

# West African Empires



## California Standards

### History–Social Science

**7.4** Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the sub-Saharan civilizations of Ghana and Mali in Medieval Africa.

### Analysis Skills

**CS 3** Use a variety of maps to explain the expansion and disintegration of empires.

**HR 2** Distinguish fact from opinion.

### English–Language Arts

**Speaking 7.2.1** Deliver narrative presentations.

**Reading 7.2.0** Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material.

### FOCUS ON SPEAKING

**A Praise Song** For centuries, the history of West Africa's peoples and rulers has been kept alive by griots, performers who memorize the histories of their people. At the end of this chapter, you will pretend to be a griot and perform your own song of praise about one of the empires or leaders.



### CHAPTER EVENTS

1000

### WORLD EVENTS

**1060s**  
The Empire of Ghana reaches its height.



**1066**  
William the Conqueror invades England.



**History's Impact**

▶ video series

Watch the video to understand the impact of the salt trade.



**What You Will Learn...**

In this chapter you will learn about the great empires of West Africa, which grew rich from trade. This photo shows women in front of a mosque in the city of Djenné, in the modern country of Mali.



**c. 1235**  
The empire of Mali is established.

**1324**  
Mansa Musa leaves Mali on a hajj to Mecca.



**1464**  
Sunni Ali conquers Timbuktu.

**1590s**  
Moroccan invaders begin their conquest of Songhai.

1200

1400

1600



**1281** The Mongols' attempt to conquer Japan fails.

**1337** The Hundred Years' War begins in France.



**1521** Spanish explorers conquer the Aztec Empire.



Economics

Geography

Politics

Religion

Society  
and Culture

Science and  
Technology

**Focus on Themes** This chapter describes three powerful empires that ruled West Africa between the years 300 and 1600—Ghana, Mali, and Songhai. As you read about each empire, you will learn who its greatest leaders were and how

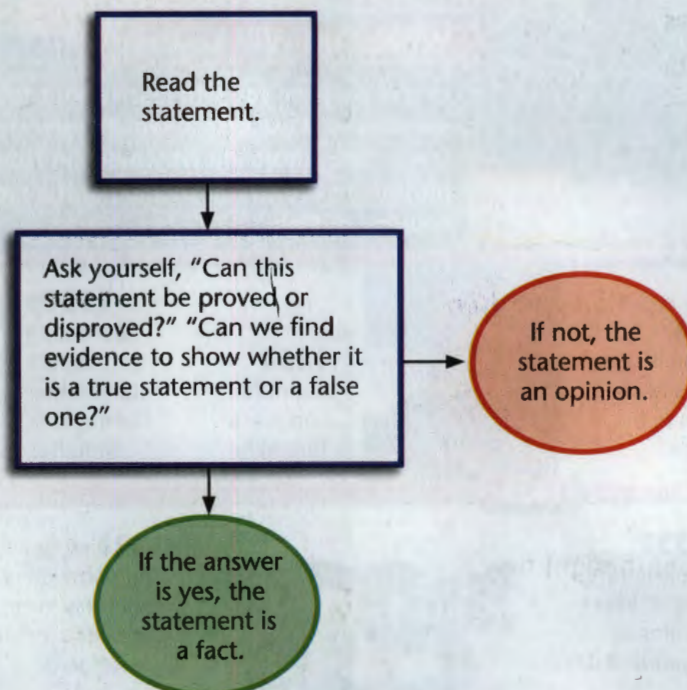
these leaders encouraged the development of their civilizations, civilizations honored for centuries through songs and stories. You will also learn how the **geography** of West Africa affected trade, the basis for the region's **economy**.

## Facts and Opinions about the Past


**Focus on Reading** Every statement you read can be classified as either a fact or an opinion. When you read history, it is important to focus on the facts. Why? By studying facts you can learn what really happened in the past.

**Identifying Facts and Opinions** A statement is a **fact** if it can be proved or disproved. For example, research can prove the following statement: "Mali was an empire in West Africa." But research can't prove the following statement because it is just an **opinion**, or someone's belief: "Emperor Mansa Musa of Mali was one of the wisest leaders in African history."

Use the process below to decide whether a statement is fact or opinion.



Additional reading support can be found in the

.....  
**Interactive**  
  
**Reader and Study Guide**





**HSS Analysis HR 2** Distinguish fact from opinion.

**ELA Reading 7.2.0** Read and understand grade-level-appropriate material.

# Key Terms and People

## Chapter 6

### Section 1

silent barter (p. 132)

Tunka Manin (p. 134)

### Section 2

Sundiata (p. 136)

Mansa Musa (p. 138)

### Section 3

Sunni Ali (p. 143)

Askia the Great (p. 144)

### Section 4

oral history (p. 147)

griots (p. 147)

proverbs (p. 148)

kente (p. 151)

### Academic Vocabulary

**Success in school is related to knowing academic vocabulary—the words that are frequently used in school assignments and discussions. In this chapter, you will learn the following academic words:**

process (p. 132)

various (p. 145)

## You Try It!

The following passage tells about how the rulers of Ghana, an empire in West Africa, made money. All the statements in this passage are facts. What makes them facts and not opinions?

### Taxes and Gold

With so many traders passing through their lands, Ghana's rulers looked for ways to make money from them. One way they raised money was by forcing traders to pay taxes. Every trader who entered Ghana had to pay a special tax on the goods he carried. Then he had to pay another tax on any goods he took with him when he left.

*From  
Chapter 6,  
p. 133*

Traders were not the only people who had to pay taxes. The people of Ghana also had to pay taxes. In addition, Ghana conquered many small neighboring tribes, then forced them to pay tribute. Rulers used the money from taxes and trade to support Ghana's growing army.

Not all of Ghana's wealth came from taxes and tribute. Ghana's rich mines produced huge amounts of gold. Some of this gold was carried by traders to lands as far away as England, but not all of Ghana's gold was traded. Ghana's kings kept huge stores of gold for themselves.

**Identify each of the following as a fact or an opinion and then explain your choice.**

1. Ghana's rulers made money by taxing the traders who came to Ghana.
2. This taxation was unfair to traders.
3. The rulers of Ghana were too greedy.
4. None of the people who lived in nearby tribes thought they should have to pay taxes.
5. People shouldn't have to pay taxes to leave a country.

**As you read Chapter 6, you will learn about several important leaders. As you read facts about these leaders, think of how the facts could be used to support opinions.**



# Empire of Ghana

## If YOU were there...

You are a trader, traveling in a caravan from the north into West Africa in about 1000. The caravan carries many goods, but the most precious is salt. Salt is so valuable that people trade gold for it! You have never met the mysterious men who trade you the gold. You wish you could talk to them to find out where they get it.

## Why do you think the traders are so secretive?

**BUILDING BACKGROUND** The various regions of Africa provide people with different resources. West Africa, for example, was rich in both fertile soils and minerals, especially gold and iron. Other regions had plentiful supplies of other resources, such as salt. Over time, trade developed between regions with different resources. This trade led to the growth of the first great empire in West Africa.

## Ghana Controls Trade

For hundreds of years, trade routes crisscrossed West Africa. For most of that time, West Africans did not profit much from the Saharan trade because the routes were run by Berbers from northern Africa. Eventually, that situation changed. Ghana (GAH-nuh), an empire in West Africa, gained control of the valuable routes. As a result, Ghana became a powerful state.

As you can see on the map on the following page, the empire of Ghana lay between the Niger and Senegal rivers. This location was north and west of the location of the modern nation that bears the name Ghana.

## Ghana's Beginnings

Archaeology provides some clues to Ghana's early history, but we do not know much about its earliest days. Historians think the first people in Ghana were farmers. Sometime after 300 these farmers, the Soninke (soh-NING-kee), were threatened by nomadic herders. The herders wanted to take the farmers' water and pastures. For protection, groups of Soninke families began to band together. This banding together was the beginning of Ghana.

## What You Will Learn...

### Main Ideas

1. Ghana controlled trade and became wealthy.
2. Through its control of trade, Ghana built an empire.
3. Ghana's decline was caused by attacking invaders, overgrazing, and the loss of trade.

### The Big Idea

The rulers of Ghana built an empire by controlling the salt and gold trade.

## Key Terms and People

silent barter, p. 132

Tunka Manin, p. 134



**HSS 7.4.1** Study the Niger River and the relationship of vegetation zones of forest, savannah, and desert to trade in gold, salt, food, and slaves; and the growth of the Ghana and Mali empires.

