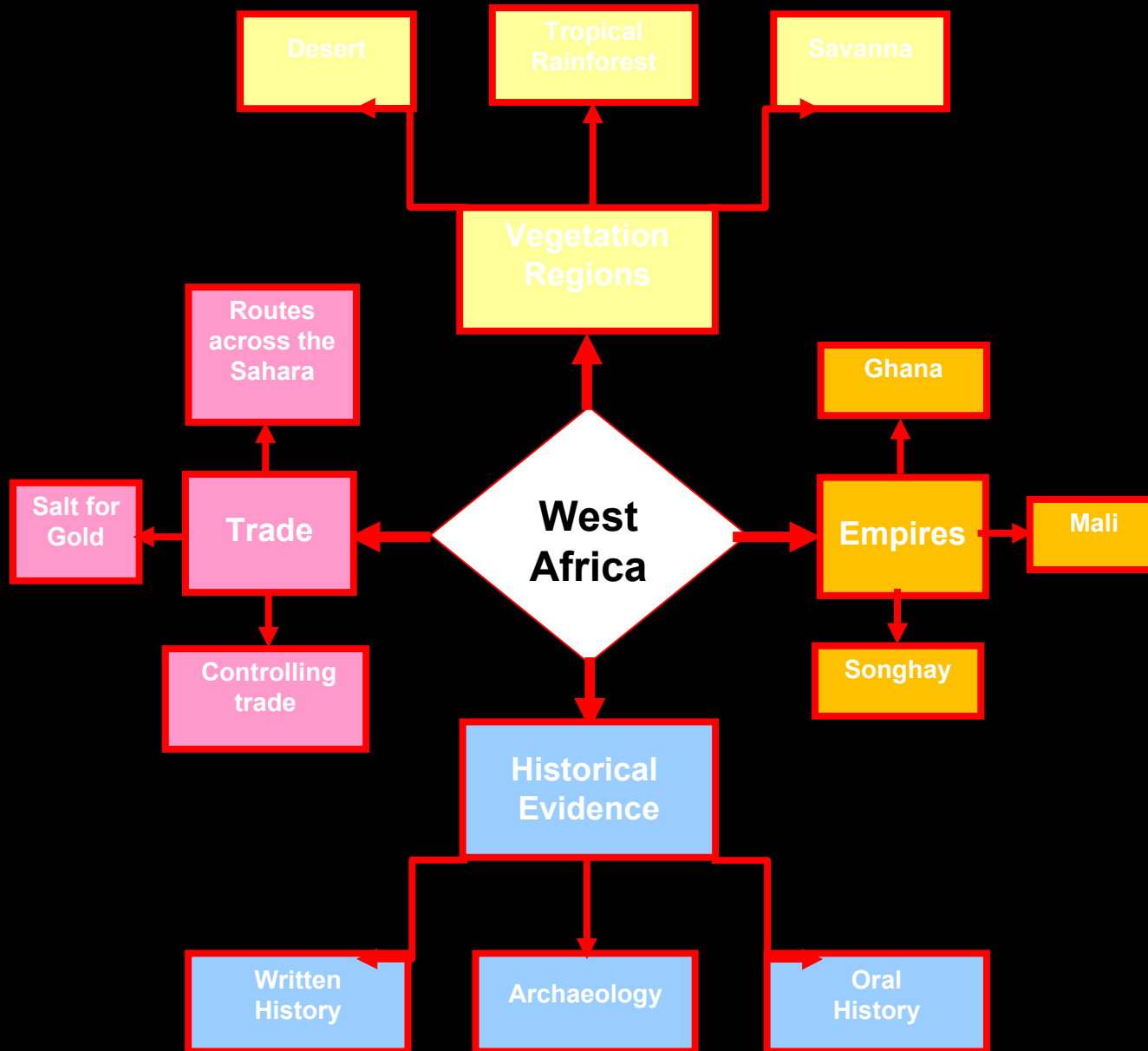


Three Worlds meet

Africa

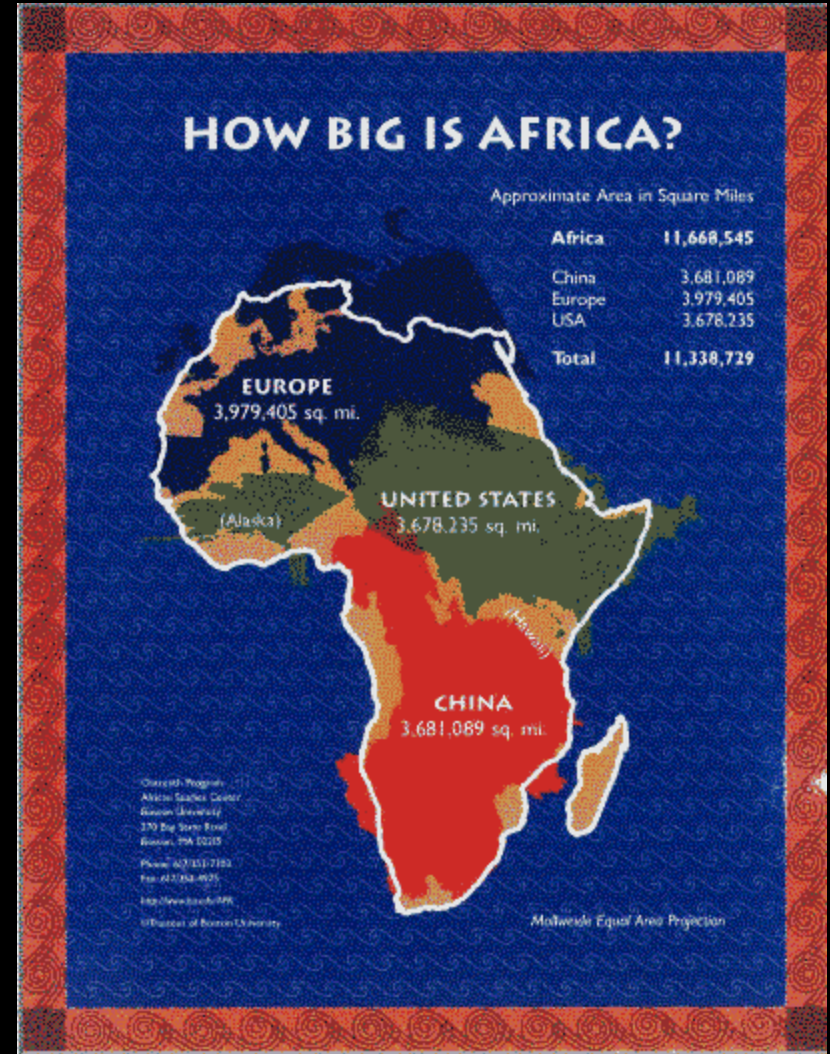


Lesson 5:
**A Brief Look at West
Africa**



Background Information

