African Voices

Unless you know the road you’ve come down, you cannot know where you are going.

Temne Proverb, Sierra Leone

The Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History
http://www.mnh.si.edu/africanvoices/
1. **5 Million Years Ago**
   **Humans Arise in Africa**

   “All the earliest hominid species have been found in Africa, and Africa alone.”

   Richard Leakey,
   Kenyan anthropologist, 1972

The fossil trail of our origins begins in East Africa’s Great Rift Valley, where upright-walking human ancestors appeared about five million years ago. According to most evidence, by 130,000 years ago modern humans had also originated in Africa.

The continent’s tremendous range of habitats—from rainforest to savanna—favored early human evolution. Climate and vegetation changed over time. New conditions posed evolutionary challenges that led to greater species diversity and, eventually, to our ancestors.

**History Matters**

“When Africans talk about civilization, there’s a great pride that it all started here. We are the custodians of this history.”

Isiah Odhiambo Nengo, Kenyan paleontologist, 1998

**Louis Leakey 1903 - 1972**

Louis Leakey was born near Nairobi, Kenya. His parents were Harry and Mary Leakey and were both missionaries. Some people say he was born to be an archaeologist. He grew up with children from the Kikuyu tribe. Leakey went to school at Cambridge University, majoring in Anthropology. He graduated from Cambridge in 1926. After leaving school, Leakey got a job as an African expert on an archaeological mission to Tanzania. When it was finished, Leakey returned to Cambridge and studied anthropology.

Leakey had a view that early man developed in Africa. He studied the Olduvai Gorge and the Homo sapiens skeleton. He studied many sites and found many interesting things, such as tools, bones and other artifacts. After few years, he had gained recognition from other archaeologists, went back to England with a two year Fellowship at St. John’s College and got married to Frieda in 1928.

Leakey published his first book *The Stone Age Cultures of Kenya Colony*. While working at St. John’s, Leakey got a grant to go back to Olduvai Gorge. While he was there he discovered the oldest Homo sapiens in the world. People contradicted his theories. He then went back to Africa and found older skulls whose age could be proven.

Louis Leakey died in 1972 of a heart attack at age 69. Mary and their son, Richard, went on to continue his work and discover more artifacts.

**Discussion Questions:** Write at least a two-sentence answer for each. Capitalization, punctuation, and spelling count.

1. Africans can take great pride in what fact about civilization?

2. What was Leakey’s great discovery?

3. According to Leakey when and in what valley did modern humans originate?

**View:** *Africa: A History Denied*

4. In a complete paragraph explain why has Africa’s history been “misinterpreted” or denied.
2. 3100 B.C.E. to 350
Nile Civilizations Flourish

“From 3500 BC, at the same time as the genesis of Egyptian civilization, a parallel culture was rising in Nubia.”

Dr. Ossama Abdel-Meguid,
Director, The Nubian Museum,
Aswan, Egypt, 1998

The Nile Valley gave birth to two great African civilizations: ancient Nubia to the south and Egypt to the north. All along the Nile, these African societies traded and intermarried. At times they lived in peace, at times in war.

Early in their histories, both Nubia and Egypt had divine kings, and each developed distinctive writing systems. The art, architecture, philosophy, and astronomy of the Nile Valley gained world renown and influenced peoples in distant lands.

History Matters

“Important new perspectives...assert that ancient Egyptian civilization was indebted to Africa to the South, including Nubia, for some of its formative ideas.”

Edmund Barry Gaither, Director,
Museum of the National Center for Afro-American Artists, 1998