**7.4.2** Analyze the importance of family, labor specialization, and regional commerce in the development of states and cities in West Africa.



## Ghana Empire, c. 1050



Carving of a human head from Ghana

Once they banded together, the people of Ghana grew in strength. They learned how to work with iron and used iron tools to farm the land along the Niger River. They also herded cattle for meat and milk. Because these farmers and herders could produce plenty of food, the population of Ghana increased. Towns and villages grew.

Besides farm tools, iron was also useful for making weapons. Other armies in the area had weapons made of bone, wood, and stone. These were no match for the iron spear points and blades used by Ghana's army.

### Trade in Valuable Goods

Ghana lay between the vast Sahara Desert and deep forests. In this location, they were in a good position to trade in the region's

### GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

### INTERPRETING MAPS

**Movement** What goods came to Ghana from the north?

most valuable resources—gold and salt. Gold came from the south, from mines near the Gulf of Guinea and along the Niger. Salt came from the Sahara in the north.

People wanted gold for its beauty. But they needed salt in their diets to survive. Salt, which could be used to preserve food, also made bland food tasty. These qualities made salt very valuable. In fact, Africans sometimes cut up slabs of salt and used the pieces as money.



## ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

**process** a series of steps by which a task is accomplished

The exchange of gold and salt sometimes followed a **process** called silent barter. **Silent barter is a process in which people exchange goods without ever contacting each other directly.** The method made sure that the traders did business peacefully. It also kept the exact location of the gold mines secret from the salt traders.

In the silent barter process, salt traders went to a riverbank near gold fields. There they left slabs of salt in rows and beat a drum to tell the gold miners that trading had begun. Then the salt traders moved back several miles from the riverbank.

Soon afterward, the gold miners arrived by boat. They left what they considered a fair amount of gold in exchange for the salt. Then the gold miners also moved

back several miles so the salt traders could return. If they were happy with the amount of gold left there, the salt traders beat the drum again, took the gold, and left. The gold miners then returned and picked up their salt. Trading continued until both sides were happy with the exchange.

### Growth of Trade

As the trade in gold and salt increased, Ghana's rulers gained power. Over time, their military strength grew as well. With their armies they began to take control of this trade from the merchants who had once controlled it. Merchants from the north and south met to exchange goods in Ghana. As a result of their control of trade routes, the rulers of Ghana became wealthy.

## Salt and Gold





Additional sources of wealth and trade were developed to add to Ghana's wealth. Wheat came from the north. Sheep, cattle, and honey came from the south. Local products, including leather and cloth, were also traded for wealth. Among the prized special local products were tassels made from golden thread.

As trade increased, Ghana's capital grew as well. The largest city in West Africa, Koumbi Saleh (KOOM-bee SAHL-uh) was an oasis for travelers. These travelers could find all the region's goods for sale in its markets. As a result, Koumbi Saleh gained a reputation as a great trading center.

**READING CHECK** **Generalizing** How did trade help Ghana develop?



Ghana's rulers got rich by controlling the trade in salt and gold. Salt came from the north in large slabs like the ones shown at left. Gold, like the woman above is wearing, came from the south.

## Ghana Builds an Empire

By 800 Ghana was firmly in control of West Africa's trade routes. Nearly all trade between northern and southern Africa passed through Ghana. Traders were protected by Ghana's army, which kept trade routes free from bandits. As a result, trade became safer. Knowing they would be protected, traders were not scared to travel to Ghana. Trade increased, and Ghana's influence grew as well.

### Taxes and Gold

With so many traders passing through their lands, Ghana's rulers looked for ways to make money from them. One way they raised money was by forcing traders to pay taxes. Every trader who entered Ghana had to pay a special tax on the goods he carried. Then he had to pay another tax on any goods he took with him when he left.

Traders were not the only people who had to pay taxes. The people of Ghana also had to pay taxes. In addition, Ghana conquered many small neighboring tribes, then forced them to pay tribute. Rulers used the money from taxes and tribute to support Ghana's growing army.

Not all of Ghana's wealth came from taxes and tribute. Ghana's rich mines produced huge amounts of gold. Some of this gold was carried by traders to lands as far away as England, but not all of Ghana's gold was traded. Ghana's kings kept huge stores of gold for themselves. In fact, all the gold produced in Ghana was officially the property of the king.

Knowing that rare materials are worth far more than common ones, the rulers banned anyone else in Ghana from owning gold nuggets. Common people could own only gold dust, which they used as money. This ensured that the king was richer than his subjects.



## Expansion of the Empire

Ghana's kings used their great wealth to build a powerful army. With this army the kings of Ghana conquered many of their neighbors. Many of these conquered areas were centers of trade. Taking over these areas made Ghana's kings even richer.

Ghana's kings didn't think that they could rule all the territory they conquered by themselves. Their empire was quite large, and travel and communication in West Africa could be difficult. To keep order in their empire, they allowed conquered kings to retain much of their power. These kings acted as governors of their territories, answering only to the king.

The empire of Ghana reached its peak under **Tunka Manin** (TOOHN-kah MAH-nin). This king had a splendid court where he displayed the vast wealth of the empire. A Spanish writer noted the court's splendor.

“The king adorns himself . . . round his neck and his forearms, and he puts on a high cap decorated with gold and wrapped in a turban of fine cotton. Behind the king stand ten pages holding shields and swords decorated with gold.”

—al-Bakri, from *The Book of Routes and Kingdoms*

**READING CHECK** Summarizing How did the rulers of Ghana control trade?

### FOCUS ON READING

Does this quotation express a fact or the writer's opinion? How can you tell?

## BIOGRAPHY

### Tunka Manin

Ruled around 1068

All we know about Tunka Manin comes from the writings of a Muslim geographer who wrote about Ghana. From his writings, we know that Tunka Manin was the nephew of the previous king, a man named Basi. Kingship and property in Ghana did not pass from father to son, but from uncle to nephew. Only the king's sister's son could inherit the throne. Once he did become king, Tunka Manin surrounded himself with finery and many luxuries.

**Contrasting** How was inheritance in Ghana different from inheritance in other societies you have studied?

## Ghana's Decline

In the mid-1000s Ghana was rich and powerful, but by the end of the 1200s, the empire had collapsed. Three major factors contributed to its end.

### Invasion

The first factor that helped bring about Ghana's end was invasion. A Muslim group called the Almoravids (al-moh-RAH-vidz) attacked Ghana in the 1060s in an effort to force its leaders to convert to Islam.

The people of Ghana fought hard against the Almoravid army. For 14 years they kept the invaders at bay. In the end, however, the Almoravids won. They destroyed the city of Koumbi Saleh.

The Almoravids didn't control Ghana for long, but they certainly weakened the empire. They cut off many trade routes through Ghana and formed new trading partnerships with Muslim leaders instead. Without this trade Ghana could no longer support its empire.

### Overgrazing

A second factor in Ghana's decline was a result of the Almoravid conquest. When the Almoravids moved into Ghana, they brought herds of animals with them. These animals ate all the grass in many pastures, leaving the soil exposed to hot desert winds. These winds blew away the soil, leaving the land worthless for farming or herding. Unable to grow crops, many farmers had to leave in search of new homes.

### Internal Rebellion

A third factor also helped bring about the decline of Ghana's empire. In about 1200 the people of a country that Ghana had conquered rose up in rebellion. Within a few years the rebels had taken over the entire empire of Ghana.





### Overgrazing

Too many animals grazing in one area can lead to problems, such as the loss of farmland that occurred in West Africa.

- 1 Animals are allowed to graze in areas with lots of grass.
- 2 With too many animals grazing, however, the grass disappears, leaving the soil below exposed to the wind.
- 3 The wind blows the soil away, turning what was once grassland into desert.

Once in control, however, the rebels found that they could not keep order in Ghana. Weakened, Ghana was attacked and defeated by one of its neighbors. The empire fell apart.

**READING CHECK** Identifying Cause and Effect Why did Ghana decline in the 1000s?

**SUMMARY AND PREVIEW** The empire of Ghana in West Africa grew rich and powerful through its control of trade routes. The empire lasted for centuries, but eventually Ghana fell. In the next section you will learn that it was replaced by a new empire, Mali.

