Essential Question:
– What was Africa like before the introduction of Islam?

Warm-Up Question:
– Get out your Ibn Battuta reading for a quick HW check.
What is the geography of Africa? How might this geography impact Africans?
Africa’s geography was very diverse & Africans were lived differently based on where they lived.
The Sahara is the world’s largest desert & acted as a barrier to separate North Africa from sub-Saharan Africa.
By 750, North Africans were part of the Islamic Empire, converted to Islam, & shared Arabic culture.
African societies south of the Sahara were isolated & missed out on the cultural diffusion of the Classical Era.
How did early people in Sub-Saharan Africa live?
Characteristics of Sub-Saharan Africa

While the societies of sub-Saharan Africa were diverse, they shared some similarities:

– Most societies lived in farming villages in family-based clans
– Few societies had written languages; Histories were shared orally by storytellers (griots)
– Made iron tools
Characteristics of Africa

- Sub-Saharan people were polytheistic:
  - Practiced animism, a religion in which spirits exist in nature & play a role in daily life.
The Bantu Migration

Over the course of 4,000 years, Bantu peoples of central Africa migrated south in search of farmland.

These Bantu migrations helped spread new farming & ironworking techniques.
What factors shaped the culture of East Africa?
The societies of East African participated in the Indian Ocean trade network & were shaped by cultural diffusion:

– The kingdom of Aksum trade with Persia, India, Arabia, & Rome; Aksum became a Christian kingdom
Aksum Church
East Africa

- Arab merchants introduced Islam to East African trade cities
- The mix of African & Arab cultures led to a new Swahili language
- Towns had mosques & were ruled by a Muslim sultan
- But many people kept their traditional religious beliefs
Closure Activity

- Compare the impact of geography on the development of Greece, China & Africa
- How are Greek myths similar to the myths and folk stories told by Africans?
- Why would someone say that trade is the most important factor in the development of East African and Roman culture?
- What comparisons could you make between African animism and Indian Hinduism?
- How are Swahili and Hellenistic cultures similar? How are they different?
Essential Question:
–What was Africa like before the introduction of Islam?

Warm-Up Question:
—?
What factors shaped the culture of West Africa?
West Africa was shaped by the trans-Saharan trade network:

- West Africans had large deposits of gold, but lacked salt
- The gold-salt trade connected North & West Africa
The gold-salt trade increased cultural diffusion with Muslim merchants:
- Islam was introduced in West Africa & slowed gained converts
- Many Africans blended Islam with animism or never converted
West Africa

The gold-salt trade led to wealth & empires in West Africa.

- By 800, Ghana became an empire by taxing merchants, building a large army, & conquering surrounding people.
- Ghana kings served as religious leaders, judges, & generals.
Eventually Ghana was overthrown & the **Mali** empire emerged —Mali’s King Sundiata took over the Ghana kingdom & trade cities in West Africa —Sundiata created an efficient gov’t, promoted farming, & controlled trade
The kings who ruled Mali after Sundiata converted to Islam

The most important king was Mansa Musa:
- He built a 100,000 man army to keep control over Mali
- He divided Mali into provinces ruled by appointed governors
Mansa Musa was a devout Muslim and went on a hajj to Mecca in 1324. Mansa Musa passed out gold nuggets to the people he met along the way.
This is a European map of Africa. Very little was known about Africa below the Sahara, but Mansa Musa is on the map. Based on his image on the map, what did Europeans know about Mansa Musa?
West Africa

When he returned from Mecca, Mansa Musa built mosques throughout Mali, including Timbuktu.

— This trade city attracted scholars, doctors, religious leaders.

— It had a university & became an important center for learning.
Timbuktu

Djenne Mosque

University
After Mansa Musa, Mali declined & was replaced by **Songhai**—Kings gained control of trade cities along the gold-salt routes—Songhai grew into the largest of the West African empires—Its fall in 1591 ended a 1,000 year era of empires in West Africa
Conclusions

- African societies were transformed by two powerful forces:
  - Trade with outsiders
  - Introduction of Islam