

Module 1

America, Africa, and Europe before 1500



Essential Question

Why might a U.S. historian study the Americas, Africa, and Europe before 1500?



About the Photo: American buffalo were a vital food source for many Native American groups.

In this module you will learn the histories of three regions—the Americas, West Africa, and Europe—whose people would come together and forever change North America.

What You Will Learn ...

Lesson 1: The Earliest Americans 6
The Big Idea Native American societies developed across North and South America.

Lesson 2: Native American Cultures 11
The Big Idea Many diverse Native American cultures developed across the different geographic regions of North America.

Lesson 3: Trading Kingdoms of West Africa 19
The Big Idea Using trade to gain wealth, Ghana, Mali, and Songhai were West Africa's most powerful kingdoms.

Lesson 4: Europe before 1500 23
The Big Idea New ideas and trade changed Europeans' lives.

Explore ONLINE!



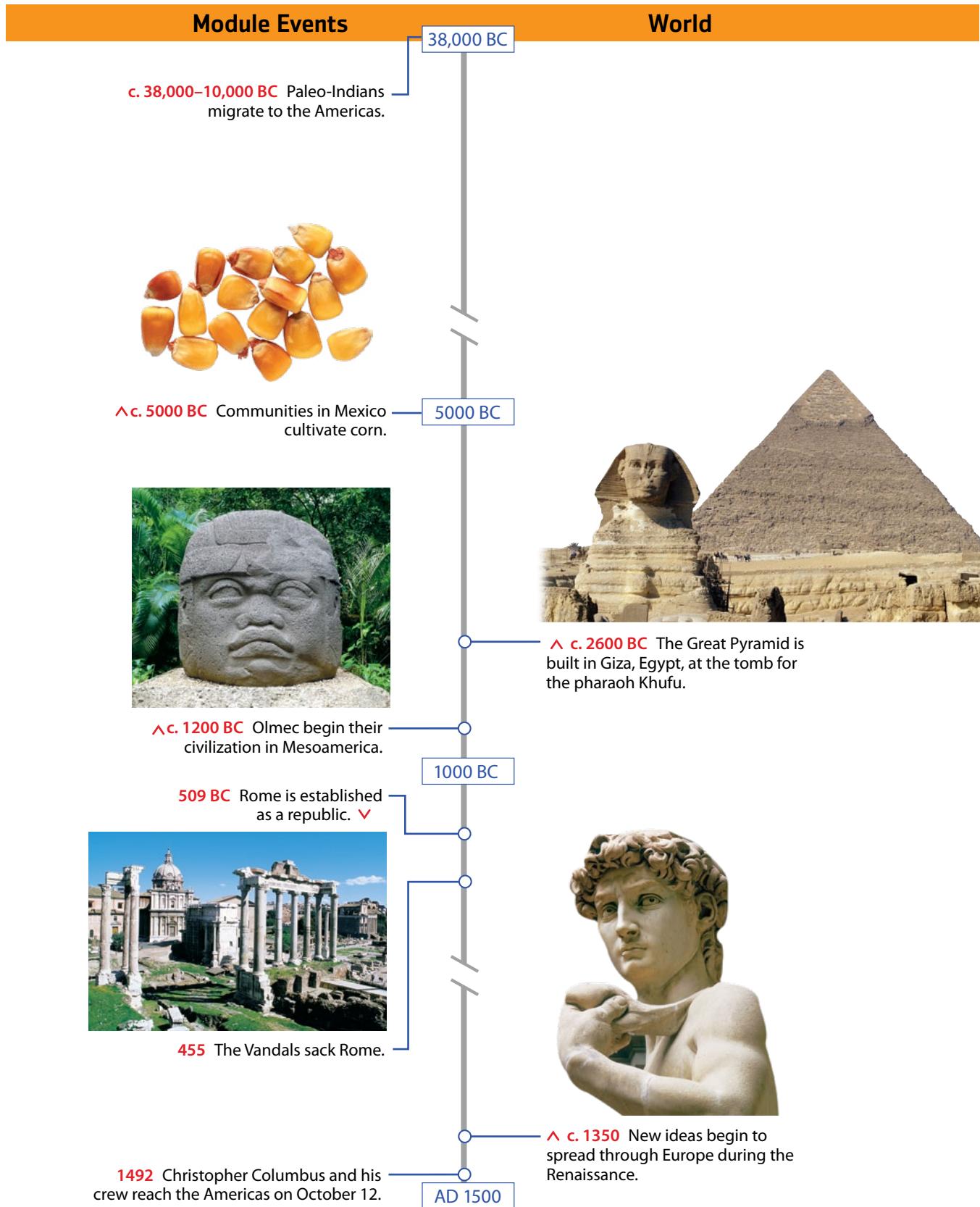
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Timeline of Events Beginnings—AD 1500

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Reading Social Studies

THEME FOCUS:

Economics, Geography

This module explains the development of major world regions before 1600. You will read about how, during the Ice Age, nomads made their way from Asia to North America. Over time they developed distinct cultures and built great civilizations. You will also read about the cultures and civilizations of Africa and Europe. As you read the module, pay careful attention to how geography and economic issues affected the growth of cultures and civilizations.

READING FOCUS:

Specialized Vocabulary of Social Studies

If you flipped through the pages of this book, would you expect to see anything about square roots or formulas? How about petri dishes or hypotheses? Of course you wouldn't. Those are terms you see only in math and science books.

Specialized Vocabulary Like most subjects, social studies has its own specialized vocabulary. Included in it are words and phrases you will see over and over as you read social studies materials. The charts below list some terms you will encounter as you read this book.

Terms about Time	
decade	a period of 10 years
century	a period of 100 years
era	a long period marked by great events, developments, or figures
BC	a term used to identify dates that occurred long ago, before the birth of Jesus Christ, on whose teachings Christianity was founded; it means "before Christ." BC dates get smaller as time passes, so the larger the number, the earlier the date.
AD	a term used to identify dates that occurred after Jesus's birth; it comes from a Latin phrase that means "in the year of our Lord." Unlike BC dates, AD dates get larger as time passes, so the larger the number, the later the date.
BCE	another way to refer to BC dates; it stands for "before the common era"
CE	another way to refer to AD dates; it stands for "common era"

Terms about Government and Society	
politics	the art of creating government policies
economics	the study of the creation and use of goods and services
movement	a series of actions that bring about or try to bring about a change in society
campaign	an effort to win a political office, or a series of military actions
colony	a territory settled and controlled by a country

You Try It!

The following passage shows you how some specialized vocabulary is defined in context.

North and Northwest Native Americans in the Pacific Northwest carved images of **totems**—ancestor or animal spirits—on tall, wooden poles. Totem poles held great religious and historical significance for Native Americans of the Northwest. Feasts called potlatches were another unique, or unusual, aspect of these Native Americans' culture.

Use the clues to understand meaning.

1. In the first sentence, find the word *totems*. Notice that the term is **highlighted** in yellow. Highlighted terms appear in a list under Key Terms and People on the first page of each lesson. Why do you think some specialized vocabulary terms are highlighted, while others are not?
2. Again, find the word *totems*. The phrase after the **dash** is the definition. Often in this book, specialized vocabulary words are defined after a dash. So be on the lookout for dashes.
3. The word *potlatches* is defined in the third sentence. The clue to finding this definition is the word **called**. Words like **called** and **known as** can indicate that a definition is coming up. In this case, the word *feasts* is a definition of *potlatches*.
4. The word *unique* is defined in the final sentence. The clue to finding this definition is the **comma** followed by the word **or**. So be on the lookout for commas followed by *or*.

As you read Module 1, keep track of the specialized vocabulary terms you learn.

Key Terms and People

Lesson 1

Bering Land Bridge
Paleo-Indians
migration
hunter-gatherers
environments
culture

Lesson 2

pueblos
kivas
totems
teepees
matrilineal
Iroquois League

Lesson 3

Berbers
Mansa Musa
hajj
mosques
Askia the Great

Lesson 4

Socrates
Plato
Aristotle
reason
democracy
knights
Black Death
Michelangelo
Leonardo da Vinci
Johannes Gutenberg
joint-stock companies

The Earliest Americans

The Big Idea

Native American societies developed across North and South America.

Main Ideas

- Climate changes allowed Paleo-Indians to migrate to the Americas.
- Major civilizations developed in Mesoamerica and South America.

Key Terms and People

Bering Land Bridge
Paleo-Indians
migration
hunter-gatherers
environments
culture

If YOU were there ...

