



GRADE 5 LOUISIANA SOCIAL STUDIES

# West African Kingdoms

Sunni Ali



## Student Workbook

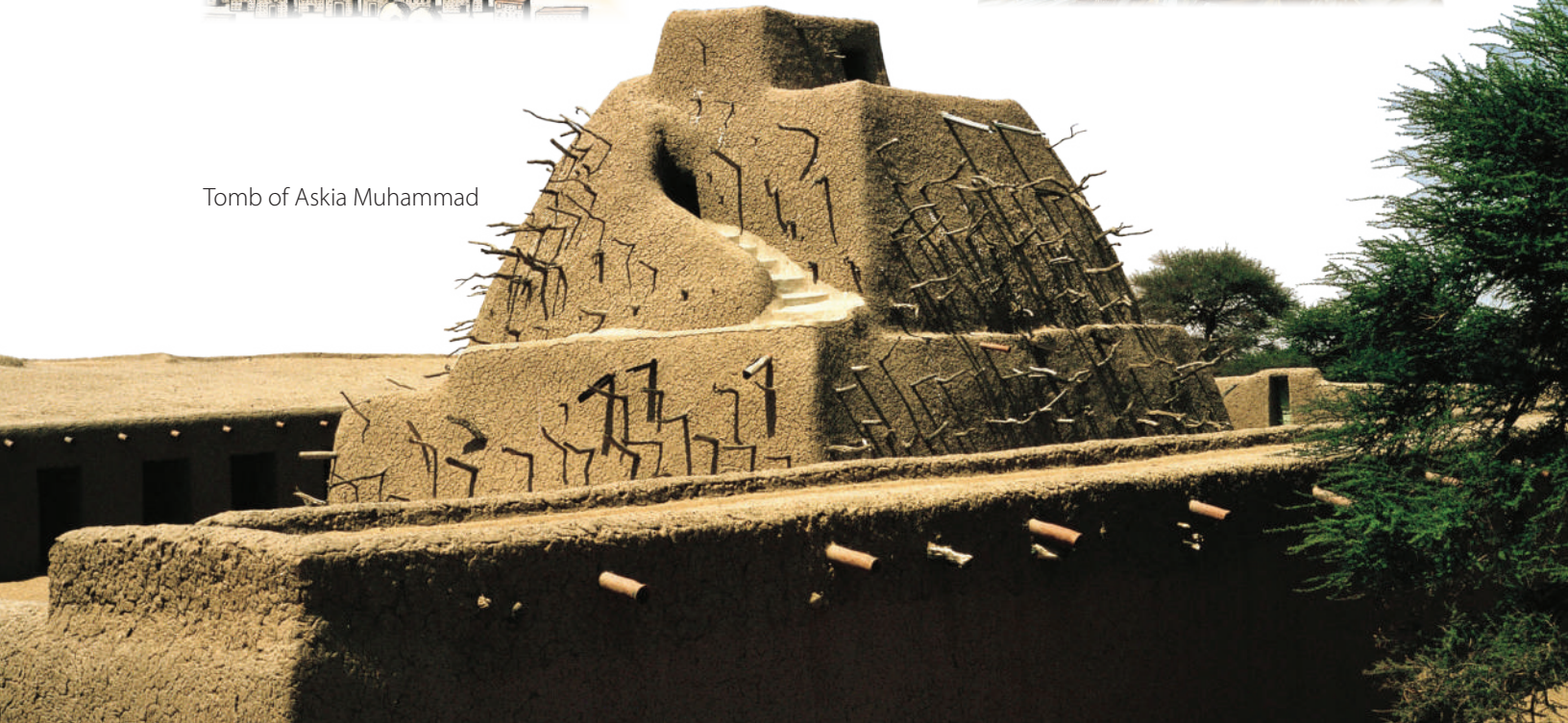


Timbuktu

Mansa Musa



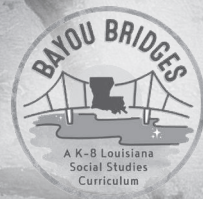
