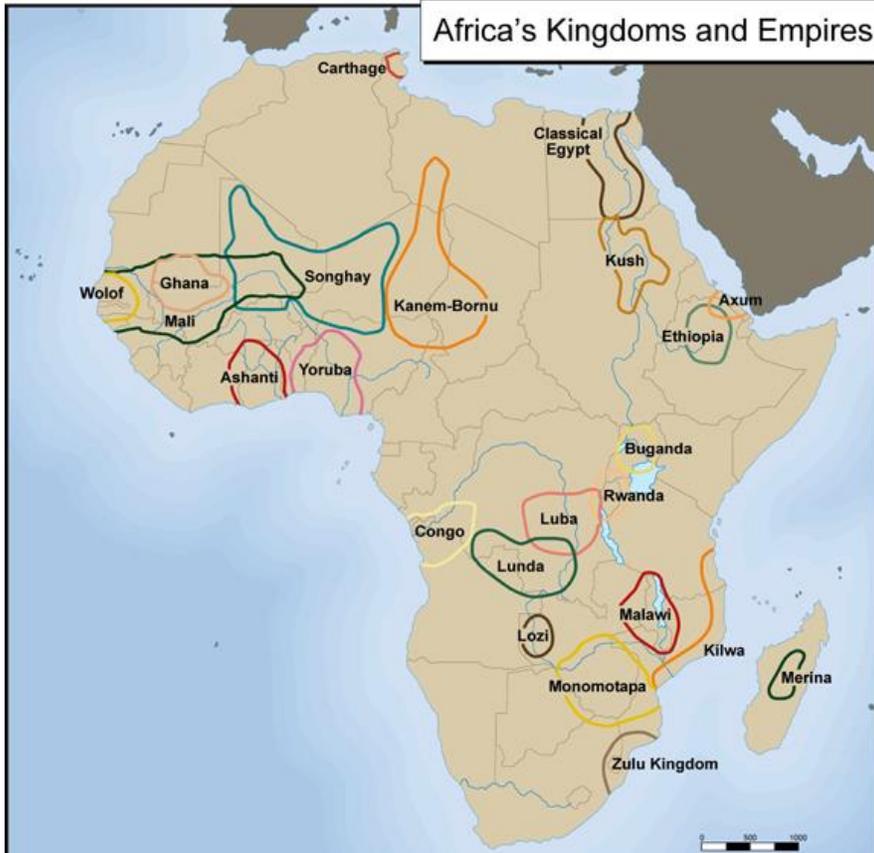


The Great West African Kingdoms

Read the text for each of the great kingdoms of West Africa; Ghana, Mali, and Songhay. The fourth text explains how parts of North Africa came to be Islamic. As you read, think about how the events in the four texts are related to one another, then use the information you have learned to answer the questions and complete the graphic organizer.

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The Kingdom of Ghana

The Kingdom of Ghana existed between the 9th and 13th centuries. Some have called the Kingdom of Ghana the "land of gold," an excellent description since the gold trade led to the development of Ghana into a powerful kingdom. The people of West Africa had developed their own gold mining **techniques** and began trading with people of other regions of Africa. At the time of the Kingdom of Ghana, gold was traded for salt that came from the Sahara desert. In addition to the gold trade, the use of iron was also important. Iron tools and weapons helped some people to **expand** their control over neighboring people. These changes contributed to the development of centralized, powerful empires. Historians also say that the use of the horse and camel, along with iron, were important factors in how rulers were able to blend small farmers and herders into their empires.

The Ghanaian kings controlled the gold that was mined in their kingdom and started a system of taxation for their people. Around 1054CE, the Almoravid rulers came south to conquer the Kingdom of Ghana and **convert** the people to Islam. The **authority** of the king eventually **diminished**, which opened the way for the Kingdom of Mali to gain power. The trade continued to **prosper**. Two important sources about the history of Ghana are the writings of a Spanish Muslim named Al-Bakri and archaeological finds at a site called Kumbi Saleh, believed to be a king's city.

Match the bold underlined word from the Ghana reading to its synonym or definition.	
Synonym/Definition	Word from reading
1. succeed	
2. power to rule	
3. make larger	
4. methods or procedures	
5. change	
6. lessened or became smaller	

Note – the abbreviation “CE” after a date stands for **C**ommon **E**ra and is used by some historians to replace “AD”, which stands for **A**nno **D**omini(Latin for “the year of our Lord”).