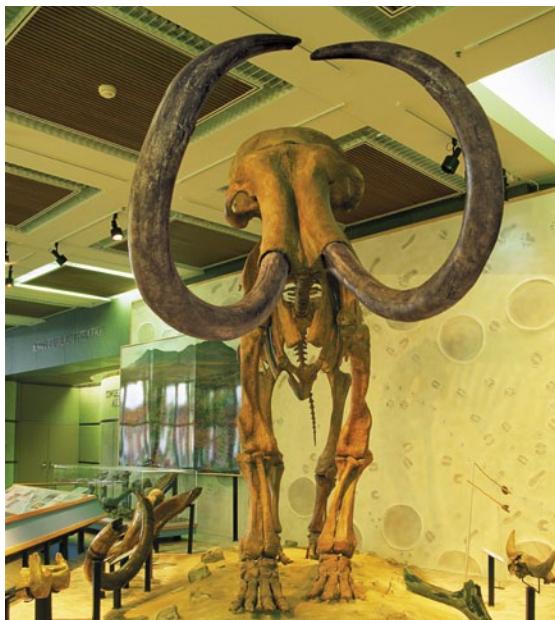
You are living in North America about 10,000 years ago, close to the end of the Ice Age. For weeks, your group has been following a herd of elk across a marshy landscape. This trip has taken you far from your usual hunting grounds. The air is warmer here. There are thick grasses and bushes full of berries. You decide to camp here for the summer and perhaps stay a while.

How would settling here change your way of life?

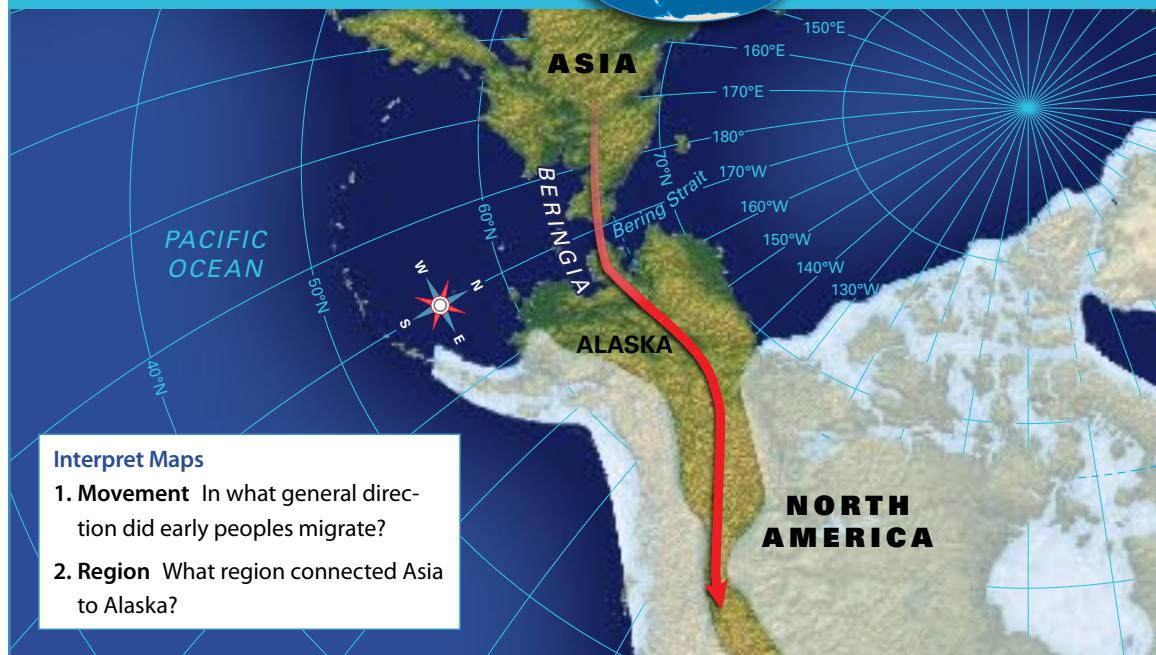
Early Migrations to the Americas

Many scientists believe that the first people arrived in North America during the last Ice Age. At the start of the Ice Age, Earth's climate became intensely cold. Large amounts of water froze into huge, moving sheets of ice called glaciers. As a result, ocean levels dropped more than 300 feet lower than they are today. When the sea level fell, a land bridge between northeastern Asia and present-day Alaska was exposed. Geographers call this strip of land the **Bering Land Bridge**. Although no one knows exactly when or how people crossed into North

Mammoths, such as the skeleton shown here, were present during the Ice Age and were hunted by early peoples in North America.



Land Migrations of Early Peoples



America, evidence suggests that people called **Paleo-Indians** crossed this bridge into Alaska between 38,000 and 10,000 BC.

This **migration**—a movement of people or animals from one region to another—took place over a long time. It is believed that Paleo-Indians traveled south into Canada, the United States, and Mexico following herds of animals. Over time, their descendants went as far as the southern tip of South America. These people were **hunter-gatherers**, people who hunted animals and gathered wild plants for food.

About 8000 BC Earth's climate grew warmer, and the Ice Age ended. Rising temperatures melted glaciers. Water levels in the oceans rose, and the Bering Land Bridge was covered with water.

Although most scholars agree that early peoples crossed the Bering Land Bridge into the Americas, some researchers have proposed other theories about the continents' settlement. Those scientists point to sites in South America that were occupied by humans long before people could have migrated to those places from Beringia, the area surrounding the Bering Land Bridge. One theory in particular provides an explanation. That theory says that people from East Asia came to the west coast of North and South America by boat. They could have stayed in sight of land as they traveled north and then south along the coast.

The warmer climate that developed at the end of the Ice Age created new **environments**—climates and landscapes that surround living things. Large herds of animals such as buffalo and deer ate new short grasses that thrived in the warm climate. As the number of these animals grew, Paleo-Indians hunted them for resources such as meat, hides, and bones.

Varied environments influenced the development of different Native American societies, or groups that share a culture. **Culture** is a group's set

of common values and traditions, including language, government, and family relationships.

Like all societies, Native American groups changed over time. People planted seeds, and eventually they learned to breed animals, farm, and grow plants. Maize, or corn, was one of their most important early crops. Later, they learned to grow beans and squash. Farming allowed people to stop moving around looking for food and to settle in one place. With adequate food supplies, settlements could support larger populations. As populations grew, more advanced societies began to develop.

Early Mesoamerican and South American Societies

Some of the earliest American cultures arose in Mesoamerica, a region that includes the southern part of what is now Mexico and the northern parts of Central America.

Academic Vocabulary
develop the process of growing or improving

Olmec and Maya Around 1200 BC the Olmec **developed** the earliest-known civilization in Mesoamerica. The Olmec are known for their use of stone in architecture and sculpture. They built the first pyramids in the Americas, and they created sculptures of huge stone heads. When their civilization ended around 400 BC, trade had spread Olmec culture throughout the region.



This pyramid is one of five that the Maya built in Tikal, Guatemala, which was an important Maya trading post.

Like the Olmec, the Maya grew maize and other crops and lived in small villages. These villages traded goods with each other, and by about AD 200, the Maya were building large cities.

Maya cities had pyramids, large stone temples, palaces, and bridges. The Maya also paved large plazas for public gatherings and built canals to control the flow of water through the cities.

In the 900s Maya civilization began to collapse. Historians are still not sure what caused this great civilization's decline. Theories include disease, soil exhaustion, and long-term drought, among others.

Aztec The Aztec were fierce warriors, and their superior military ability was key to their success. Around the mid-1100s AD, the Aztec migrated south to central Mexico. There they settled down, conquered many towns, made alliances to build their empire, and controlled a huge trade network.

In AD 1325 the Aztec founded their capital, Tenochtitlán (tay-nawch-teet-LAHN), on an island in Lake Texcoco. Raised roads called causeways connected the island to the shore, making trade and travel easier. Tenochtitlán became the greatest city in the Americas and one of the world's largest cities.

Trade and tribute paid by conquered people in the form of cotton, gold, and food made the Aztec rich. By the early 1500s, they ruled the most powerful state in Mesoamerica.

Reading Check

Draw Conclusions

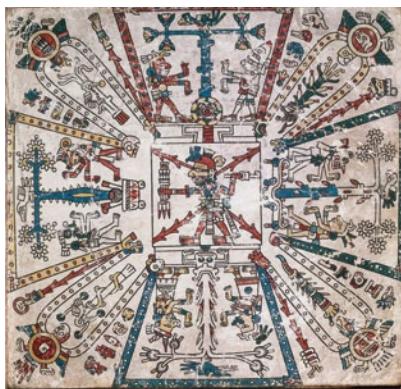
How did climate change affect early peoples' migrations?

Academic Vocabulary

develop the process of growing or improving

Aztec and Inca Civilizations





Aztec Calendar of the World

This map is from an illustrated book of the Aztec calendar dating to the 1400s. The map shows the world in the shape of a cross. Each branch is a direction—east (top), west (bottom), north (left), and south (right).