Christian Nubia, ca. A.D. 550-1400

Nubia first became Christian in the time of the Roman emperor Justinian, but soon after, the Moslem Arabs conquered Egypt, and the Nubians were isolated from direct contact with the Christian world north of the Mediterranean. Early attempts at Moslem conquest in Nubia failed, allowing various Christian kingdoms of Nubia to remain independent for centuries, and they even had a profitable treaty arrangement with the Caliph. At times, Christian Nubia became quite powerful and was able to intervene on behalf of the Coptic Christians in Egypt and even to hold territory. In the twelfth century, under Saladin, and later, under the Mamelukes, the power of Christian Nubia was broken by a series of campaigns and invasions of Arab tribes. By 1400, Christian Nubia had disappeared. Nubians are now virtually all Moslem.
The conversion to Christianity was a major stimulus to cultural achievement. Christianity required churches, written texts, in Greek, Egyptian Coptic and in Old Nubian, as well as educational and inspirational decoration. The Christian images and symbols were drawn largely from traditions developed in Egypt and the Mediterranean world, but Nubian artists and architects added details, designs, combinations, and proportions of their own to establish a unique formal art. Some of the greatest paintings of the Middle Ages were made on the walls of the Cathedral at Faras and rescued by a Polish expedition for the Museums of Khartoum and Warsaw. The Oriental Institute excavated a major monastery at Qasr el Wizz, and a large town at Serra East, which contained churches with frescoes that could be copied, but were too damaged to remove. Much architectural information was recovered, along with objects from daily life, including superbly painted pottery which was, as so often before, the glory of Nubia.

Discussion Questions and activities: Use at least two or more sentences to answer each.

1. Look at the picture of stone church from Lalibela. Using the text reading, describe how these churches were made.

2. How did Christianity help Nubia obtain cultural achievements?

3. Explain how Nubian became Christian and why it is now mainly Muslim.
3. 200 B.C.E. to 1400  Mali Recovers an Ancient History

“The pillage and illicit traffic of cultural property constitutes a serious menace to an understanding of the history of Mali.”

Government of Mali, 1997

On the fertile banks of the Niger River, Africans built some of this region’s oldest cities. Archeological finds in present-day Mali reveal two millennia of human occupation—but looting plagues many sites, limiting knowledge of the past.

By the dawn of the first millennium, towns such as Jenne-jeno had risen on the river’s banks. Between the 9th and 15th centuries, they formed the economic backbone of three successive empires with far-flung trade networks: Ghana, Mali, and Songhai.

History Matters

Although it is illegal in Mali to export archeological objects, criminal activity continues. To stem the tide, in 1993 the United States enacted a law that bans the import of Malian objects lacking legal certification.

Mansa Musa

Mansa Musa captured the attention of the Arab world when he left his home in Mali to make a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324. Unlike Sundiata, Mansa Musa truly was a Muslim. Islamic law requires that all faithful Muslims make a pilgrimage, or holy visit, to the city on the Arabian peninsula where the faith was started. Mansa Musa was said to have taken more than 500 people with him, each carrying a staff of solid gold. When Mansa Musa passed through Cairo, he gave away so much gold that the price of gold fell and the economy was effected for more than twenty years.

The appearance of a wealthy king from a far away land made a deep impression, and Mali began to appear on maps throughout the Middle East and Europe. Sub-Saharan Africa was well known north of the Sahara Desert for the first time. Mansa Musa was followed in power by less able leaders and in time another kingdom, Songhai, replaced Mali.

A bloody war with Morocco destroyed Songhai. The sultan of Morocco wanted West African gold, so he sent an army of 3000 men across the desert in 1590. The spears and lances of the Songhai warriors were no match for the cannons and muskets of the Moroccan army, but they continued to fight long after the government had been destroyed. The bloody war continued for more than ten years until the Sultan lost interest and abandoned his army in Songhai. The Moroccan soldiers were either killed or absorbed into the local population. The Moroccan invasion destroyed Songhai, and with it the trade routes that had brought prosperity to the region for hundreds of years.

Discussion Questions: Two sentences or more.

1. How long did civilization flourish along the Niger River and why do we know so little about it?
2. What were the three main empires and what economic activity made them successful?
3. Describe Mansa Musa's pilgrimage.
4. Why was this pilgrimage so important?
5. Describe the downfall of Mali and its final kingdom.
4. 1086 to 1147: African Muslims Rule Spain

“At Malaqa [Spain]...the mosque covers a large area and has a reputation for sanctity; the court of the mosque is of unequaled beauty....”

Ibn Battuta (1304-1377),
Moroccan geographer

The Almoravids, African Muslims based south of the Sahara Desert, conquered Spain and Portugal in 1086, forging an empire that spanned two continents. Although African Muslims were prominent in the Arabic conquest of Spain in 711, and in the centuries of Islamic rule that followed, the Almoravid reign marked undisputed African control.

The Almoravids’ rigorous Islamic reform movement emphasized equality and led to a period of stability in North and West Africa. In Spain, the Almoravids were succeeded by North African Muslims, the Almohads. Cultural innovators, they became known for the architecture of their glorious mosques.