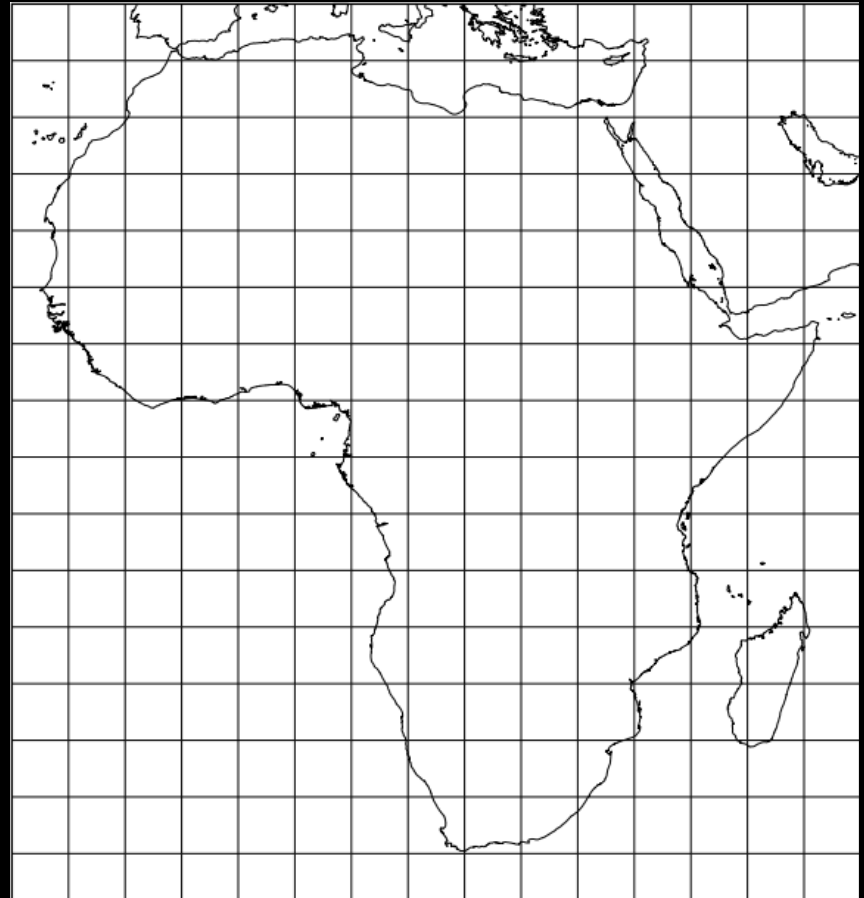
- **Africa is a huge continent. You can fit all of Europe, all of the U.S. including Alaska, and the country of China into the continent of Africa.**