Reading Check

Summarize

What early civilizations existed in Mesoamerica and South America?

The Aztec used mathematics and their observations of the heavens to create a calendar. The calendar was made up of two cycles that together formed a 52-year period. Among other Aztec achievements were jade and stone carvings, the use of medicinal herbs, and maintenance of a road system. They also had a writing system made up of signs and symbols. The Aztec spoke Nahuatl, a language that still has some 1.5 million speakers, most of whom live in Central Mexico.

Inca The Inca began as a small tribe in the Andes Mountains of South America. They named their capital city Cuzco (KOO-skoh). In the mid-1400s, the Inca began to expand their territory. By the 1500s the empire stretched along the Pacific coast from what is now northern Ecuador to central Chile. In time, the empire was home to about 12 million people. The Inca formed a strong central government with a king as ruler. The official language of the empire was Quechua.

Because they had no written language, the Inca kept records with a system of knotted strings called *quipu*. They also used *quipu* for mathematics. The knots and their positions on the string indicated numbers, while the strings' colors represented different types of information. For example, red strings may have been used to count warriors or yellow strings to count gold. The Inca also developed a device much like a calculator, allowing them to multiply, divide, and use fractions.

The Inca are known for building and for art. Massive buildings and forts were made of huge stone blocks. An advanced system of highways ran the length of the empire. Paved roads and rope bridges connected all parts of Inca territory. This enabled the Inca to communicate with and control their large empire.

Summary and Preview Early people migrated into North and South America and developed societies. In the next lesson you will learn about Native American cultures in North America.

Lesson 1 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

1. a. **Recall** What was the Ice Age?
b. **Summarize** Why were early peoples able to use the Bering Land Bridge?
c. **Draw Conclusions** Why do you think the migration of early peoples in the Americas flowed north to south?
2. a. **Identify** What was the earliest civilization in the Americas, and where was it located?
b. **Analyze** How did the Aztec build such a powerful, rich state?
c. **Evaluate** Which of the four civilizations discussed do you think was the most highly developed? Explain.

Critical Thinking

3. **Categorize** In this lesson you learned about the migration of early peoples and about their societies. Create a table similar to the one below and identify accomplishments of the four early Mesoamerican and South American civilizations.

	Significant Accomplishments
Olmec	
Maya	
Aztec	
Inca	

Native American Cultures

The Big Idea

Many diverse Native American cultures developed across the different geographic regions of North America.

Main Ideas

- Several early societies developed in North America long before Europeans explored the continent.
- Geographic areas influenced Native American cultures.
- Language united Native American groups and contributed to cultural diversity.
- Despite their differences, Native American cultures shared similar beliefs and practices.

Key Terms and People

pueblos
kivas
totems
teepees
matrilineal
Iroquois League

If YOU were there ...

You live in the North American Southwest about 1,000 years ago. You've been working in the fields for several hours today. The maize crop looks good this summer, and you are hoping for a successful harvest. After finishing your work, you walk home. The opening to your house is in a cliff wall 30 feet above a canyon floor. You must use ladders to get to the opening.

Do you like the location of your home? Why?

Early Societies

The earliest people in North America were hunter-gatherers. After 5000 BC some of these people learned how to farm and settled in villages. In time, many diverse and complex societies developed throughout North America. Although they left no written record, historians have learned about them by studying artifacts, or the objects that they made and used.

Anasazi By 1500 BC the people who lived in the North American Southwest, like those who lived in Mesoamerica, were growing maize. One of the early farm cultures in the Southwest was the Anasazi (ah-nuh-SAH-zee). The Anasazi lived in the Four Corners region, where present-day Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah meet. Anasazi farmers adapted to their dry environment and grew maize, beans, and squash. Over time, they began to use irrigation to increase food production. By the time the Anasazi settled in the area, they were already skilled basket makers. They wove straw, vines, and yucca to make containers for food and other items, and they eventually became skilled potters as well.

The early Anasazi lived in pit houses dug into the ground. After about AD 750 they built **pueblos**, or aboveground houses made of a heavy clay called adobe. The Anasazi built these houses on top of each other, creating large multistoried complexes. Some pueblos had several hundred rooms and



Anasazi Cliff Dwellings

Dwellings like these were built into cliffs for safety. Often, ladders were needed to reach the buildings. The ladders could be removed, keeping invaders from reaching the dwellings.

could house 1,000 people. The Anasazi often built their houses in canyon walls and had to use ladders to enter their homes. These cliff dwellings provided a strong defense against enemies. The Anasazi also built **kivas**, underground ceremonial chambers, at the center of each community. Kivas were sacred areas used for religious ceremonies. Some of these rituals focused on the life-giving forces of rain and maize.

The Anasazi thrived for hundreds of years. After AD 1300, however, they began to abandon their villages. Scholars believe that drought, disease, or raids by nomadic tribes from the north may have caused the Anasazi to move away from their pueblos.

Mound Builders Several farming societies developed in the eastern part of North America after 1000 BC. The Hopewell lived along the Mississippi, Ohio, and lower Missouri river valleys. They supported their large population with agriculture and trade. They built large burial mounds to honor their dead.

By AD 700 the Hopewell culture had declined and another culture, the Mississippian, began to thrive in the same area. Skilled farmers and traders, the Mississippian built large settlements. Their largest city, Cahokia, was located near present-day Saint Louis, Missouri. It had a population of 30,000.

The Mississippian people built hundreds of mounds for religious ceremonies. Cahokia alone had more than 100 temple and burial mounds. These mounds had flat tops, and temples were built on top of the mounds. Many of the mounds were gigantic. Monks Mound, near Collinsville, Illinois, for example, was 100 feet high and covered 16 acres.

Reading Check

Summarize

Why did some Native American groups build mounds?

Several other mound-building cultures thrived in eastern North America. More than 10,000 mounds have been found in the Ohio River valley alone. Some of these mounds are shaped like birds and snakes. The mound-building cultures had declined by the time European explorers reached the Southeast. Their societies no longer existed by the early 1700s.

Native American Culture Areas

Researchers use culture areas—the geographic locations that influenced societies—to help them describe ancient Native American peoples. North America is divided into several culture areas.

North and Northwest The far north of North America is divided into the Arctic and Subarctic culture areas. Few plants grow in the Arctic because the ground is always frozen beneath a thin top layer of soil. This harsh environment was home to two groups of people, the Inuit and the Aleut. The Inuit lived in present-day northern Alaska and Canada. Their homes were igloos, hide tents, and huts. The Aleut, whose home was in western and southern Alaska, lived in multifamily houses that were partially underground. The two groups shared many cultural features, including language. Both groups survived by fishing and hunting large mammals. The Aleut and Inuit also depended on dogs for many tasks, such as hunting and pulling sleds.

South of the Arctic lies the Subarctic, home to groups such as the Dogrib and Montagnais peoples. While they followed the seasonal migrations of deer, these peoples lived in shelters made of animal skins. At other times, they lived in villages made up of log houses. Farther south, the Kwakiutl and the Chinook thrived, thanks to the rich supply of game animals, fish, and wild plants that allowed large populations to increase without the need for farming.

Native Americans in the Pacific Northwest carved images of **totems**—ancestor or animal spirits—on tall, wooden poles. Totem poles held great religious and historical significance for Native Americans of the Northwest. Feasts called potlatches were another unique, or unusual, aspect of these Native Americans' culture. At these gatherings, hosts, usually chiefs or wealthy people, gave away most of their belongings as

People in different culture areas created unique artifacts. The bird-shaped pipe (left) is from the Northwest Coast culture area. The sewing tool (center) with a carved bone handle was used in the Great Plains. The human figure (right) was created by someone who lived in the Southwest culture area.



gifts. Those gifts would likely be distributed to friends or even neighboring tribes. By displaying their generosity, potlatch hosts increased their social status and power. Potlatches were also occasions for defining roles within the group and for granting economic privileges.

West and Southwest Farther south along the Pacific coast was the California region, which included the area between the Pacific and the Sierra Nevada mountain range. Food sources were plentiful, so farming was not necessary. One major plant food was acorns, which were ground into flour. People also fished and hunted deer and other game. Most Native Americans in the California region lived in groups of families of about 50 to 300. Among these groups, including the Hupa, Miwok, and Yokuts, more than 100 languages were spoken.

The area east of the Sierra Nevada, the Great Basin, received little rain. To survive, Native Americans adapted to the drier climate by gathering seeds, digging roots, and trapping small animals for food. Most groups in this area, including the Paiute, Shoshone, and Ute, spoke the same language.