**History Matters**

African Muslim cultures have had a strong influence in Spain ever since 711, making important contributions to Islamic law as well as to distinctive architecture, music, and decorative arts.

**Almoravids**

*Pronounced As: almôrvidz*, Berber Muslim dynasty that ruled Morocco and Muslim Spain in the 11th and 12th cent. The Almoravids may have originated in what is now Mauritania. The real founder was Abd Allah ibn Yasin, who by military force converted a number of Saharan tribes to his own reformed religion and then advanced on Morocco. After his death (c.1059), Yusuf ibn Tashfin and his brother Abu Bakr came to power. Marrakech was founded in 1062 and was the center of a powerful empire. Called by the Moors in Spain to help stem Christian reconquest, Yusuf entered Andalusia and defeated (1086) Alfonso VI of Castile. He later subdued the local Muslim rulers and governed Muslim Spain and N Morocco (Abu Bakr ruling over S Morocco). The dynasty also pushed south, destroying the ancient state of Ghana. The Almoravids were rough and puritanical, contemptuous of the luxurious Muslim courts in Spain. Their rule was never entirely stable and in the 12th cent. was attacked by the Almohads, who finally (by 1174) won both Morocco and Muslim Spain.

Discussion Questions: Two or more sentences

1. What two other names are the Almoravids called?
2. What major city of commerce did they create?
3. What contributions did the Almoravids give to Spain?
5. 1500 to 1860s
Money Drives the Slave Trade

“There exists a firm bond of sympathy between us and the Negro people of the Americas. The ancestors of so many of them come from this country.”

Kwame Nkrumah,
First president of Ghana, 1957

Marched to the coast in shackles and forced aboard ships that were little more than floating coffins, millions of Africans were caught in a transatlantic trade that lasted nearly 400 years. How did this tragedy occur?

Soon after Europeans began colonizing the Americas, they turned to enslaved labor to work their plantations and mines. European slave traders negotiated with African elites to procure captives. Most were taken as prisoners in African wars, others were captured by European-led expeditions. From the moment of captivity, millions of Africans fought for freedom.

History Matters

The transatlantic slave trade drained Africa’s population and produced unprecedented wealth in the Americas, transforming American economies.

Read Captured by Olaudah Equiano

1. Write a paragraph describing how Olaudah manages to endure. (5 or more sentences)

2. Explain the natural resource taken by slavery and why it harmed Africa so much. (2 or more sentences.)
6. 1800s to Early 1900s
Trade Transforms Africa

“I opened the trade routes...with the goal of being my own agent.”

King Ekwikwi in Angola, to a Portuguese official, 1886

With the end of the Atlantic slave trade and the onset of Europe’s Industrial Revolution, a new group of African leaders and entrepreneurs emerged, leading a trade revolution that changed domestic economies. Palm oil and peanut production boomed in West Africa, as did the ivory trade in Central and East Africa and coffee production in the North. From Angola, Ovimbundu caravans carried goods, guns, letters, and newspapers between the continent’s interior and coast.

History Matters
In the 1800s, Africans began to redirect their energies from local industries to agricultural exports. This shift, later intensified during colonialism, laid the basis for future dependence on imported manufactured goods.

Scramble for Africa

Scramble for Africa, is a phrase used to describe the sometimes frenzied claiming of African territory by half a dozen European countries that resulted in nearly all of Africa becoming part of Europe’s colonial empires. The Scramble began slowly in the 1870s, reached its peak in the late 1880s and 1890s, and tapered off over the first decade of the 20th century. Between 1885 and 1900, European powers were, at times, racing each other to stake claims in Africa. Most Africans resisted being taken over and ruled by foreigners. Thus, much of the latter part of the Scramble involved European armies using modern weapons to crush opposition and install authority over the continent's inhabitants.

On the eve of the Scramble, Western Europe was a century into the Industrial Revolution and clearly the most powerful and technologically advanced portion of the globe. Firearm, transportation, and communications technologies were developing at an astonishing pace, and national pride was growing in each European country. Furthermore, advances in medicine enabled Europeans to spend longer periods in the tropics free of illness. Industrial production was reaching such high levels that Europeans worried about over-production and finding consumers for all the goods that European industries were turning out. An economic downturn in the early 1870s brought some Europeans to look toward the non-industrial world. They viewed these countries as both markets for their products and as suppliers of natural resources to fuel the industries. In addition, the strongest European countries began fearing what would happen to the balance of power if their rivals acquired colonies in Africa. National pride was at stake. So was Christianity: famous Scottish missionary/explorer David Livingstone had whet the public appetite for a Christian “civilizing” mission in this continent full of non-Christians and torn by slave trading. Livingstone’s death in the wilds of Africa in 1873 called attention again to the cause.