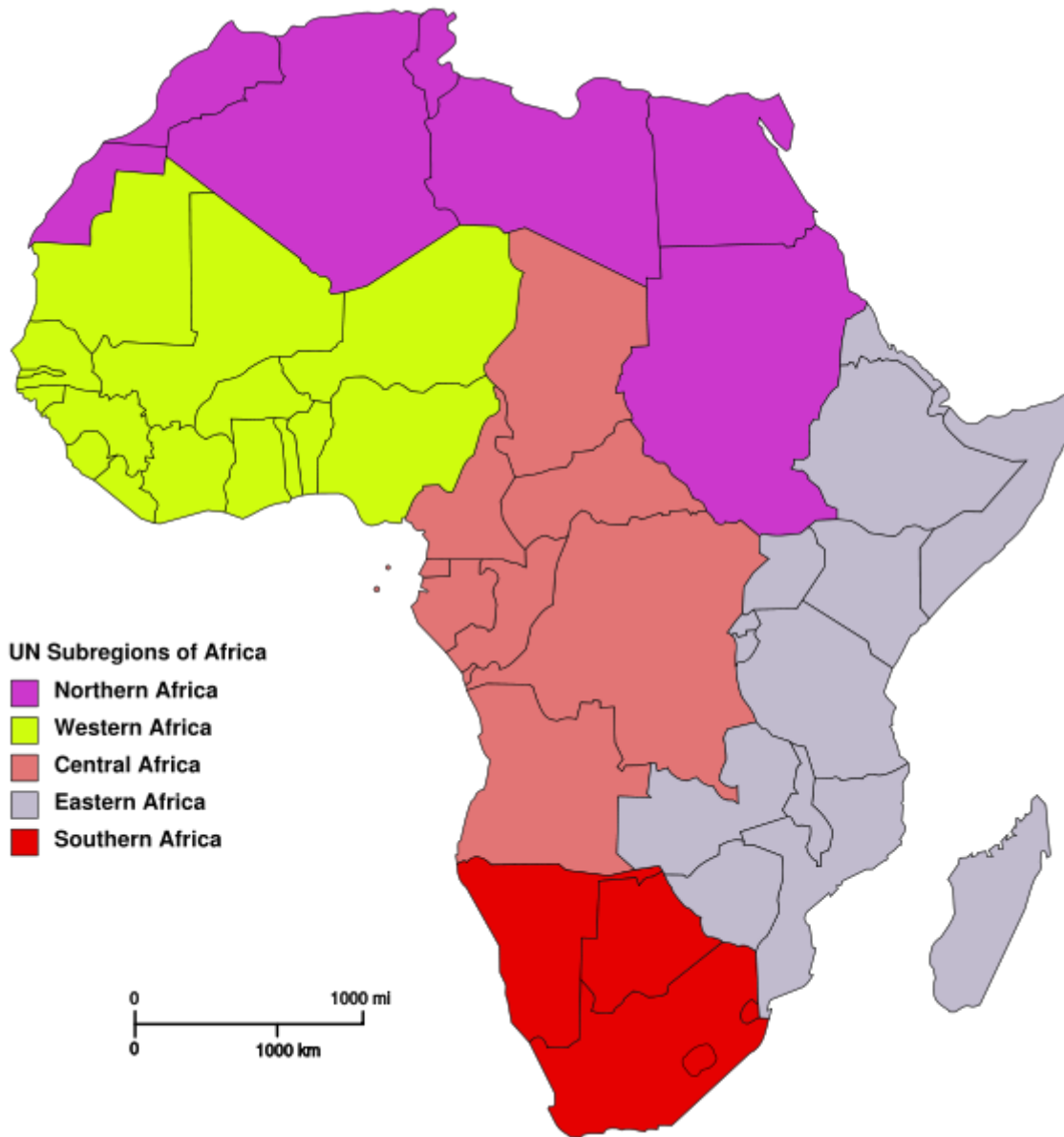


Background Information

- **Africa has over 50 countries and hundreds of different cultures. More than 2000 different languages are spoken in Africa.**
- **Africa has a rich history going back thousands and thousands of years.**
- **Evidence of the very earliest humans has been found in Africa.**

