovered in the Inland Niger Delta region of Mali and is dated between the 13th and 15th centuries.



Source: National Museum of African Art.

¹ Equestrian: relating to the riding of horses

Item 1: Multiple Choice

Which characteristic of the Mali Empire is **most closely** associated with Source 2?

- A. trade with North Africa
- B. powerful military
- C. wealth obtained from gold mines
- D. training wild animals for celebrations

Item 2: Multiple Select

What do Source 1 and Source 2 suggest about the development of West African kingdoms?

Select the **two** correct answers.

- A. People specialized in different jobs as a result of the growth in trading cities.
- B. People often used camels for transportation.
- C. The armies of each kingdom used a wide variety of weapons in war.
- D. People had leisure time to develop arts.
- E. The kingdoms had powerful and rich leaders.

Item 3: Technology Enhanced Item

Physical and human geography influenced the medieval West African kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai. Based on the sources and your knowledge of social studies, identify the geographic factors that **most** influenced the medieval West African kingdoms.

Drag the correct answers from the list to chart titled Geographic Factors Influencing Medieval West African Kingdoms. Fill every space in the chart. All options will not be used from the list.

Plentiful salt deposits
Location near the Atlas Mountains
Inland port cities on rivers
Nearness to the Silk Road
Abundance of gold
Taxes collected from merchants
Trans-Atlantic trade routes
Nearness to trans-Saharan caravan routes

Geographic Factors Influencing Medieval West African Kingdoms

Correct Answers:

Geographic Factors Influencing Medieval West African Kingdoms
Plentiful salt deposits
Inland port cities on rivers
Abundance of gold
Nearness to trans-Saharan caravan routes

Item 4: Constructed Response

Based on the sources and your knowledge of social studies, explain **two** reasons medieval West African kingdoms were successful.

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Scoring Information	
Score Points	Description
2	Student’s response correctly explains two reasons that medieval West African kingdoms were successful.
1	Student’s response correctly explains one reason that medieval West African kingdoms were successful.
0	Student’s response does not correctly explain reasons that medieval West African kingdoms were successful.

Scoring Notes:

- Reasons that medieval West African kingdoms were successful may include:
 - The land held natural resources and minerals that could be traded with other groups for a profit.
 - Powerful militaries were used to expand and protect the kingdoms.
 - Wealth was increased by collecting taxes from merchants traveling on trade routes through the kingdoms.
- Accept any other reasonable answer.