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Online Quiz

KEYWORD: SQ7 HP6

## Section 1 Assessment

### Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People **HSS** 7.4.1, 7.4.2

1. a. **Identify** What were the two most valuable resources traded in Ghana?  
 b. **Explain** How did the **silent barter** system work?
2. a. **Identify** Who was **Tunka Manin**?  
 b. **Generalize** What did Ghana's kings do with the money they raised from taxes?  
 c. **Elaborate** Why did the rulers of Ghana not want everyone to have gold?
3. a. **Identify** What group invaded Ghana in the late 1000s?  
 b. **Summarize** How did overgrazing help cause the fall of Ghana?

### Critical Thinking

4. **Identifying Cause and Effect** Draw a diagram like the one shown here. Use it to identify factors that helped Ghana's trade grow and those that led to its decline.



### FOCUS ON SPEAKING

5. **Gathering Information** Look back through this section for information on Ghana and Tunka Manin. Is there anything in this section you might include in your song?



# Empire of Mali

## If YOU were there...

You are a servant of the great Mansa Musa, ruler of Mali. You've been chosen as one of the servants who will travel with him on a pilgrimage to Mecca. The king has given you all fine new clothes of silk for the trip. He will carry much gold with him. You've never left your home before. But now you will see the great city of Cairo, Egypt, and many other new places.

## How do you feel about going on this journey?

**BUILDING BACKGROUND** Mansa Musa was one of Africa's greatest rulers, and his empire, Mali, was one of the largest in the continent's history. Rising from the ruins of Ghana, Mali took over the trade routes of West Africa and grew into a powerful state.

## Sundiata Makes Mali an Empire

Like Ghana, Mali (MAH-lee) lay along the upper Niger River. This area's fertile soil helped Mali grow. In addition, Mali's location on the Niger allowed its people to control trade on the river. Through this control of trade, the empire became rich and powerful. According to legend, Mali's rise to power began under a ruler named **Sundiata** (soohn-JAHT-ah).

## Beginnings of the Empire

Since written records about Mali are scarce, the details of its rise to power are unclear. Many legends about this period exist, though. According to these legends, Sundiata, Mali's first strong leader, was both a mighty warrior and a magician. According to the legends, he had to overcome great hardships before he could build his empire.

Sundiata was the son of a previous king of Mali. When he was a boy, however, Mali was conquered by a powerful king who treated the people of Mali badly. Sundiata grew up hating him. When he reached adulthood, Sundiata built up a huge army and won his country's independence. Then he set about conquering many nearby kingdoms, including Ghana.

## What You Will Learn...

### Main Ideas

1. A ruler named Sundiata made Mali into an empire.
2. Mali reached its height under the ruler Mansa Musa.
3. Mali fell to invaders in the late 1400s.

### The Big Idea

The wealthy and powerful Mali Empire ruled West Africa after the fall of Ghana.

### Key People

Sundiata, p. 136

Mansa Musa, p. 138



**HSS 7.4.3** Describe the role of the trans-Saharan caravan trade in the changing religious and cultural characteristics of West Africa and the influence of Islamic beliefs, ethics, and law.

**7.4.4** Trace the growth of the Arabic language in government, trade, and Islamic scholarship in West Africa.



# Mali Empire, c. 1300



Clay sculpture of a horse and rider from Mali

## Improvements in Mali

After Sundiata had conquered Ghana, he took over the salt and gold trades. He also worked to improve agriculture in Mali. Sundiata had new farmlands cleared for beans, onions, rice, and other crops. He even introduced a new crop to Mali—cotton. People used cotton to make clothing that was comfortable in the warm climate. Realizing its value, they also sold cotton to other people.

To help feed the people of his new empire, legend says that Sundiata put some soldiers to work in the fields. Once Mali's enemies had been defeated, the soldiers didn't need to fight, so they worked alongside slaves on large farms. Using conquered people as slaves was a common practice in the kingdoms of West Africa.

## GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

## INTERPRETING MAPS

**Location** On what river are Timbuktu and Gao located?

## Consolidation of Power

Under Sundiata's guidance, Mali grew into a prosperous kingdom. To keep order and protect his authority, Sundiata took power away from local leaders. These local leaders had borne the title *mansa* (MAHN-sah), a title Sundiata now took for himself.

*Mansas* had both political and religious roles in society. By taking on the religious authority of the *mansas*, Sundiata gained even more power in Mali.



The religious role of the *mansa* grew out of traditional Malian beliefs. According to these beliefs, the people's ancestors had made an agreement with the spirits of the land. The spirits would make sure that the land provided plenty of food. By keeping in touch with their ancestors, the people could contact these spirits.

Sundiata died in 1255. His son, who was the next ruler of Mali, also took the title of *mansa*, as did the empire's later rulers. Unlike Sundiata, though, most of these later rulers were Muslims.

**READING CHECK** **Sequencing** What steps did Sundiata take to turn Mali into an empire?

## Mansa Musa

Mali's most famous ruler was a Muslim king named **Mansa Musa** (MAHN-sah moo-SAH). Under his skillful leadership, Mali reached the height of its wealth, power, and fame in the 1300s. Because of Mansa Musa's influence, Islam spread through a large part of West Africa.

Mansa Musa ruled Mali for about 25 years. During that time, his army captured many important trade cities, including Timbuktu (tim-buhk-TOO), Gao (GOW), and Djenné (je-NAY). These cities became part of Mali's empire.

### The World Learns about Mali

Religion was very important to Mansa Musa. In 1324, he left Mali on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Making such a journey, or hajj, is a spiritual duty of all Muslims.

Mansa Musa's first stop on his hajj was Cairo, Egypt. According to one account, he arrived in the city with nearly 100 camels, each loaded with 300 pounds of gold. Some 60,000 men traveled with him. About 10 years later, a historian spoke to an official who had met him:

“He did me extreme honor and treated me with the greatest courtesy. He addressed me, however, only through an interpreter despite his perfect ability to speak in the Arabic tongue. Then he forwarded [sent] to the royal treasury many loads of unworked native gold and other valuables . . . He left no court emir nor holder of a royal office without the gift of a load of gold. The Cairenes [people of Cairo] made incalculable [uncountable] profits out of him.”

—Shihad ad-Din Ahmad Ibn Fadl Allah al-Umari,  
from *Sight-Seeing Journeys*

This historian says that Mansa Musa gave away so much gold in Egypt that gold was no longer rare there, even 10 years later! As a result, its value dropped steeply.

Through his journey, Mansa Musa introduced the empire of Mali to the world. Before he came to power, only a few people outside of West Africa had ever heard of Mali, even though it was one of the world's largest empires. Mansa Musa made such a great impression on people, though, that Mali became famous throughout Africa, Asia, and Europe.

### Learning and Religion in Mali

Just as he supported his faith, Mansa Musa supported education. In his first years as ruler, he sent scholars to study in Morocco. These scholars later set up schools in Mali for studying the Qur'an. Timbuktu became famous for its schools.

Mansa Musa wanted Muslims to be able to read the Qur'an. Therefore, he stressed the importance of learning to read and write the Arabic language. Arabic became the main language not only for religious study but also for government and trade.

Mansa Musa wanted to spread Islam in West Africa. To encourage this spread, he hired architects from other Muslim countries to build mosques throughout his empire. Elaborate mosques were built in Timbuktu, Djenné, and other cities.

#### THE IMPACT TODAY

Some of the mosques built by Mansa Musa can still be seen in West Africa today.



# Timbuktu

Timbuktu became a major trading city at the height of Mali's power under Mansa Musa. Traders came to Timbuktu from the north and south to trade for salt, gold, metals, shells, and many other goods.

Mansa Musa and later rulers built several large mosques in the city, which became a center of Islamic learning.

Winter floods allowed boats to reach Timbuktu from the Niger River.

Timbuktu's walls and buildings were mostly built with bricks made of dried mud. Heavy rains could soften the bricks and destroy buildings.

At crowded market stalls, people traded for goods like sugar, kola nuts, and glass beads.

Camel caravans from the north brought goods like salt, cloth, books, and slaves to trade at Timbuktu.

**ANALYSIS SKILL** ANALYZING VISUALS

How did traders from the north bring their goods to Timbuktu?



Mansa Musa hoped that people would accept Islam as he had, but he did not want to force people to convert. Still, during his reign Islam became very popular in Mali. Following their king's example, many people from Mali went to Mecca. In turn, many Muslims from Asia, Egypt, and other parts of Africa visited Mali. These journeys between regions helped create more trade and made Mali even richer.