Regions in Africa, color on your map

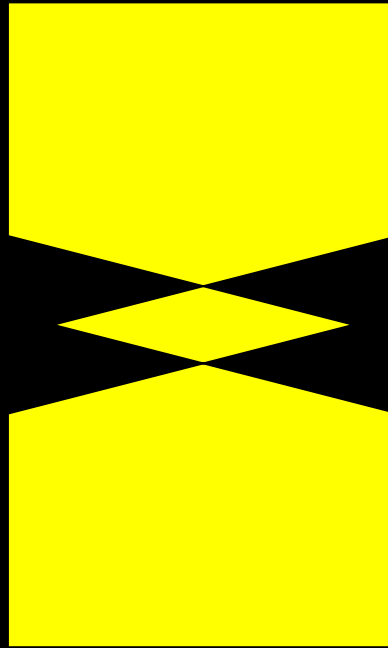


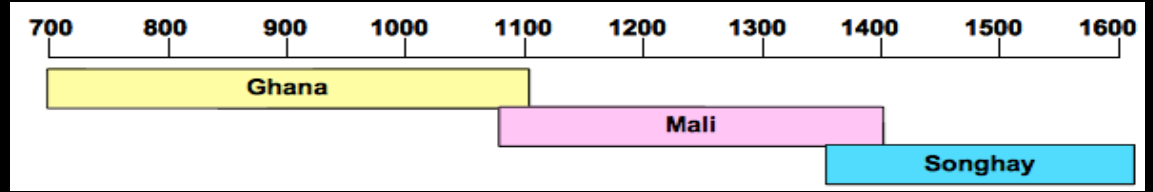


UN Subregions of Africa

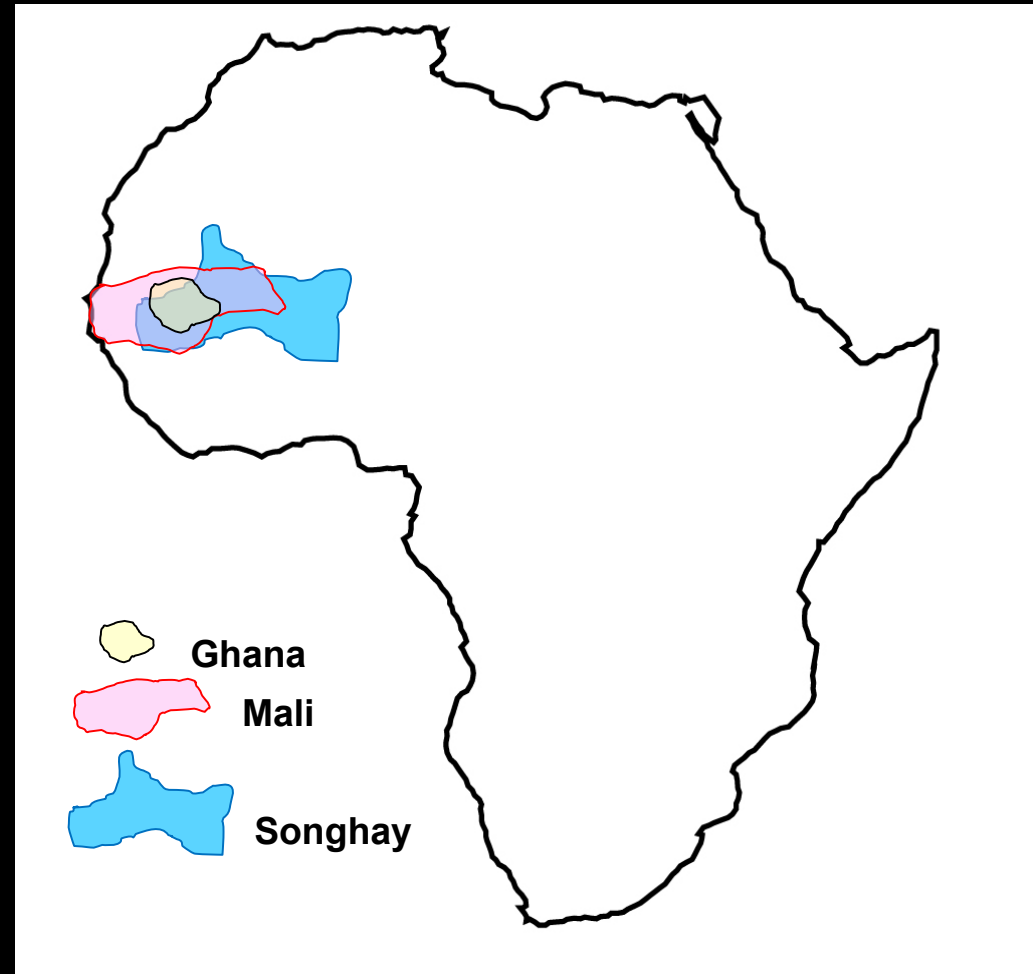
- Northern Africa
- Western Africa
- Central Africa
- Eastern Africa
- Southern Africa

