

#8604

AFRICA: SOUTH OF THE SAHARA

Grade Levels: 7-10

20 minutes

BENCHMARK MEDIA 1999

DESCRIPTION

Gives a broad overview of the countries of Africa that lie south of the Sahara desert. Briefly reviews the history of the continent, mentioning various trade routes and European dominance during the nineteenth century. Looks at cultural, political, and economic situations that affect more than 2,000 ethnic groups who live south of the Sahara.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: History

- ◆ Standard: Understands the historical perspective
 - Benchmark: Predicts how events might have turned out differently in one's local community if specific individuals or groups had chosen different courses of action
 - Benchmark: Analyzes the influence specific ideas and beliefs had on a period of history



Subject Area: Geography

- ◆ Standard: Understands the physical and human characteristics of place
 - Benchmark: Knows the human characteristics of places (e.g., cultural characteristics such as religion, language, politics, technology, family structure, gender; population characteristics; land uses; levels of development)
 - Benchmark: Knows the physical characteristics of places (e.g., soils, land forms, vegetation, wildlife, climate, natural hazards)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To show how Africa's cultural, economic, and political legacy and problems are derived from its ancient trade with other continents, and later European colonial exploitation.

- To show how the terrain and climate of Africa varies, and how it affects regional agriculture, commerce, and the way people live.
- To examine some major trends and problems in political and economic conditions.

BEFORE SHOWING

- Using a wall map, locate Africa, south of the Sahara. How far is it from where students live? Note the locations of the continent's countries, major bodies of water and rivers, mountain terrain and lowlands related to climatic variations, and major cities. Note that nearly the entire continent is a high plateau, above 1,000 feet. Is the plateau higher in the east than in the west? (Yes.) How do these physical geographic features and climate compare with those of the United States?
- Discuss elements that make up a culture such as religion, language, sports and leisure activities, foods, music, art, family structure, etc. Make a list of how various cultures have shaped students' lives; for example, the foods they eat, the sports they play, the language(s) they speak, the music they listen to, their religion. How would their everyday lives be different if they were not influenced by other cultures?
- Discuss how terrain, climate and natural resources affect the way people live and work in your local area. Expand the concept to various regions of the country. When viewing the video, notice the specific links between terrain and climate and the way people in different regions of Africa, south of the Sahara, live.
- Discuss what and how historic events have influenced life today in the students' own area. How has trade with outside regions affected the local economy and local cultural values? What changes in local life style have modern communications (TV, the Internet) brought with them?



AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

- Stimulate class discussion about physical geography with the following questions: Describe the topography of the continent. Where are Africa's largest cities located? Why? Where is the longest freshwater lake in the world? (Lake Tanganyika in the fertile Great Rift Valley in eastern Africa.) Note that similar bands of vegetation and climate stretch across Africa, north and south of the equator. Although most of Africa is hot all year long, the biggest difference among regions is in the amount of rainfall they receive.



2. Divide the class into two groups, and assign each group to one of these ethnic groups: the Masai, and the Bantu. Prepare a class presentation on one aspect of their group's culture; i.e., religion, foods, traditional livelihood, etc.; or a typical day in the life of a person, such as a Masai cattle herder.
3. How did the Europeans come to define the political boundaries of Africa, and what were the eventual ethnic and economic consequences? (Antagonistic ethnic groups arbitrarily locked into the same country, and economies dependent on a few export products with unstable prices.)
4. Why do efforts to modernize and democratize African countries so often fail? (Tribal loyalties and conflicts, corruption, and a tradition of authoritative rule.)
5. Plan a trip to Africa--south of the Sahara--using maps, consulate tourist information, information from World Wide Web on the Internet, books and articles, and the video. Reports should address how students would travel, where they would choose to visit, what they would expect to see and do, which time of the year they would prefer to travel and why, what clothing they would bring, and what the weather and landscape would be like.

SUMMARY

The people living in countries north of the Sahara Desert are largely Muslims. The people living south of the Sahara are quite different and more diverse. The ancient land trade routes from Europe and Asia to West Africa brought wealth, the religion of Islam, and created West African centers of civilization. Port cities on Africa's east coast also prospered. Slave traders from Asia who took millions of Africans to work plantations in the Americas. European powers claimed colonial territories in Africa, and their political boundaries are a legacy to the political divisions, which contain antagonistic tribes, and many of the ethnic problems today. Africa freed itself from colonial rule after World War II. Colonial rule left unstable economies devoted to minerals and export crops the colonials wanted. Developing diversified healthy economies concerned with internal needs is the goal.



RELATED RESOURCES




Captioned Media Program

- Central African Republic #3220
- Horn of Africa: Somalia & Djibouti #3253
- Kenya: The Masai Homeland #3622
- South Africa: A Land Apart #3297



World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid-safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **MR. DOWLING'S ELECTRONIC PASSPORT**

<http://www.mrdowling.com/>

Click on the "Ancient Africa," "Colonial Africa" and "Africa Today" for interesting facts about this country.

- **THE LIVING AFRICA**

<http://library.thinkquest.org/16645/contents.html>

Information on the people, land, wildlife, national parks. Also features a wildlife conservation game, virtual postcards and safaris, and a living atlas.

- **KINGS OF AFRICA**

<http://www.tamarin.com/kings/kindire1.htm>

Exhibition of photographs of kings/emperors of Africa. Click on titles to see larger pictures and a brief background.

- **AFRICAN COOKBOOK**

http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Cookbook/about_cb_wh.html

Cook various food recipes from different African countries.

- **AFRICA GEOGRAPHIA**

<http://www.geographia.com/indx06.htm>

Click and explore the different countries within Africa. Brief explanation of location, geography, climate, history and people.