**READING CHECK Identifying Cause and Effect** How did Mansa Musa spread Islam?

## The Fall of Mali

Mali's success depended on strong leaders. Unfortunately, some of Mali's leaders were not strong. Their poor leadership weakened the empire.

When Mansa Musa died, his son Maghan (MAH-gan) took the throne. Unlike his father, however, Maghan was a weak ruler. When raiders poured into Mali, he couldn't stop them. The raiders set fire to Timbuktu's great schools and mosques. Mali never fully recovered from this terrible blow. Weakened, the empire gradually declined.

One reason the empire declined was its size. The empire had become so large that the government could no longer control it. Parts of the empire began to break away. For example, the city of Gao declared its independence in the 1400s.

Invaders also helped weaken the empire. In 1431 the Tuareg (TWAH-reg), nomads from the Sahara, attacked and seized Timbuktu. Soon afterward, the kingdom of Takrur (TAHK-roohr) in northern Mali declared its independence. Gradually, the people living at the edges of Mali's empire broke away. By 1500, nearly all of the lands the empire had once ruled were lost. Only a small area of Mali remained.

**READING CHECK Evaluating** How did Mali's growth eventually weaken the empire?

**SUMMARY AND PREVIEW** Through the leadership of people like Sundiata and Mansa Musa, Mali became a large empire. In time, it became famous for its wealth and its centers of learning. In the next section you will learn about the empire that took over much of Mali's wealth and its great cities. That empire was called Songhai.

## Section 2 Assessment

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**Online Quiz**  
KEYWORD: SQ7 HP6

### Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People **HSS** 7.4.3, 7.4.4

- Identify** Who was Sundiata?
  - Sequence** How did Sundiata turn Mali into an empire?
- Identify** What became the main language of government, trade, and Islamic scholarship in West Africa?
  - Summarize** How did Mansa Musa's journey change people's perceptions of Mali?
  - Elaborate** How did Islam help turn Mali into a center of learning?
- Identify** What group invaded Mali in 1431?
  - Explain** How did Mali's size lead to its fall?

### Critical Thinking

- Finding Main Ideas** Draw two boxes. In them, list three major accomplishments of Sundiata and Mansa Musa.

Sundiata	Mansa Musa

### FOCUS ON SPEAKING

- Taking Notes on Mali** Add to the notes you took earlier your thoughts on Sundiata and Mansa Musa. Compare the leaders of Mali with those of Ghana. Start thinking about which you will choose for your poem.



## Mansa Musa

### How could one man's travels become a major historic event?

**When did he live?** the late 1200s and early 1300s

**Where did he live?** Mali

**What did he do?** Mansa Musa, the ruler of Mali, was one of the Muslim kings of West Africa. He became a major figure in African and world history largely because of a pilgrimage he made to the city of Mecca.

**Why is he important?** Mansa Musa's spectacular journey attracted the attention of the Muslim world and of Europe. For the first time, other people's eyes turned to West Africa. During his travels, Mansa Musa gave out huge

amounts of gold. His spending made people eager to find the source of such wealth. Within 200 years, European explorers would arrive on the shores of western Africa.

**Identifying Points of View** How do you think Mansa Musa changed people's views of West Africa?

### KEY FACTS

**According to chroniclers of the time, Mansa Musa was accompanied on his journey to Mecca by some 60,000 people. Of those people,**

- **12,000** were servants to attend to the king.
- **500** were servants to attend to his wife.
- **14,000** more were slaves wearing rich fabrics such as silk.
- **500** carried staffs heavily decorated with gold. Historians have estimated that the gold Mansa Musa gave away on his trip would be worth more than \$100 million today.

This Spanish map from the 1300s shows Mansa Musa sitting on his throne.

THE GRANGER COLLECTION, NEW YORK





# Empire of Songhai

## If YOU were there...

You are a farmer in the Niger River Valley in about 1500. You're making your first visit to the great city of Timbuktu. You stare around you at the buildings with their tall towers. In the streets you hear people talking in many different languages. They must be students from other countries, come to study in the universities here. From the tower of a mosque, you hear the call to prayer.

## How does the great city make you feel?

**BUILDING BACKGROUND** Timbuktu was the greatest city in Mali. But as the empire of Mali grew weaker and fell, the city did not. As a new empire arose in West Africa, its rulers recognized the greatness of Timbuktu. Just as it had been the major city of Mali's empire, so it was the greatest city in Mali's replacement—Songhai.

## The Songhai Build an Empire

Even as the empire of Mali was reaching its height, a rival power was growing in the area. That rival was the Songhai (SAHNG-hy) kingdom. From their capital at Gao, the Songhai participated in the same trade that had made Ghana and Mali so rich.

By the 1300s the Songhai had become rich and powerful enough to draw the attention of Mali's rulers. Mansa Musa sent his army to conquer the Songhai and make their lands part of his empire. As you have already seen, Gao became one of the most important cities in all of Mali.

## The Birth of the Empire

Songhai did not remain part of Mali's empire for long. As Mali's government grew weaker, the people of Songhai rose up against it and regained their freedom.

Even before they were conquered by Mali, the leaders of the Songhai had become Muslims. As such, they shared a common religion with many of the Berbers who crossed the Sahara to trade in West Africa. Because of this shared religion, the Berbers were willing to trade with the Songhai, who began to grow richer.

## What You Will Learn...

### Main Ideas

1. The Songhai built a new empire in West Africa.
2. Askia the Great ruled Songhai as an Islamic empire.
3. Songhai fell to Moroccan invaders, ending the great era of West African empires.

### The Big Idea

The Songhai Empire strengthened Islam in West Africa.

### Key People

Sunni Ali, p. 143

Askia the Great, p. 144



**HSS 7.4.3** Describe the role of the trans-Saharan caravan trade in the changing religious and cultural characteristics of West Africa and the influence of Islamic beliefs, ethics, and law.



# Songhai Empire, c. 1500



Moroccan coin used to trade in Songhai

## Growth and Conquest

As the Songhai grew richer from trans-Saharan trade, they expanded their territory. Gradually, they built an empire.

Songhai's growth was largely the work of one man, **Sunni Ali** (SOOH-nee ah-LEE), who became the ruler of Songhai in 1464. Before Ali took over, the Songhai state had been disorganized and poorly run. As ruler, he worked constantly to unify, strengthen, and enlarge it.

Much of the land that Sunni Ali added to his empire had been part of Mali. For example, he conquered the wealthy trade cities of Timbuktu and Djenné. In 1468 the rulers of Mali asked Sunni Ali to help fight off Tuareg invaders who were about to capture Timbuktu. Ali agreed, but once he had driven off the invaders he decided

### GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

### INTERPRETING MAPS

**Region** About how many miles did the Songhai Empire stretch from west to east?

to keep the city for himself. From there he launched attacks against Djenné, which he finally captured five years later.

As king, Sunni Ali encouraged all people in his empire to work together. To build peace between religions, he participated in both Muslim and local religions. As a result, he brought peace and stability to Songhai.

**READING CHECK Finding Main Ideas** What did Sunni Ali achieve as ruler of the Songhai?



## Askia the Great

Sunni Ali died in 1492. He was followed as king by his son, Sunni Baru, who was not a Muslim. However, most of the people of the empire's towns were. They were afraid that if Sunni Baru didn't support Islam they would lose power in the empire, and trade with other Muslim lands would suffer. As a result, they rebelled against Sunni Baru.

The leader of the people's rebellion was a general named Muhammad Ture (moo-HAH-muhd too-RAY). After overthrowing Sunni Baru, he took the title *askia*, a title of high military rank. Eventually, he became known as **Askia the Great**.

### Religion and Education

Like Mansa Musa, the famous ruler of Mali, Askia the Great took his Muslim faith very seriously. After he defeated Sunni Baru, Askia made a pilgrimage to Mecca, just as Mansa Musa had 200 years earlier.

Also like Mansa Musa, Askia worked to support education. Under his rule the city of Timbuktu flourished once again. The great city contained universities, schools, libraries, and mosques. Especially famous was the University of Sankore (san-KOH-rah). People arrived there from all over West Africa to study mathematics, science, medicine, grammar, and law. In the early 1500s, a Muslim traveler and scholar called Leo Africanus wrote this about Timbuktu:

“There are in Timbuktu numerous judges, teachers and priests, all properly appointed by the king. He greatly honors learning. Many hand-written books imported from Barbary [North Africa] are also sold. There is more profit made from this commerce [trade] than from all other merchandise.”