Why would people make this kind of trade????





What do we know about Africa from these two pictures?



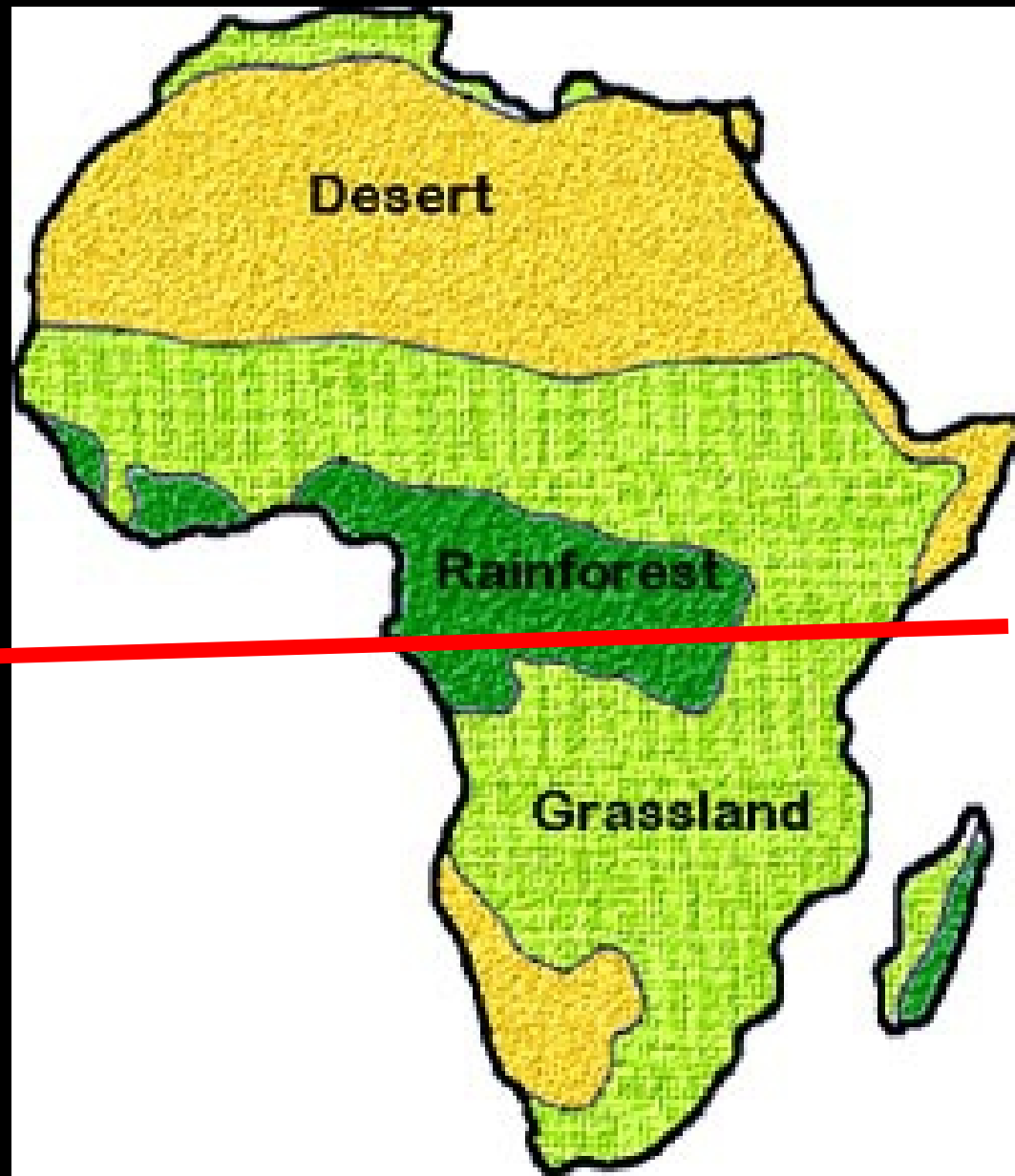
- There were three countries/states/kingdoms that appeared in this region.
- The countries/states/kingdoms got bigger.
- The second one, Mali, may have taken over the first one, Ghana. The same thing may have happened with Songhay.
- They began over 900 years ago.
- They contained a wealth of resources.

