The BIG Idea
Beginning around 1200, global trade and interactions increased as:

Unit 3
Section 3: Global Trade and Interactions

Section Overview
In the 1200s, global interactions increased. During the early Ming dynasty in China, trade thrived and cities grew. Goods continued to travel with Muslim traders by sea from China to Africa, where Venetian ships transported goods across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. The population of Europe began to grow leading a revival of European trade and town life. Italian cities became flourishing centers of industry and trade. Also, the Hanseatic League gained control of trade in the Baltic and North Seas. In time, Portugal found a sea route to Asia, providing Europeans with easier access to the riches of the East. Trade and urbanizations were slowed, however, by the coming of the bubonic plague in the 1300s. As a result, social, economic, and political upheaval occurred in Asia, Africa, and Europe.

INTERDEPENDENCE What factors led to increased global trade from the 1200s to the 1500s?

MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS What were some of the major trade centers and trade routes from the 1200s to the 1500s?

URBANIZATION Why did cities grow in importance?

CHANGE How did the plague affect the world socially, economically, and politically?

MAJOR TRADE ROUTES
Important trade routes enabled people and goods to move across Asia, Africa, and Europe.

ACROSS THE INDIAN OCEAN
Sea routes crossing the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea allowed east trade between Asian and East Africa. Trading centers developed in eastern Africa. For example, Mogadishu and Great Zimbabwe thrived on trade across the Indian Ocean. European ships on their way to Asia often stopped at East African coastal cities.

OVERLAND BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST
A variety of overland trade routes linked Asia with the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe. Trade from China followed the Silk Road and entered Europe through Russia or Constantinople. Goods also traveled between Constantinople and India.

ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA
In the Middle East, Muslim traders brought goods to ports in Egypt, Syria, and Turkey. Major Egyptian ports included Cairo and Alexandria. In Egypt, goods could be transferred to Italian ships. Italian merchants carried the goods across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe.

RESURGENCE OF EUROPEAN TRADE
Europeans were more and more interested in trade with the East. Improved methods of agriculture during the later Middle Ages allowed the European population to grow, leading to an increase in trade. The Crusade had also had an impact.

IMPACT OF THE CRUSADES
As you have learned, one of the effects of the Crusades was increased European interest in the East. Returning crusaders brought back goods. Ships that had been used to carry crusaders back and forth to the Holy Land could not be used for trade. Even though the Muslims had captured the crusader states, trade continues between the Middle East and Europe through Italy.

ITALIAN CITY-STATES
Be the late 1300s, northern Italian cities had become flourishing centers on industry and trade. Venice, Genoa, and Florence had grown rich and powerful. Venice in particular took advantage of its location to control the valuable spice trade with Asia. Eventually Venice, in partnership with Egypt, came to dominate trade with the East. The Venetians and the Muslim counterparts prospered. After goods arrive in Venice, traders took them over the Alps and up to the Rhine River to Flanders. From there, other traders took the goods throughout Europe, as far as England and to area along the Baltic Sea.

TRADE FAIRS AND THE GROWTH OF CITIES
Much trade within Europe went on at trade fairs. Trade fairs took place in towns where trade routes met, often on navigable rivers. These fairs contributed to the growth of European cities. Many traders came to settle in these areas, as did craft workers and merchants. The population of town increased. In time, some towns developed into large cities populated by thousands of people. The wealthiest cities were at either end of the trade routes, in Flanders in the north and in Italy in the south.
The Bubonic plague, also called the Black Death, was a highly contagious disease spread by the fleas that lived on rats. Shortly after being bitten by a flea, people developed swellings and black bruises on their skin. Within a few days, victims often died in agony. At the time, there was no cure for the plague, so many of those who became infected died.

A GLOBAL EPIDEMIC
The bubonic plague was a devastating epidemic, or outbreak that spreads quickly and affects a large number of people. The resurgence of trade that had been occurring since the 1100s had helped the plague to spread. Fleas from rats infested traders in the East, who then carried the plague to the Middle East. North Africa and Italy were hit next. By the mid-1300s, the plague had reached Spain and France. From there it swept across the rest of Europe.

EFFECTS OF THE PLAGUE
The plague brought terror and devastation to all the regions it struck. Because of the number of deaths, the plague devastated economies around the world.