—Leo Africanus, from *History and Description of Africa*

Djenné also became a center of learning, especially for medicine. Doctors there discovered that mosquitoes spread malaria. They even performed surgery on the human eye.

The people of Songhai depended on the Niger River for many things. It was an important transportation route and provided fertile lands and a source of water for farming.





## Trade and Government

Timbuktu and Djenné were centers of learning, but they were also trading centers. Merchants from distant lands came to these cities and to Gao.

Most of Songhai's traders were Muslim, and as they gained influence in the empire so did Islam. Askia the Great, himself a devout Muslim, encouraged the growth in Islamic influence. Many of the laws he made were similar to those of Muslim nations across the Sahara.

To help maintain order, Askia set up five provinces within Songhai. He removed local leaders and appointed new governors who were loyal to him. One such governor ran the empire for Askia when he was away on pilgrimage to Mecca. When he returned, Askia brought even more Muslim influence into his government.

Askia also created special departments to oversee certain tasks. These departments worked much like government offices do today. He created a standing professional army, the first in West Africa.

**READING CHECK** **Evaluating** What do you think was Askia's greatest accomplishment?

## Songhai Falls to Morocco

After Askia the Great lost power to his son in 1528, other *askias* ruled Songhai. The empire did not survive for long, though. Areas along the empire's borders started to nibble away at Songhai's power.

## The Moroccan Invasion

One of Songhai's northern neighbors, Morocco, wanted to control the Saharan salt mines. To get those mines, Moroccan troops invaded Songhai. With them they brought a terrible new weapon—the arquebus (AHR-kwih-buhs). The arquebus was an early form of a gun.

## BIOGRAPHY

### Askia the Great

c. 1443–1538

Askia the Great became the ruler of Songhai when he was nearly 50 years old. He ruled Songhai for about 35 years. During his reign the cities of Songhai gained power over the countryside.

When he was in his 80s, Askia went blind. His son Musa forced him to leave the throne. Askia was sent to live on an island. He lived there for nine years until another of his sons brought him back to the capital, where he died. His tomb is still one of the most honored places in all of West Africa.

**Drawing Inferences** Why do you think Askia the Great's tomb is still considered an honored place?



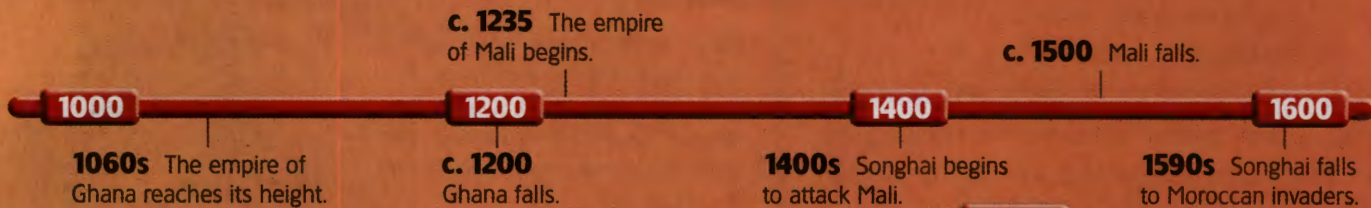
The Moroccans wanted control of the salt mines because they needed money. Not long before the fight over the mines, Morocco had defended itself against huge invading armies from Portugal and Spain. The Moroccans had eventually defeated the Europeans, but the defense had nearly ruined Morocco financially. Knowing of Songhai's wealth, the Moroccan ruler decided to attack Songhai for its rich deposits of salt and gold.

The Moroccan army set out for the heart of Songhai in 1591. Not all of the troops were Moroccan, though. About half were actually Spanish and Portuguese war prisoners. These prisoners had agreed to fight against Songhai rather than face more time in prison. Well trained and disciplined, these soldiers carried **various** weapons, including the deadly new guns. The Moroccans even dragged a few small cannons across the desert with them.

**ACADEMIC VOCABULARY**  
various of many types



## West African Empires



**ANALYSIS  
SKILL**

**READING TIME LINES**

Which empire came first?

### The Destruction of Songhai

The Moroccans' guns and cannons brought disaster to Songhai. The swords, spears, and bows carried by Songhai's warriors were no match for firearms.

The Moroccans attacked Timbuktu and Gao, looting and taking over both cities. The Moroccans didn't push farther into Songhai, but the damage was done. Songhai never recovered from the loss of these cities and the income they produced.

Changes in trade patterns completed Songhai's fall. Overland trade declined as port cities north and south of the old empire became more important. For example, people who lived south of Songhai began

to trade along the Atlantic coast. European traders preferred to sail to Atlantic ports than to deal with Muslim traders. Slowly, the period of great West African empires came to an end.

**READING CHECK** **Predicting** What do you think happened to the people of West Africa after the empire of Songhai was defeated?

**SUMMARY AND PREVIEW** The empire of Songhai was known for its wealth, culture, and learning. In the next section you will read more about the major West African cultures and how we know about them.

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**Online Quiz**

KEYWORD: SQ7 HP6

## Section 3 Assessment

### Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People **HSS** 7.4.3

- a. Identify** In what part of West Africa did Songhai begin?

**b. Summarize** What did **Sunni Ali** accomplish?
- a. Identify** What religion gained influence in Songhai under **Askia the Great**?

**b. Analyze** How did contact with other cultures change Songhai's government?
- a. Identify** Which group of people invaded the Songhai Empire in the 1590s?

**b. Predict** How might West Africa's history have been different if the invaders who conquered Songhai had not had firearms?

### Critical Thinking

- Analyzing** Copy the graphic organizer on the right. In each oval, describe an important development in Songhai during the rule of Askia the Great.



### FOCUS ON SPEAKING

- Evaluating** Add information to your notes for Songhai's leaders. What were their achievements? Compare the Songhai achievements with those of Ghana and Mali.



# Historical and Artistic Traditions

## If YOU were there...

You are the youngest and smallest in your family. People often tease you about not being very strong. In the evenings, when work is done, the people of your village gather to listen to storytellers. One of your favorites is about the hero Sundiata. As a boy he was small and weak, but he grew to be a great warrior and hero.

### How does the story of Sundiata make you feel?

**BUILDING BACKGROUND** Although trading empires rose and fell in West Africa, many traditions continued through the centuries. In every town and village, storytellers passed on the people's histories, legends, and wise sayings. These were at the heart of West Africa's arts and cultural traditions.

## Storytellers Maintain Oral History

Although cities like Timbuktu and Djenné were known for their universities and libraries, writing was never very common in West Africa. In fact, none of the major early civilizations of West Africa developed a written language. Arabic was the only written language they used. Many Muslim traders, government officials, and religious leaders could read and write Arabic.

The lack of a written language does not mean that the people of West Africa didn't know their history, though. They passed along information through oral histories. **An oral history is a spoken record of past events.** The task of remembering West Africa's history was entrusted to storytellers.

### The Griots

West African storytellers were called **griots** (GREE-ohz). They were highly respected in their communities because the people of West Africa were very interested in the deeds of their ancestors. Griots helped keep this history alive for each new generation.

## What You Will Learn...

### Main Ideas

1. Storytellers helped maintain the oral history of the cultures of West Africa.
2. Visitors to West Africa from other lands wrote histories and descriptions of what they saw there.
3. Traditionally, West Africans have valued the arts.

### The Big Idea

Because the people of West Africa did not have a written language, their culture has been passed down through oral history, writings by other people, and the arts.

### Key Terms

oral history, p. 147  
griots, p. 147  
proverbs, p. 148  
kente, p. 151



**HSS 7.4.4** Trace the growth of the Arabic language in government, trade, and Islamic scholarship in West Africa.

**7.4.5** Describe the importance of written and oral traditions in the transmission of African history and culture.





### Oral Traditions

West African storytellers called griots had the job of remembering and passing on their people's history. In this photo, everyone wears their best clothes and gathers around a griot to listen.

The griots' stories were entertaining as well as informative. They told of past events and of the deeds of people's ancestors. For example, some stories explained the rise and fall of the West African empires. Other stories described in detail the actions of powerful kings and warriors. Some griots made their stories more lively by acting out events from the past like scenes in a play.

In addition to stories, the griots recited **proverbs, or short sayings of wisdom or truth**. They used proverbs to teach lessons to the people. For example, one West African proverb warns, "Talking doesn't fill the basket in the farm." This proverb reminds people that they must work to accomplish things. They can't just talk about what they want to do. Another proverb advises, "A hippopotamus can be made invisible in dark water." It warns people to remain alert. Just as it can be hard to see animals in a deep pool, people don't always see the problems they will face.

