

SS7G4

The student will describe the diverse cultures of the people who live in Africa.

a. Explain the differences between an ethnic group and a religious group.

An ethnic group is a group of people who share cultural ideas and beliefs that have been a part of their community for generations.



The above photos are of the Masai, a tribe in Kenya. This ethnic group is well-known for being a warrior tribe. ²

The characteristics they have in common could include language, religion, a shared history, types of food, and a set of traditional stories, beliefs, or celebrations.



Meat is reserved only for very special occasions like feasts and celebrations when the Masai cash in their precious capital and kill a bull. Only the murran, shown here preparing for the occasion, are allowed to witness the slaughter which is carried out with skill and respect for the animal.

A religious group shares a belief system in a god or gods, with a specific set of rituals and literature like the Bible or the Quran. People from different ethnic groups may share the same religion, though they may be from very different cultures.



Above are photos of different Christian worship services.

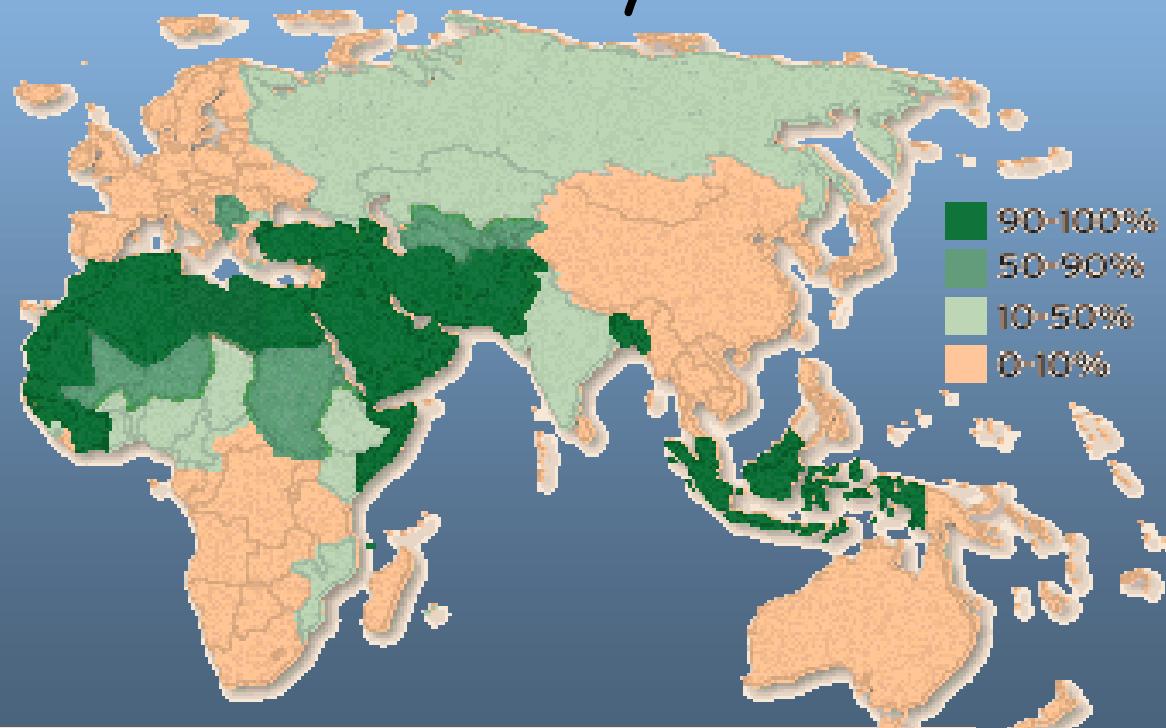
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The student will describe the diverse cultures of the people who live in Africa.

b. Explain the diversity of religions within the Arab, Ashanti, Bantu, and Swahili ethnic groups.