POPULATION LOSSES In the early 1300s, when the plague first began to spread in China, about 35 million Chinese died. At its peak, the plague killed about 7,000 people a day in Cairo. Other regions of Africa and the Middle East suffered similar fates. By the time the worst of the plague was over, about one-third of the European population had died.

ECONOMIC DECLINE In killing so many people, the plague devastated economies around the world. In Europe, farm and industrial production declined. The people who were left were in a position to demand higher wages, and prices rose. When landowners and merchants took action to stop this wage increase, peasant revolts occurred. Because it devastated the economies of Eurasia and North Africa, the plague also disrupted trade. Some cities and provinces that had grown rich through trade struggled to survive.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE Economic changes had social results, as the strictly defined levels of society that had been in place before began to break down. Feudalism declined as peasant revolts weakened the power of landowners over peasants. The decline of feudalism led to the growth of new political systems. In England and France especially, monarchs gained power and began to build more powerful nations.

CONFUSION AND DISORDER The plague threw society into disorder. Some people questioned their faith and the Church, turning to magic and witchcraft to try to save themselves. Others blamed local Jews, whom they said had poisoned the wells. As a result, thousands of Jews were murdered.

OVERALL Beginning the 1200s, global trade and other interactions increased. China underwent a period of expanding overseas and overland trade. Trade between Asia, Africa, and Europe increased. The Crusades and a growing population helped European trade. Italian city-states transported goods across the Mediterranean Sea, becoming rich and powerful. Portugal found a direct sea route to the East. In the 1300s, however, the bubonic plague disrupted trade as well as social and political life in Europe, Asia, and parts of Africa.
The BIG Idea:
In Europe at the end of the Middle Ages:
- Feudalism and the manor economy were based on land. Those who had land held wealth and power. A money economy gave a larger number of people the ability to gain wealth and to rise in society.
- Change occurred in many aspects of society.
- The Renaissance brought new philosophies that emphasized the world and the individual. In art and literature, new styles and ideas emerged.
- Reformers challenged the power and authority of the Roman Catholic Church in a movement that divided the Church. Throughout the period, feudalism weakened. In England and France, nation-states were forming. In France, the monarchy gained power; in England, the monarch shared power with a representative body.

Unit 3
Section 4: The Resurgence of Europe

Section Overview
From the 1300s through the 1700s, Europe underwent many changes. An increase in the importance of trade brought Europe not only an economy based on money but also a new middle class. The Renaissance brought new philosophies that emphasized the world and the individual. In art and literature, new styles and ideas emerged. Reformers challenged the power and authority of the Roman Catholic Church in a movement that divided the Church. Throughout the period, feudalism weakened. In England and France, nation-states were forming. In France, the monarchy gained power; in England, the monarch shared power with a representative body.

KEY THEMES & CONCEPTS
ECONOMICS What factors led to the commercial revolution?
CHANGE What were the causes and impacts of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation?
NATIONALISM How did the government for France and England differ as they moved toward a stronger sense of nationhood?

THE COMMERCIAL REVOLUTION
With the expansion of trade and the growth of cities between about 100 and 1300, new ways of doing business arose in Europe. Money grew in importance, and a new social class emerged.

TOWNS AND THE MIDDLE CLASS
A growing population and an increase in trade led to the growth of towns and cities. Urban centers based on trade gave new power to a rising new class - a middle class of merchants, traders, and artisans. They were called the “middle” class because they ranked between the older feudal classes of nobles and peasants.

IMPORTANCE OF GUILDS
Merchants and the craftsmen formed guilds. A guild was a type of trade association. All of the people who worked in one craft, such as baking or weaving, would join together. Merchant guilds had great power. Typically, guilds did the following to protect the interests of their members:
- made sure the quality of goods stayed high
- provided social service for members, such as hospitals and aid to widows and children of members
- regulated hours of work and prices of goods
- Ensured a supply of new artisans by training young people, called apprentices, in their crafts.
RISE OF CAPITALISM
As feudalism was declining all over Europe, a new system called capitalism was emerging. Capitalism is based on trade and capital, the name of money used for investment. When the demand for a product is great, prices rise, and traders therefore profit. However, traders can lose everything when the demand falls. Early capitalists devised new business methods to create wealth. This and other changes are known as the commercial revolution, or business revolution.

