

Name: _____ date: _____ hr: _____ class # _____
 GROUP **SOLO** Due on: _____

Diverse Societies in Africa

A LAND OF GEOGRAPHIC CONTRASTS

What are some of the geographic contrasts in Africa?

Africa is the second largest continent in the world. It stretches 4,600 miles from east to west and 5,000 miles from north to south. It has about one-fifth of the earth’s land. Much of the land is a high plateau,

with lower land near the coasts. The rivers that flow along this high land often form waterfalls or rapids. As a result, boats cannot use these rivers to travel either to or from the coast. Also, the coast has few harbors for so large a landmass.

Africa has many different environments. There are hot, dry deserts; steamy, wet rain forests; and high, cool mountains.

About a third of Africa’s land is desert. Few people live there. Deserts form a barrier to people who want to move from one area to another. The **Sahara** Desert in the north of Africa is about one- third the size of the United States. Dense rain forests cover much of the central part of Africa.

The northern and southern regions of Africa have large numbers of people. Most Africans live on the **savannas**, grasslands that cover almost half of the continent. They grow grains, including rice and wheat, and tend cattle.

The land at the southern edge of the Sahara Desert is the **Sahel**. Each year, the Sahara Desert takes over a little more of this Sahel.

TERMS AND NAMES

- Sahara** Large desert in Africa
- savanna** Grassy plain
- Sahel** Land at the southern edge of the Sahara
- animism** Religion in which spirits play a role in daily life
- griot** West African storyteller
- Nok** African people who lived in what is now Nigeria from 500 B.C. to A.D. 200
- Djenné-Djeno** Oldest known city in Africa south of the Sahara

1. Name three contrasting features of African geography. _____

EARLY HUMANS ADAPT TO THEIR ENVIRONMENTS

When and where did people begin to farm?

The first humans in Africa got food by hunting animals and gathering plants. Even today, some African peoples still use this method to get food.

Over time, these people learned to tame animals and raise them for food. Like the hunters and gatherers, these herders were *nomadic* people. As they moved, they looked for grass and for water for their animals. When food or water was used up in one area, they moved to another.

About 10,000 B.C., some people in Africa began to farm. People used to farm in the area of the Sahara before it became a desert. They also farmed in the Nile Valley and West Africa or on the grass- lands. Some moved to the rain forest.

2. Where did African people settle and begin farming? _____

EARLY SOCIETIES IN WEST AFRICA--*How did early societies live?*

The *diverse* environments of Africa created much variety in the way different African peoples lived, The people who lived south of the Sahara, though, had these features in common:

- The family was the most important unit of society. The family was an extended family that included grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. In some groups, family included all the people who came from common *ancestors*. This is called a *clan*.
- They believed that one god created the world. Their beliefs included **animism**. They felt that plants, animals, and other natural forces all have spirits that play an important role in life.

3. What features did people living south of the Sahara have in common?

- They relied on oral storytelling, rather than writing, to pass on the traditions of their people. In West Africa, for example, storytellers, or **griots**, kept history alive.

WEST AFRICAN IRON AGE--*Who were the Iron Age societies?* The West African **Nok** culture existed from about 500 B.C. to A.D. 200. The Nok people made pottery figures and were the first people in Africa who knew how to make iron. Some styles of Nok pottery are still found in Africa today. Djenné-Djeno is the oldest known African city south of the Sahara. It was located on the banks of the Niger River. It dates from about 250 B.C. About 50,000 people lived there at its height. At first, they lived in round huts made of *reeds* and covered with mud. Later they lived in houses of mud bricks. They grew rice, raised cattle, and made iron. They traded these goods for gold and copper.

4. What is Djenné-Djeno?

CHAPTER 8 Section 2 (pages 220–224)

Migration--CASE STUDY: BANTU-SPEAKING PEOPLES, A PEOPLE ON THE MOVE--*What are the main reasons for migrations?*

Throughout human history, many peoples have felt the urge to move from their land. This movement is called **migration**. There are many reasons that people make such a move. But they can be grouped into three main causes. They are environmental change, economic pressure, political and religious *persecution*.

Reasons people move into or out of an area are called **push-pull factors**. People may be attracted or pulled into an area because they see economic advantages. Or they may move because they want freedom. Sometimes people are pushed out of an area because the environment changes and it is impossible to live there. Other times people may leave to find security or peace that can not be found in their area. These are examples of push factors.

In studying times before written history, researchers look for clues to migrations. One clue they use is language. People take their language with them when they move to a new place. When historians find two languages from two distant areas that have words that are somewhat similar, they can conclude that those two languages may have both come from the same language. However, some time later the original speakers of the language moved apart. Then the two languages changed independently. This kind of clue has given historians a way of understanding the early history of Africa.

1. Name three key reasons for migration.

TERMS AND NAMES

migration A permanent move from one area to another

push-pull factors Reasons attracting or driving people to move

Bantu-speaking peoples People who speak one of a group of languages related to Bantu

MASSIVE MIGRATIONS--*Who were the Bantu-speaking peoples?*

Many languages spoken in Africa today developed from the same parent language called *Proto-Bantu*. The speakers of all these different languages are called the **Bantu-speaking peoples**. The people who spoke Bantu first lived in a part of modern Nigeria. In the first few centuries A.D., they began to move south and east. Over time, they spread throughout Africa south of the Sahara Desert, reaching the southern tip around 500 years ago. They brought their language and their culture with them.

One of the reasons people moved had to do with their style of farming. They would clear an area and use it until the soil no longer could produce good crops. The people then needed to move to a new area to clear new ground.