In order to recite their stories and proverbs, the griots memorized hundreds of names and events. Through this memorization process the griots passed on West African history from generation to generation. However, some griots confused names and events in their heads. When this happened, specific facts about some historical events became distorted. Still, the griots' stories tell us a great deal about life in the West African empires.

### West African Epics

Some of the griot poems are epics—long poems about kingdoms and heroes. Many of these epic poems are collected in the *Dausi* (DAW-zee) and the *Sundiata*.

The *Dausi* tells the history of Ghana. Intertwined with historical events, though, are myths and legends. For example, one story is about a terrifying seven-headed snake god named Bida. This god promised that Ghana would prosper if the people sacrificed a young woman to him every



year. One year a mighty warrior killed Bida. But as the god died, he cursed Ghana. The griots say that it was this curse that caused the empire of Ghana to fall.

Like the *Dausi*, the *Sundiata* is about the history of an empire, Mali. It is the story of Sundiata, Mali's legendary first ruler. According to the epic, when Sundiata was still a boy, a conqueror captured Mali and killed Sundiata's father and 11 brothers. He didn't kill Sundiata because the boy was sick and didn't seem like a threat. However, Sundiata grew up to be an expert hunter and warrior. Eventually he overthrew the conqueror and became king.

**READING CHECK** Drawing Conclusions Why were oral traditions important in West Africa?

## Visitors Write Histories

The people of West Africa left no written histories of their own. Visitors to West Africa from other parts of the world, however, did write about the region. Much of what we know about early West Africa comes from the writings of travelers and scholars from Muslim lands such as Spain and Arabia.

One of the first people to write about West Africa was an Arab scholar named al-Masudi (ahl-mah-SOO-dee). He visited the region in the 900s. In his writings, al-Masudi described the geography, customs, history, and scientific achievements of West Africa.

About 100 years later, another writer, Abu Ubayd al-Bakri, wrote about West Africa. He lived in Córdoba, Spain, where he met many people who had been to West Africa. Based on the stories these people told him, al-Bakri wrote about life in West African kingdoms.

More famous than either of these two writers was Ibn Battutah, a tireless traveler who described most of the Muslim world.

From 1353 to 1354 Ibn Battutah traveled through West Africa. His account of this journey describes the political and cultural lives of West Africans in great detail.

The last of the major Muslim visitors to West Africa was a young man called Leo Africanus (LEE-oh af-ri-KAY-nuhs), or Leo the African. Born in what is now Spain, Leo traveled through northern and western Africa on missions for the government. On his way home, however, pirates captured Leo and brought him to Rome as a prisoner. Although he was freed, he stayed in Rome for many years. There he wrote a description of what he had seen in Africa. Because Leo lived and wrote in Europe, for a long time his work was the only source about life in Africa available to Europeans.

**READING CHECK** Generalizing Why were the written histories of West Africa written by people from other lands?

### Primary Source

#### BOOK

### A Description of Mali

*In the 1300s, Ibn Battutah traveled through much of Asia and Africa. This passage describes the people of Mali, one of the places he visited in Africa.*

“[They] possess some admirable qualities. They are seldom unjust, and have a greater abhorrence [hatred] of injustice than any other people. Their sultan [ruler] shows no mercy to anyone who is guilty of the least act of it. There is complete security in their country. Neither traveler nor inhabitant in it has anything to fear from robbers or men of violence . . . They are careful to observe the hours of prayer, and assiduous [careful] in attending them in congregations [gatherings], and in bringing up their children to them.”

—Ibn Battutah, from *Travels in Asia and Africa 1325–1354*

#### ANALYSIS SKILL

#### ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES

Why may Ibn Battutah have been particularly interested in security within Mali?



## West Africans Value Arts

Like most peoples, West Africans valued the arts. The art they produced took many forms. Common West African art forms included sculpture, mask- and cloth-making, music, and dance.

### Sculpture

Of all the visual art forms, the sculpture of West Africa is probably the best known. West Africans made ornate statues and carvings out of wood, brass, clay, ivory, stone, and other materials.

Most statues from West Africa are of people—often the sculptor's ancestors. In most cases, these statues were made for religious rituals, to ask for the ancestors' blessings. Sculptors made other statues as gifts for the gods. These sculptures were kept in holy places. They were never meant to be seen by people.

Because their statues were often used in religious rituals, many African artists were deeply respected. People thought artists had been blessed by the gods.

Long after the decline of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, West African art is still admired. Museums around the world today display African art. In addition, African sculpture helped inspire some European artists of the 1900s, including Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso.

### Masks and Clothing

In addition to statues, the artists of West Africa carved elaborate masks. Made of wood, these masks bore the faces of animals such as hyenas, lions, monkeys, and antelopes. Artists often painted the masks after carving them. People wore these masks during rituals as they danced around fires. The way firelight reflected off the masks made them look fierce and lifelike.

## LINKING TO TODAY

### Music From Mali to Memphis

Did you know that the music you listen to today may have begun with the griots? From the 1600s to the 1800s, many people from West Africa were brought to America as slaves. In America, these slaves continued to sing the way they had in Africa. They also continued to play traditional instruments such as the *kora* played by Senegalese musician Soriba Kouyaté, the son of a griot (right). Over time, this music developed into a style called the blues, made popular by such artists as B. B. King (left). In turn, the blues shaped other styles of music, including jazz and rock. So, the next time you hear a Memphis blues track or a cool jazz tune, listen for its ancient African roots!



#### ANALYSIS SKILL

#### ANALYZING INFORMATION

How did West African music affect modern American music?



Many African societies were also famous for the cloth they wove. The most famous of these cloths is called kente (ken-TAY). **Kente is a hand-woven, brightly colored fabric.** The cloth was woven in narrow strips that were then sewn together. Kings and queens in West Africa wore garments made of kente for special occasions.

Like their music and dance, many West African crafts have been handed down for generations. This woman in the modern nation of Ghana is weaving traditional baskets.



### Music and Dance

In many West African societies, music and dance were as important as the visual arts. Singing and dancing were great forms of entertainment, but they also helped people honor their history and were central to many celebrations. For example, music was played when a ruler entered a room.

Dance has long been a central part of African society. Many West African cultures used dance to celebrate specific events or ceremonies. For example, they may have performed one dance for weddings and another for funerals. In some parts of West Africa, people still perform dances similar to those performed hundreds of years ago.

**READING CHECK Summarizing** Summarize how traditions were preserved in West Africa.

**SUMMARY AND PREVIEW** The societies of West Africa never developed written languages, but their histories and cultures have been passed on through traditions and customs. You will next read about another culture in which traditions are important—China.

## Section 4 Assessment

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Online Quiz

KEYWORD: SQ7 HP6

### Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People **HSS** 7.4.4, 7.4.5

- a. Define** What is oral history?

**b. Generalize** Why were griots and their stories important in West African society?

**c. Evaluate** Why may an oral history provide different information than a written account?
- a. Identify** Name one writer who wrote about West Africa.

**b. Infer** How do you think these writers' views of West Africa may have differed from the views of West Africans?
- Identify** What were two forms of visual art popular in West Africa?

### Critical Thinking

- Categorizing** Create a chart like the one here. Use it to describe the *Dausi* and the *Sundiata*.

Great Epics of West Africa	
<i>Dausi</i>	<i>Sundiata</i>

### FOCUS ON SPEAKING

- Writing about Oral and Written Traditions** Take notes on how griots and musicians wrote and played to get ideas for your own performance. Consider these questions: How dramatic should my praise song be? How can I make the performance of my praise song more interesting?



from

# Sundiata

by D. T. Niane, as told by Djeli Mamoudou Kouyaté

Translated by G. D. Pickett

**GUIDED READING**

**WORD HELP**

**rampart** a protective bank or wall

**colossal** gigantic

**provisions** supplies

1 *Soumaoro* is another name for Sumanguru. Noumounkeba is one of his assistants.

2 *Sogolon Djata* is another name for Sundiata.

*Imagine that you are one of Sundiata's warriors. How do you feel as you look down on the city of Sosso?*

3 A *sofa* is a warrior.

4 The Mandingoes were the people of Mali.



**ELA Reading 7.3.2** Identify events that advance the plot and determine how each event explains past or present action(s) or foreshadows future action(s).

