



MALI: MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL LESSON PLANS

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The following lessons are designed to be taught individually or in a series.

LESSON 1 – WEST AFRICA THEN AND NOW – EMPIRES AND COUNTRIES

By: Lynda K. Dunnigan

History and Social Science Standards of Learning USI.4 (2015) - The student will apply social science skills to understand European exploration in North America and West Africa by

- a. c) identifying the location and describing the characteristics of West African societies (Ghana, Mali, and Songhai) and their interactions with traders.

History and Social Science Standards of Learning WHI.12 (2015) – The student will apply social science skills to understand the civilizations and empires of Africa, with emphasis on the African kingdoms of Axum and Zimbabwe and the West African civilizations of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, by

- a. locating early civilizations and kingdoms in time and place and describing major geographic features;
- b. explaining the development of social, political, economic, religious, and cultural patterns in each region; and evaluating and explaining the European interactions with these societies, with emphasis on trading and economic interdependence.

Objectives

- a. In their study of the ancient West African empires, students will locate the Sahara Desert and the Niger River, the ancient West African empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, and capital cities and strategic trading centers. They will compare and contrast current geo-political boundaries of Mali and surrounding nations with boundaries of the ancient West African empires.
- b. Students will identify two great rulers who shaped the ancient Mali Empire.

Procedures

Introductory Activities

- a. Organize the class into groups of 3-4 students
- b. Using an overhead or a wall map of Africa, ask students the following questions:
 1. Where is Mali?
 2. What two physical geographic features might help shape the culture of West Africa?
 3. What does the term *land-locked* mean? How might this affect the settlement and economy of a culture?

Materials

- red and blue markers or colored pens or pencils

- political outline map of Africa
- *Timelines on File - the Ancient and Medieval World*, *Facts on File, Inc.*, 11 Penn Plaza, New York, New York (Note: permission for photocopy of text and illustrations is acceptable for nonprofit educational use)
- Map exercise questions
- Handout, Basic Activities of Civilization - Mali (Download below)

Developmental Activities

- a. distribute markers, maps and articles to students
- b. instruct students to use information from sources such as [The World Fact Book: Mali](#)

Copy and distribute the following map exercise to students

Name _____

Mali Then and Now - Empires and Countries

Use the handouts to complete the map exercise and questions.

- Using the map found on the first page of the *Culture Gram 2001, Republic of Mali*
 - Locate and place the following on your political outline map:
 - Sahara Desert
 - Niger River
 - Mali
 - Bamako
 - Timbuktu
 - Djenne (also called Jene-jeno)
 - Gao
 - the seven nations bordering Mali
 - Using the *Timeline on File* handout
 - Locate the ancient Songhay empire and outline it in red on your map.
 - Circle the capital city of the Songhay Empire.
 - Name the two groups of people who formed the Songhay Empire.
 - Locate the boundary of the Empire of Mali 2 and outline it in blue on your map.
 - What Kangaban ruler defeated the Susu and founded the empire of Mali?
 - In what century did the people of Mali convert to Islam?
 - Underline the two ancient Mali gold trading cities.
 - Who was the last great ruler of Mali? When did he reign?

Closing Activities

Debrief by having students share their answers to the questions.

Homework

Read and annotate Basic Activities of Civilizations - Ancient African Empires Handout: See below

Assessment

Student map and answers to questions

NOTE TO TEACHER: The Basic Activities of Civilization provides a systematic way of organizing activities common to all civilizations. The examples have been tailored to fit the unit on Mali. The strategy can be used with other units. A blank template is provided for student use in lesson 2. We have also provided a handout with category suggestions for you to copy and distribute to students.

- Download Blank Template (PDF)
- Download Basic Activities of Civilizations-Chart for Handout (PDF)

LESSON 2 – BASIC ACTIVITIES OF CIVILIZATIONS

By: Linda K. Dunnigan

Length of lesson: two class periods

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History and Social Science Standards of Learning WHI.12 (2015) – The student will apply social science skills to understand the civilizations and empires of Africa, with emphasis on the African kingdoms of Axum and Zimbabwe and the West African civilizations of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, by

- a. locating early civilizations and kingdoms in time and place and describing major geographic features;
- b. explaining the development of social, political, economic, religious, and cultural patterns in each region; and
- c. evaluating and explaining the European interactions with these societies, with emphasis on trading and economic interdependence.