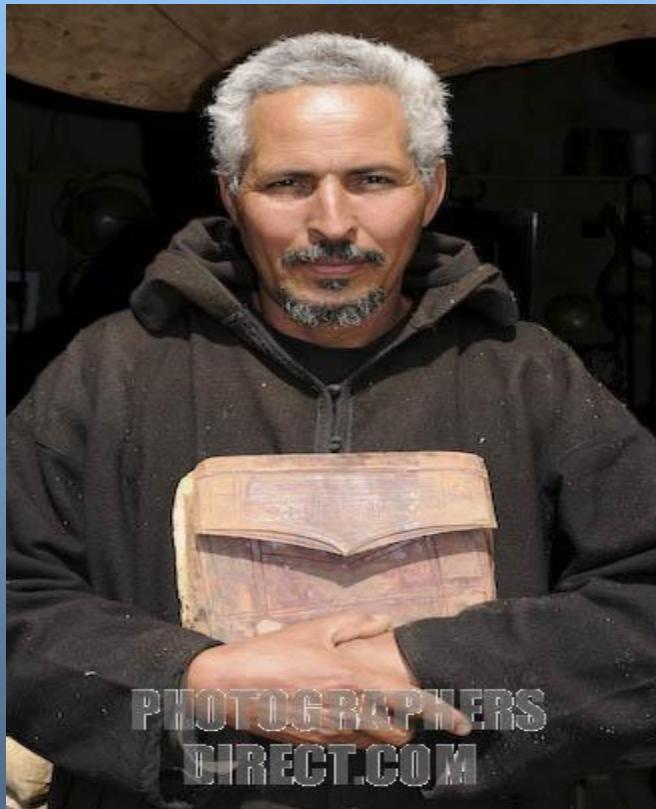
Arab

Arab people began to spread into North Africa in the late 600's AD, when the first Muslim armies arrived in Egypt. From there, Arab armies, traders, and scholars spread across northern Africa all the way to Morocco.



Distribution of Muslim Populations

Wherever the Arabs went, they took Islam and the Arabic language with them. Arabic was necessary if one was to be able to read the Quran, Islam's' holy book.



Above photo: Man holding old manuscripts of the holy Quran in Mauritania, a country in western Africa.

From North Africa, Arab traders began to lead caravans south across the Sahara Desert on the gold and salt trade. This brought Islam and Arab culture to the Sahel region and beyond.



Above photo: Camel caravans in the Sahara Desert.

Along the east coast of Africa, Arab traders traveled by land and by sea down to present-day Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zanzibar. They married local women, and the process of blending cultures and religions began there as well.



Photo above: Antique map of the east coast of Africa; National Maritime Museum, Greenwich , England.

The Arabic language, the religion of Islam, and many other aspects of Muslim culture became part of Africa. Today Muslims are found throughout Africa. They make up a majority of the people living along the Mediterranean coast and in some countries along the Indian Ocean in the east.



Islam is observed by a small minority of South Africans, including these children.

Ashanti

The Ashanti people are found in the modern country of **Ghana**. They have been a powerful group in this part of Africa for over 300 years. The culture has played a part in the countries around them including Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, and Togo.



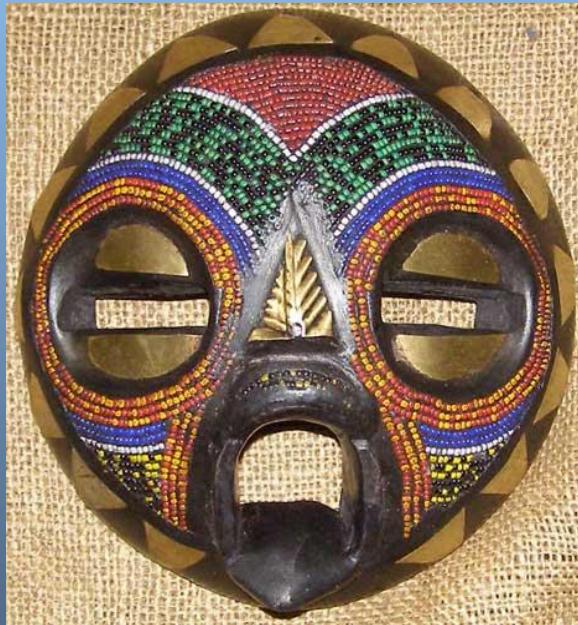
Above: Ashanti stool ceremony

The Ashanti believe that their kingdom was founded in 1701 with the help of a holy man who produced a **Golden Stool** from the heavens and gave it to the first Ashanti king. The stool came to symbolize Ashanti power and the belief is that the kingdom will last as long as the Golden Stool remains in the hands of the Ashanti king.



The traditional Ashanti stool shown above is $17 \frac{3}{4}$ in. tall in the center, $25 \frac{1}{2}$ in. long, and $14 \frac{1}{4}$ in. wide. It is made of wood covered with hand-hammered copper.¹²

The traditional Ashanti religion is centered in a supreme god, or **Nayme**. Nayme's many children, the **Abosome**, represent all the natural powers and forces in the world. The traditional Ashanti believe that all living things have souls.



Above are Ashanti masks that are sometimes used in religious ceremonies.

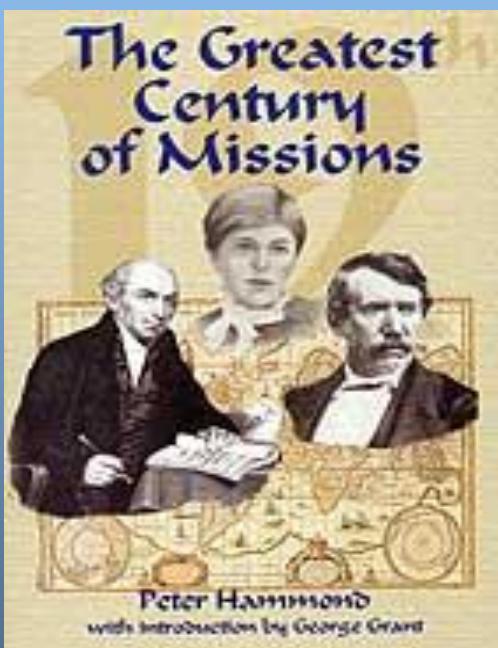
The Ashanti also believe that witches , demon spirits, and fairies have powers in the lives of men.