The Southwest culture region included the present-day states of Arizona and New Mexico and parts of Colorado and Texas. Pueblo groups, such as the Hopi and Zuni, lived there. Like the Anasazi, these Native Americans also adapted to a dry climate. The Pueblo irrigated the land and grew maize, squash, and beans. These crops were vital to southwestern peoples. The Pueblo religion focused on two key areas of Pueblo life—rain and maize. The Pueblo performed religious rituals hoping to bring rain and a successful maize crop to their people.

Pueblo peoples were settled and built multistoried houses out of adobe bricks. Over time their towns grew larger, and some towns had more than 1,000 residents. Pueblo peoples made fine pottery that featured beautifully painted designs.

The Apache and Navajo also lived in the Southwest. These groups were nomadic—they moved from place to place hunting small animals and foraging for food. The Apache and Navajo also supported themselves by raiding the villages of the Pueblo and others.



Pawnee Star Chart

The Pawnee carefully observed the night sky. This map of the night sky dates to the 1700s, but historians believe that Plains Indians used similar maps before 1500.

Great Plains The huge Great Plains region stretches south from Canada into Texas. This culture area is bordered by the Mississippi Valley on the east and the Rocky Mountains on the west. The Plains were mainly grassland, home to millions of buffalo. Deer, elk, and other game also thrived there.

Most Great Plains peoples were nomadic hunters. Many groups hunted buffalo using bows and spears. Blackfoot and Arapaho hunters sometimes chased the animals over cliffs, drove them into corrals, or trapped them in a ring of fire. Native Americans on the Plains used buffalo skins for shields, clothing, and coverings for their **teepees**—cone-shaped shelters. Buffalo skins were also trade items.

Some Plains groups were farmers, while others depended more on gathering foods in addition to hunting. For example, some groups of Sioux

gathered wild rice and speared fish. The Mandan and Pawnee settled in villages and grew corn, beans, and squash. The Pawnee lived in round lodges made of dirt.

Like some other Native American groups, Pawnee society was **matrilineal**. This means that people traced their ancestry through their mothers, not their fathers. In some groups, such as the Sioux, women organized societies focused on the community's well-being. Men of the Sioux belonged to military societies that acted as a police force.

Northeast and Southeast Eastern North America was rich in sources of food and shelter. Animals, plant foods, fish, and wood for housing were plentiful in the region's woodlands and river valleys.

Most southeastern groups, including the Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole, lived in farming villages governed by village councils. In the Northeast, groups like the Algonquian survived by hunting and gathering plants. Those in the south farmed, hunted, gathered plants, and fished. Many tribes used strings of beads known as wampum for money.

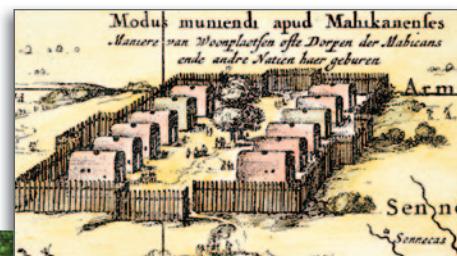
To the east of the Algonquian lived the Iroquois (or Haudenosaunee). They were farmers, hunters, and traders. Among their crops were squash, corn, and beans. During the cold winters, the Iroquois cut holes in the ice over rivers and lakes to catch fish. In the spring, they tapped the region's maple trees to make syrup. The Iroquois lived in longhouses, or rectangular homes made from logs and bark, that housed eight to ten families.

Five Iroquois nations—the Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, and Seneca—formed a political alliance called the **Iroquois League**. This is also

Iroquois Longhouse

Northeastern Native Americans such as the Iroquois lived in longhouses made of tree bark. The drawing at right shows the longhouses in one Iroquois village.

Why do you think a fence was built around the longhouses?



Native American Culture Areas



Interpret Maps

- 1. Region** Why did some culture areas have fewer groups of people than other culture areas did?
 - 2. Human-Environment Interaction** What natural features served as boundaries between culture areas?

known as the Iroquois Confederation. In 1722, a sixth nation, the Tuscarora, joined the league. The Confederation kept peace among its members and waged war to protect its territory from invasion.

Highly organized and extremely powerful, the Iroquois Confederation held strong for hundreds of years. Its government was founded in the Great Law of Peace, an oral constitution that emphasized the equality of all people. The confederation made decisions through representatives and consensus, or agreement. Some scholars propose that the constitution and structure of the Iroquois Confederation inspired the framers of the U.S. Constitution.

Reading Check

Generalize

How did environment influence Native American cultures in North America?

Reading Check

Make Inferences

How were Native American culture areas and languages connected?

Native American Languages

As you can see on the “Native American Culture Areas” map, some culture areas, such as the Arctic, occupied large regions, but had few distinct groups of people. By contrast, the California and Northwest Coast areas were home to many groups. Language played an important part in the cultural diversity of these regions.

At the time of European contact, about 300 languages were spoken in North America. Most could be grouped into 29 language families, or languages that descend from a common ancestor. Present-day California was home to more than 70 languages and 20 language families, some of which covered areas no larger than a modern county. Other language families occupied broader territory. One of the largest, the Uto-Aztecan language family, covered about a fourth of what is now the continental United States. Today the Shoshone in the Great Basin and the Hopi in the Southwest continue to speak Uto-Aztecan languages.

Similar Beliefs and Practices

Despite their differences, Native American groups of North America shared a number of similar beliefs and practices. For example, Native Americans held similar spiritual and religious ideas. One was a spiritual connection to the natural world. A chief of a Wabanaki nation in the Northeast once described this idea by saying “The Great Spirit is our father, but the Earth is our mother.”

In many belief systems, a tree stood at the center of the earth. For the Iroquois it was a white pine; for the Sioux, a mighty flowering tree. Animals, too, were thought to be powerful spirits. Hunters often carried out rituals to honor the spirit of an animal they were about to kill. Many groups chose an animal as their symbol and spirit guide.

Native Americans also had similar ideas about land ownership. Generally speaking, they did not believe that land could be bought, sold, or owned by individuals. Rather, land was held for the use of everyone in a group to hunt, fish, or gather and grow food as needed. Many believed that they should preserve the land and its resources for future generations. These beliefs contrasted sharply with those of Europeans, who believed that land and everything on it could be bought and owned by individuals. This difference would cause conflict for hundreds of years.



Though Native Americans did not own land, they did have other forms of private property. For example, in the Great Plains, women owned tepees and most household goods.

Among all the peoples of North America, women played essential roles in the groups' survival. Women performed many tasks, such as making baskets and clothing, cooking, hunting, child rearing, and gathering wild foods. Among the Inuit, women had to prepare meat obtained on a hunt before the cold air froze the meat. In farming societies, women were usually responsible for growing crops. In many North American groups, women owned property in their own right and held considerable power. For example, Iroquois clanmothers—older, respected women of the community—appointed the chief. The clanmothers could also fire the chief if he proved to be a poor leader.

Though they held similar traits in common, the diverse culture groups of North America generally did not join together into large political units. For most Native American peoples, respected elders and chiefs led local groups. Native Americans were, however, connected by thousands of miles of trade networks. Along with foodstuffs, raw materials, and exotic goods, trade networks carried ideas from place to place. One of the most famous routes began in Iroquois country and ran southward through mountain valleys to present-day North Carolina. It crossed the territory of the Shawnee, Choctaw, Cherokee, and other nations.

Reading Check
Identify Points of View What beliefs and practices did Native American groups share?

Summary and Preview People of North America formed many complex societies. In the next lesson you will read about societies in West Africa.

Lesson 2 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

1. a. **Recall** Why did the Anasazi build kivas?
b. **Summarize** What different types of housing were built by the Anasazi?
c. **Draw Conclusions** Why do you think that some mounds were built in the shapes of birds and snakes?
2. a. **Identify** What are culture areas?
b. **Contrast** How did food sources for Native Americans of the North and Northwest differ from those living in the West and Southwest?
c. **Elaborate** Why was the formation of the Iroquois League considered to be a significant political development?
3. a. **Recall** About how many languages were spoken in North America at the time of European contact?
b. **Analyze** What role did language have in the various regions of North America?
c. **Make Generalizations** What generalization can you make about Native American languages in what is now California?

4. a. **Recall** How did Native Americans view land ownership?
b. **Analyze** What role did nature play in the religious ideas of Native Americans?
c. **Explain** Why do you think women held positions of power and influence in many Native American groups?

Critical Thinking

5. **Compare and Contrast** In this lesson you learned about early societies and culture areas. Create a graphic organizer like the one below to compare and contrast early Native American culture groups.

North and Northwest	
West and Southwest	
Great Plains	
Northeast and Southeast	

Trading Kingdoms of West Africa

The Big Idea

Using trade to gain wealth, Ghana, Mali, and Songhai were West Africa's most powerful kingdoms.

