Activity  Mansa Musa

Grade 7

Class Social Studies

Teacher Sorensen, Van Buren, Walz

Week May 4th – 8th

Key Content/Modeling
- How did Mansa Musa, an early African emperor, turn his stash of gold into one of the world’s biggest empires?
- [https://youtu.be/O3YJMaL5STM](https://youtu.be/O3YJMaL5STM) Introduction: Watch the short video about Mansa Musa. When and where did he rule? What was his legacy? A legacy is about the actions you take during your life and the way those actions affect how people remember you.

You Try  Familiarize yourself with the Words to Know. Have you heard the words? Read the definition and example sentences for each word. Try and think of another example sentence for the most difficult words.

Read the article. To guide you in reading critically and gaining a deeper understanding of the text, follow the Close Reading Checklist. As you read ask yourself how Mansa Musa’s pilgrimage affect people’s perception of his empire? (Cause and Effect) What made Mansa Musa a strong leader? (Drawing Conclusions)

Show me what you know (Proof of learning)
Check your understanding of the article by taking the Know the News: The Bling King ten question multiple choice quiz.

Self-Assessment
Show your understanding by writing an objective summary. Use the Summarizing 101 skills sheet as an outline. An objective summary does not include opinions.

Priority Standard(s):
RH 7.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
RI7.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

What am I learning?
What would you do if you were one of the world’s richest people? What would you want your legacy to be? Do people with more money have an obligation to help those in need?

How do I know I learned?
Learning Evidence in 1-3 Descriptors

Extra Learning Opportunities
[https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/preserving-the-priceless-manuscripts-of-timbuktu](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/preserving-the-priceless-manuscripts-of-timbuktu) Learn about the work people are doing to save ancient manuscripts from the library of Timbuktu.
Mansa Musa Lesson Outline

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What would you do if you were one of the world's richest people? What would you want your legacy to be? Do people with more money have an obligation to help those in need?

LEARNING TARGET

- How did Mansa Musa, an early African emperor, turn his stash of gold into one of the world’s biggest empires?

FEATURED SKILL: Reading a Map

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- [https://youtu.be/O3YJMaL55TM](https://youtu.be/O3YJMaL55TM) Introduction: Watch the short video about Mansa Musa. When and where did he rule? What was his legacy? A legacy is about the actions you take during your life and the way those actions affect how people remember you.
- Familiarize yourself with the Words to Know. Have you heard the words? Read the definition and example sentences for each word. Try and think of another example sentence for the most difficult words.
- Read the article. To guide you in reading critically and gaining a deeper understanding of the text, follow the Close Reading Checklist. As you read ask yourself how Mansa Musa’s pilgrimage affect people’s perception of his empire? (Cause and Effect) What made Mana Musa a strong leader? (Drawing Conclusions)
- Check your understanding of the article by taking the Know the News: The Bling King ten question multiple choice quiz.
- Show your understanding by writing an objective summary. Use the Summarizing 101 skills sheet as an outline. An objective summary does not include opinions.
- On the last page of the article study the map of Musa’s World. Answer the 10 map skills questions.
- Practice your map skills by studying the Historical Map of Africa and answering the questions. Don’t forget the read the information above the map.

EXTENDED LEARNING

[https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/preserving-the-priceless-manuscripts-of-timbuktu](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/preserving-the-priceless-manuscripts-of-timbuktu) Learn about the work people are doing to save ancient manuscripts from the library of Timbuktu.
Building Vocabulary

Words to Know

Read the following definitions and example sentences of vocabulary words from this issue. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, write a definition and an example sentence for two other words from the issue.

1. **bureaucracy (n)**: A system of management with excessively complicated procedures
   - Example: Employees complained that their company had become a bureaucracy after learning about a new rule requiring that they fill out 10 different forms before taking a vacation.

2. **Cold War (n)**: A power struggle between the U.S. and the Soviet Union from 1947 to 1991
   - Example: U.S. schoolchildren practiced “duck and cover” safety drills during the Cold War in case of a nuclear attack by the Soviet Union.

3. **conservative (n)**: A person who tends to favor tradition and stability over social and political reforms
   - Example: The conservative voted for the candidate who promised not to raise taxes and to limit the government’s role in health care and the economy.

4. **exodus (n)**: A mass departure of people
   - Example: A major earthquake devastated the country, triggering a sudden exodus to neighboring areas.