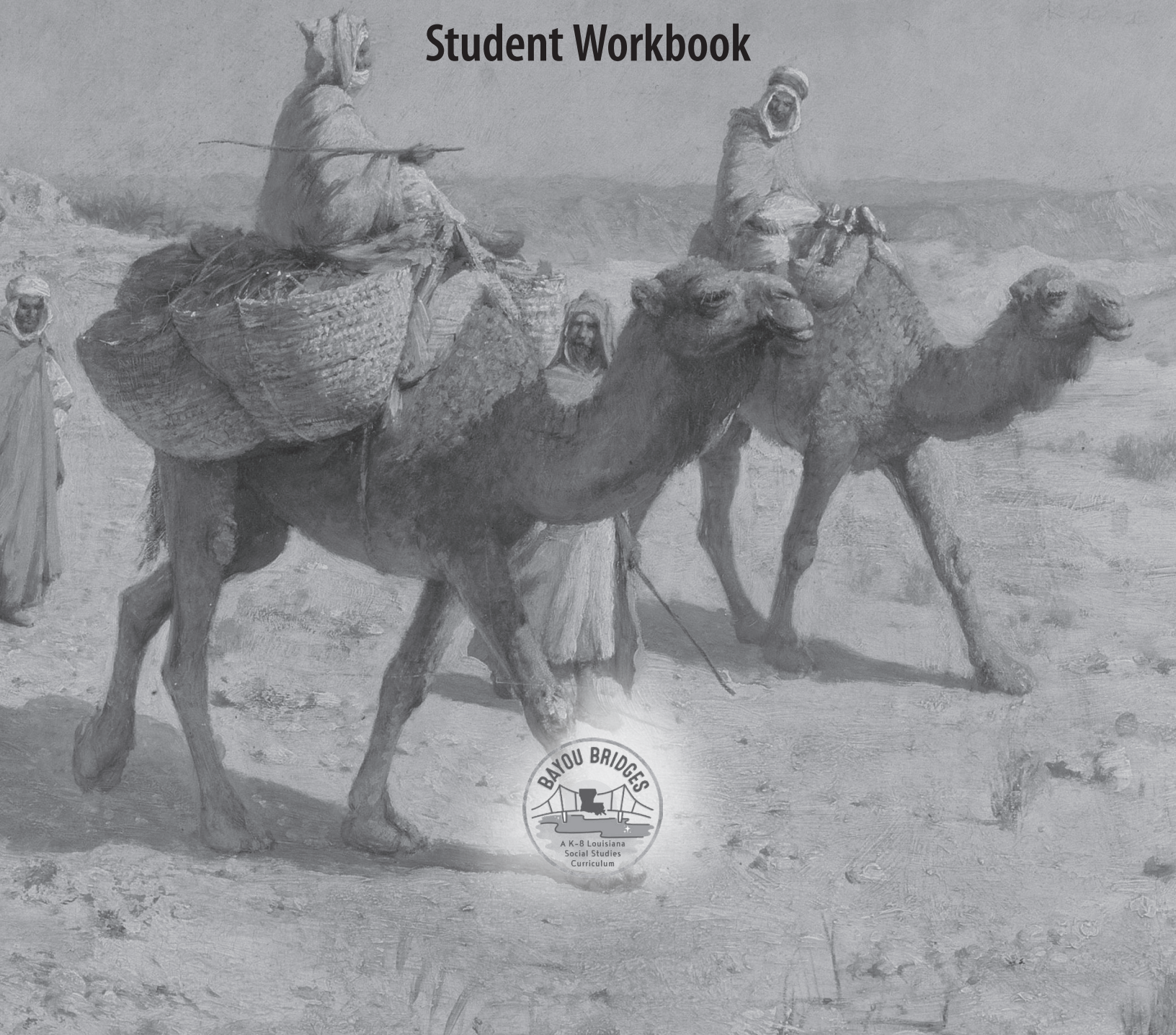
Tomb of Askia Muhammad





# West African Kingdoms

## Student Workbook



## Creative Commons Licensing

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.