Why do you think some historians prefer to use CE?

List four factors that helped Ghana grow into a strong empire.

The Kingdom of Mali

Take another look at the map. Notice the relationship between Ghana and Mali. What do you see? The Kingdom of Mali includes all of Ghana plus a lot more territory! During its time, Mali was the second largest empire in the world (the Mongolian empire in Asia was first). The dates that historians use for the Kingdom of Mali are from the 13th to 15th centuries CE.

The Kingdom of Mali came to control the gold trade that the Kingdom of Ghana had controlled before it, but it also expanded its trading in many ways. Mali also controlled the salt trade in the north and many **caravan** trade routes. Additionally, it traded extensively with Egypt and the copper mine areas to the east.

The founder and first ruler of the Kingdom of Mali was Sundiata Keita. We know about him through the writings of a 14th century North African historian named Ibn Khaldun. Sundiata expanded the kingdom to include the Kingdom of Ghana and West African gold mines.

The best known king of Mali was Mansa Musa. He greatly extended Mali's territory and power during his **reign**. He made a name for himself in distant regions throughout the Muslim world through his **pilgrimage** to Mecca, which is in present-day Saudi Arabia. Sixty thousand people and eighty camels, each carrying 300 lbs. of gold, accompanied him to Mecca.

Several great centers of Islamic learning were also established during the Kingdom of Mali. Among them were the legendary Timbuktu, Djenne, and Gao. Scholars came from all over the Muslim world to study at these places, which have a long and rich history of learning in religion, mathematics, music, law, and literature. Although many people in Mali maintained their **indigenous** religions during this time, Islam was becoming well established throughout the area.

The Kingdom of Songhay

Now take another look at the map. You will see that the Kingdom of Songhay included part of Mali, as well as land to the east and north. The dates for the Kingdom of Songhay partly overlap those of Mali; the dates for the Kingdom of Songhay are between 1350 and 1600 CE.

The exact **origins** of the Kingdom of Songhay are not clear to historians. The first of two great rulers in the Kingdom of Songhay was Sonni Ali. He came to power in 1464CE and made Songhay the most powerful state in West Africa. He **seized** Timbuktu and Djenne, which had been parts of the Kingdom of Mali. These, as well as the capital city of Gao, continued to be important centers of learning and **commerce**. Sonni Ali was not a **devout** Muslim; he was mostly concerned about his own ambitions to build a great empire.

His successor, Mohammed Askia, came to power in 1493CE. He expanded the kingdom further and set up a more advanced and strongly centralized government. He developed a new system of laws, expanded the military, and encouraged scholarship and learning. Unlike Sonni Ali, he was a devout Muslim, who used the combination of Islam and commerce to build his kingdom. He brought peace and stability to the kingdom during his reign. The Kingdom of Songhay came to an end when the Moroccans invaded and conquered them. By 1600CE, the great kingdoms of West Africa were over.

Identify and describe the four leaders below.

Sundiata Keita	
Mansa Musa	
Sonni Ali	
Mohammed Askia	

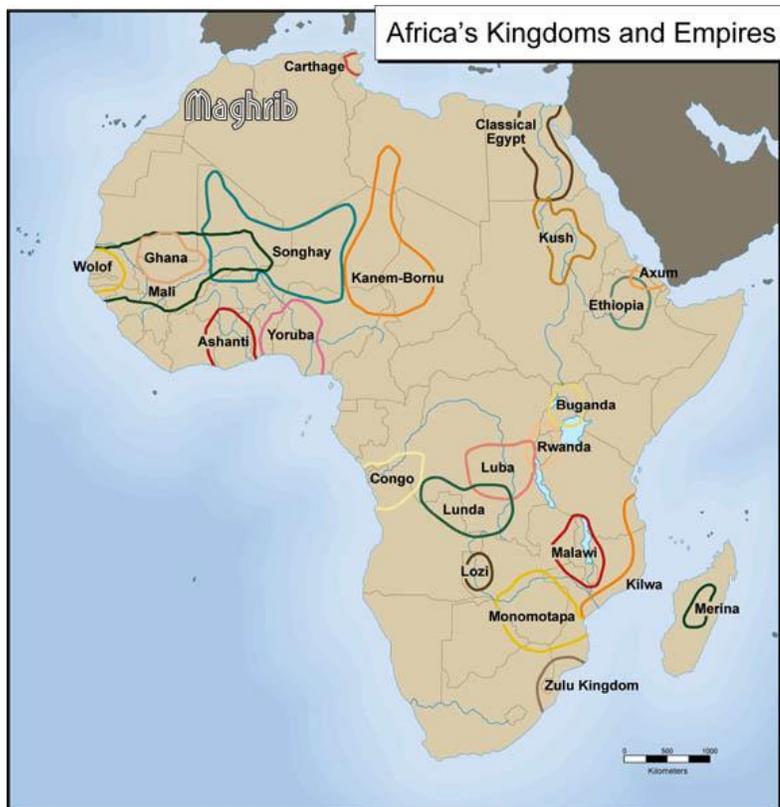
Answer the vocabulary questions about Mali and Songhay on the top of the next page.