5. **harrowing (adj)**: Extremely distressing
   - Example: After escaping the enemy, the prisoner of war shared her harrowing tale of capture, torture, and imprisonment.

6. **infrastructure (n)**: The structures and public works of a society, such as roads
   - Example: During his reelection campaign, the governor pledged to spend more money on improving the state’s infrastructure, beginning with highways.

7. **liberal (n)**: A person who tends to support social and political reforms
   - Example: The liberal voted for the candidate who promised to keep same-sex marriage legal and push for equal access to health care.

8. **monopolize (v)**: To gain or hold complete control over
   - Example: Once the diva got ahold of the microphone, she monopolized the stage for two hours, refusing to let anyone else sing.

9. **net worth (n)**: The total value of something after debts and other costs have been deducted
   - Example: After taking into account the large amount of money he owed to the bank, the businessman’s net worth was half of what he expected.

10. **Pentagon (n)**: The headquarters of the Department of Defense in Arlington, Virginia
    - Example: Before U.S. officials built the Pentagon in the 1940s, the country’s defense personnel had been spread among 17 different facilities.

11. **pilgrimage (n)**: A journey to a sacred place
    - Example: All Muslims are expected to go on a pilgrimage to pray at the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, at least once in their lifetime.

12. **quarantine (v)**: To isolate someone to prevent the spread of contagious diseases
    - Example: Officials from Venice, Italy, tried to avoid the plague in the 14th century by quarantining sailors on ships from infected ports, refusing to let anyone come ashore for 40 days after anchoring.

13. **ravage (v)**: To cause severe and extensive damage
    - Example: The bears ravaged the campsite, ripping apart tents, trampling backpacks, and overturning coolers in search of the campers’ hidden stash of chocolate.

14. **U.S. territory (n)**: An area other than a state that is controlled by the U.S. government
    - Example: American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are the five major U.S. territories.
The Bling King

How Mansa Musa, an early African emperor, turned his stash of gold into one of the world’s biggest empires

SEPTEMBER 17, 2018  |  By Laura Anastasia

Rihanna reportedly spends $1 million a year on her hair. Boxer Floyd Mayweather recently dropped $18 million on a diamond-encrusted watch. And Amazon founder Jeff Bezos shelled out $65 million for a private jet. But those celebs’ spending habits—and their bank accounts—would have been chump change for African emperor Mansa Musa (MAHN-sah MOO-sah). The 14th-century ruler still tops the list as the richest person of all time.

Musa ruled as mansa, or king, of the West African empire of Mali from 1312 to 1337, controlling about 80 percent of the world’s gold. His net worth would have topped $400 billion in today’s dollars.

Musa’s claim to fame extended far beyond money, however. The emperor was a skilled leader who transformed Mali into one of the largest empires in African history.

Original accounts about Musa and his reign still exist. So why haven’t more people heard of Musa, nicknamed the “Lion of Mali”? Mainly because he lived hundreds of years ago. Many world history classes don’t even discuss events that happened before 1450—especially those in Africa.

Here’s everything you need to know about the mighty emperor and the secrets of his success.
Q: How did Musa get so rich?

A: He was in the right place at the right time, for starters. Mali had an ideal location on the upper Niger River in West Africa. The fertile soil produced abundant crops and the area teemed with natural resources, including salt and gold.

Salt was a hot commodity in the ancient world. It could be used to preserve meat and other foods. That was especially important, since refrigerators weren’t invented for another 500-plus years. Mali had easy access to the Sahara Desert’s huge salt deposits.

As for gold, “the upper reaches of the Niger River produced more gold in the 14th century than anywhere else,” says Richard Smith, an expert on ancient Mali at Ferrum College in Virginia. (Gold was still relatively rare back then, which made the metal even more valuable.)

Musa built on that wealth by conquering Timbuktu and other major cities along trade routes in the Sahara. The conquests were doubly beneficial to Musa: Merchants paid him taxes, and conquered kings gave him gifts of gold and other valuables.

Q: How important was the Mali Empire really?

A: Pretty important. Mali became West Africa’s most powerful state back in the 1200s, under the leadership of Sundiata, the empire’s first great mansa.