You are free:

**to Share**—to copy, distribute, and transmit the work

**to Remix**—to adapt the work

**Under the following conditions:**

**Attribution**—You must attribute the work in the following manner:

*This work is based on an original work of the Core Knowledge® Foundation ([www.coreknowledge.org](http://www.coreknowledge.org)) and the additions from the Louisiana Department of Education, made available through licensing under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike4.0 International License. This does not in any way imply that the Core Knowledge Foundation or the Louisiana Department of Education endorses this work.*

**Noncommercial**—You may not use this work for commercial purposes.

**Share Alike**—If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under the same or similar license to this one.

**With the understanding that:**

For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work. The best way to do this is with a link to this web page:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Copyright © 2025 the Louisiana Department of Education for the additions to CKHG and the Core Knowledge Foundation for its predecessor work CKHG.

[www.coreknowledge.org](http://www.coreknowledge.org)

All Rights Reserved.

Core Knowledge®, Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™, Core Knowledge History and Geography™, and CKSci™ are trademarks of the Core Knowledge Foundation. Bayou Bridges is a trademark of the Louisiana Department of Education.

Trademarks and trade names are shown in this book strictly for illustrative and educational purposes and are the property of their respective owners. References herein should not be regarded as affecting the validity of said trademarks and trade names.

# West African Kingdoms

## Chapter 1: The Ghana Empire

**Student Reading Notes** 1

### Primary Sources

- Primary Source A: Excerpt from Ibn Battuta's *Travels in Asia and Africa* 4
- Primary Source Analysis (AP 1.3) 5
- Primary Source Analysis (AP 1.3) for The Salt-Gold Trade 6

**Check for Understanding** 7

## Chapter 2: The Mali Empire

**Student Reading Notes** 8

### Primary Sources

- Primary Source B: Leo Africanus's Description of Timbuktu 10
- Primary Source Analysis (AP 1.3) 11
- Primary Source Analysis (AP 1.3) for "Kingdom of Mali" by al-Umari 12

**Check for Understanding** 13

## Chapter 3: The Songhai Empire

**Student Reading Notes** 14

### Primary Sources

- Primary Source C: The Tomb of Askia Muhammad 16
- Artifact Study (AP 1.2) 17

**Check for Understanding** 19

**Activity Pages**

- Ghana, Mali, and Songhai (AP 3.1) **20**
- Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 1–3 (AP 3.2) **22**

**Performance Task**

- Performance Task Activity **23**
- Claims and Evidence (AP 1.4) **24**

# Chapter 1: The Ghana Empire

---

**Framing Question:** What characterized the African empire of Ghana?

## Student Reading Notes

Use the information in your Student Reader to fill in the chart.

Section	Notes
Traders of Past African Empires	
Early African Civilizations	

<b>Africa During Europe's Medieval Period</b>	
<b>Origins of the Ghana Empire</b>	
<b>The Growth of Trade in the Ghana Empire</b>	



**The Political and Social Structures of the Ghana Empire**

**Changes and the Decline of the Ghana Empire**

## Primary Sources

### PRIMARY SOURCE A: EXCERPT FROM IBN BATTUTA'S *TRAVELS IN ASIA AND AFRICA*

*In 1325 CE, legal scholar Ibn Battuta began traveling through the Islamic world at twenty years of age. He started the journey as a pilgrimage to Mecca but traveled for over twenty years. In this excerpt, he describes his visit to Toghata, a city on the trans-Saharan trade route in the Ghana Empire.*

After a journey of five and twenty days, [we] arrived at Toghata, a village in which there is nothing good, for its houses and mosque are built with stones of salt, and covered with the hides of camels. There is no tree in the place; it has nothing but sand for soil; and in this are mines of salt. For this, they dig in the earth, and find thick tables of it, so laid together as if they had been cut and placed under ground. No one, however, resides in these [houses] except the servants of the merchants, who dig for the salt. . . . To them come the people of Sudan from their different districts, and load themselves with the salt, which among them passes for money, just as gold and silver does among other nations; and for this purpose, they cut it into pieces of a certain weight, and then make their purchases with it.