Main Ideas

- The Empire of Ghana was the first of three great West African trading kingdoms.
- Like Ghana, the empires of Mali and Songhai grew strong by controlling trade.

Key Terms and People

Berbers
Mansa Musa
hajj
mosques
Askia the Great

If YOU were there . . .

You are a trader's assistant from the Middle East, traveling in a caravan headed for West Africa. The caravan carries many goods, but the most precious is salt. Your job is to trade the salt for gold and return the gold to your employer immediately. Your boss never meets the traders face to face.

Why is your boss so secretive?

Empire of Ghana

By 1500 West Africa was well known for its trading kingdoms. Since ancient times, despite the dangers of the Sahara, trade routes crisscrossed West Africa. For many years, **Berbers**, a group of people from northern Africa, controlled these routes. In time, however, a series of three great trading empires arose thanks to the control of the salt and gold trades. Ghana (GAH-nuh) was the first of these empires.

The Rise of Ghana Historians think the first people in Ghana were farmers along the Niger River. Sometime after AD 300 these farmers, the Soninke (soh-NING-kee), were threatened by nomadic herders. The herders wanted to take the farmers' water and pastures. For protection, groups of Soninke families began to band together. This banding together was the beginning of Ghana.

Ghana was in an ideal position to become a trading center. To the north lay the vast Sahara, the source of much of the salt. Ghana itself was rich in gold. People wanted gold for its beauty, but they needed salt in their diets to survive. Salt, which could be used to preserve food, also made bland food tasty. These qualities made salt very valuable. In fact, Africans sometimes cut up slabs of salt and used the pieces as money.

As the gold and salt trade increased, Ghana's rulers gained power. Eventually, they built up armies equipped with iron weapons that were superior to the weapons of nearby people. Over time, Ghana conquered its neighbors and took control over trade in the region.



Ghana's rulers grew wealthy by controlling trade in salt and gold. Salt came from the north in large slabs, and gold came from the south.

By 800 Ghana was firmly in control of West Africa's trade routes. Nearly all trade between northern and southern Africa passed through Ghana. With so many traders passing through their lands, Ghana's rulers looked for ways to make money from them. One way they raised money was by forcing traders to pay taxes. All traders who entered Ghana had to pay a special tax on the goods they carried. Then they had to pay another tax on any goods they took with them when they left. Ghana's rulers gained incredible wealth from trade, taxes on traders and on the people of Ghana, and their own personal stores of gold. They used their wealth to build an army and an empire.

Islam in Ghana Extensive trade routes brought the people of Ghana into contact with people of many different cultures and beliefs. As the kingdom of Ghana extended into the Sahara, increased contact with Arab traders from the east brought the religion of Islam to Ghana.

Islam was founded in the 600s by an Arab man named Muhammad. Muslims, followers of Islam, believe that God had spoken to Muhammad through an angel and had made him a prophet, someone who tells of God's messages. After Muhammad's death, his followers wrote down his teachings to form the book known as the Qur'an. Islam spread quickly through the Arabian Peninsula.

In the 1060s a Muslim group called the Almoravids (al-muh-RAH-vuhdz) attacked Ghana in an effort to force its leaders to convert to Islam. The Almoravids weakened Ghana's empire and cut off many trade routes.

Without its trade, Ghana could not support its empire, and the empire eventually fell. The influence of Islam, however, remained strong. By the late 1400s Islam would become the most practiced religion in the region.

Reading Check

Identify

How did Ghana become wealthy through trade?

The Empires of Mali and Songhai

For about 150 years after Ghana's decline, no one kingdom controlled trade across the Sahara. Then two new trading empires rose to power in the region—Mali (MAH-lee) followed by Songhai (SAWNG-hy).

Kingdom of Mali Like Ghana, Mali lay along the upper Niger River. This area's fertile soil helped Mali grow. In addition, Mali's location on the Niger allowed its people to control trade on the river. Through this control of trade, the empire grew rich and powerful. According to legend, Mali's rise to power began under a ruler named Sundiata. Sundiata



Mansa Musa was a descendant of Sundiata, the first emperor to rule a united Mali.

won back his country's independence and conquered nearby kingdoms, including Ghana.

Mali's most famous ruler, however, was a Muslim king named **Mansa Musa** (MAHN-sah moo-SAH). Under his leadership, Mali reached the height of its wealth, power, and fame.

Mansa Musa ruled Mali for about 25 years, from 1312 to 1337. During that time, Mali added many important trade cities, including Timbuktu (tim-buhk-TOO), Djenné (je-NAY), and Gao (GOW), to its empire. Traders came to Timbuktu from the north and the south to trade for salt, gold, metals, shells, and many other goods.

Religion was also very important to Mansa Musa. In 1324 he left Mali on a **hajj**, or pilgrimage to Mecca. Making this journey once in their lives is the spiritual duty of all Muslims. As he traveled to Mecca, Mansa Musa introduced his empire to the world. The stories of Mali's wealth and religion spread far and wide. Because of Mansa Musa's influence, Islam spread through a large part of West Africa.

Mansa Musa wanted all Muslims to be able to read the Qur'an. Therefore, he stressed the importance of learning to read and write the Arabic language. He sent scholars to study in Morocco. These scholars later set up schools in Mali for studying the Qur'an.

To encourage the spread of Islam in West Africa, Mansa Musa brought back artists and architects from other Muslim countries to build **mosques**, or buildings for Muslim prayer, throughout his lands.

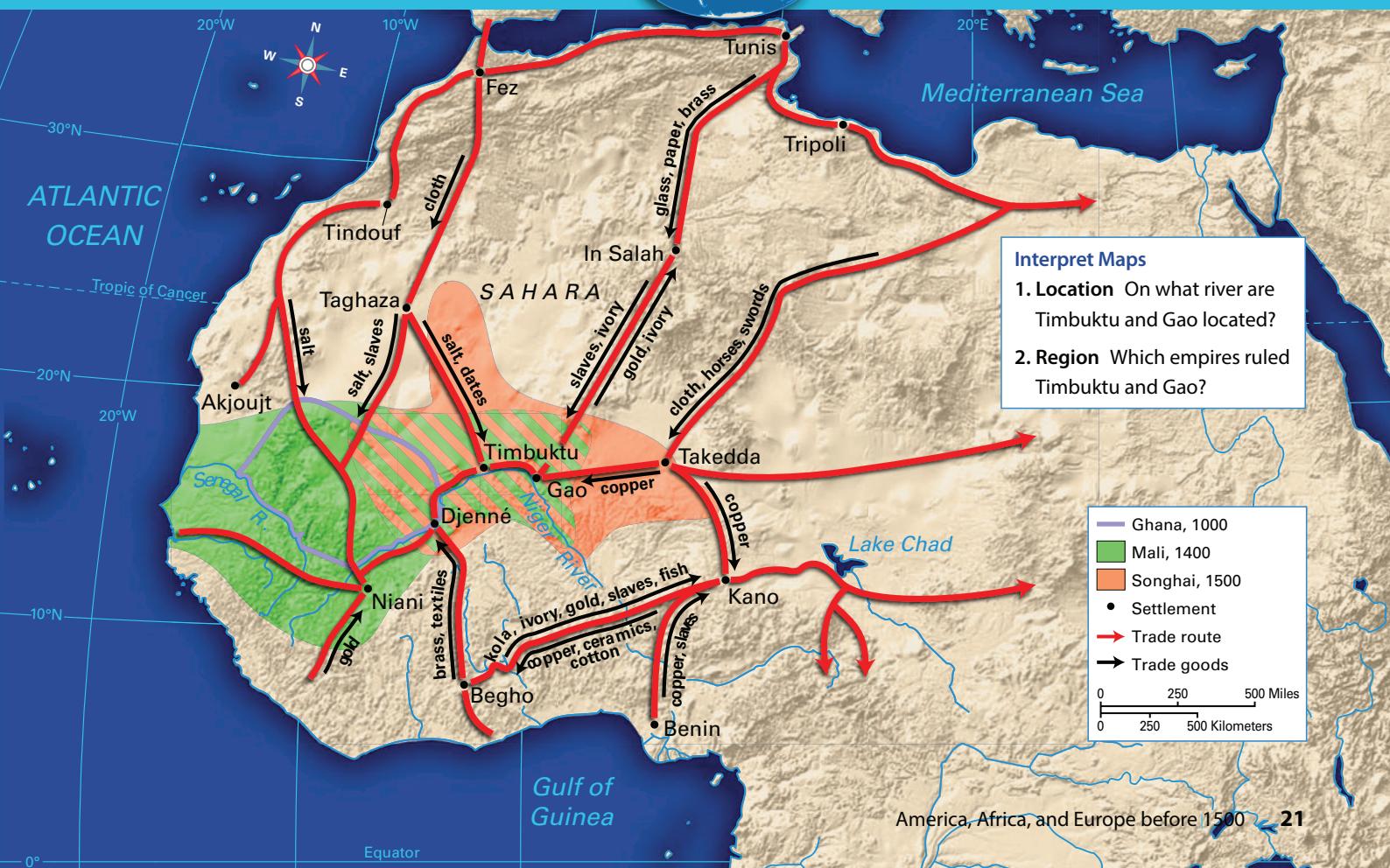
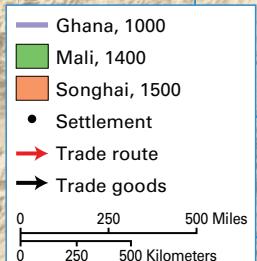
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Empires of West Africa, 800–1500



Interpret Maps

- Location** On what river are Timbuktu and Gao located?
- Region** Which empires ruled Timbuktu and Gao?