Ancestors, the people from whom the Ashanti are descended, are given great respect, and there are a number of family rituals associated with birth, puberty, marriage, and death.



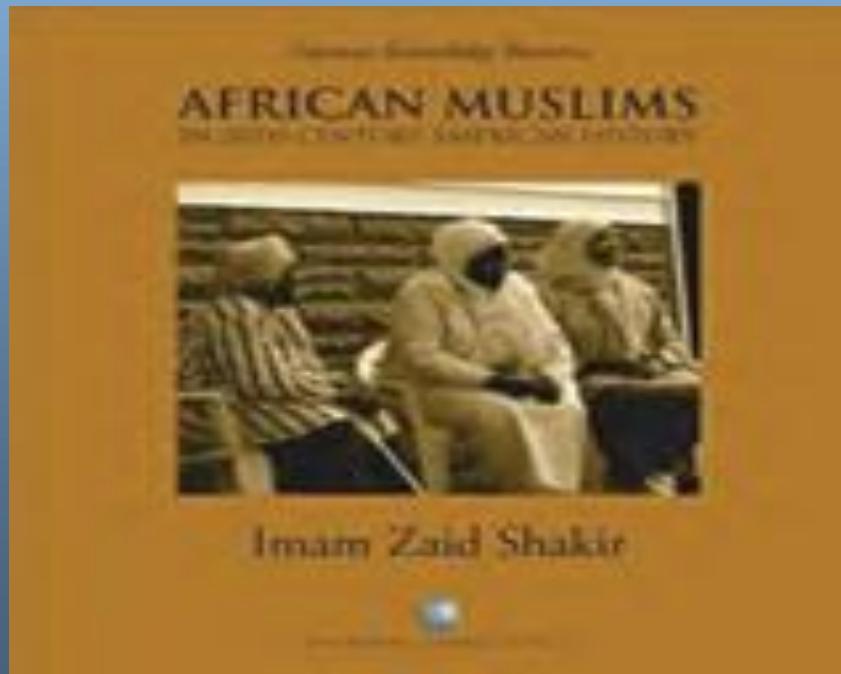
The above ceremony is an election of an Ashanti chief. No one but the enstooled chief is allowed to sit on the Golden Stool.

Other religions are also practiced by many of the Ashanti. Christianity has gained many followers in Ghana and along the west coast of Africa. It was introduced by European and American missionaries beginning in the 1800's.



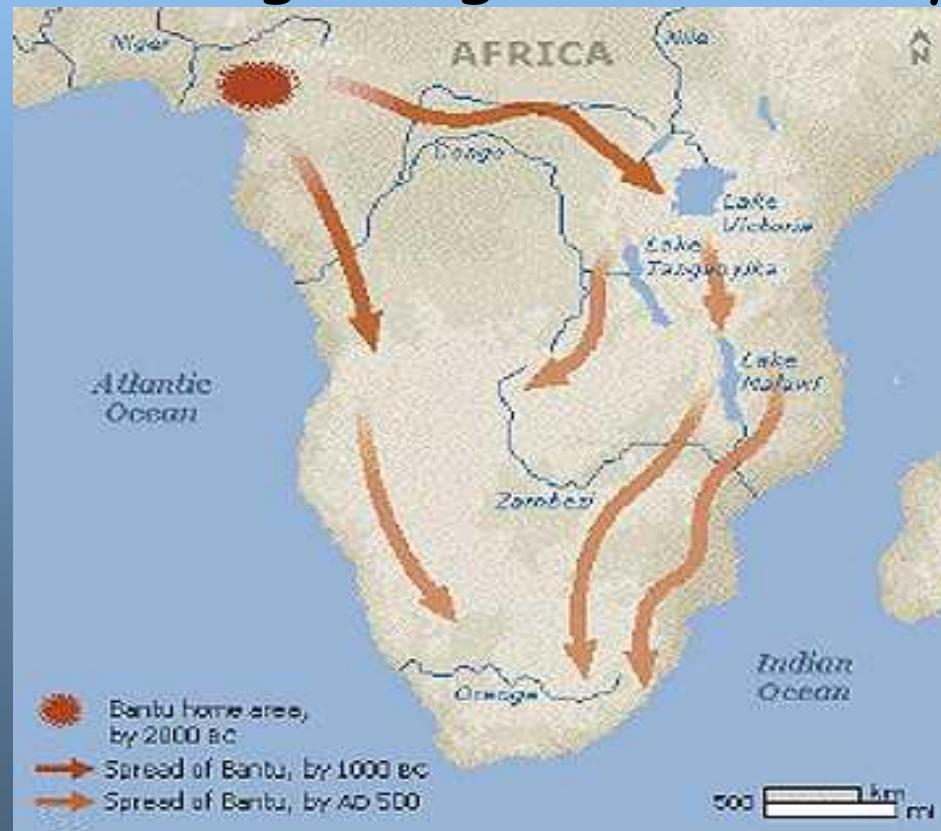
Above left: Kevin and Mariam Smith are missionaries in Kenya.
Right: David and Janis Betzer established The Lighthouse Children's Shelter for orphaned and abandoned babies and toddlers.