Adapted from Lee, Rev. Samuel. *The Travels of Ibn Batuta*. London: The Oriental Translation Committee, 1829. 231–232.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary Source Analysis

<p><b>Describe the source.</b></p>	<p><b>Connect the source to what you know.</b></p>
<p><b>Understand the source. Identify its message, purpose, and/or audience.</b></p>	<p><b>Draw a conclusion from or about the source.</b></p>

**SOURCE:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Source Analysis**

<p><b>Describe the source.</b></p>	<p><b>Connect the source to what you know.</b></p>
<p><b>Understand the source. Identify its message, purpose, and/or audience.</b></p>	<p><b>Draw a conclusion from or about the source.</b></p>

**SOURCE:**

**Chapter 1 Check for Understanding:** What characterized the African empire of Ghana?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Chapter 2: The Mali Empire

**Framing Question:** How did strong leaders change West Africa?

## Student Reading Notes

Use the information in your Student Reader to fill in the chart.

Section	Notes
A Powerful New Empire	
Sundiata	

<b>The Rise of Timbuktu and Trade in the Mali Empire</b>	
<b>Mansa Musa</b>	
<b>Decline of the Mali Empire</b>	

## Primary Sources

### PRIMARY SOURCE B: LEO AFRICANUS'S DESCRIPTION OF TIMBUKTU

*Leo Africanus was a Moroccan scholar who traveled a great deal. For centuries, his writings provided Europeans with information about Islam and the continent of Africa.*

Timbuktu is about twelve miles from the Niger River. The houses in the city are now all built of limestone and covered with thatch [a roof covering of straw or similar material]. There is a temple, made of stone and lime. A palace is in the city too, which was built by the skilled workers of Granada. There are shops, craftsmen, and merchants, especially those who sell linen and cotton textiles. Here you can find merchants who bring cloth from Europe. All the women except the young female servants keep their faces covered, and they sell food that people need. The people who live in Timbuktu are wealthy. There are wells that bring up clean water. Whenever the Niger River overflows, they bring water into the town by way of a small gate that controls the water. Corn, cattle, milk and butter [are] found in abundance here. But, there is not much salt. Salt is brought there by land routes from Toghaza, five hundred miles away from the city.

Adapted from Africanus, Leo. *The History and Description of Africa and of the Notable Things Therein Contained*. Translated by John Pory. Edited by Robert Brown. Vol. 3. London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1896. 824.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary Source Analysis

<p><b>Describe the source.</b></p>	<p><b>Connect the source to what you know.</b></p>
<p><b>Understand the source. Identify its message, purpose, and/or audience.</b></p>	<p><b>Draw a conclusion from or about the source.</b></p>

**SOURCE:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Source Analysis**

<p><b>Describe the source.</b></p>	<p><b>Connect the source to what you know.</b></p>
<p><b>Understand the source. Identify its message, purpose, and/or audience.</b></p>	<p><b>Draw a conclusion from or about the source.</b></p>

**SOURCE:**

**Chapter 2 Check for Understanding:** How did strong leaders change West Africa?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Chapter 3: The Songhai Empire