All of this resulted in the Scramble for Africa. It began with slow territorial acquisition through the early 1880s, followed by a competitive rush to claim African lands after the Berlin West Africa Conference (1884-1885). The final stage of the Scramble was characterized by slower occupation of territories and overcoming of African resistance through the first decade of the 20th century. By 1912 all of Africa was in European hands except Liberia and Ethiopia. The period of colonial rule that followed brought social, political, and economic change across the continent. The African colonies would only slowly gain their independence, most doing so between 1955 and 1965. Some did not achieve self-rule or majority rule until the 1980s or 1990s.

The Scramble and its aftermath held great irony. While the conquest was going on, events in Africa were of the greatest importance throughout Europe. European competition for African territory dominated headlines, brought down governments, and nearly drove nations to war. But once the conquest was complete, Africa was largely forgotten and not considered again until the movement for African independence of the 1950s and 1960s.
Effects of the European takeover on Africans were considerable. In the short term, the Scramble obviously led to Africans' loss of control of their own affairs. But it also brought enormous hardship to most Africans. In addition to the deaths caused by the conquest itself, many Africans died as a result of disrupted lifestyles and movement of people and animals among different disease environments. Africa's population did not begin to recover from the devastation caused by the Scramble and its aftermath until well into the 20th century. In the long term, the Scramble was part of a larger process of bringing non-Western peoples into the world economy—in most cases as exporters of agricultural products or minerals and importers of manufactured or processed goods. Colonial governments taxed their African subjects and used the revenues to improve the colony's infrastructure: building roads, bridges, and ports that connected distant locales to the outside world. Meanwhile, institutions to improve people's lives, such as hospitals and schools, appeared more slowly. Colonial rule also brought elements of Western culture—from the French and English languages and Western political models to Coca-Cola and automobiles. It was in reaction to European rule that Africans developed a sense of nationalism that would help them gain independence in the second half of the 20th century.

For Europeans, the Scramble for Africa helped set the stage for World War I. Competition for African territory raised nationalist feelings and kept relations tense and combative. It also gave Europeans a sense that war was good for “national character” and not so taxing on budgets and manpower. World War I would soon destroy these illusions.

Contributed By: Donald R. Wright, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.
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Discussion Questions: 2 sentences each

1. Explain what the scramble was and when it was.

2. Explain three benefits European countries attained from African colonies.

3. What terrible event did Europe's scramble for Africa fuel and how?

4. Explain three ways that the scramble hurt Africa.

5. Define nationalism and explain how it hurt Africa and Europe.
7. 1896
Ethiopia Prevails over Italy

“I have no intention of being an indifferent onlooker if the distant powers have the idea of dividing up Africa....”

Menelik II, Emperor of Ethiopia,
April 10, 1891

On March 2, 1896, the Ethiopian army under Emperor Menelik II overwhelmingly defeated the invading Italians at the Battle of Adwa.

Victory secured Ethiopia’s independence at a time when European powers were overrunning Africa. Ethiopia was one of two African countries that escaped European colonial rule. Its victory reverberated in the West Indies, the United States, and Africa, encouraging resistance to colonialism and racism.

History Matters

Ethiopia’s triumph inspired a later generation of young Pan-Africanists, who united Africans and African descendants in the Americas in their fight for human rights.

Read *The Man Who Shared His Hut* by Jomo Kenyatta and fill out the representation chart.

Answer the following in at least one paragraph each.

1. Describe what happened in the story.

2. How does Kenyatta describe the relationship between Europeans and Africans?

3. Do you think the man in the story was justified in what he did? Explain why.
8. Late 1800s to 1990
Colonialism Yields to Independence

“Africa will tell the West that today it desires the rehabilitation of Africa, a return to the roots, a revalorization of moral values.”