NEW BUSINESS PRACTICES
The new middle class gathered together in various types of organizations. Business people were aided by banking and insurance services.

PARTNERSHIPS AND JOINT STOCK COMPANIES Merchants sometimes joined together in partnerships. By pooling their capital, they could finance ventures that no single merchant could have afforded. In a partnership, a small group of merchants pooled their funds to finance a large-scale trading venture. A joint stock company allowed many merchants to pool their funds for business ventures. Joint stock companies invested in trading ventures around the world.

BANKING Banking grew during this period. Individual merchants often did not have the capital they needed for an overseas trading venture. They borrow from moneylenders, who developed systems of banking. Bankers also provided bills of exchange. These were needed because it was dangerous to travel over long distances with gold coins. Instead, a merchant deposited money with a banker in his hometown. The banker gave him a bill of exchange. The merchant could exchange this bill for cash in the city where he would be engaging in trade.

INSURANCE Insurance helped reduce business risks. For a small fee, a merchant’s shipment was insured. If the merchant’s goods were damaged or lost, the insurer paid the merchant most of the value of the shipment.

SOCIAL CHANGES
The Commercial revolution reshaped medieval society. For example, the use of money undermined serfdom and led to the decline of feudalism. Because feudal lords needed money to buy goods, peasants sold their farm products and began paying their lords with money rather than labor.

THE RENAISSANCE AND HUMANISM
The period from the 1300s to the 1500s was a time of great creativity and change in Europe. This period is called the Renaissance, which means “rebirth”. It was a golden age in the arts, literature, and sciences. The Renaissance began in Italy in the mid-1300s and then spread northward. The cities of Italy were thriving centers of trade and manufacturing. Merchants in these cities had great wealth and were willing to use it to promote art and education.

NEW WAYS OF THINKING
During the Renaissance, Europeans developed a new way of thinking called humanism. During the Middle Ages, philosophers and writers had wondered about life after death. Renaissance humanists, on the other hand, were more curious about life in the present. Another feature of this new way of thinking was an emphasis on the achievements of the individual. Instead of religious issues, humanists examined worldly subjects that the ancient Greeks and Romans had studies. They hoped to use ancient learning to increase knowledge about their own times.
Name three Renaissance artists, and describe an achievement of each below, in the bottom area.

Artists of the Italian Renaissance
The Renaissance began in Italy in the mid-1300s. Over the next hundred years it spread to the rest of Europe. Rich merchants, princes, and popes took a great interest in the arts and gave financial support to artists.

How did writing in the languages or ordinary people rather than Latin or Greek help Renaissance ideas to spread?

ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS
The Renaissance produced some of the greatest painting, sculptures, and architecture in the history of the world. Renaissance architects rejected medieval forms of architecture. They returned to Greek and Roman styles for columns, arches, and domes. Artists were supported by merchants, popes, and princes. The art of the time reflected humanist concerns. Many paintings still had religious subject, but others portrayed important contemporary figures. Renaissance art was very realistic. Renaissance artist learned the rules of perspective - the technique used to give art a three-dimensional effect. These artists also studied human anatomy and often worked from live models, so they could portray the body in amazingly accurate detail. Two of the most famous artist of the Renaissance were Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci.

ARTISTS OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leonardo da Vinci</th>
<th>Michelangelo</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Painter, sculptor, inventor, architect, musician, engineer</td>
<td>• Sculptor, engineer, poet, painter, architect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mona Lisa (painting)</td>
<td>• David (statue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sketches and plans for flying machines and submarines</td>
<td>• Dome of St. Peter’s Church in Rome</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raphael</th>
<th>Sofonisba Anguissola</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Painter</td>
<td>• Female artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci</td>
<td>• The Artist’s Sisters Playing Cards (painting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Painting of the madonna, mother of Jesus</td>
<td>• Painter for King Philip II of Spain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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MICHELANGELO Michelangelo was a sculptor, engineer, poet, painter, and architect. He is best known for his enormous mural on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. Michelangelo is also well known for his statue of the biblical character David.