There are also a large number of Muslims.
Like so many other places in Africa,
movement of people through the centuries
has resulted in a great deal of diversity in
nearly all aspects of life
among the Ashanti.



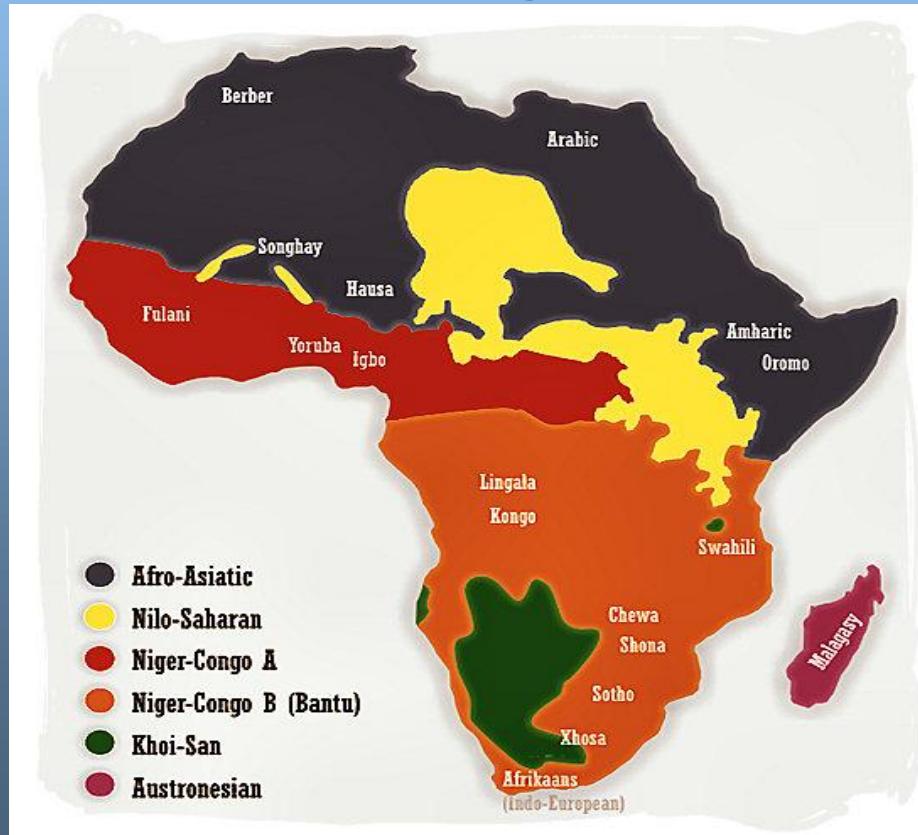
Bantu

The Bantu-speaking people of Africa migrated in many different waves from the region just south of the Sahara Desert to the central and southern parts of the continent beginning over 2,000 years ago.



This map represents the best calculations on where and when the Bantu peoples migrated, carrying with them their iron, pottery, and agricultural technology.¹⁷

Today the speakers of the hundreds of Bantu-related languages include many different ethnic groups, though they share a number of cultural characteristics or features. From their earliest days, the Bantu were known as farmers and animal herders, and they learned iron-making crafts as well.



Above is a map of the many Bantu-related language families.

BANTU

As the Bantu spread south and east across the continent, following rivers and streams, they met many new people and learned new skills, as well as sharing their own. Bantu-speaking people settled as far south as the southern tip of Africa.