Vegetation Regions of Africa

The Sahara Desert is in the north part of the region, a dry area difficult to live in.

Savanna, or grasslands have a short rainy season. This area is similar to the prairies of North America.

Tropical rainforests have a hot, humid climate and thick vegetation.

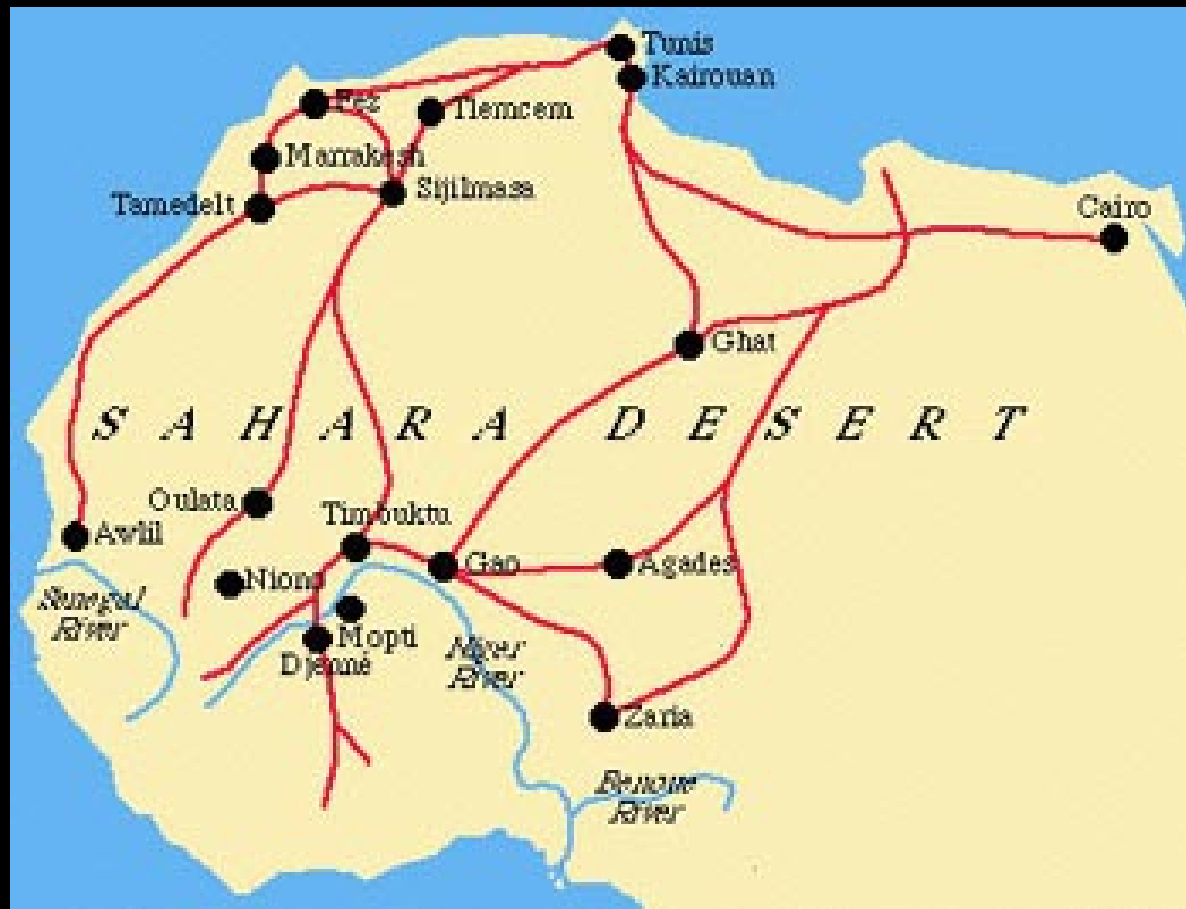


People had to adapt to
these regions.