Askia the Great became ruler of Songhai when he was nearly 50 years old. He ruled Songhai for about 35 years.

Reading Check

Compare
What did Mali and Songhai have in common?

The architectural advances in cities like Timbuktu as well as an organized government, an emphasis on education, and an expansion of trade all combined to make Mansa Musa Mali's most successful ruler. Much of Mali's success depended on strong leaders. After Mansa Musa died, poor leadership weakened the empire. By 1500 nearly all of the lands the kingdom once ruled were lost. Only a small area of Mali remained.

Songhai Empire In the 1300s Mansa Musa had conquered a rival kingdom of people called the Songhai, who also lived along the Niger River. As the Mali Empire weakened in the 1400s, the Songhai grew wealthy by trading goods along the Niger. They took advantage of Mali's decline, regained their independence, and eventually conquered most of Mali.

One of Songhai's greatest rulers was Muhammad Ture, who chose the title *askia*, a title of military rank. He became known as **Askia the Great**. Like Mansa Musa, Askia the Great was a devout Muslim who supported education and learning. Under his rule, the cities of Gao and Timbuktu flourished. They contained great mosques, universities, schools, and libraries. People came from all parts of West Africa to study mathematics, science, medicine, grammar, and law.

Askia understood that an empire needed effective government. He created a professional army, and to improve the government, he set up five provinces within Songhai. He removed local leaders and appointed new governors who were loyal to him. He also created specialized departments to oversee various tasks, much like modern-day government offices do.

Soon after Askia the Great lost power, the empire of Songhai declined. Songhai was invaded by the Moroccans, the kingdom's northern neighbors. The Moroccans wanted to control the Saharan salt mines. They had superior military power and were able to take over Timbuktu and Gao. Changes in trade patterns completed Songhai's fall.

Summary and Preview Trade was important to the kingdoms of West Africa. In the next lesson you will learn about Europe before 1500.

Lesson 3 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

1. a. **Identify** How did trade contribute to the rise of Ghana?
- b. **Explain** Why did Ghana's rulers tax traders passing through their kingdom?
- c. **Evaluate** Which resource do you think was more valuable to Ghana, gold or salt? Why?
2. a. **Describe** How did Mansa Musa introduce his empire to the world?
- b. **Compare** How did Islam affect the achievements of Mali and Songhai?
- c. **Evaluate** What do you think was the most important achievement of Askia the Great? Explain.

Critical Thinking

3. **Compare and Contrast** In this lesson you learned about African kingdoms and trade. Create a chart like the one below and identify the similarities and differences that led to the fall of the kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai.

Fall of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai	Similarities	Differences

Europe before 1500

The Big Idea

New ideas and trade changed Europeans' lives.

Main Ideas

- The Greeks and Romans established new forms of government.
- During the Middle Ages, society eventually changed from a feudal system to a system with a middle class of artisans and merchants.
- The Renaissance was a time of rebirth in the arts and in learning.

Key Terms and People

Socrates
 Plato
 Aristotle
 reason
 democracy
 knights
 Black Death
 Michelangelo
 Leonardo da Vinci
 Johannes Gutenberg
 joint-stock companies

Academic Vocabulary
 classical referring to the cultures of ancient Greece or Rome

If YOU were there ...

You are a peasant in the Middle Ages, living on the land of a noble. Although you and your family work very hard from sunrise to sundown, much of the food you grow goes to the noble. Your house is very small and has a dirt floor. Your parents are tired and weak, and you wish you could do something to improve their lives.

Is there any way you could change your life?

Greek and Roman Influences

By 1500 European culture had been shaped by centuries of civilization and cultural development. Among the most significant and lasting contributions were those made by the ancient Greeks and Romans.

Greek Philosophers and Government Ancient Greeks valued human reason and believed in the power of the human mind to think, explain, and understand life. Three of the greatest Greek thinkers, or philosophers, were **Socrates**, **Plato**, and **Aristotle**. Socrates, a great teacher, wanted to make people think and question their own beliefs. Plato, a philosopher and teacher, wrote a work called *The Republic*. It describes an ideal society based on justice and fairness for everyone. Aristotle taught that people should live their lives based on **reason**, or clear and ordered thinking.

Greek scientists and mathematicians also gained fame for their contributions to geometry and for accurately calculating the size of Earth. Doctors studied the human body to understand how it worked. One Greek engineering invention that is still used today is a water screw, which brings water to farm fields.

One of the Greeks' most lasting contributions, however, is their political system. During the time known as the **Classical Period**, around the fifth and fourth centuries BC, Greece was organized into several hundred independent

The Roman Senate played a principal role in the Roman government.



city-states, which became the foundation for Greek civilization. Athens was the first Greek city-state to establish **democracy**—a form of government in which people rule themselves. All male citizens in Athens had the right to participate in the assembly, a gathering of citizens, to debate and create the city's laws. Every citizen voted on every issue. Because all male citizens in Athens participated directly in government, we call the Greek form of government a direct democracy.

Roman Law and Government Later, Rome followed Greece's example by establishing a form of democratic government. The Roman Republic was created in 509 BC. Each year freeborn male citizens of Rome elected officials to rule the city. These officials acted on behalf of the citizens and debated ideas at an assembly of representatives. They had many powers, but stayed in power for only one year. Although this early republic was not a direct democracy, it did allow input from citizens. Later, the Romans changed their government into one with three parts. These three parts were made up of elected representatives who protected the city and its residents.

Roman laws were written and kept on public display so all people could know them. Roman concepts of equality before the law and innocent until proven guilty protected Roman citizens' rights.

The political ideas of Greece and Rome survived to influence governments around the world, including that of the United States. In the U.S. political system, citizens vote for representatives, making the nation a democratic republic.

Reading Check

Analyze

How did Roman and Greek governments influence the United States?

Middle Ages

As the Roman Empire fell, groups from the north and east moved into former Roman lands. By the early 500s Europe was divided into many small kingdoms. This marked the beginning of the Middle Ages, a period that lasted about a thousand years.

Feudalism In the 480s a powerful group called the Franks conquered Gaul, the region we now call France. The Franks created a huge empire in



The structure of feudal society has been likened to a pyramid, with kings sitting at the very top of society and peasants at the bottom.

Europe. When invaders began to attack European settlements in the 800s, the Frankish kings could not defend their empire. Nobles had to defend their own lands. As a result, the power of nobles grew, and kings became less powerful. Although loyal to the king, nobles ruled their lands as independent territories.

Nobles needed soldiers to defend their lands. Nobles gave **knights**, warriors who fought on horseback, land in exchange for military service. Nobles who gave land to knights so the knights would defend the land were called lords. A knight who promised to support the noble in battle was called a vassal. This system of promises between lords and vassals is known as feudalism.

Peasants owned no land, so they were not part of the feudal system. They did, however, need to grow food to live. As a result, a new economic system developed. Knights allowed peasants to farm land on their large estates, called manors. In return, the peasants had to give the knights food or other goods as payment.

Because of its structure, feudalism promoted the separation of territories and people. The Catholic Church, however, served as a strong unifying force among the states and people of Europe. During the Middle Ages, nearly everyone in Europe was Christian. Life revolved around the local church with markets, festivals, and religious ceremonies.

The Crusades In the late 1000s a long series of wars called the Crusades began between the European Christians and Muslims in Southwest Asia.

The Turks had captured Palestine, also known as the Holy Land because it was where Jesus had lived. Christians no longer felt safe to travel there on pilgrimages. Christians were called upon to go to war with the Turks to recapture Palestine.