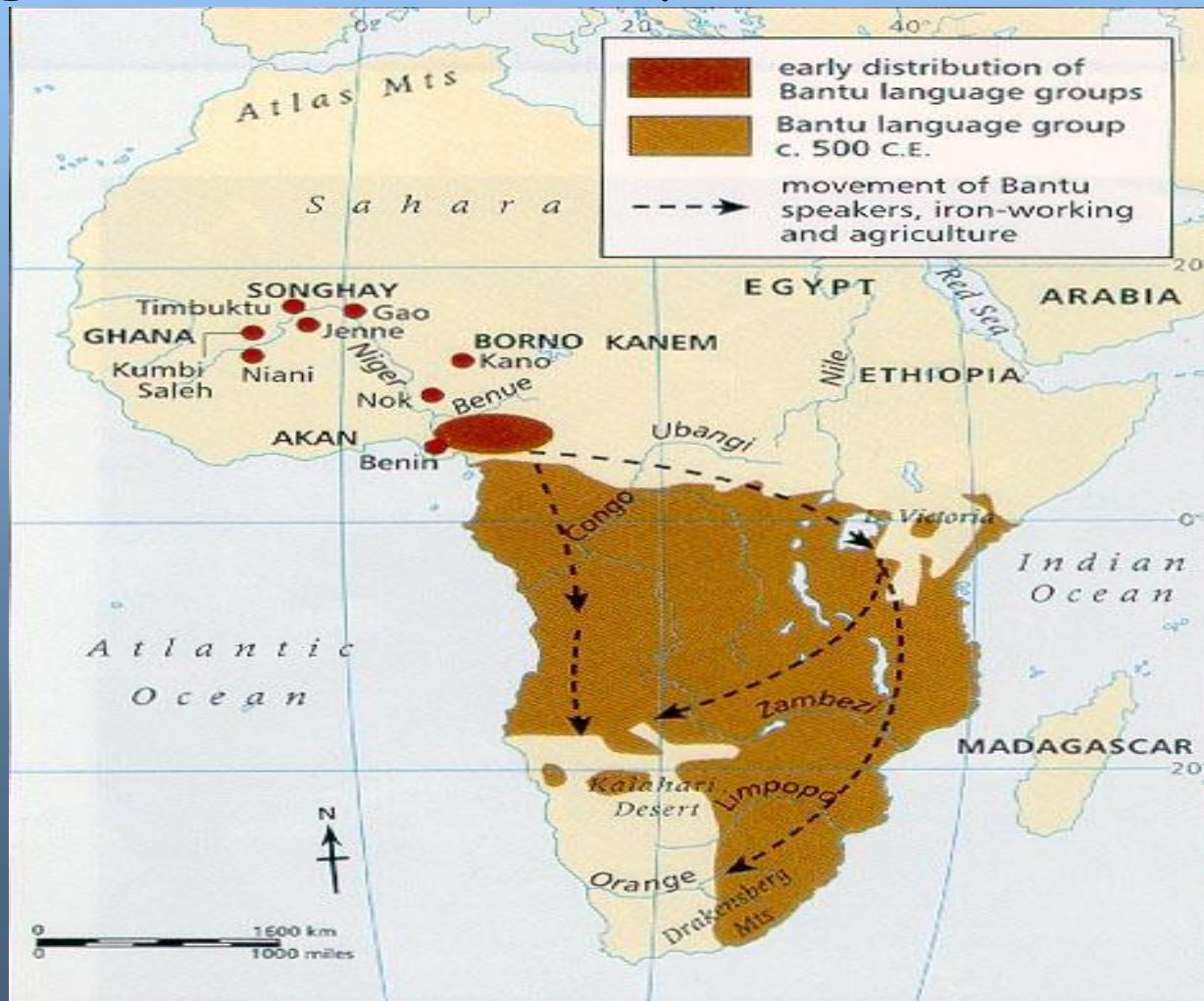


They intermarried with the people they met accepting new traditions and blending them with Bantu culture.

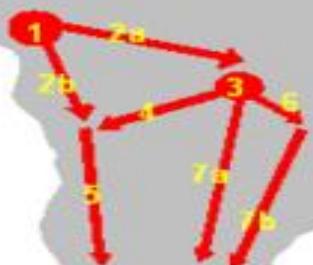


In preparation of Bantu weddings in the country of Somalia, the men build new houses. This shows them building the wall of the house first.

The Bantu migration was one of the largest movements of people in Africa's history. Today over 60 million people in central and southern Africa speak Bantu-based languages and share some part of the Bantu culture.



Using the key, below you can see when each wave of Bantu migration occurred.



1. = 3000 - 1500 B.C.E. origin

2 = ca.1500 B.C.E. first migrations

2.a = Eastern Bantu

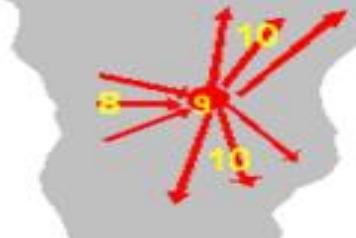
2.b = Western Bantu

3. = 1000 - 500 B.C.E. Urewe nucleus of Eastern Bantu

4. - 7. southward advance

9. = 500 B.C.E. - O Congo nucleus

10. = 0 - 1000 C.E. last phase



Many Bantu who settled in areas where there was a strong Arab presence are Muslim. Others, living in parts of Africa, were influenced by missionary efforts and are Christian.



Above left: a mosque in Tanzania;
Right: one of the many churches on Ilha De Mozambique

Still others follow traditional animist religions. Animists believe that spirits are found in natural objects and surroundings. They may feel a spiritual presence in rocks, trees, a waterfall, or particularly beautiful place in the forest.



The above image shows symbols of the world's major religions.

Swahili

The Swahili community developed along the coast of east Africa when Arab and Persian traders looking for profitable markets began to settle there and intermarry with the local Bantu-speaking population.