But a century later, Musa took the empire to the next level by seizing control of gold-producing regions, monopolizing important trade routes, and reconquering areas of the kingdom that had broken away.
By the time his reign ended, the Mali Empire spanned about 1,200 miles of West Africa. It covered all or part of what are now nine modern-day countries (see map, below). Musa once boasted that it would take a year for a person to travel from one end of his empire to the other.

Musa ruled over 40 million people in his kingdom and managed to maintain peace during his 25-year reign. He devoted large amounts of time and money to building schools and mosques (buildings where Muslims worship), both of which benefited his many citizens. He was also known for his generosity, handing out millions of dollars’ worth of gold.

Those habits were likely the secret to his great success, says David Tschanz, who wrote a book about the emperor.

“If you have a good economy and everybody’s happy,” he says, “nobody gets upset with you.”

**Q:** That sounds like a lot of work. Did Musa ever take time off?

**A:** As a matter of fact, he took the vacation of the century in 1324—a trip so extravagant that it wowed people throughout Europe and the Middle East.

Musa’s journey was a 4,000-mile hajj—the Muslim pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca. In true centibillionaire fashion, he didn’t go it alone. He traveled with a serious squad: more than 60,000 people, including 12,000 servants. (Of course, the king himself led the way on a blinged-out black stallion.) Musa’s caravan stretched as far as the eye could see.

Also along for the ride: a mind-boggling amount of gold. About 80 camels carried roughly 300 pounds of gold each. Musa’s slaves lugged another 24 tons of the precious metal.
“It was more money than anybody had ever seen anybody ever bring with them,” Tschanz says.

Musa and his entourage crossed the Sahara Desert, stopping for a few months in Cairo, Egypt. Along the way, Musa spent—and handed out—a lot of gold. Tales of his incredible wealth and charity quickly spread to North Africa, Europe, and the Arab world through traders and travelers he encountered during his journey.

He had good reason to show off his fortune. “The lavish display of wealth was designed to advertise his kingdom as a trade destination, and to a large extent, it worked,” Smith says. After Musa’s hajj, he and his empire were included in the 1375 Catalan Atlas, a map of the world that was important in medieval Europe.

**Q: How did Musa’s religion affect his rule?**

**A:** As evidenced by his hajj, Musa took his Islamic faith very seriously. Fridays are holy days for Muslims, and every Friday during his hajj, Musa reportedly ordered that a mosque be constructed wherever he happened to be.

After the trip, he devoted himself to turning Timbuktu into a center for Muslim learning and culture. He brought Islamic architects and artists to the city and also built a major college, Sankore University, with a library collection that dwarfed those of European libraries at the time. (Invaders destroyed the school a few centuries later.)

Musa wanted his people to learn to read and write Arabic so they could understand the Koran, the Muslim holy book. To that end, he oversaw the construction of schools and mosques to promote the study of Islam. One of Musa’s mud-brick-and-wood structures, Djinguerereber Mosque, could hold 2,000 people. It still stands in Timbuktu today.
Q: Did Musa spend all of his money on building stuff?

A: He did build an awful lot. But construction wasn’t Musa’s only expense. During his pilgrimage, for example, he spent a lot of time shopping at Cairo’s world-famous markets. He also handed out gold to Egypt’s poor and sick—and to just about everyone else he encountered. Historians estimate that the gold he gave away during his hajj alone would be worth more than $100 million today.

Musa reportedly pumped so much gold into Cairo’s economy that the precious metal decreased in value. It took more than 12 years for gold’s value to bounce back. Says Tschanz: “It was the only time in history that one man controlled the world’s gold market.”

Q: How does Musa stack up to today’s wealthiest people?

A: It’s not even a contest. Amazon founder Jeff Bezos is currently the world’s richest person, with a net worth of about $112 billion. Musa’s net worth was more than three times that much—an amount unfathomable to most people.

“Imagine as much gold as you think a human being could possess and double it,” Rudolph Ware, a history professor at the University of Michigan, told Time. “This is the richest guy anyone has ever seen.”

Q: What happened to Musa’s empire after he died?