Patrice Lumumba (1925-1961),
First prime minister of present-day Congo

In Africa, the 1960s was the “Decade of Independence,” as country after country overthrew European colonial rule. Freedom followed nearly a century of foreign domination, a fate sealed in 1884-85 at the Berlin Conference, when European powers set rules for their division of Africa.

Colonialism denied Africans basic rights and control over their own destinies. Africans adapted their lives and cultures to colonial rule, even as generations struggled for independence.

History Matters

Newly independent African countries inherited the institutions and policies of the colonial powers. Many countries are still determining what to retain, reform, or discard from this legacy.

In groups, read the play, *Africa and its Struggle for Independence* (Given time we will perform it as a class.)

Discussion Questions: Answer each with a full paragraph. Please use the back or a separate piece of paper.

1. Briefly describe the events of the play.
2. What role did prejudice play in the colonization of Africa and what did African's have to do to overcome it?
3. What are some of the steps Kenyatta took to gain independence for Kenya?

Read/Listen to Kwame Nkrumah’s speech, *The Vision that I See*

4. In what ways are Ghana and the United States alike?
9. 1994
South Africans End Apartheid

“Never and never again shall the laws of our land rend our people apart or legalize their oppression and repression.”

Nelson Mandela,
South African President,
April 27, 1994

In 1994, South Africans voted in their first multiracial democratic elections. Gone at last was the rule of a white minority, in place since 1910 and further entrenched under apartheid in 1948.

Apartheid legalized and enforced discrimination based on rigid racial categories, dictating where nonwhite South Africans could live, work, and attend school. Under apartheid, untold thousands of Africans were jailed and killed for asserting their human rights.

Since winning majority rule, South Africans have embraced the huge challenge of restructuring their society.

History Matters

Millions of Americans took up the cause of South African freedom, calling for U.S. corporate divestment from South Africa. In 1986, Congress passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act

View South Africa Video BBC – Nelson Mandela End of Apartheid

http://ed.ted.com/on/xk556vby

1. Collect 10 main ideas about Mr. Mandela

2. Describe Apartheid in a complete paragraph.

3. Why is Mr. Mandela considered to be one of the greatest leaders in history? Write a paragraph or more.
10. Today

Children’s Health Comes First

“Africa faces an increasingly serious public health crisis.... Many deaths could be prevented by vaccinations...and by investing in improved sanitation and basic health care.”

Kofi Annan, from Ghana,
Secretary-General of the
United Nations, 1998

History Matters

“In many African countries, painful structural [economic] adjustment programmes have led to...reductions in the delivery of many of the most basic social services.”
Kofi Annan, from Ghana, Secretary-General of the United Nations, 1998


Read of the article on AIDS in Africa and answer the following.

1. Please summarize your article in one complete paragraph.

2. What are the solutions to the problem your article addresses? Write a paragraph or more.

3. What can you do to stop this crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa? Write a paragraph or more.
Directions:

1. Using the Smithsonian Website *African Voices* you will complete all questions and activities contained in the reading packet.
2. You will then create a timeline with 10 or more events in African history. For each entry on your timeline you must put: the date, event, and a sentence or more explanation.
3. You will then create a poem about Africa. It must contain 5 main features/facts/truths about Africa that you have learned from your study. You will draw/print 2 or more pictures to go with your poem and create a small poster (8.5 x 11)
4. You will answer a short essay question: Economist say Africa will rise again someday to be a world leader and a powerful continent. Why do they say that?
5. Vocabulary – you will learn 40 words associated with Africa. You will use the words as you study Africa and in the above activities.

**Approximate Due Dates:**

2/06 – Vocab #1 due
2/11 – packet questions and activities are complete.
2/13 – Vocab #2 due
2/18 – timeline due
2/20 – Vocab #3 due
2/24 – African Poem Poster due
2/25 – vocab #4 due
2/26 - Vocabulary Test
3/02 – Short Essay Due

**African Voices Grading Rubric**

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<th>Professional 9-10</th>
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<tr>
<td>Poem Poster</td>
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<td>All directions followed, detail and full explanation given</td>
<td>X2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Essay</td>
<td>Answered the question poorly, little or no vocabulary use or facts.</td>
<td>Answered question partially needing some vocabulary and facts.</td>
<td>Answered question completely using 5 +vocabulary and 5+ facts. (Underline vocabulary and facts)</td>
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Total _____/100