The resulting Swahili culture is a mix of people who can claim ancestors in Africa, Arabia, and even across the Indian Ocean. Many people in the countries of Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique share the Swahili culture, language, history, and traditions.



Above is a photo of a Swahili tribesman in Kenya.²⁶

While the Swahili language is considered a Bantu language, there are many Arabic words and phrases included as well. The word Swahili comes from the Arabic language and means "one who lives on the coast." Most Swahili today are city dwellers rather than traditional farmers and herdsmen. Many are engaged in fishing and trade, as their ancestors once were.

Swahili Words for Animals

English

elephant
cheetah
lion
giraffe

Swahili

tembo
duma
simba
twiga

Because contact with Arab traders was such a big part of their history, most of the Swahili today are Muslims. Islam has been one of the factors that has helped to create a common identity for such a diverse group of people.

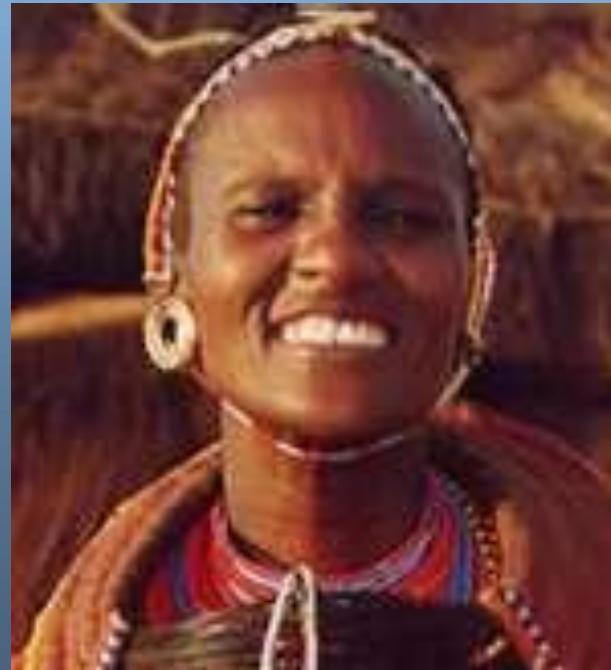


The photos above are of some women in a Swahili-speaking Muslim community. Men and women create/ produce kofia, male skull-caps, for local and regional markets. Such caps are regularly worn, highly valued and are often presented to men at special occasions and religious festivals. The women in these pictures are involved in embroidering kofia, a process that may take up to six months.

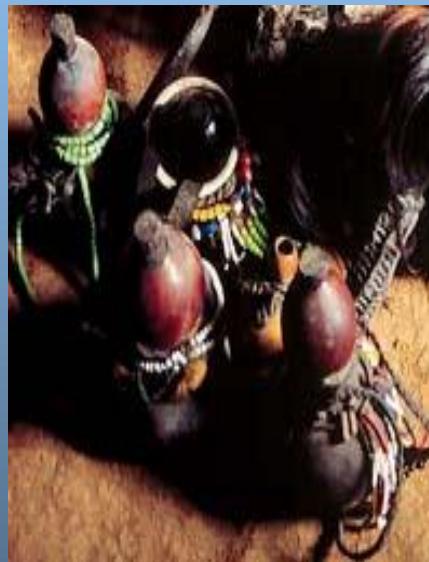
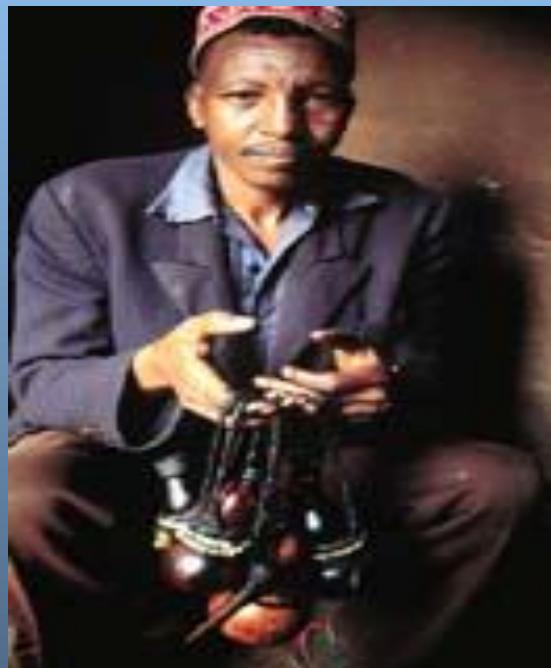
It is not unusual for Swahili men to wear charms around their necks containing verses of the Quran to protect them from harm. The Quran is the holy book of the Muslims.



Many among the Swahili also follow local beliefs that have been a part of the culture of eastern Africa since before Muslim traders arrived over a thousand years ago. These local beliefs are known as mila. One belief that is part of mila is that there are spirits that can possess a person.



Many Swahili also see a close link between their religious beliefs and the practice of medicine and healing. Herbal medicines are often given along with prescribed prayers and rituals that are all thought to be a part of the cure.