LEONARDO DA VINCI The Mona Lisa is Leonardo da Vinci’s most famous painting. Leonardo da Vinci was very much interested in human anatomy, and he dissected human corpses to see how muscles and bones worked. His sketches for flying machines and underwater boats were made centuries before the first airplane or submarine was actually built.

LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS
The humanist interest in this world was also expressed in the literature of the day. In the late Middle Ages, people had begun to write in the everyday language of ordinary people. Instead of scholarly Greek and Latin, they used vernacular languages such as Italian, French, English, and other languages.

DANTE Dante Alighieri was an Italian writer who wrote in the years before the Renaissance took hold. Dante wrote about a journey through hell and heaven in his masterpiece The Divine Comedy. Because he wrote in the language of the Italian people, not in Latin, he is seen as a forerunner of the Renaissance.

SHAKESPEARE William Shakespeare, writing in England around 1600, is another figure of the Renaissance. Shakespeare wrote extensively about
human beings and the joys and sorrows of human life.

MACHIAVELLI Niccolo Machiavelli wrote The Prince in the early 1500s. In this book he advises rulers on how to gain and maintain power. He tells rulers that they should use whatever methods are necessary to ensure their success. His work is seen today as a realistic picture of the politics of his time.

IMPACT OF THE PRINTING PRESS
By 1300, papermaking and printing technology had reached Europe from China. The invention of movable type in the 1400s led to Johann Gutenberg’s printing of the Bible on his press in Germany in 1456. The printing press was important for the Renaissance and later intellectual development for the following reasons:

- **Books became more available.** Books became cheaper and easier to make
- **Literacy increased.** Because books were more readily available, more people learned to read and write.
- **Ideas spread rapidly.** People also had access to new knowledge about such subjects as medicine and geography. Printed bibles increased the spread of religious ideas.

REFORMATION AND COUNTER-REFORMATION
In the 1500s, great changes occurred in European religious life: the Protestant Reformation and the Counter-Reformation.

CAUSES OF THE REFORMATION
The movement that resulted in the Reformation did not have a simple cause. A number of factors led to its emergence.

- **The Renaissance** Humanism led people to question Church authority. They placed increasing faith in human reason.
- **Strong Monarch** Strong national monarchs were emerging. Sometimes they increased their own power by supporting reformers against the Church.
- **Problems in the Church** As ordinary people examined the Church, some felt that its leaders were acting more like kings, fighting for power and wealth, than like representatives of God. Others objected to the Church charging increased fees for marriages and baptisms and selling indulgence, or pardons for sins.

PROTESTANT REFORMERS
MARTIN LUTHER By the 1500s, many Christians wanted to reform the Church. One such person was the German monk Martin Luther. Disgusted over the sale of indulgences, Martin Luther took actions in 1517. He posted his famous 95 Theses, which were 95 arguments against indulgences, on the door of a church in Wittenberg. This event sparked the Protestant Reformation, the period when Europeans broke away from the Catholic Church and formed new Christian churches.

Luther believed that people could reach heaven only through faith in God and that the pope could not grant a pardon for sins. He thought that the Bible was the only source of religious truth. Luther was excommunicated, or excluded, from the Roman Catholic Church, for his radical views. The ideas of Luther, however, spread throughout northern Europe and Scandinavia, thanks in part to the printing press. Followers of Luther’s beliefs were called Lutherans and eventually-Protestants because they protested papal authority.
BELIEF SYSTEMS

The Counter-Reformation was both an attempt to keep Catholics from leaving the Church and an effort to reform some aspects of the Church.

JOHN CALVIN John Calvin was another influential reformer. Born in France, Calvin was trained as a lawyer. Like Luther, Calvin believed that Christians could reach heaven only through faith in God. Calvin, however, had his own views on the power of God and the nature of human beings. He promoted the idea of predestination, the belief that God had determined before the beginning of time who would gain salvation. Calvin’s followers lived strict, disciplined, and frugal lives. Calvinism spread to Germany, France, Scotland, and England.

THE COUNTER-REFORMATION

As the Protestant Reformation continued to spread, a reform movement was also taking place within the Roman Catholic Church. That movement is called the Counter-Reformation, or the Catholic Reformation. The purpose of the Counter-Reformation was to strengthen the Catholic Church as well as to keep Catholics from converting to Protestantism.