Match the bold underlined word from the Mali reading to its synonym or definition.	
Synonym/Definition	Word from reading
1. religious journey	
2. native	
3. a rulers time in power	
4. group of traders traveling together	

Match the bold underlined word from the Songhay reading to its synonym or definition.	
Synonym/Definition	Word from reading
1. trade or business	
2. devoted	
3. took control of	
4. beginnings	

The Coming of Islam to the Maghrib

Now we are going to go back in time again to the beginnings of the Kingdom of Ghana, but this time we will be looking at a region called the Maghrib. The region known as the Maghrib is in North Africa. Note on the map below where the Maghrib lies in relation to the three West African kingdoms we have discussed Think about what relationship might have existed between these two regions as you read through the text below.



The Maghrib underwent **significant** changes beginning in the 7th century CE that led to a shift in its dominant religion to Islam. Before this time, the population **consisted** of a mix of Christians, Jews, and people practicing indigenous religions. Yet this began to change as Arabs gained more and more power in the region. The people living in the Maghrib at the time were called Berbers. Today their **descendants** still live in this region of Africa, and the majority of them follow Islam. During the period between the 7th century and 10th century CE, Islam became accepted throughout this region. It remains the dominant religion there up to this day. How did this significant change occur?

The Arabs brought Islam to the Maghrib as they moved into the area. The Arabs were a powerful force in the region. At first, Berbers were pressured to join the Arab military and adopt Islam. However by the 8th century, Berbers were ready to adopt Islam as well as Arabic culture. They converted to Islam on a massive scale, but also continued to **resent** Arab domination in this region.

The Berbers developed their own unique expression of Islam in a **doctrine** called Kharidjism. This doctrine emphasized equality among Muslims and criticized the ruling authority of the Arabs.

By the 10th century, most of the region known as the Maghrib had become Islamic. During this time of the Arab conquest of the Maghrib in the 7th and 8th centuries, there was an **influx** of Muslim merchants who became involved in the gold trade with the Great Kingdoms of West Africa that were just forming around this time.

Match the bold underlined word from the Maghrib reading to its synonym or definition.	
Synonym/Definition	Word from reading
1. policy or set of guidelines	
2. dislike	
3. those born from you	
4. important	
5. made up or included	
6. arrival	

Why do you think the Berbers resented being ruled by the Arabs, even though they had converted to their religion?

The spread of Islam into the Maghrib is an example of _____.

Find examples of three Culture Patterns from the reading:

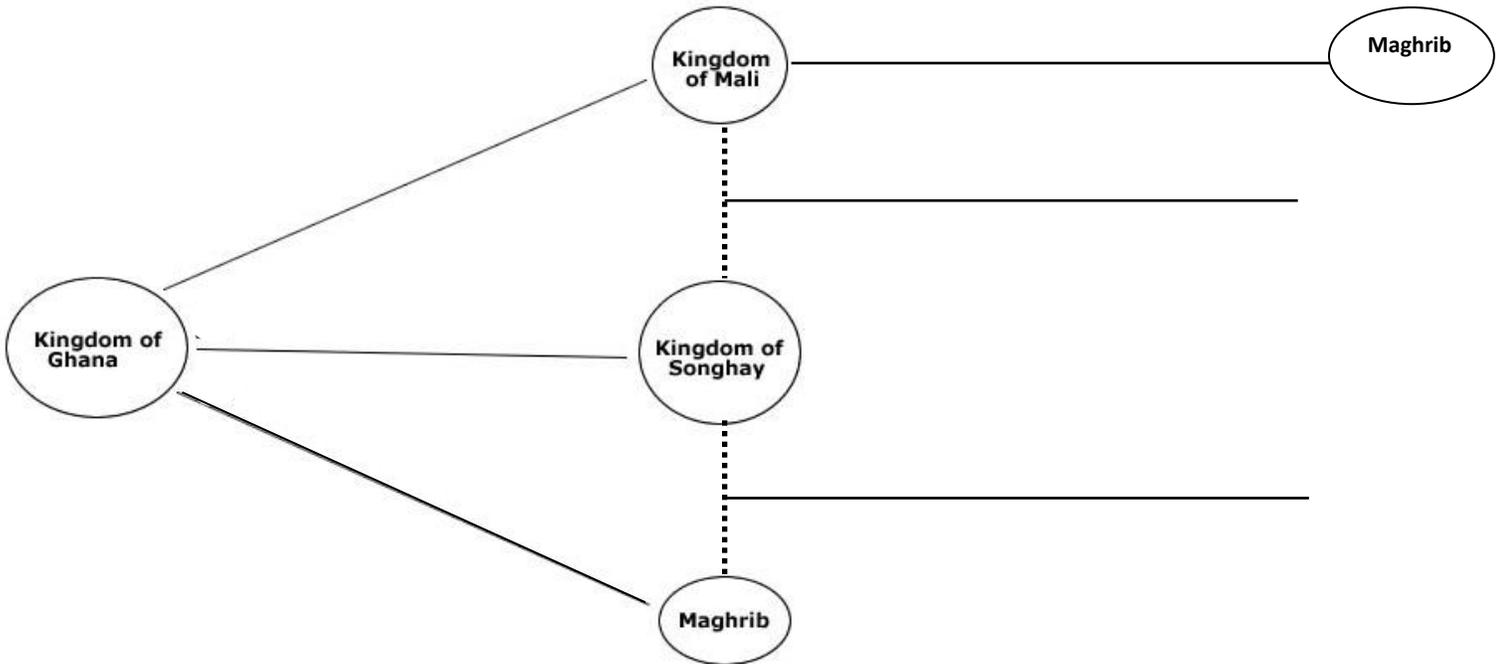
Pattern	Example

Find examples of three of the Five Themes of Geography from the reading:

Theme	Example

Graphic Organizer

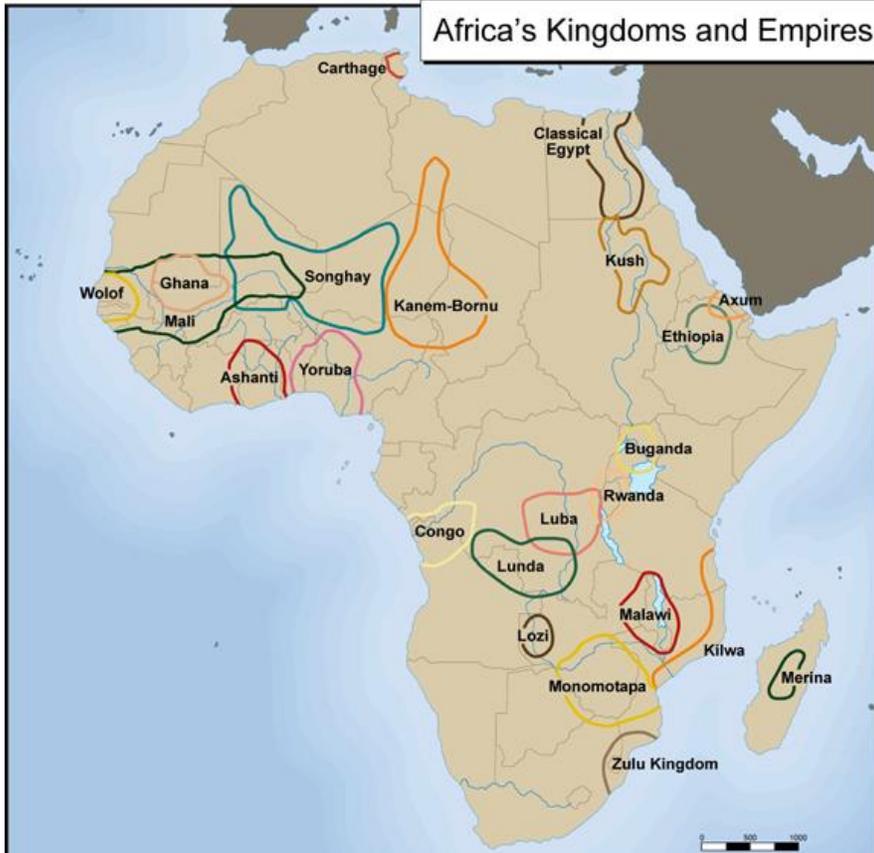
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1. succeed	prosper
2. power to rule	authority
3. make larger	expand
4. methods or procedures	techniques
5. change	convert
6. lessened or became smaller	diminished