A: Musa died in 1337, somewhere around age 55. His empire lived on for only 100 or so more years, partly because Musa’s successors did not share his talent for leadership. Outsiders conquered Gao, one of the kingdom’s most important trading hubs, around 1365. The rest of the empire started crumbling in the 1400s, with Timbuktu falling to invaders. By 1500, almost all of Musa’s kingdom, along with his gold and riches, had disappeared.
Many people in Mali make their living by farming.
Islam is still the dominant religion in Mali, but that may be the only aspect Mansa Musa would recognize about the country today. The peace Mali enjoyed under Musa is a thing of the past. For a few centuries, other empires ruled Mali. Then France seized control of the area in 1898. (European countries colonized much of Africa around that time.) Mali gained its independence in 1960 but has since suffered droughts, rebellions, and a military dictatorship.

As for all those riches, the area’s gold deposits were mostly used up before the 19th century. Today, about half of Mali’s 18.9 million people live in poverty, and only about one-third can read. In recent years, Mali has become a breeding ground for terrorism. Al Qaeda and ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) remain active in Mali, and the country is plagued by violence and political instability.

**Musa’s World**

The Mali Empire’s wealth relied on access to prized gold and salt resources—and a network of routes for trading them.
DIRECTION: Find the compass rose on the map. It shows the cardinal directions: north, east, south, and west. Halfway between any two of them are the intermediate directions: northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest.
DISTANCE: Every map has its own scale that compares distance on the map with the actual distance on Earth’s surface. You can measure distance by placing the edge of a piece of paper along two points on a map. Mark the center of each point on the paper. Then compare those points with the map’s scale of miles or kilometers.

MAP SKILLS

1. What do we use to find direction on a map?
2. What are the cardinal directions?
3. Which trade-route city was directly east of Timbuktu?
4. The Mali Empire’s western area was rich in which resource?
5. What kind of mines lay west of the city of Taghaza?
6. Mansa Musa’s hajj to Mecca began near which river?
7. Which general direction did his hajj take to Taghaza?
8. What is used to measure distance on a map?
9. About how many straight-line miles separate Cairo and Mecca?
10. Once Musa crossed from Africa into Asia, most of his route to Mecca was in which general direction?
Close Reading Checklist

Reading an article closely involves thinking critically about the text—plus any photos, maps, graphics, and other elements—and considering how the author presents information. Use this guide to read any Junior Scholastic article closely.

□ **STEP 1:** Number each paragraph of the article. This will help you cite evidence from the text when answering questions or participating in a class discussion.

□ **STEP 2:** Annotate the text. Jot down any comments or questions in the margins. Use these symbols to mark up the article as you read.

★ Place a star next to anything that seems important.

? Write a question mark next to any words, phrases, or ideas that you don’t understand.

! Put an exclamation point next to anything you find surprising or interesting.

□ **STEP 3:** Write a brief summary of each chunk or section of the article. (Ask yourself: What is being said?)

□ **STEP 4:** Write a brief analysis of each chunk or subsection of the article. (Ask yourself: What does this section add to the article? What might have been the author’s purpose for including it? Why does the author use particular words and phrases? What inferences can I make?)

□ **STEP 5:** Examine text features. Write a brief explanation of what any photos, maps, graphics, and other visuals show. (Ask yourself: Why might the author have included them? What do they add to the information provided in the text?)

□ **STEP 6:** Dig a little deeper. Reread the article and revise your analysis as necessary. Sometimes a text is like a puzzle, and you need to read it multiple times before you can see how all the pieces fit together.
Know the News: The Bling King

Read the article on pp. 18-21, then answer the questions.

1. Which is a central idea of the article?
   A. Mansa Musa was an extremely wealthy African emperor who built a major empire.
   B. Musa had more money than Rihanna.
   C. Musa's hajj, or pilgrimage, brought Mali fame.
   D. Musa had a lot of gold and salt.

2. Which statement best supports that central idea?
   A. "[Musa was] nicknamed the 'Lion of Mali.'"
   B. "After Musa's hajj, he and his empire were included in the 1375 Catalan Atlas, a map of the world that was important in medieval Europe."
   C. "The emperor was a skilled leader who transformed Mali into one of the largest empires in African history."
   D. "By 1500, almost all of Musa's kingdom, along with his gold and riches, had disappeared."

3. Which is one reason the author calls Musa a "skilled leader"?
   A. Musa conquered major cities along trade routes.
   B. Musa's empire was rich in natural resources.
   C. Musa had thousands of servants at his disposal.
   D. Musa decreased the value of gold in Cairo, Egypt.