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT Pope Paul III called the Council of Trent in 1545 to guide the reform movement. The council, which met on and off for 20 years, reaffirmed traditional Catholic beliefs and worked to end abuses in the Church. It also ended the sale of indulgences and created the Index - a list of banned books.

THE INQUISITION The Church used a court made up of Church officials to root out heresy by force. Trials were held, often using torture, to find people suspected of having beliefs that differed from official Church teachings.

EFFECTS OF THE REFORMATION

The Reformation had complex effects. Most obviously, it led to the formation of the Protestant churches. Other effects also occurred over time.

- **RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL DIVISIONS** The Reformation created a loss of religious unity in Western Europe. Political divisions resulted as well. Rulers often chose a religion for their nations. While some states remained Catholic, others became Protestant.

- **RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS** For more than 100 years after the Reformation, wars sparked in part by religion raged in Europe. In the 1500s, religious civil wars occurred in Germany and France, and Spanish Catholics battled English Protestants. The Thirty Years’ War, involving many European states, occurred in the 1600s.

- **ANTI-SEMITISM** The Reformation brought persecution to several groups, especially the Jews. Over time, restrictions placed on Jews by both Protestants and Catholics increased. For example, in some cities, Jews were forced to live in a separate neighborhood. Some Jews were expelled from their homes; others were murdered.

- **WITCH HUNTS** Religious fervor sometimes led people to accuse others of being witches, agents of the devil. Thousands of people, especially women, were put to death for this reason.

RISE OF NATION-STATES

During the late Middle Ages, kings, nobles, and the Church struggled for power. Feudalism was on the decline. Kings slowly began to increase their power. This shift occurred first in England and France, taking a somewhat different path in each country. These changes marked the beginning of feelings of nationalism - pride and devotion to one’s country.
King in England
- Decided who could build castles and where
- Forced vassals to obey them
- Established common law so that all people were treated the same
- Collected records of who owned land
  Both
  - Added to their lands
  - Set up organized government
  - Collected taxes
  - Created a royal treasury
  - Set up royal courts and royal law

Kings in France
- Made throne hereditary
- Became allies with the Church
- Organized army
- Took French lands from English king

GROWTH OF ROYAL POWER IN FRANCE
When Hugh Capet became monarch in 987, feudal nobles did not perceive him as a threat to their power. However, Hugh and his heirs, known at the Capetians, slowly increased royal power. The Capetians made the throne hereditary. They also gained vast amounts of land by playing rival nobles against one another. They developed a system of tax collection as well.

The growth of royal power led in part to the Hundred Years’ War, a conflict that occurred between England and France from the middle of the 1300s to the mid-1400s. When it looked as if the French would lose the war, a peasant woman named Joan of Arc managed to rally the French to victory. Killed by the English, she became an important focus of French national feeling.

Joan’s efforts built up the power of the French monarchs. Frances kings developed policies that weakened the power of the nobles and strengthened the power of the crown. The French representative body, the Estates General, did not limit the monarchs power during this period.

NATIONHOOD & LIMITED MONARCHY IN ENGLAND
When the Anglo-Saxon King Edward des in 1066, his brother-in-law was chosen to rule. However, Duke William of Normandy claimed the English throne as well. A battle for the throne began. William invaded England and won the throne. As king, William the Conqueror exerted control.

AN ENGLISH LEGAL SYSTEM William’s successors strengthened English finance and law. Under Henry II, common law, or law that was the same for all people, was established. Henry broadened the system of royal justice by sending out traveling justices to enforce laws. Henry also developed an early jury system. When justices visited an area, a jury, or group of men sworn to speak the truth, was gathered by local officials. The jury determined which cases should be brought to trial.

MAGNA CARTA English rulers clashed with nobles and the Church over efforts to extend royal power. In 1215, the nobility rebelled against King John and forced him to sign the Magna Carta, a charter that placed limits on the king’s power. The Magna Carta stated, for example, that the monarch must obey the law and that the monarch could not raise taxes without first consulting his Great Council of lords and clergy.