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Why do you think some historians prefer to use CE?

_ to be more inclusive; so they do not leave out non-Christians _

List four factors that helped Ghana grow into a strong empire. **Gold trade; use of iron; use of horses; strong government**

The Kingdom of Mali

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Identify and describe the four leaders below.

Sundiata Keita	Founder; first ruler of Mali
Mansa Musa	Best known ruler of Mali; remembered for wealth and pilgrimage to Mecca
Sonni Ali	First great ruler of Songhay, built Songhay into powerful empire
Mohammed Askia	Second great ruler of Songhay; devout Muslim; built up military and encouraged learning

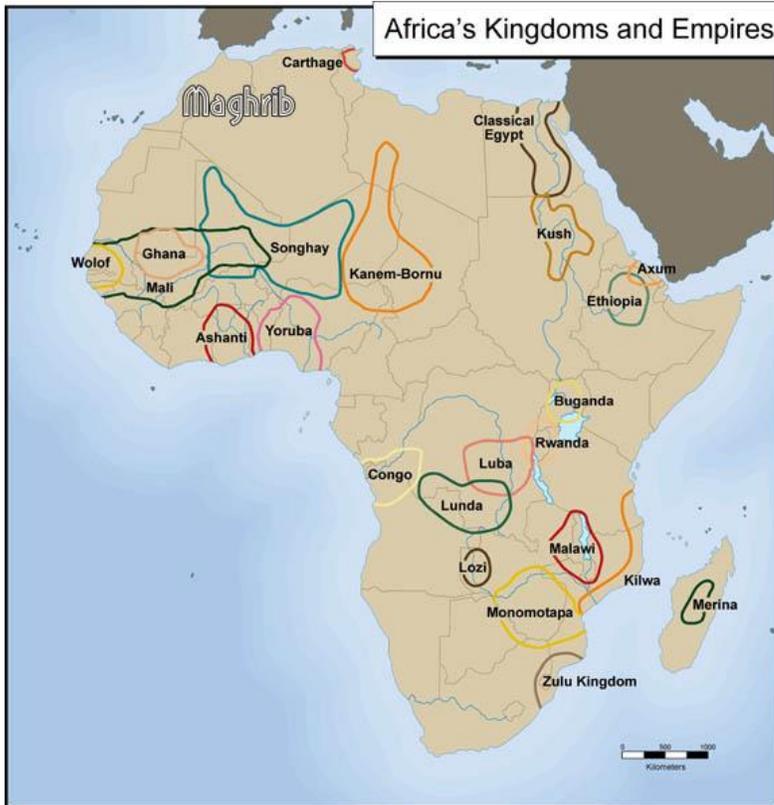
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2. native	Indigenous
3. a rulers time in power	reign
4. group of traders traveling together	caravan

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2. devoted	devout
3. took control of	seized
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2. dislike	resent
3. those born from you	descendants
4. important	significant
5. made up or included	consisted
6. arrival	influx

Why do you think the Berbers resented being ruled by the Arabs, even though they had converted to their religion?

they probably wanted to be independent and to make their own decisions about ruling and governing themselves.

The spread of Islam into the Maghrib is an example of **cultural diffusion**.

Find examples of three Culture Patterns from the reading:

Pattern	Example
economics	Trade (gold for salt)
politics	Most West African empires were ruled by kings
religion	Islam spread into West Africa

Find examples of three of the Five Themes of Geography from the reading:

Theme	Example
Movement	Islam spread into West Africa
Location	Mali was in West Africa
HEI	Salt was mined from the earth.

Graphic Organizer

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