**About the Reading** For almost 900 years, West African griots have been telling the story of Sundiata, king and founder of the Mali Empire. Like other ancient epics, this one is a blend of history and legend. Some parts of the story are based on fact—such as Sundiata's defeat of the tyrant-king Sumanguru, which took place in about 1235. Other elements, though, were added over time for dramatic effect. In the following episode, for example, an almost superhuman Sundiata swoops down upon Sumanguru's capital city, Sosso, vowing to destroy it in a single morning.

**AS YOU READ** Imagine the sequence of events.

Sosso was a magnificent city. In the open plain her triple rampart with awe-inspiring towers reached into the sky. The city comprised a hundred and eighty-eight fortresses and the palace of Soumaoro loomed above the whole city like a gigantic tower. 1 Sosso had but one gate; colossal and made of iron, the work of the sons of fire. Noumounkeba hoped to tie Sundiata down outside of Sosso, for he had enough provisions to hold out for a year.

The sun was beginning to set when Sogolon Djata appeared before Sosso the Magnificent. 2 From the top of a hill, Djata and his general staff gazed upon the fearsome city of the sorcerer-king. The army encamped in the plain opposite the great gate of the city and fires were lit in the camp. Djata resolved to take Sosso in the course of a morning . . .

At daybreak the towers of the ramparts were black with sofas. 3 Others were positioned on the ramparts themselves. They were the archers. The Mandingoes were masters in the art of storming a town. 4 In the front line Sundiata placed the sofas of Mali, while those who held the ladders were in the second line protected by the shields of the spearmen. The main body of the army was to attack the city gate. When all was ready, Djata gave the order to attack. The drums resounded, the horns blared and like a tide the Mandingo front line



moved off, giving mighty shouts. With their shields raised above their heads the Mandingoes advanced up to the foot of the wall, then the Sossos began to rain large stones down on the assailants. From the rear, the bowmen of Wagadou shot arrows at the ramparts. The attack spread and the town was assaulted at all points . . . On one knee the archers fired flaming arrows over the ramparts. Within the walls the thatched huts took fire and the smoke swirled up. The ladders stood against the curtain wall and the first Mandingo sofas were already at the top. Seized by panic through seeing the town on fire, the Sossos hesitated a moment. The huge tower surmounting the gate surrendered, for Fakoli's smiths had made themselves the masters of it. **5** They got into the city where the screams of women and children brought the Sossos' panic to a head. They opened the gates to the main body of the enemy.

Then began the massacre. Women and children in the midst of fleeing Sossos implored mercy of the victors. Djata and his cavalry were now in front of the awesome tower palace of Soumaoro. Noumounkeba, conscious that he was lost, came out to fight. With his sword held aloft he bore down on Djata, but the latter dodged him and, catching hold of the Sosso's braced arm, forced him to his knees whilst the sword dropped to the ground. He did not kill him but delivered him into the hands of Manding Bory . . . **6**

Just as he had wished, Sundiata had taken Sosso in the course of a morning. When everything was outside of the town and all that there was to take had been taken out, Sundiata gave the order to complete its destruction. The last houses were set fire to and prisoners were employed in the razing of the walls. Thus, as Djata intended, Sosso was destroyed to its very foundations.

## GUIDED READING

### WORD HELP

**assailants** attackers  
**surmounting** rising above  
**razing** tearing down

**5** Fakoli, Soumaoro's nephew, had rebelled against his uncle.

**6** Manding Bory is Sundiata's half-brother and best friend.

**This blanket was woven by the Fulani people of modern Mali, the descendants of Sumanguru and his subjects.**



## CONNECTING LITERATURE TO HISTORY

**1. Analyzing** West African epics sometimes included both elements of truth and fictional embellishments. Which details in this excerpt sound like they could be true? Which were probably invented later? What makes you think that?

**2. Making Decisions** Griots had to commit to memory hundreds of events in order to tell their stories. They would sometimes act stories out like plays. If you were a griot, how might you bring the action in this excerpt to life?





Analysis

Critical Thinking

Participation

Study

## Interpreting Maps: Expansion of Empires

### Understand the Skill

Many types of maps are useful in the study of history. *Physical maps* show natural features on the earth's surface. *Political maps* show human cultural features such as cities, states, and countries. Modern political maps show the present-day borders of states and countries. Historical political maps show what cultural features were in the past.

Some historical political maps show how boundaries and features changed over time. Being able to interpret such maps makes the growth and disintegration of countries and empires easier to visualize and understand.

### Learn the Skill

Use these guidelines to interpret maps that show political change.

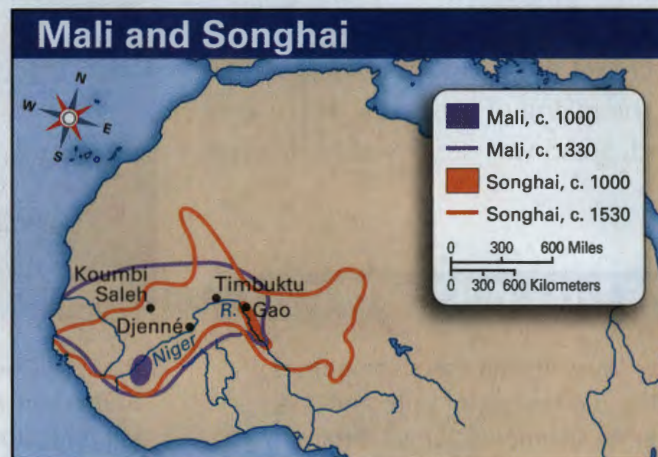
- 1 Read the title to find out what the map is about.
- 2 Read the legend. The map's title may state the time period covered by the map. However, in this type of map, information about dates is often found in the legend.
- 3 Study the legend carefully to be sure you understand what each color or symbol means. Pay special attention to colors or symbols that might indicate changes in borders, signs of the growth or loss of a country's territory.

- 4 Study the map itself. Compare the colors and symbols in the legend to those on the map. Note any labels, especially those that may show political change. Look for other indications of political changes on the map.

### Practice and Apply the Skill

Interpret the map below to answer the following questions about the Mali and Songhai empires.

1. Which empire was older? Which empire expanded the most?
2. Was Songhai ever part of the Mali Empire? Explain how the map provides this information.
3. Who controlled the city of Gao in the year 1100? in 1325? in 1515?
4. By what date do you know for sure that the Mali Empire had disintegrated? How do you know?





## Visual Summary

Use the visual summary below to help you review the main ideas of the chapter.

**QUICK FACTS**

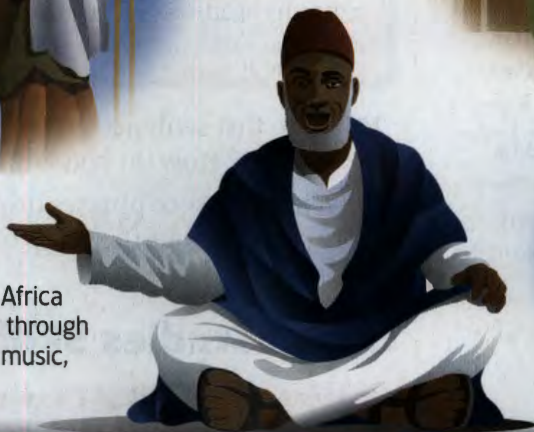


The Ghana Empire developed in West Africa and controlled the trade in salt and gold.



Mali's kings built an empire and spread Islam in West Africa.

The history of West Africa has been preserved through storytelling, writing, music, and art.



The Songhai Empire continued to spread Islam.

## Reviewing Vocabulary, Terms, and People

Imagine that these terms and people from the chapter are correct answers to items in a crossword puzzle. Write the clues for the answers. Then make the puzzle with some answers written down and some across.

1. silent barter
2. Tunka Manin
3. Sundiata
4. Mansa Musa
5. various
6. Askia the Great
7. oral history
8. griots
9. proverbs
10. kente
11. Sunni Ali
12. process

## Comprehension and Critical Thinking

### SECTION 1 (Pages 130–135) HSS 7.4.1, 7.4.2

13. **a. Identify** What were the two major trade goods that made Ghana rich? Where did each come from?
- b. Draw Conclusions** Why did merchants in Ghana not want other traders to know where their gold came from?
- c. Evaluate** Who do you think was more responsible for the collapse of Ghana, the people of Ghana or outsiders? Why?