PARLIAMENT During the 1200s, this council evolved into the representative assembly known as Parliament. In order to finance their wars, English monarchs repeatedly had to ask Parliament for funds, thus strengthening the power of Parliament.
**AN ENGLISH CHURCH** The final break between the English monarchy and the Catholic Church occurred under Henry VIII in the 1500s. Angered that the pope refused to grant him an annulment of his marriage, Henry consulted Parliament and had a series of laws passed. Under these laws, Henry gained control of the English church. He created the Anglican Church, or Church of England. In 1558, Henry’s daughter, Elizabeth I, became queen and firmly established England as a Protestant nation.

**OVERVIEW** A growing population and an increase in trade led to a commercial revolution in Europe and a rising middle class. At the same time, the Renaissance brought new ideas about the world and the place of people within it. Great worlds of art and literature emerged from this period. Inventions such as the printing press helped learning and new ideas to spread throughout Europe. There were also religious changes, as Protestant reformers challenged the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and founded new Christian churches. Throughout this period, Feudalism weakened, while nations united under strong monarchs. In 1215, England instituted the Magna Carta, which placed limits on royal power. Under the Magna Carta, the English monarch shared power with Parliament, a representative body.

**ECONOMICS** What factors led to the commercial revolution?

**CHANGE** What were the causes and impacts of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation?
NATIONALISM How did the government for France and England differ as they moved toward a stronger sense of nationhood?
The BIG Idea
Prior to 1600, people in Africa:

- • GEOGRAPHY The geographic diversity and geographic barriers of Africa led to the development of many different cultures on the continent.

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Unit 3
Section 5: African Civilizations

Section Overview
Africa’s varied climates and terrains contributed to the development of diverse societies on that continent. From about A.D. 800 to 1600, several civilizations rose and fell in Africa/ West Africans built the powerful kingdoms of Mali and Songhai as they gained control over internal trade routes. In East Africa, the kingdom of Axum became a center of international trade. Africa played an important role in the global trading network. Trade with the people of Europe, the Middle East, and India encouraged an exchange of ideas between Africa and other lands. During this time, Islam became established in various parts of Africa. Still, traditional patterns of village, family, and religious life remained important through most of Africa.

GEOGRAPHY How did the geography of Africa encourage the development of diverse civilizations?

POWER What factors contributed to the rise and fall of powerful kingdoms in Africa?

MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS What links did Africa have with global trade routes?

CULTURE How did traditional art and literary forms reflect the beliefs of African peoples?

AFRICA’S VARIED GEOGRAPHY
As the second largest continent in the world, Africa accounts for one fifth of the land surface on the Earth. Africa included varied climates and terrains. Much of Africa is made up of savanna, or grassy plains. Despite hot weather and occasional droughts, this area generally has good soil and enough rain to support farming. It is therefore the most densely populated climate region. A large part of Africa, however, is made up of desert, or dry, barren land. The Sahara in North Africa is the world’s largest desert, with extremely hot temperatures during the day and little vegetation. Africa also has a small belt of rain forests along the Equator and small areas of Mediterranean climate along the coast of North Africa and at the southern top of the continent. In these area, there is fertile farmland.
Africa has few good natural harbors. Because much of the interior is a high plateau, the rivers that flow down to the coast cascade through a series of rapids. Barriers such as these sometimes made travel difficult for Africans. Despite geographic barriers, early Africans traveled within and beyond their continent. Much of this movement was linked to trade. Africa’s gold, salt, iron, copper, and other minerals were important goods in early trade networks.

TRADITIONAL SOCIETY AND CULTURE

VILLAGE GOVERNMENT
In most traditional African communities, power was shared among members of the community rather than exercised by a single leader. Within a village, decisions were often made by a process known as consensus. Village members gathered together for open discussions. Elders and other respected people presented their arguments before a general agreement was reached.

FAMILY PATTERNS
While the family was the basic unit of society in traditional African, patterns of family life varied in several ways. For example, the nuclear family, parent and children worked and lived together as a unit. In other communities and more commonly, several generations lived in one household or near each other as an extended family.

Because traditional African social studies emphasized the group over the individual, extended families who descended from a common ancestor formed clans. Community values were greatly enhanced through identification with a particular clan.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS
Across Africa, religious beliefs were varied. Like many other ancient peoples, early African identified the forces of nature with divine spirits and worshiped many gods and goddesses. Many Africans believed that the spirits of their departed ancestors were present on Earth. They would call on these spirits for help in times of trouble. Some people in these long-ago African societies believed in one supreme being who was the creator and ruler of the universe.

