***Ch 15:Cultural Legacy of W. Africa***

**CH 15 PREVIEW -** page 93 in Grey W/B

* Transparency 15A: Kente Cloth - Note: The opening photo for this chapter, on p 164, shows a boy wearing kente. Examine the dress + background in the photograph.
* Just as other cultures have influenced their own community, Islam has influenced the culture of W Africa.
* The connection between the Preview and the upcoming activity. This cloth is called kente, which is a woven cloth made by the Asante people of Ghana and the Ewe people of Ghana and Togo. Weavers use looms to make strips of kente cloth + then craft garments by sewing the strips together in a pattern of staggered stripes

The contrasts in line and color have special meanings and give the cloth a rhythmic quality. Kente cloth is admired and worn in many countries around the world today. In the United States, kente is worn at weddings, for important events, and on holidays.

* Kente cloth is just one example of West Africa’s cultural legacy. Others are oral or written, or they may take on the form of sculpture, everyday objects, music, or dance. In this activity you will learn about key West African cultural achievements and how they continue to shape the world today.

OUTLINE OF CH 15 WITH STANDARDS

# 15.2 West African Oral and Written Traditions

## ORAL Traditions

### *GRIOTS*: RECORD KEEPERS OF THE PEOPLE

* GENEALOGIES
* STORY TELLING
* SING SONGS OF PRAISE
* RECITE POEMS

### FOLKTALES

* PASS ALONG HISTORY
* TRICKSTER TALES

### PROVERBS

* IMAGES OF EVERYDAY LIFE

## WRITTEN TRADITION

### BECAME IMPORTANT AFTER INTRO OF ISLAM

### KEY SOURCE OF INFORMATION

#### HISTORY

#### LEGENDS

#### CULTURE

# 15.3 West African Music

# What functions did music serve in W. Africa?

* + - Music communicated ideas, values, and feelings and marked important events such as weddings and funerals.
    1. CALL AND RESPONSE
       1. COMMON STYLE OF MUSIC
       2. LEADER CALLS
       3. GROUP RESPOND
    2. MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS
       1. 3 TRADITIONAL INSTRUMENTS
          1. BALAFON –XYLOPHONE/MARIMBA
          2. NGONI – small stringed
          3. KORA – harp like/21 strings
    3. DRUMMING
       1. Perform during many functions
       2. hollowed-out logs or wood covered with animal skins
       3. ensembles or groups playing in circular formation
       4. W. African slaves brought drumming to USA
    4. DANCE
       1. An important part of African culture
       2. performed for all kinds of occasions

# 15.4 W. AFRICAN VISUAL ARTS

* + Some visual art, such as fabrics and baskets, served everyday needs. Other art was used in rituals and ceremonies to honor spirits, ancestors, and royalty.
    1. SCULPTURE
       1. RELIGIOUS SCULPTURE
       2. TERRA-COTTA – Nok culture
       3. BRASS – Yoruba people
    2. MASKS
       1. WOODEN MASKS – made for centuries
       2. Detailed and expressive
       3. Used to represent spirits
    3. TEXTILES
       1. BEAUTIFUL AND SYMBOLIC
       2. 3 WELL-KNOWN TYPES
          1. STAMPED FABRICS

DRAWING / STAMP / DYE

* + - * 1. STORY FABRICS

DEPICT EVENTS

APPLIQUÉ

* + - * 1. KENTE CLOTH

Most famous

Sew together narrow strips - silk

Symbolic meanings

* + 1. EVERYDAY OBJECTS
       1. Design and decoration of everyday objects
       2. Ceramic storage containers
       3. Utensils
       4. Furniture
       5. Baskets

GUIDE TO READING NOTES 15

15.2 West African Oral and Written Traditions questions

1. What written and oral traditions did West Africans create? (A proverb is one example.)

* + - * West Africans created proverbs, stories, praise songs, poems, historical accounts and genealogies, and folktales.