---

**Framing Question:** How was the Songhai Empire similar to and different from previous West African empires?

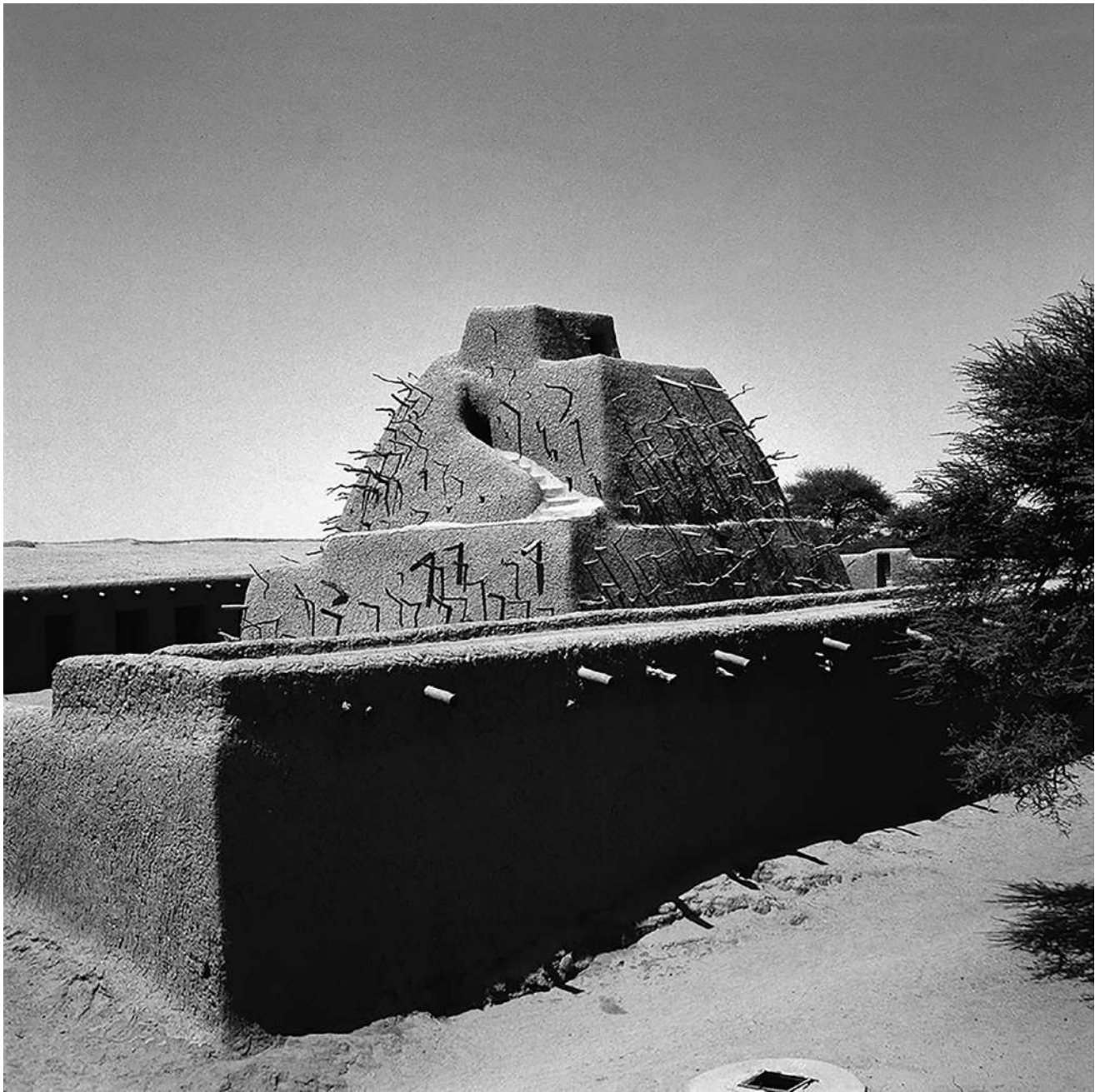
### Student Reading Notes

Use the information in your Student Reader to fill in the chart.

Section	Notes
A New Empire Takes Hold	
Strong Leaders and Trade in the Songhai Empire	

<b>The Portuguese in West Africa</b>	
<b>The Political Structure of the Songhai Empire</b>	
<b>The Social Structure of the Songhai Empire</b>	

**PRIMARY SOURCE C: THE TOMB OF ASKIA MUHAMMAD**



**Askia Muhammad's tomb is in the city of Gao.**

**NOTE:** Go to page 32 of the Student Reader to see this source in full color.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity Page 1.2**

**Use with Chapter 3**

**Artifact Study**

**Describe the artifact.**

1. What type of object is it? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where is it from? \_\_\_\_\_
3. When was it made? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What color is it? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What shape is it? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What size is it? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is it made of? \_\_\_\_\_

**Think about the artifact.**

8. What knowledge or experience was needed to create it?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Why was it made? What is its purpose?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Could it have been made by one person, or did it need to be made by a group?  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. How has the artifact changed over time?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity Page 1.2 (*continued*)**

**Use with Chapter 3**

**Think about context.**

**12.** What do you know about the time and place the artifact was created?

---

---

**Draw a conclusion about the artifact.**

---

---



**Chapter 3 Check for Understanding:** How was the Songhai Empire similar to and different from previous West African empires?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Activity Page 3.1

Use with Chapter 3

Ghana, Mali, and Songhai

Directions: Study the map. Use it to answer the questions on the next page.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity Page 3.1 (continued)**

**Use with Chapter 3**

1. Which empire reached as far as the Atlantic Ocean?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Which was the smallest of the three empires?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Which empire stretched the farthest east?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Which body of water was important to all three empires?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Which city was important to both Mali and Songhai?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. How did the expansions of the Mali and Songhai Empires compare?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Based on the map, were the three empires at the beginning, middle, or end of the trans-Saharan trade routes?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Activity Page 3.2

Use with Chapter 3

Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 1–3

For each word, write the letter of the definition.