Above left: a traditional healer in Tanzania; Middle: medicine gourds, or tunguli, of the healer; Right: another traditional healer at the district market in Lushoto District, Tanzania

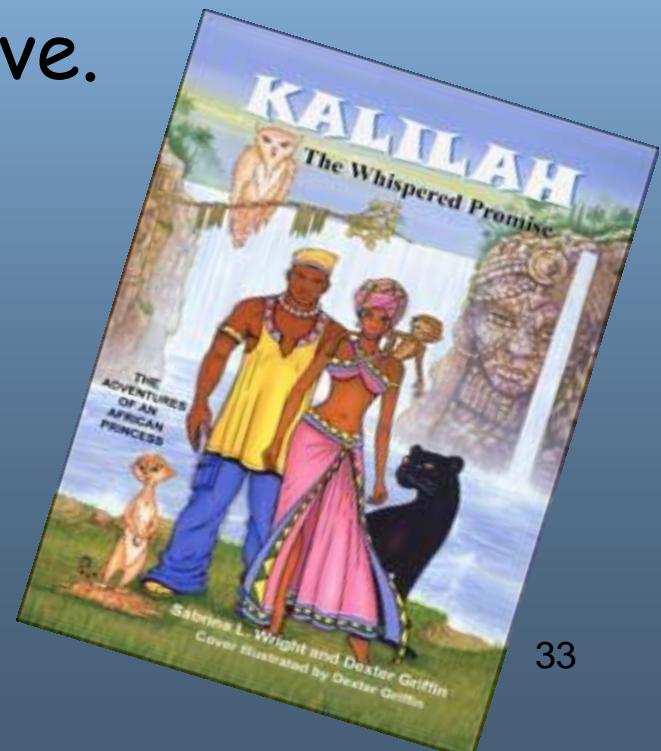
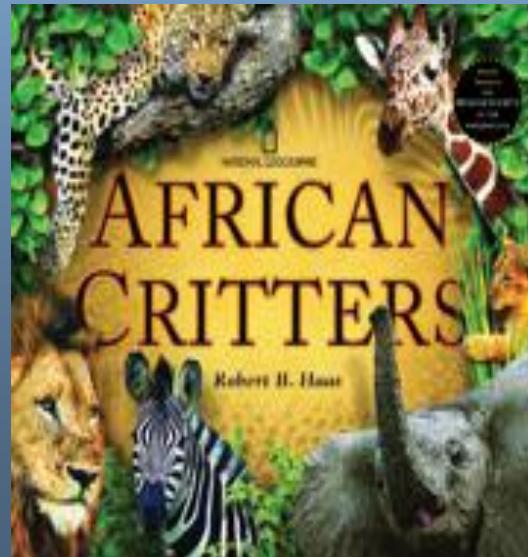
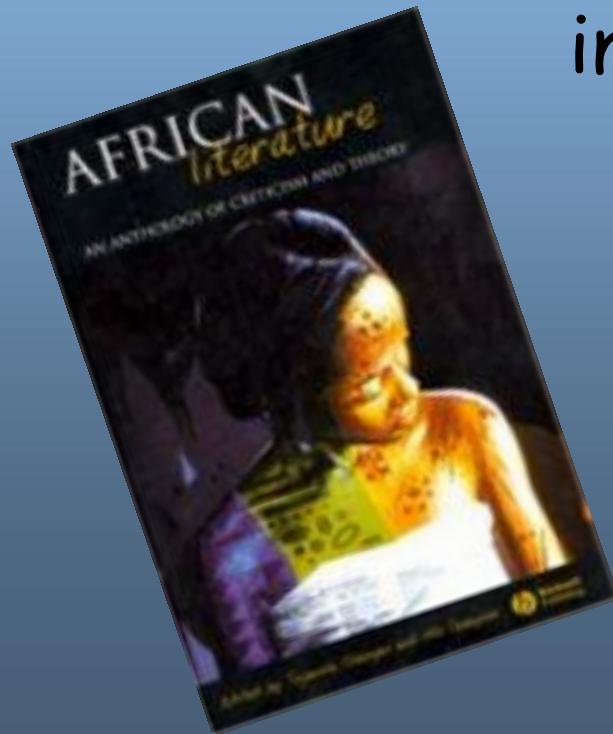
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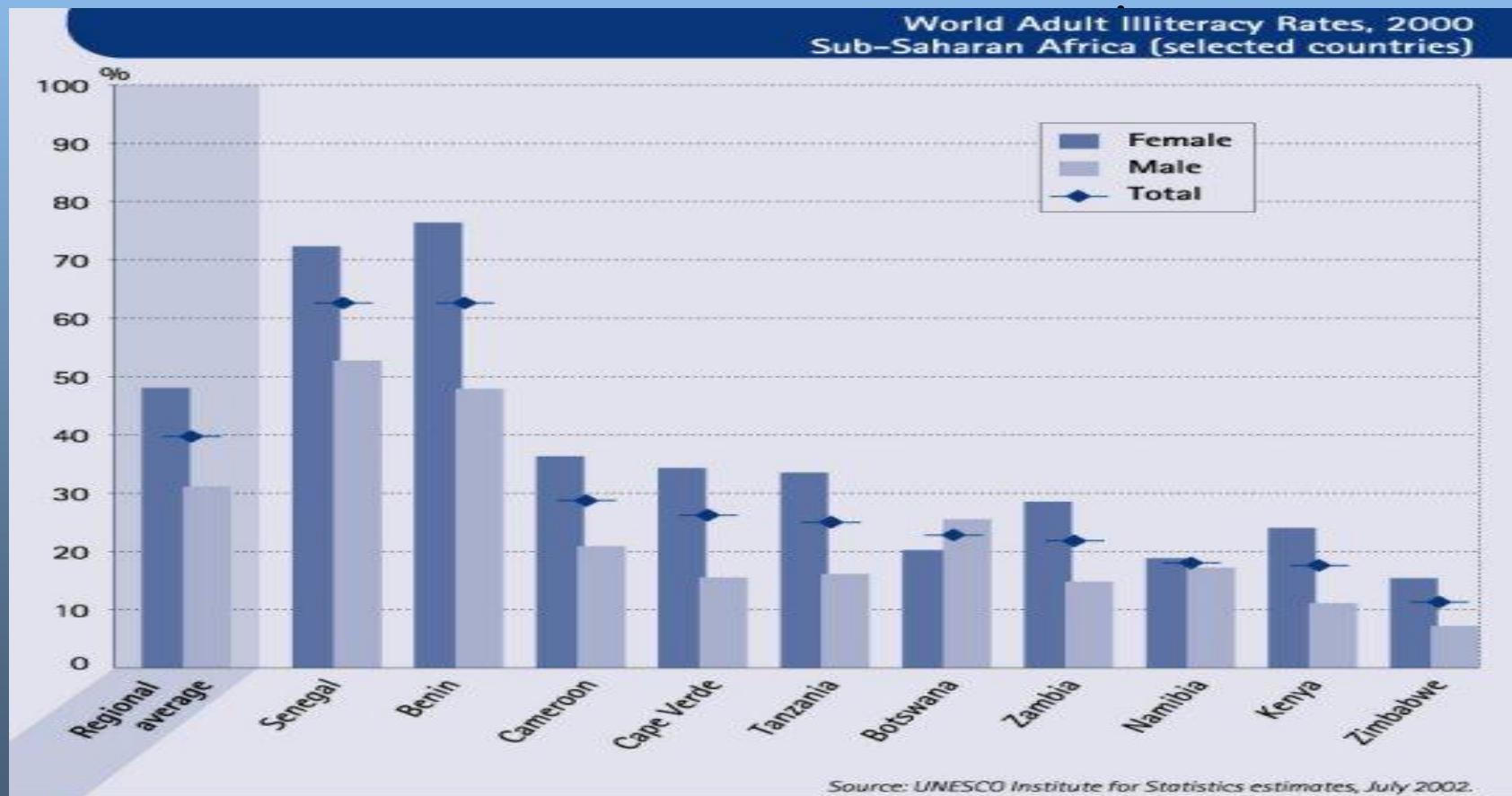
- c. Evaluate how the literacy rate affects the standard of living.