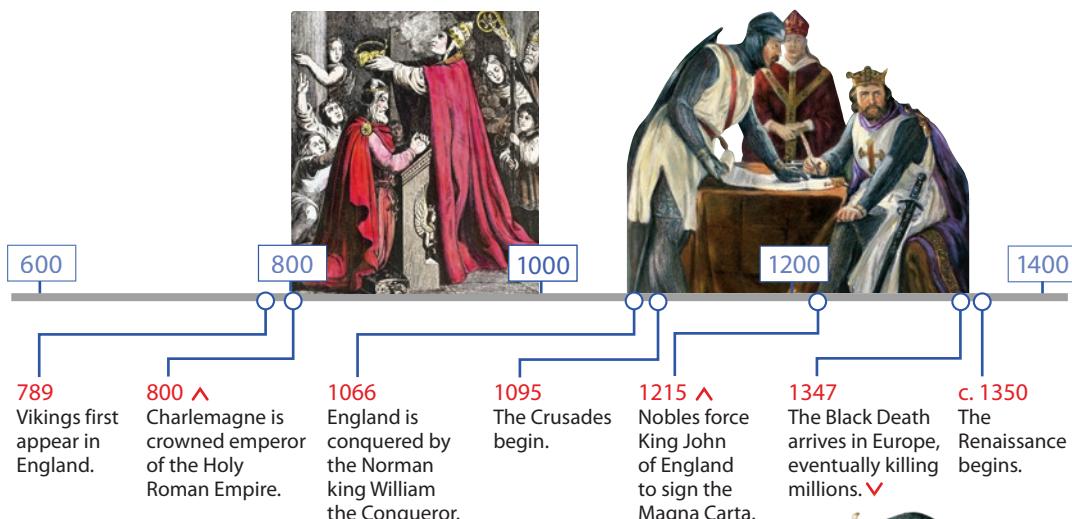
Although the Crusades failed, they changed Europe forever. Trade between Europe and Asia began to grow, introducing Europeans to new products such as apricots, rice, and cotton cloth, as well as the ideas of Muslim thinkers.

Travel, Trade, and Towns In the Middle Ages, towns were small. After about 1000, this situation began to change. New technology meant farmers could produce larger harvests. As farmers grew more food, the population increased.

Travel became safer as increased protection from stronger rulers kept larger territories secure. Over time, kingdoms became nation-states—organized political units with central governments. This development provided even more protection to merchants.

The rulers of the Mongols made routes like the Silk Road (a caravan route that started in China and ended at the Mediterranean Sea) safe for travelers and traders. Among these traders was Marco Polo. In 1271 he journeyed from Europe to China along part of the old Silk Road. He spent 20 years living and traveling in Asia. When Marco Polo returned to Europe, he brought back stories of spices, coal, and paper money.

Timeline: Key Events in the Middle Ages



Interpret Timelines

What important event happened in 1215?



Trade routes spread all across Europe. Merchants brought goods from Asia and Africa to sell in European markets. Their ships also brought back rats infected with the plague. The disease, known as the **Black Death**, spread across Europe, killing an estimated 25 million people. The European economy was dramatically affected by the shortage of workers. Peasants and serfs could now demand payment for their labor. They began to move to cities, which began to grow in size.

In time, the growth of trade led to the decline of feudalism and the manor system. A new middle class of artisans and merchants emerged, and trade cities became commercial centers. Trade associations called guilds became an influential part of European life.

Renaissance

The Renaissance period brought new ways of thinking to Europe, weakening the old feudal system even more. The word *Renaissance* means “rebirth” and refers to the period that followed the Middle Ages in Europe. This movement began in Italy and eventually spread to other parts of Europe.

During the Renaissance, European rulers began to increase their power over the nobles in their countries. Fewer invasions from outside forces helped bring a period of order and stability to Europe.

Search for Knowledge Love of art and education was a key feature of the Renaissance. As Turks conquered much of the Byzantine Empire in the East, scholars fled to Italy. They brought ancient classical writings with them. Some of the works were by Greek thinkers like Plato.

Excited by the discoveries brought by Byzantine scholars, European scholars went looking for ancient texts in Latin. They discovered many

Reading Check

Draw Conclusions

How did travel and trade affect the feudal system?

Latin texts in monasteries, which had preserved works by Roman writers. As Italian scholars read these ancient texts, they rediscovered the glories of Greece and Rome.

The search for knowledge and learning spread to all fields, including art, literature, science, and political thought. The Renaissance emphasized the importance of people rather than focusing on religion. This new focus on human value and the study of humanities was called humanism. People's interest in the humanities led them to respect those who could write, create, or speak well. During the Middle Ages, most people had worked only to glorify God.

Italian artists created some of the most beautiful paintings and sculptures in the world. Their art reflected the basic Renaissance idea—the value of human beings. They rejected flat, two-dimensional images used in medieval art in favor of classical forms and techniques such as perspective. **Michelangelo** and **Leonardo da Vinci** are two of the greatest Renaissance artists. They are known for their work in the fields of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Leonardo was also an inventor, engineer, and mapmaker.

Italian writers also penned great works of literature. Dante Alighieri was a politician and poet. Before Dante, most authors wrote in Latin, the language of the church. But Dante chose to write in Italian, the common language of the people. This gave ordinary people the opportunity to read Dante's work.

Many texts that Europeans rediscovered in the 1300s dealt with science. After reading these works, Renaissance scholars went on to make their own scientific advances. They also studied ancient math texts and built on the ideas they read about. For example, they created symbols for the square root and for positive and negative numbers. Astronomers discovered that Earth moves around the sun. Other scientists used measurements and made calculations to create better, more accurate maps.



By 1450 Johannes Gutenberg had refined his invention of the printing press.

The development of the printing press was a giant step forward in spreading new ideas. In the mid-1400s, a German man, **Johannes Gutenberg** (GOOT-uhn-berk), developed a printing press that used movable type. This allowed an entire page to be printed at once. For the first time in history, thousands of people could read the same books and share ideas about them.

Economic Changes Affect Trade The growth in trade and services at the beginning of the Renaissance sparked a commercial revolution. This also brought a rise in mercantilism. Mercantilism is an economic system that unifies and increases the power and wealth of a nation.

Four northern Italian cities, Florence, Genoa, Milan, and Venice, developed into important trading centers. These cities played two major roles in trade. They served as ports along the Mediterranean Sea. They also served as manufacturing centers and specialized in certain crafts. This economic activity made some families in these cities very wealthy.

As trade and commerce grew, the need for banks arose. Bankers in Florence, Italy, kept money for merchants from all over Europe. The bankers also made money by charging interest on funds they loaned to merchants. The greatest bankers in Florence were from the Medici family. Although Florence was already wealthy from trade, banking increased that wealth.

During this time, merchants began to create **joint-stock companies**, or businesses in which a group of people invest together. In a joint-stock company, the investors share in the company's profits and losses. Forming joint-stock companies allowed investors to take fewer risks.

Summary and Preview Greek and Roman civilizations, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance were major forces that shaped European history. In the next module you will read about how the Renaissance paved the way for exploration of the Americas.

Reading Check

Draw Conclusions

How did the Renaissance lead to trade and a commercial revolution?

Lesson 4 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

1. a. **Identify** What is the difference between a direct democracy and a republic?
b. **Elaborate** What is the importance of having a written law code?
2. a. **Describe** What was the relationship between knights and nobles?
b. **Elaborate** How did the Crusades affect the feudal system?
3. a. **Identify** What does the term *Renaissance* mean?
b. **Analyze** What is the relationship among trade, banking, and joint-stock companies?
c. **Elaborate** What do you think was the greatest accomplishment of the Renaissance?

Critical Thinking

4. **Support a Point of View** You learned about the major changes that took place in Europe during the periods discussed in this lesson. Create a chart similar to the one below and identify which period you think was the most important and explain why.