Let's find out how!

Trade Routes

What pattern do you see in the trade routes?



Most of the trade routes cross the Sahara Desert and connect the savanna region of West Africa to the region of North Africa.

What kind of challenges would people encounter on a trade route through a desert?

lack of water, sand storms, no shade, hot temperatures, etc.

Then why would people trade across a desert!?

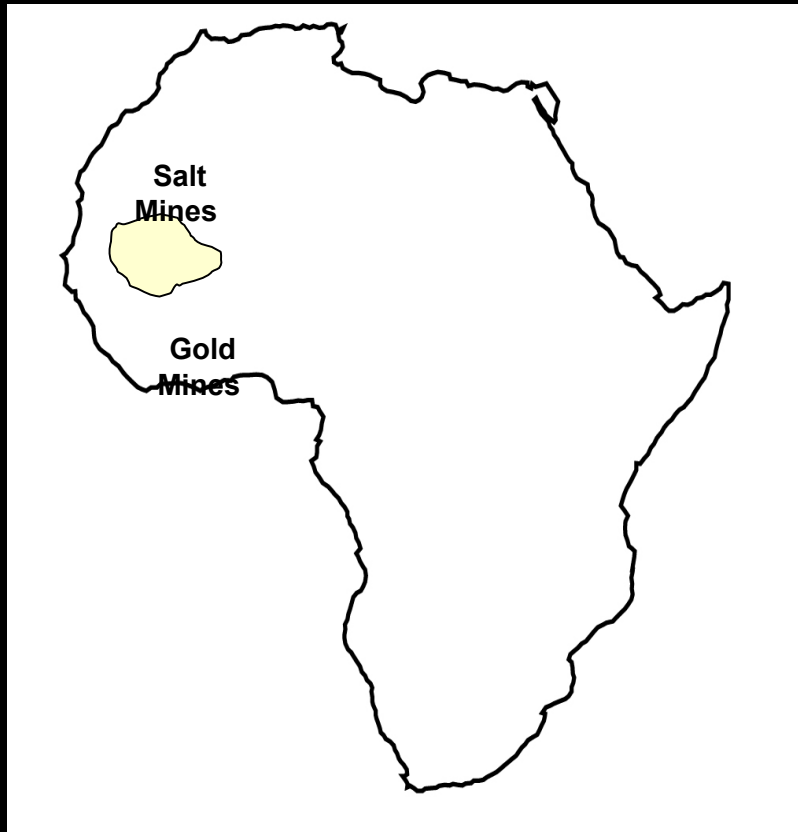


People on either side of the desert must have had trade goods that the other side wanted.

The camel helped make this trade possible since camels could carry large loads, needed little water, and were steady walking on sand. They became the 'ships of the desert'.

By controlling these trade routes the empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay became rich and powerful.

The Location of Ghana



People had cleared land, built homes, and farmed in this region for hundreds of years.

They mined iron ore and shaped it into tools and weapons. The ability to use iron allowed them to grow more food. It also allowed them to make stronger weapons which resulted in taking over weaker groups near them

By the year 700 Ghana was changing from a small kingdom to a powerful empire.

Gold was seen as a valuable trade good all over the world! Ghana had so much gold they didn't think it was valuable.

Salt was essential to life for people living in the tropical rainforest. It kept food from spoiling so they created the salt for gold trade



Mined Iron Ore

Used Iron Ore to make tools and weapons

Could grow more food

Could use weapons to take over weaker groups

From small kingdom to powerful empire



*By 1100 the empire of Ghana had pretty much **fallen apart** and a new empire called **Mali** had risen.*

What could cause an empire to fall apart?



There appears to have been a drought in the area which affected the production of food.

People from North Africa (called the Almoravids) invaded Ghana. They were not able to hold on to Ghana but it greatly weakened the empire.

Following the invasion, a harsh king came to power in Ghana. He was eventually defeated by Sundiata, the ruler of the small kingdom of Mali. As a result of these factors, Ghana lost control of the trade network.