4. What does teemed mean in this sentence?
   "The fertile soil produced abundant crops and the area teemed with natural resources, including salt and gold."
   A. drove away  
   B. lacked  
   C. had a lot of  
   D. sold

5. How did Musa promote Islam within his empire?
   A. He oversaw the construction of schools and mosques in his cities so people could learn to read the Muslim holy book.
   B. He made sure Mali's economy stayed strong, which meant people had more free time to spend in prayer.
   C. He gave away more than $100-million worth of gold during his pilgrimage.
   D. He conquered major cities including Timbuktu.

6. What conclusion can you draw about the importance of Gao after reading "What happened to Musa's empire after he died?" on p. 21?
   A. Musa's successors cared more about Gao than about Timbuktu.
   B. Keeping control of Gao was key to maintaining the Mali Empire.
   C. Gao was no longer an important trading hub after 1365.
   D. After Musa's death, Gao and Timbuktu fell to the same invaders.

7. Which of these statements is a fact?
   A. History classes should cover Musa's empire.
   B. Musa remains the richest person of all time.
   C. Today's billionaires should be more generous.
   D. Musa should have spent less money in Egypt.

8. In what way is Mali today similar to the Mali Empire in the 14th century?
   A. About half the people live in poverty.
   B. It has large gold deposits.
   C. Islam is the dominant religion.
   D. It is plagued by violence.

9. What is the main purpose of the map on p. 21?
   A. to show that Musa's empire was located in West Africa
   B. to illustrate why salt was so valuable in the 14th century
   C. to highlight the location of Algiers and Tunis
   D. to show the Mali Empire's size and access to important trading routes

10. Why might the editor have chosen this headline for the article?
    A. to highlight one of Musa's nicknames
    B. to illustrate Musa's interest in diamonds and gold
    C. to emphasize that Musa enjoyed listening to hip-hop music
    D. to grab readers' attention and engage them in the story right away
A summary tells what an article is mainly about. An objective summary does not include your opinions. (This is different from a review, which includes your opinions.) Writing an objective summary can help you understand what you've read and teach other people about a topic.

Choose any article in Junior Scholastic to summarize. Then follow the steps below.

**Step 1:** Write the main idea of the article.

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

**Step 2:** Find three key details from the article that support that main idea. Write them in your own words in two or three sentences. (Hint: Avoid choosing minor details from just one section of the article.)

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**Step 3:** Combine your responses to steps 1 and 2 in one cohesive paragraph. Make sure that you didn't include any opinions. Revise as necessary.

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**Challenge** On a separate sheet of paper, turn your objective summary into a review. Think about how an objective summary and a review differ in purpose, tone, and content.
LESSON 11

Historical Map

A historical map provides information about the past. The map of Africa below shows present-day country names and borders. However, European colonial powers used to control most of the continent, as this map indicates with color-coding. The dates on the map tell you the year in which each African country gained independence.

COLONIAL POWERS AT THE TIME OF INDEPENDENCE

- Belgium
- France
- Germany
- Great Britain
- Italy
- Portugal
- Spain
- Non-European power
- Never colonized

*After independence, South Africa continued to be ruled by a white minority until 1994.
**Formerly Rhodesia, Zimbabwe declared independence in 1965 but wasn’t recognized until 1980.
LESSON 11

Historical Map

Use Your Skills
Use the map on p. 1 to answer the questions.

1. This map shows how many European countries that had colonies in Africa?
   ____________________________________________________________

2. Which European power dominated northwestern Africa?
   ____________________________________________________________

3. In what year did most of that country’s African colonies gain their independence?
   ______________

4. What are Africa’s oldest and youngest countries?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

5. South Africa was a colony of which European power?
   ____________________________________________________________

6. South Africa was under white-minority rule for how many years after its independence?
   ______________

7. Which African country has never been colonized?
   ____________________________________________________________

8. Which European country listed in the map key had no colonies south of the equator?
   ____________________________________________________________

9. Which African countries on or south of the equator are shown as having been colonies of Portugal?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

10. Which countries gained their independence from non-European countries? How can you tell?
    ____________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________

Consider This
At the end of the 19th century, European powers controlled 90 percent of the African continent. Most of the current national borders are the result of deal-making among European nations, which carved up the land to their own benefit, disregarding the interests and cultural connections of the people living there. How might such a history help explain some of the economic and political problems many African nations face today?