- |       |                      |  |
|-------|----------------------|--|
| _____ | 1. prosperity        | a) a good, commonly a raw material, that can be interchanged with other goods of the same type       |
| _____ | 2. malleability      | b) a king or queen who has the unchecked authority to do whatever they want without any restrictions |
| _____ | 3. court             | c) the belief that objects, places, and creatures all possess a distinct spiritual essence           |
| _____ | 4. commodity         | d) people who surround an important person   |
| _____ | 5. monopoly          | e) a condition of being successful, especially financially   |
| _____ | 6. animism           | f) composed of people from many parts of the world   |
| _____ | 7. diplomat          | g) someone who represents the government of one country in another country                           |
| _____ | 8. clan              | h) the complete control of the supply of a good or service by one person, country, or company        |
| _____ | 9. cosmopolitan      | i) a group of families claiming a common ancestor  |
| _____ | 10. entourage        | j) to move troops into position for a military action  |
| _____ | 11. imam             | k) ability to be shaped into many forms  |
| _____ | 12. deploy           | l) to prevent something  |
| _____ | 13. proximity        | m) a Muslim worship leader   |
| _____ | 14. thwart           | n) nearness in space   |
| _____ | 15. absolute monarch | o) related to an emperor, empress, or empire   |
| _____ | 16. imperial         | p) the residence of a royal family and supporting staff  |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Performance Task Activity: *West African Kingdoms***

West African empires were influenced and shaped by two important factors: trade and religion. Select one of these two factors, and give a presentation explaining how it shaped the West African empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai. Give specific examples.

Use the Claims and Evidence Activity Page (AP 1.4) and the lines below to take notes and organize your thoughts. Remember to include details from the chapters and primary sources in *West African Kingdoms*, as well as from the sources and resources in the unit activities.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Name \_\_\_\_\_

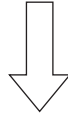
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Activity Page 1.4

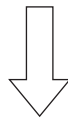
Use with Chapters 1 and 3 and Performance Task

**Claims and Evidence**

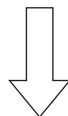
**STATE THE CLAIM** *What opinion or position are you defending?*



**STATE THE REASON** *Why should someone agree with this claim?*



**IDENTIFY THE EVIDENCE** *What details from the text and sources support the reason?*



**RECOGNIZE A COUNTERCLAIM** *What different opinion or position might someone have?  
What argument might be used against you?*

**ANSWER THE COUNTERCLAIM** *How will you disprove the counterclaim?*

## **Illustration and Photo Credits**

A Camel Train, 1899 (panel)/Lazerges, Paul John Baptiste (1845–1902) / French/Private Collection/Photo © Bonhams, London, UK / Bridgeman Images: i

Mansa Kankan Musa I, 14th century king of the Mali empire (gouache on paper)/McBride, Angus (1931–2007) / British/Private Collection/© Look and Learn / Bridgeman Images: Cover C

North Wind Picture Archives / Alamy Stock Photo: Cover B

Universal Images Group North America LLC / DeAgostini / Alamy Stock Photo: Cover D, 16









## Bayou Bridges: A K–8 Louisiana Social Studies Curriculum

A comprehensive program in world and U.S. history, integrating topics in geography, civics, economics, and the arts, exploring civilizations, cultures, concepts, and skills specified in the 2022 Louisiana Student Standards for Social Studies

### **Bayou Bridges**

units at this level include:

**The Medieval World**

**West African Kingdoms**

**Civilizations in North America**

**The Inca and Aztec Empires**

**Renaissance and Reformation**

**Age of Contact**

[www.coreknowledge.org](http://www.coreknowledge.org)