RISE AND FALL OF AFRICAN KINGDOMS

MALI
Mali was ruled by powerful kings, called masas. Under Mansa Musa, the most powerful ruler, Mali extended its borders and dominated West Africa. Mansa Musa’s large army kept order in the empire and protected it from attack.

Although warriors were an elite class in Mali, most of its people were farmers and herders.

Mansa Musa ran an efficient government, appointing governors to rule particular areas. Mansa Musa converted to Islam, basing his system of justice on the Qur’an. He also made the city of Timbuktu a center of Muslim learning. The empire, however, declined in the 1400s, when the people could not agree on who should rule the kingdom.

SONGhai
Like Ghana and Mali, the Songhai empire depended on a strong army to control trade routes. The emperor Sonni Ali built Songhai in to the largest state that had ever existed in West Africa, bringing the wealthy city of Timbuktu under his control. Songhai established an efficient bureaucracy to govern the kingdom. Its people also expanded trade to Europe and Asia. Songhai prospered until the late 1500s, when civil war broke out. At that time, invaders from the north defeated the disunited forces of Songhai and caused the downfall of the kingdom.
AFRICAN KINGDOMS
People of West Africa traded among themselves for many centuries. By about the 400s, this regional trade system had grown into an extensive trans-Saharan trade system connecting much of Africa. Over the centuries, different kingdoms controlled the routes.

GEOGRAPHY
The bodies of water on Africa’s east and west coasts were busy highways for trade with Europe and Asia. These contacts had an effect on Africa’s history and culture.

AFRICANS ROLE IN GLOBAL TRADE
African states in both the eastern and western parts of the continent played a significant role in global trade. The Mediterranean and Red Seas linked Africa to the Middle East and Europe. In addition, the Indian Ocean linked East Africa to India and other Asian lands. Products from the African interior were transported overland to the coast and then out of Africa.

CONTRIBUTIONS
THE ARTS
African art, most often created in ivory, wood, and bronze, was sometimes used for decorative purposes, such as jewelry. Most often, however, art was closely tied to religion. Statues and masks, for example, were used in religious ceremonies and rituals.
African art also strengthened bonds within the community. Art linked people who created it with those who used it. Moreover, decorative patterns on an object often identified it as the work of a particular clan or as a possession of royalty.

LITERARY TRADITIONS
Africans used both oral and written literature to preserve their culture. Arabic was a common written language used by people in parts of Africa that were influenced by Islam. Today, Arabic documents offer insight into the laws, religions, and history of African societies.
Most often, histories and folk tales were passed down in oral form from generation to generation. Histories praised the heroism of famous ancestors or kings. Folk tales, on the other hand, blended fantasy and humor to teach
Manuscript: a book or document written by hand

important moral lessons.

EDUCATION
In most African societies, it was the duty of the elders to teach boys and girls what their special roles would be in the community. The elders also passed down information about their clan’s history and religious beliefs. In the 1400s, Timbuktu in Mali had become a leading center of learning. Manuscripts were brought to Timbuktu to be sold at high prices. The university at Timbuktu, built by Mansa Musa, attracted students from all over the Muslim world.

COMMERCE
The development of commerce by African kingdoms did much to establish trade routes that would endure for centuries. Commerce also introduced Africa to crops and animals from other lands. In addition, a rich mix of cultures developed. An unfortunate result of commerce, however, was the rise of trading enslaved people.

OVERALL: Africa’s geography encouraged the formation of separate kingdoms. After A.D. 800, powerful trading empire formed in western Africa. Through trade, Africans were introduced to Islam. During the same period trading kingdoms on Africa’s eastern coast were forming ties with India, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean. African societies were exposed to many new influences but retained the traditional importance of village, family, and religion.

GEOGRAPHY How did the geography of Africa encourage the development of diverse civilizations?

POWER What factors contributed to the rise and fall of powerful kingdoms in Africa?

MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS What links did Africa have with global trade routes?

CULTURE How did traditional art and literary forms reflect the beliefs of African peoples?