	What led to its rise and growth?	What led to its decline?
G h a n a	!	!

IMPORTANT POINT:

The story of West Africa is not just the story of kings and empires but of the many common people who raised the food, made the tools and mined the gold.

- The majority of people of Ghana lived in small farming compounds. These were made up of a man, his sons' families and his daughters' families. A compound usually had a group of houses around a central courtyard shared by the families.**
- Family compounds made up a village led by a village leader. Villages were connected and traded with each other.**
- Family, clan and village were very important to the people of West Africa.**
- Several villages made up a small kingdom led by a king.**
- These small kingdoms made up the empire of Ghana led by a king.**

Mali handout.

Read with your partner and
HIGHLIGHT ways Mali was
similar and different to Ghana!

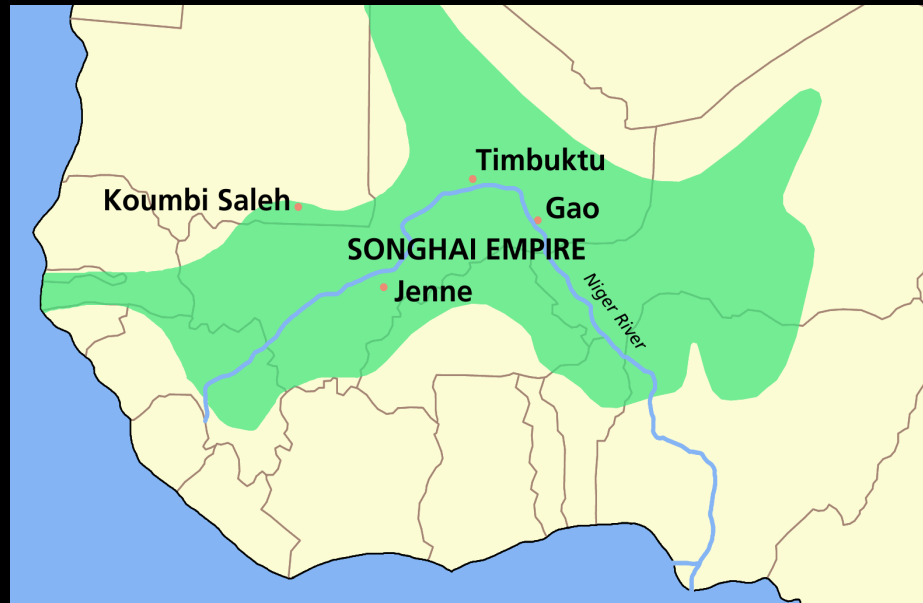
- How was Mali like Ghana?
- How was Mali different?
- Why do you think the kings of Mali divided up their empire into smaller areas called provinces?
- What was the influence of Islam in Mali?
- What is remembered about the famous Mali ruler Mansa Musa?



	What led to its rise and growth?	What led to its decline?
M a l i	!	!

Mali handout (Homework?)

HIGHLIGHT ways Songhay rose
and fell!



	What led to its rise and growth?	What led to its decline?
S o n g h a y	!	!

**How do we know
about the history
of West Africa?**

Archaeological Evidence



Archaeological



What:?

Wooden sculpture of a horse and rider

Rider

short pants , tight-fitting cap, a large necklace and two weapons: (a short bow in his hand and a dagger)

Horse

tube-like, unrealistic legs and head. Archaeologists do not know why .

Historians thinking: rider made larger than the horse to show power and importance of the rider who was probably a warrior.

Archaeological



- **Archaeological evidence like this can help us understand what soldiers may have worn and the weapons they may have used.**
- **Archaeologists are unclear about what the sculpture was used for. Has a base shaped like a mushroom so it may have been stuck on top of something like a long pole.**

Written History

"The King adorns himself like a woman wearing necklaces round his neck and bracelets on his forearms and he puts on a high cap decorated with gold and wrapped in a turban of fine cotton. He holds an audience in a domed pavilion around which stand ten horses covered with gold-embroidered materials..."

At the door of the pavilion are dogs of excellent pedigree. Round their necks they wear collars of gold and silver, studded with a number of balls of the same metals."

- Al-Bakri, early Muslim geographer

Oral History

Griot

an historian and storyteller responsible for keeping the oral history of an area



Evaluating Different Types of Historical Evidence

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Ar ch ae olo gy	.	.
Wr itte n Hi sto ry	.	.
Or al Hi sto ry	.	.