Literacy, or the ability to read and write, has a big effect on the standard of living of a country.

Those who cannot read or write have very difficult time finding decent jobs. Lack of education also prevents many young people from becoming engineers, doctors, scientists, or business managers that countries need in order to improve.



Many parts of Africa have lower literacy rates than one finds in Europe or the United States. Often schooling is only available to those who can afford to pay to attend. Many countries in this region are working hard to raise literacy



Girls have less opportunity to go to school than boys in many areas of Africa. The United Nations and the World Bank are currently working with many African countries to try to bring educational opportunities to their people. The chart on the next slide shows the relationship between the literacy rate and the gross domestic product (GDP) of some African countries.

The GDP is the value of all goods and services produced within a country in a given year.



Above left: a group of Malawi schoolgirls; Middle: Somali schoolgirls; Right: girls in Sierra Leone

| Country | Total Literacy Rate | Literacy of Males | Literacy of Females | GDP Per Capita |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Burkina Faso | 21% | 21.4% | 15% | \$1,300 |
| Congo | 67% | 80.9% | 54.1 | \$300 |
| Egypt | 71.4% | 83% | 59.45% | \$5,500 |
| Ghana | 51.9% | 49.8% | 49.8% | \$1,400 |
| Kenya | 85.1% | 79.7% | 79.7% | \$1,700 |
| South Africa | 86.4% | 85% | 85% | \$9,800 |
| Sudan | 61.1% | 50.5% | 50.5% | \$2,200 |
| United States (for comparison) | 99% | 99% | 99% | \$45,000 36 |