Most Important	Why

Social Studies Skills

Interpret Diagrams

Understand the Skill

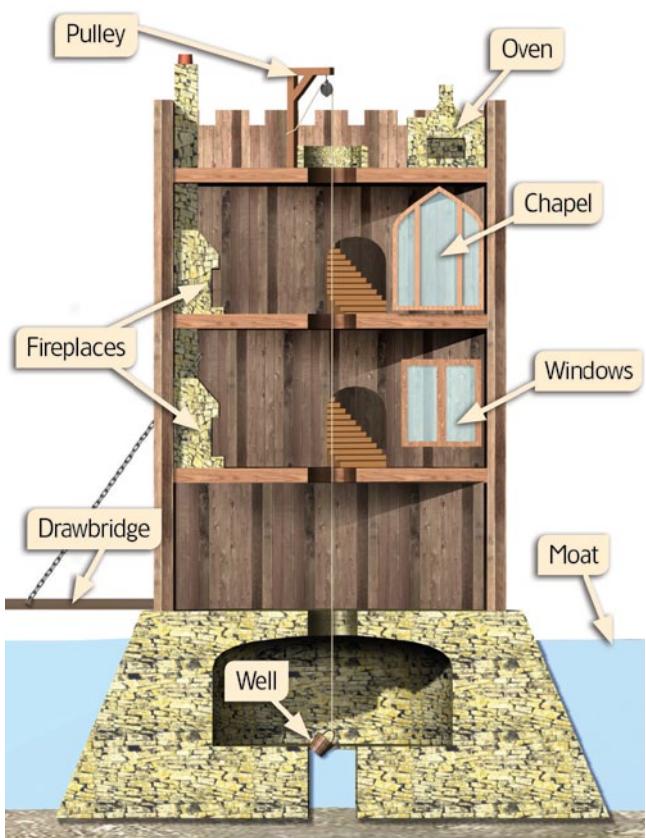
Diagrams are drawings that use lines and labels to explain or illustrate something. Different types of diagrams have different purposes. *Pictorial diagrams* show an object in simple form, much like it would look if you were viewing it. *Cutaway diagrams* show the “insides” of an object. *Component diagrams* show how an object is organized by separating it into parts. Such diagrams are sometimes also called *schematic drawings*. The ability to interpret diagrams will help you to better understand a historical object, its function, and how it worked.

Learn the Skill

Use these basic steps to interpret a diagram:

1. Determine what type of diagram it is.
2. Read the diagram’s title or caption to find out what the diagram represents.
3. Look for any labels and read them carefully. Most diagrams include text that identifies the object’s parts or explains relationships among the parts.
4. If a legend is present, study it to identify and understand any symbols and colors that are used in the diagram.
5. Look for numbers or letters that might indicate a sequence of steps. Also, look for any arrows that might show direction or movement.

An Early Castle



Practice and Apply

Interpret the diagram of an early castle and answer the following questions.

1. What type of diagram is this?
2. What labels in the diagram suggest how the castle was heated?
3. What was the purpose of the pulley?
4. Of what materials was the castle made?
5. What features of the castle helped make it secure against attack?

Module 1 Assessment

Review Vocabulary, Terms, and People

Complete each sentence by filling in the blank with the correct term or person.

1. During the Ice Age, a narrow strip of land called the _____ was exposed.
2. The _____ of Paleo-Indians from North to South America took thousands of years.
3. Native Americans living in the Pacific Northwest carved _____ on tall poles.
4. The first political confederation of Native Americans in North America was the _____.
5. The most famous ruler of Mali was _____.
6. While Mali's leader was on a _____, or pilgrimage to Mecca, he introduced his empire to the world.
7. The most famous ruler of Songhai took the name _____.
8. _____ describes an ideal society based on justice in *The Republic*.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

Lesson 1

9. a. **Describe** How did early peoples in the Americas get their food?
- b. **Analyze** What led to the development of different culture groups in the Americas?
- c. **Elaborate** What features did the early civilizations of Mesoamerica and South America have in common?

Lesson 2

10. a. **Identify** Which early Native American society built cliff dwellings and which built mounds?
- b. **Analyze** How did Native Americans' religious beliefs affect their lives in North America?
- c. **Evaluate** Do you think it was easier for Native Americans to live in the dry climate of the Southwest, where rainfall was scarce, or in the North, where the cold climate presented a constant challenge?

Lesson 3

11. a. **Describe** Which two major trade goods made Ghana rich?
- b. **Compare** What characteristics did Mansa Musa and Askia the Great have in common?
- c. **Elaborate** How did geography contribute to the rise of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai?

Lesson 4

12. a. **Recall** What role did Greek and Roman traditions play in the development of the United States?
- b. **Summarize** How did the Crusades in Southwest Asia and the travels of Marco Polo in Asia contribute to the growth of trade in Europe?
- c. **Evaluate** Which do you think contributed the most to the advances in learning that occurred during the Renaissance—writing in the common language of a people or inventing the printing press?

Module 1 Assessment, continued

Review Themes

13. **Geography** How did changes in climate lead to migration to the Americas?
14. **Economics** Describe the development of the European economy during the Middle Ages.

Reading Skills

Specialized Vocabulary of Social Studies Use the Reading Skills taught in this module to answer the question about the reading selection below.

To encourage the spread of Islam in West Africa, Mansa Musa brought back artists and architects from other Muslim countries to build **mosques**, or buildings for Muslim prayer, throughout his lands.

15. What is the definition of the word *mosques* in the sentence above?

Social Studies Skills



Interpret Diagrams Use the Social Studies Skills taught in this module to answer the question below.

16. Look back at the diagram of a castle on the Social Studies Skills page. Which of the following is the main way to enter the castle?
 - a. well
 - b. moat
 - c. drawbridge
 - d. windows

Focus on Writing

17. **Write a Travelogue** In a travelogue, you describe a journey you have taken to an area. Someone who is not familiar with the area can learn about it from your descriptions. You have read about many cultures across a long span of history. Pick one area that you found the most interesting in the module. Organize your thoughts about the kinds of people you would have met, the sights and sounds you would have experienced, and the kind of things you would have done if you had traveled there during the time discussed.

Try to include information about a culture's history, customs, beliefs, practices, economies, political systems, and natural environments. Write a paragraph about what you might have liked or disliked about your trip. Be sure to include a main idea sentence and several sentences that support the main idea with evidence.



MULTIMEDIA CONNECTIONS

THE MAYA

The Maya developed one of the most advanced civilizations in the Americas, but their story is shrouded in mystery. Around AD 250, the Maya began to build great cities in southern Mexico and Central America. They developed a writing system, practiced astronomy, and built magnificent palaces and pyramids with little more than stone tools. Around AD 900, however, the Maya abandoned their cities, leaving their monuments to be reclaimed by the jungle and, for a time, forgotten.

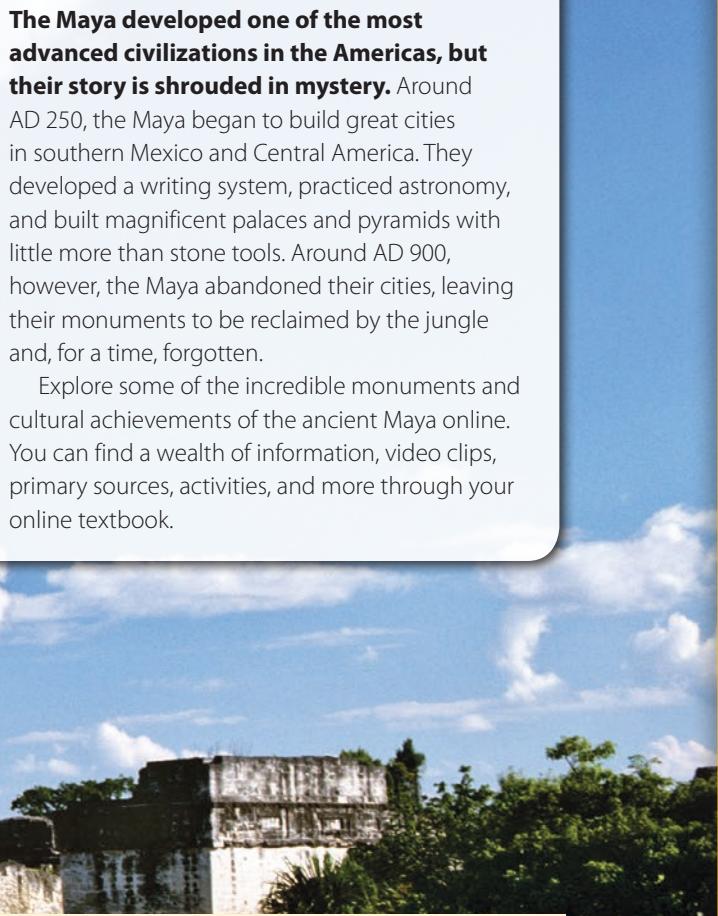
Explore some of the incredible monuments and cultural achievements of the ancient Maya online. You can find a wealth of information, video clips, primary sources, activities, and more through your online textbook.

“Thus let it be done!
Let the emptiness be filled!
Let the water recede and
make a void, let the earth
appear and become solid; let it
be done . . . “Earth!” they said,
and instantly it was made.”



The Popol Vuh

Read the document to learn how the Maya believed the world was created.



Destroying the Maya’s Past

Watch the video to learn how the actions of one Spanish missionary nearly destroyed the written record of the Maya world.



Finding the City of Palenque

Watch the video to learn about the great Maya city of Palenque and the European discovery of the site in the eighteenth century.



Pakal’s Tomb

Watch the video to explore how the discovery of the tomb of a great king helped archaeologists piece together the Maya past.

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