

WEST AFRICA Geography TN 7.21



7.22 Explain indigenous African spiritual traditions, including: ancestor worship, animism, and the relationship between humans and deities.

Animism	Ancestor Worship	Deities
Belief that everything on Earth has a powerful spirit that can help or harm human needs.	Ancestors were feared. Spirits exist in animal or inanimate (lifeless) objects	Control the day-to-day occurrences in human life.
Called upon for help in times of need or trouble.	Griots – story teller that passes down belief systems through generations.	These gods/goddesses could control creation, nature, leadership, and agriculture.

Ancestor Worship = "extension of a belief in and respect for elders. Followers of traditional African religion believe that ancestors maintain a spiritual connection with their living relatives."

7.23 Analyze the growth of the kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, including cities such as a Djenne and Timbuktu as centers, culture, and learning

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

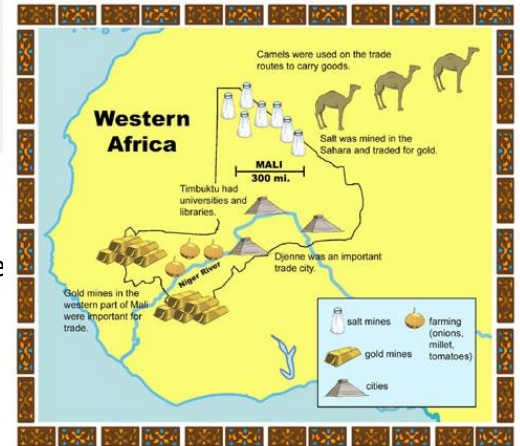
Djenné, ancient trading city and center of Muslim learning, The city benefited both from its direct connection by river with Timbuktu and from its situation at the head of the trade routes to the gold mines; it was also an important trade center for salt.

Timbuktu was one of the most important commercial centers after the 12th century, because it allowed the meeting of western Africa with the nomadic populations of the Sahara known as Berbers. The Mosque in **Timbuktu** attracted many scholars. During Europe's Middle Ages, it was home to a rich writing tradition that saw the creation of millions of manuscripts, hundreds of thousands of which survive to present day.

7. 24 Describe the role of the Trans-Saharan caravan trade in the changing religious and cultural characteristics of West Africa and in the exchange of salt, gold and slaves.

Impacts of Trans-Saharan Trade

- Islam spreads into West Africa along with Arabic
- West African cities become major centers of trade
- The Berber tribes gained prominence as trans-Saharan merchants
- Trade centers promoted regional development, learning and culture



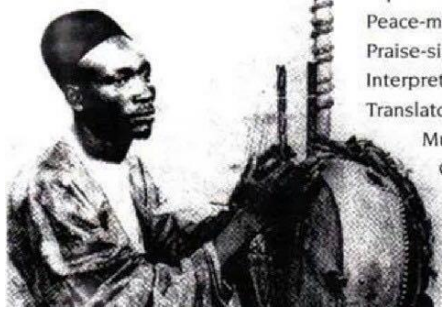
Must haves for Trans-Saharan Trade Camels and Oases along the trade routes
Trade goods like gold, salt, ivory, slaves, and pepper helped to forge major connections across the Sahara

7.25 Explain the importance of griots in the transmission of West African history and culture

A griot is a West African storyteller, singer, musician, and oral historian. The griot keeps records of all the births, deaths, marriages through the generations of the village or family. Master of the oral traditions, the griot plays a key role in west African society

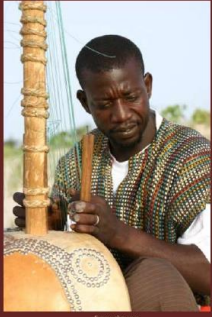
GRIOTS

- What do griots do? They are:
- Poets
 - Historians
 - Advisors
 - Spokespersons
 - Diplomats
 - Peace-makers
 - Praise-singers
 - Interpreters
 - Translators
 - Musicians
 - Composers
 - Teachers
 - Warriors
 - Witnesses



GRIOTS OF THE PAST

• Inherited their role. They had to be born into a family of griots. They learned to memorize events, songs, and dances which transmitted the history of families, villages, and kingdoms.



7.26 Explain the importance of the Malian king Mansa Musa and his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324.



Mansa Musa was an emperor (**mansa**) of the Mali Empire during the 14th century. He was the first African ruler to be widely **known** throughout Europe and the Middle East, and is regarded as the richest person to have ever lived.

- Mansa Musa's caravan consisted: of *60,000 men* including *12,000 slaves* who dressed in Persian silk.
- Musa rode on a horseback with 500 slaves carrying gold adorned staff directly preceding him.
- He also took along with him *80 camels* which carried *300 pound of gold* each.
- Musa spent lavishly during his journey distributing gold to people and exchanging it for souvenirs in the cities he crossed on his way to Mecca including Cairo and Medina.
- When historian *Chihab al-Umari* visited Cairo twelve years later, the citizens were still singing Musa's praise.
- Mansa Musa gave away so much gold in Cairo the value of gold declined in Egypt for 12 years



EFFECT S OF MANSA MUSAS HAJI

- Mansa Musa brought back Arab scholars
- The *University of Sankore* in Timbuktu became a center of learning
- Muslim scholars from all over Africa and even the Middle East visited
- World became aware of Mali's wealth and this in turn made Timbuktu a center of trade where merchants from several cities including Venice, Granada, and Genoa traded goods for gold.