1. Why has the oral tradition been so important in West Africa?
   * + - For a long time, there was no written tradition in West Africa. The oral tradition was used to pass down important information and traditions.
2. What is a griot? Why were they important?
   * + - A griot is a verbal artist responsible for memorizing and retelling the history and traditions of West Africa. Griots also helped advice rulers.
3. How do West African written and oral traditions influence life today?
   * + - Preserved writings tell us about West African heritage and culture. Some modern West African writers build on ancient written and oral traditions.

GUIDE TO READING NOTES 15

**15.3 West African Music**

1. What functions did music serve in West Africa?

* Music communicated ideas, values, and feelings and marked important events such as weddings and funerals.

1. What does the term call and response refer to?

* Call and response is a style of music in which a leader plays or sings a call and others play or sing a response.

1. What instruments were used in West Africa?

* Some instruments used in West Africa were the balafon, ngoni, kora, drums, bells, and rattles.

1. How does West African music and dance influence music today?

* People still perform traditional West African dance. West African music has influenced gospel, jazz, blues, rock and roll, and rap. West African drum music and Afro-Cuban drumming are popular in world music.

GUIDE TO READING NOTES 15

15.4 West African Visual Arts

1. What functions did visual art serve in West Africa?

* Some visual art, such as fabrics and baskets, served everyday needs. Other art was used in rituals and ceremonies to honor spirits, ancestors, and royalty.

1. What forms of visual art did West Africans create?

* They created sculptures, masks, textiles, and everyday objects.

1. What were some of the methods artists used?

* Sculptures were molded from clay and fashioned from bronze, copper, and brass. Masks were carved from wood. Textiles were stamps with patterns, and sometimes pieces of fabric were applied to a larger piece (appliqué).

1. How has West African visual art influenced modern art and culture?

* Modern artists like Pablo Picasso were inspired by West African art. Kente cloth is worn around the world. West African basket-making techniques are still used in the American South

Timeline Challenge 3

Guide to Timeline Challenge Questions

1. How many years separate the time when Nok villagers began to use iron tools and Ghana became a rich empire? 1350 years
2. How might these two events be related?

During its rise to power, Ghana might have used iron weapons to subdue its enemies.

1. Look at the Unit 1 timeline. How many years separate the start of the building of Chartres Cathedral and the building of the mosque at Timbuktu? 131 years
2. Give one similarity and one difference between the two structures.

Both structures are devoted to the worship of God. Chartres is constructed mainly of stone while the mosque at Timbuktu is constructed of limestone and mud.

1. From the timeline, we can assume North African traders had been converted to Islam by 700 C.E. Now look at the Unit 2 timeline. How many years separate this year from the death of Muhammad? 68 years;
2. How many separate the death of Muhammad from the rule of Mansa Musa, the first West African king to devoutly practice Islam? Do you think North Africa or West Africa was easier to convert to Islam? 680 years Why?

It appears that it was more difficult to convert people in West Africa.

1. Three events on this timeline occur or begin in the 14th century. What are the three events? How are they related?
2. The rule of Mansa Musa begins,
3. al-Saheli builds a new mosque at Timbuktu, and
4. Timbuktu becomes a center for the study of Arabic language and literatures.

Mansa Musa, the first West African ruler to devoutly practice Islam, established Timbuktu as a center of learning that taught Arabic and Arabic literature. He also encouraged al-Saheli, a Spanish architect, to build the mosque at Timbuktu.

Creating a Cultural Center Guide to West African Cultural Achievements

Imagine that you are the director of the Cultural Center of West

Africa. You have created exhibits about African art, music, and oral and written traditions. Now you want to publish a guide to help visitors better understand the exhibits. Your guide must be between 500 and 700 words and

* + Include a colorful and creative cover and title.
  + Be at least three pages long, with pages devoted to art, music, and oral and written traditions.
  + Include at least five illustrations or drawings.
  + Contain information to help the reader understand African culture. The guide must have at least three paragraphs that describe the exhibits and explain what they teach us about African culture and society. Each paragraph must cover one of these three topics: art, music, and oral and written traditions.
  + Include a list of at least four examples of ways in which West African cultural achievements influence our world today.

Prepare a rough draft of your guide and have your parent review it. Type or write your final draft neatly in ink.

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