### SECTION 2 (Pages 136–140) HSS 7.4.3, 7.4.4

14. **a. Describe** How did Islam influence society in Mali?
- b. Compare and Contrast** How were Sundiata and Mansa Musa similar? How were they different?
- c. Elaborate** How did Mali's growth and power help lead to its downfall?



### SECTION 3 (Pages 142–146) HSS 7.4.3

15. **a. Identify** What ruler led Songhai in its conquest of Mali?
- b. Make Inferences** Why did Muhammad Ture become known as Askia the Great?
- c. Evaluate** Which do you think played more of a role in Songhai's society, warriors or traders? Why?

### SECTION 4 (Pages 147–151) HSS 7.4.4, 7.4.5

16. **a. Describe** Who were the griots? What role did they play in West African society?
- b. Make Inferences** Why do you think music and dance were so important in West African society?
- c. Evaluate** Which do you think is a more reliable source about life in the Mali Empire—a story told by a modern griot or an account written by a Muslim scholar who had spoken to travelers from Mali? Defend your answer.

## Reviewing Themes

17. **Geography** How did the location of the West African empires affect their success at trade?
18. **Economics** How did economics shape the governments and societies of West African empires?

## Using the Internet

go.hrw.com

KEYWORD: SQ7 WH6

19. **Activity: Writing Proverbs** Does the early bird get the worm? If you go outside at sunrise to check, you missed the fact that it's a proverb that means "The one that gets there first can earn something good." Griots created many proverbs that expressed wisdom or truth. Enter the activity keyword. Then use the Internet resources to write three proverbs that might have been said by griots during the time of the great West African empires. Make sure your proverbs are written from the point of view of a West African person living during those centuries.

## Reading and Analysis Skills

**Distinguishing Fact and Opinion** Read the primary source and answer the questions that follow.

"The interpreter Dugha ... plays on an instrument made of reeds, with some small calabashes at its lower end, and chants a poem in praise of the sultan, recalling his battles and deeds of valor ... after Dugha has finished his display, the poets come in. Each of them is inside a figure resembling a thrush, made of feathers, and provided with a wooden head with a red beak, to look like a thrush's head. They stand in front of the sultan in this ridiculous make-up and recite their poems."

20. Is the first sentence of this passage a fact or an opinion? How do you know?
21. What words or phrases display Ibn Battutah's opinions about the poets of Mali?

## Social Studies Skills

**Understanding Political Change** Study the maps of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai on pages 137 and 143 and answer the following questions.

22. Which empire appears to have included the largest area?
23. Which empire seems to have contained the most trading cities?
24. How did the government of Timbuktu change over time?

## FOCUS ON SPEAKING

25. **Presenting Your Praise Song** Review your notes and choose an empire or leader. Look back at the chapter to get as many details about that empire or leader as you can. Next choose the style of your song. You may pick a familiar tune, compose a rap song, or compose a simple blues song. Now write words to go with your song's music. Be sure that your song identifies the empire or leader and tells about important accomplishments. Practice your song until you can sing it without looking at the words. Once you have prepared your song, perform it. You don't have to sing. You can chant or speak if you prefer.



# Standards Assessment

**DIRECTIONS:** Read each question, and write the letter of the best response.

**1**

Well placed for the caravan trade, it was badly situated to defend itself from the Tuareg raiders of the Sahara. These restless nomads were repeatedly hammering at the gates of Timbuktu, and often enough they burst them open with disastrous results for the inhabitants. Life here was never quite safe enough to recommend it as the centre [center] of a big state.

—Basil Davidson, from *A History of West Africa*

**In this quote, the author is discussing why Timbuktu was**

- A a good place for universities.
- B not a good place for a capital city.
- C a good location for trade.
- D not a good location for the center of the Tuareg state.

**2 In the second sentence of the passage above, what does the phrase *hammering at the gates of Timbuktu* mean?**

- A driving nails into Timbuktu's gates
- B knocking on the door to get in the city
- C trying to get into and conquer the city
- D making noise to anger the inhabitants

**3 Which of the following rivers helped the development of the West African empires?**

- A Niger
- B Congo
- C Nile
- D Zambezi

**4 The wealth of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai was based on**

- A raiding other tribes.
- B the gold and salt trade.
- C trade in ostriches and elephant tusks.
- D making iron tools and weapons.

**5 The two rulers who were most responsible for spreading Islam were**

- A Sunni Ali and Mansa Musa.
- B Sundiata and Sunni Ali.
- C Ibn Battutah and Leo Africanus.
- D Mansa Musa and Askia the Great.

**6 Griots contributed to West African societies by**

- A fighting battles.
- B collecting taxes.
- C preserving oral history.
- D trading with the Berbers.

## Connecting with Past Learnings

**7 You learned earlier about the fall of the Roman Empire. Mali fell for some of the same reasons that the Roman Empire ended. Of the following, which is *not* one of those reasons?**

- A invasions by other peoples
- B large size of the empire
- C lack of strong leadership
- D lack of products for trade



## Assignment

Write a paper explaining one of these topics:

- how the introduction of iron changed life in early West African civilizations
- why the empire of Mali declined and fell

### TIP Using a Clear Order Essays

explaining how or why should be written in a clear and consistent order. Consider using one of these:

- **chronological order**, or the order that events occurred
- **order of importance**, going from the most important information or point to the least important, or from the least important to the most important



**ELA Writing 7.2.0** Students write expository texts.

## A Writer's Framework

### Introduction

- Start with an interesting fact or question.
- Identify your big idea.
- Include important background information.

### Body

- Create at least one paragraph for each point supporting your big idea.
- Include facts and details to explain and illustrate each point.
- Use chronological order or order of importance to present your support.

### Conclusion

- Summarize your main points.
- Restate your big idea in different words.

# How and Why in History

**W**hy were the pyramids built? How did early West Africans get water for their crops? Often the first question we ask about something begins with *why* or *how*. One way we can answer *how* or *why* questions is by writing an explanation.

## 1. Prewrite

### Considering Topic and Audience

As soon as you choose one of the two topics to write about, you need to convert it to a big idea. For example, your big idea might be "The introduction of iron changed life in early West African civilizations in three important ways."

You also need to think about the people who will read your essay. In this case, your audience will be middle school students. What background information will they need to understand your explanation? What details or information might cause confusion?

### Collecting and Organizing Information

Scan the material in your textbook, looking for information about your topic. Use that information to start a plan for your paper and to organize the support for your big idea. For example, look for two or three ways in which iron changed life in early West Africa or two or three factors that caused Mali to fall. If you need more information, check your library or the Internet for sources on early West Africa.

## 2. Write

Here is a framework that can help you write a first draft.



### 3. Evaluate and Revise

#### Evaluating

Clear, straightforward language is the key to writing effective explanations. Use the following questions to discover ways to improve your paper.

#### Evaluation Questions for an Explanation of How or Why

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Do you begin with an interesting fact or question?</li><li>■ Does your introduction identify your big idea and provide any background information your readers might need?</li><li>■ Do you have at least one paragraph for each point you are using to support the big idea?</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Do you include facts and details to explain and illustrate each point?</li><li>■ Do you use chronological order or order of importance to organize your main points?</li><li>■ Does your conclusion summarize the main points and restate the big idea of your paper?</li></ul> |
|---|---|

#### Revising

Look back through your paper to see whether you have any paragraphs that are confusing or packed too full with information. To make explanations clearer, you may want to

- take the facts or details from three or more sentences,
- introduce them in one sentence, and
- break them out into a bulleted or numbered list.

### 4. Proofread and Publish

#### Proofreading

Special formatting—such as *italics*, **boldface**, underlining, numbering, or bullets—can help make your ideas clear. Using special formatting inconsistently, however, will only confuse your reader. As you proofread your paper, ask yourself these questions to look for formatting errors.

- Have you used boldface or italic type for headings, important information, or key terms in a consistent (unchanging) way?
- In a list of items, have you consistently used numbers or bullets?
- In a list of numbered steps, have you missed any numbers?

#### Publishing

Share your explanation with students from another class. Ask them if your explanation makes sense to them.

#### Practice and Apply

Use the steps and strategies outlined in this workshop to write your explanation.

#### TIP Using Bulleted Lists

The items in a bulleted list should always be in the same word forms or structures.

#### Not the same:

Askia the Great was important because he

- supported education,
- reorganization of government,
- standardized weights.

#### The same:

Askia the Great was important because he

- supported education,
- reorganized government,
- standardized weights.