Lesson Objective

1. Using *teacher selected instructional materials* students will use read and analyze information about present day Mali and synthesize their findings on the Basic Activities of Civilizations template.

2. Students will speculate reasons for the difference in the power and size of the contemporary nation of Mali and the historical Mali Empire.

Introductory Activities

1. Students should be seated in groups established in Lesson 1.
2. Lead students in a discussion of the Basic Activities of Civilization by asking the following questions, "Why these activities are called the basic activities of all civilizations? What is the connection between these activities?" Do you think the Basic Activities of contemporary Mali will differ from the ancient Empire of Mali? Be ready to give reasons for your answer. (Allow at least 10 minutes for class discussion and response.)

Materials

- Basic Activities of Civilizations blank template

Developmental Activities

1. Instruct students to work in their groups, using information from handout to find and record information relevant to the basic activities of civilizations on the Basic Activities of Civilizations template.
2. Each student should complete a template. Inform students that some categories may not be directly noted, but may be implied. Encourage students to look for these connections. Explain that the article includes additional information about the culture of Mali beyond that needed to complete the assignment.

Closing Activity

1. Debrief by revisiting the opening question of whether or not the Basic Activities of Civilization of the ancient Empire of Mali differ from those of the contemporary nation of Mali.
2. Allow time to discuss differences, and to discuss categories for which no information was found, then ask students if they found any indirect or implied connections between information in the article and any of the categories.
3. Allow time for student to respond orally, and to record additional information on the Basic Activities of Civilization templates.
4. Collect Basic Activities of Civilization templates.

Assessment

Completed Basic Activities of Civilizations templates.

LESSON 3 – KEEPING THE MEMORY – THE ISLAMIC LEGACY OF TIMBUKTU

Objective

Students will learn the art of preserving history through the oral tradition of the Griot, and demonstrate their understanding by creating and telling a story about the Islamic legacy of Timbuktu, and enhance their story with the use of poetry, song, dance, and/or music.

Procedure

1. Conduct a discussion on the importance of storytelling in preserving history, asking students to give examples with stories from their own families.
2. Discuss the importance of the oral history and the west African tradition of "keeping the memories" through stories. Be sure to relate the French origin of the term, griot.
3. Ask students to speculate answers to the following questions:

NOTE TO TEACHER – note student responses on the board or an overhead, be certain that all the information in bold print included in parentheses is included

- Who might "hire" a story teller? (the ruler, a clan, an entire village)
- What kind of information would the "keeper of the memories", i.e., the storyteller relate? (the lineage, great events, history)
- Who would the griot tell his story to? (the village, clan, the emperor and his court)
- How might he keep his audience interested? (poetry, dance, music, song)
- How was a story teller selected? (it is a family tradition, passed down from one generation to another, with the older generation teaching the story and the techniques of how to tell a good story.)
- Do you think this tradition is still practiced? Why or why not?

Activity

Copy and distribute the following to pre-assigned groups of 3 or 4 students.

1. Create a story in the griot style, that
 - a. presents the history and importance of the city of Timbuktu and
 - b. reinforces the Islamic values of the Mali people and their ruler, Mansa Musa
 - c. describes and presents the history and importance of trade as a part of the culture of Mali
 - d. includes
 - i. a prop
 - ii. music
 - iii. poetry
 - e. actively involves all group members

Assessment

1. Oral Presentation – a suggested rubric (PDF) has been included and can be modified to accommodate elements of the written story.
2. Written copy of the story should begin with the following sentences.

In a small village along the Niger River in a land called Mali, a griot recounted the story of the great Mali ruler, Mansa Musa. This is his story.

Resources

Resources are listed in each lesson.