Another reason they moved was that their farming was so successful. Farming helped them produce more food than they could by hunting and gathering. With more to eat, groups became larger and the land more crowded. They could not move north, where the Sahara Desert made a barrier. So they had to move farther and farther south.

As they reached new areas, the Bantu peoples met other peoples. Sometimes these meetings were violent. The Bantus, who knew how to make iron, had better weapons than those they met, who only had stone tools. Some of the peoples that they met are still found in Africa. But they live in small areas with very harsh environments. The Bantus took the better land.

2. Why did the Bantu peoples keep moving to new areas?

Skillbuilder

Migration: Push-Pull Factors		
Push Examples	Migration Factors	Pull Examples
Climate changes, exhausted resources, earthquakes, volcanoes, drought/famine	Environmental	Abundant land, new resources, good climate
Unemployment, slavery	Economic	Employment opportunities
Religious, ethnic, or political persecution, war	Political	Political and/or religious freedom

1. Categorizing Which pull example is associated with economic factors?

2. Drawing Conclusions Why would climate changes be considered a push factor?

CHAPTER 8 Section 3 (pages 225–229)

The Kingdom of Aksum

THE RISE OF THE KINGDOM OF AKSUM--*How did Aksum arise?*

Salt, emeralds, brass, copper, gold, cloth, olive oil, and wine all moved through Aksum. Its trade routes helped link Rome to India. Traders crowded into its chief seaport, **Adulis**.

In the early A.D. 300s, Aksum had a strong new king named **Ezana**. He brought kingdom to its height during his rule. Ezana captured more land on the Arabian peninsula, and then conquered Kush in 350.

The peoples in East Africa had a great deal of contact with people from other areas. The Kushite kingdom of Nubia had close relations with Egypt. Its kings even ruled Egypt for a while. That kingdom continued for many centuries as a trading power. It was then replaced by the kingdom of **Aksum** in what is now modern Ethiopia. The dynasty that ruled Aksum and later Ethiopia included the 20th-century ruler Haile Selassie.

Aksum may have begun as early as 1000 B.C. when Arabian traders mixed with the people of Kush. It became an important part of world trade.

TERMS AND NAMES

Aksum African kingdom that reached the height of its power in the fourth century a.d.

Adulis Chief seaport of Aksum

Ezana King of Aksum who conquered Kush

terraces Step-like ridges built on slopes to improve farming

1. Why was Aksum an important trading center?

AN INTERNATIONAL CULTURE DEVELOPS--*What was unique about Aksum's culture?*

Aksum was an international trading center. It was home to peoples from many different cultures. There were people from Aksum's widespread trading partners, including Egypt, Arabia, Greece, Rome, Persia, India, and even Byzantium. At the time of King Ezana, these different peoples all spoke to one another in Greek.

The Aksumites, like other ancient Africans, traditionally believed in one god. They also worshiped the spirits of nature and honored their dead ancestors. During his rule, King Ezana decided to become a Christian. The religion slowly spread throughout the land.

The people of Aksum also developed a special way of building. They made structures out of stone, not mud baked into bricks by the hot sun. Their kings built tall *pillars* of stone that reached as high as 60 feet. They were among the tallest structures in the ancient world.

Aksum made other advances as well. Aside from Egypt and the city of *Meroë*, it was the only culture of ancient Africa to have a written language. The language of Aksum had been brought to the land by Arab traders many hundreds of years before. Aksum was also the first state south of the Sahara to *mint* its own coins.

The people of Aksum also developed a new way of farming. They cut **terraces**, step-like ridges, into the steep mountainsides in their country. The terraces helped the land hold water instead of letting it run down the mountain in a heavy rain. This was called terrace farming. The people of Aksum also used dams and stone tanks to store water and used ditches to channel it to their fields.

2. What achievements and advances were made in Aksum?

THE FALL OF AKSUM--*Why did Aksum fall?*

Aksum remained an important power in East Africa for 800 years. It was first challenged in the 600s, after the new religion of Islam came to Arabia. The followers of Islam captured the lands that Aksum held in the Arabian peninsula. Within a few decades, they had taken much of North Africa.

At first, these conquerors left Aksum alone. Aksum remained an island of Christianity in a sea of Islam. In 710, however, the conquerors destroyed Adulis. The Aksum kings moved their capital over the mountains to a hard-to-reach area, in present-day northern Ethiopia. Aksum was now cut off from other Christian lands. It was also isolated from the sea trade. Aksum began to decline as a world power.

3. Why did the rulers of Aksum move their capital?

FOR CHAPTER 8 SECTION 1—ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. How did geography—where mountains, deserts, bodies of water and so on are located—limit trade
a) within Africa

b) between Africa and the rest of the world

2. Match items on the left with the word or concept on the right related or caused by them.

COMMON FEATURES OF SUB_SAHARAN AFRICA

valued family—viewed family as important unit in society.

relied on storytelling/no system of writing

believed that plants, animals, other natural forces have spirits.

KEYWORDS/CONCEPTS

griots

animism

clan

3. What kind of metal working skill did the Nok people have? _____ When did they build Djenné-Djeno? _____

FOR CHAPTER 8 SECTION 2—ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

4. How does language help to detect patterns of migration?

5. One reason for the Bantu migration was, the Bantu-speaking people were able to forge iron tools. How could this have been a factor in their having spread (and having taken control over lands where other people had been living)? The reading mentions making iron weapons, but IN ADDITION to that advantage, how might iron TOOLS have given them an advantage?

FOR CHAPTER 8 SECTION 3—ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

6. During what part of the video about *India—Spice Trade and Silk Route* might Aksum have been mentioned/shown? How was it involved with India?

7. How are the achievements of Aksum similar to those of other civilizations we've studied?

8. What happened when Aksum was cut off from trade?