

## **Ancient Mali: Lesson #1, Map/Globe Skills**

**Name of Lesson Plan:** Mapping Timbuktu and Ancient Mali's Trade

**Topic:** Using Map Scales

**Grade Level:** 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Time required:** 45 minutes

**Space:** Classroom

**Preparer:** Christine Ammirati

**Audience:** Whole Group

**Number of Students:** up to 30

**Resources:** pencils, colored pencils, highlighters, pre-cut strings for students (marked according to map scales for Handouts 1 and 2), Handout 1 ("Pre-Colonial African Trade Routes"), Handout 2 ("Timbuktu: A Center for Trade"), Handout 3 (multiple choice and short answer questions), classroom document camera, online video clip, classroom computer, and projector.

### **VA State Standards:**

- 3.2 The student will study the early West African empire of Mali by describing its oral tradition (storytelling), government (kings), and economic development (trade).
- 3.4 The student will develop map skills by a) locating Greece, Rome, and West Africa; b) describing the physical and human characteristics of Greece, Rome, and West Africa;

**National Standards: Standard 7A (grades 3-4):** The student understands the cultures and historical developments of selected societies in such places as Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe. Describe the effects geography has had on societies, including their development of urban centers, food, clothing, industry, agriculture, shelter, trade, and other aspects of culture.

### **Lesson Description:**

**Anticipatory Set:** Display Handout 1 ("Pre-Colonial African Trade Routes") on classroom document camera. As review, ask students to identify map scale, map symbols, position of Mali in West Africa, and major trade city of Mali (Timbuktu). Teacher highlights Timbuktu on map. Teacher asks students to name the major goods involved in ancient Mali's trade (salt from Sahara and gold from forested areas of West Africa) and then uses different colored highlighters to locate these areas on map. Teacher asks students to explain how Timbuktu's location impacted its role as a trade center (location between gold and salt mines, and on Niger River). Students watch a 3-minute video featuring a Mali salt mine and a camel caravan to Timbuktu.

### **Objectives and Purpose:**

1. Given a map of western Africa, the student will use the legend, labels, and map scale to measure four distances.
2. Given map information about Timbuktu's location, the student will explain why the city was an important trading center during the Empire of Mali.

Purpose is to apply map scale skills to analyze Mali's trade routes through Timbuktu.

**Instructional Input/Modeling:** Referencing the video's caravan route, the teacher tells students that maps will now be used to measure the distance of this and other trade routes in ancient Mali. Teacher distributes Handout 1 to each student and asks them to get out colored pencils and highlighters. The teacher elicits student input for the handout's first four itemized tasks and uses Handout 1 on the document camera to model the mark-up of the map: highlighting Mali and cities of Cairo, Timbuktu, and Taghaza; drawing a **compass rose** and marking the four **cardinal directions**; tracing the Niger River in blue pencil; and using the **map legend** to identify and trace

a trade route from Timbuktu to Cairo in green pencil. The teacher then distributes to each student one piece of pre-cut string marked with ink corresponding to the **map scale**. On the document camera, the teacher lays the string below the map scale and matches it to the map scale ruler's two ends. Both distances represent 500 miles. Using the string as a straight ruler, the teacher measures the trade route from Algiers to Gao. Using the string as a flexible map measurer, the teacher measures the curving Congo River, marking the map and moving the string to measure distances greater than 500 miles.

**Check for Understanding:** Referencing Handout 1, teacher asks students to locate the **compass rose** and the cities of Timbuktu and Cairo. Is Timbuktu north or south of Cairo? (South) Is Timbuktu east or west of Cairo? (West) What **map symbols** are used on this map? (caravan and dhow routes) What other items might be represented in a **map legend** of Mali? (salt and gold mines) Why would these items be included? (They were important trading items) What is the purpose of a **map scale**? (Shows how distances depicted on a map represent the actual distance relationship on the ground). What distance is represented in this particular map scale? (500 miles) How is string used to measure curves? (Marked with distance and matched to curves). Why is a string more useful than a ruler? (Rulers cannot bend).

**Guided Practice:** Teacher collects pre-cut strings for Handout 1 and then distributes Handout 2. Ask students to examine the map and then call on students to explain the elements of the map legend. Call on a student to describe where the map scale is located on the map and the distance represented by this scale. Teacher then distributes the pre-cut strings for Handout 2 and the multiple choice and short answer questions (Handout 3).

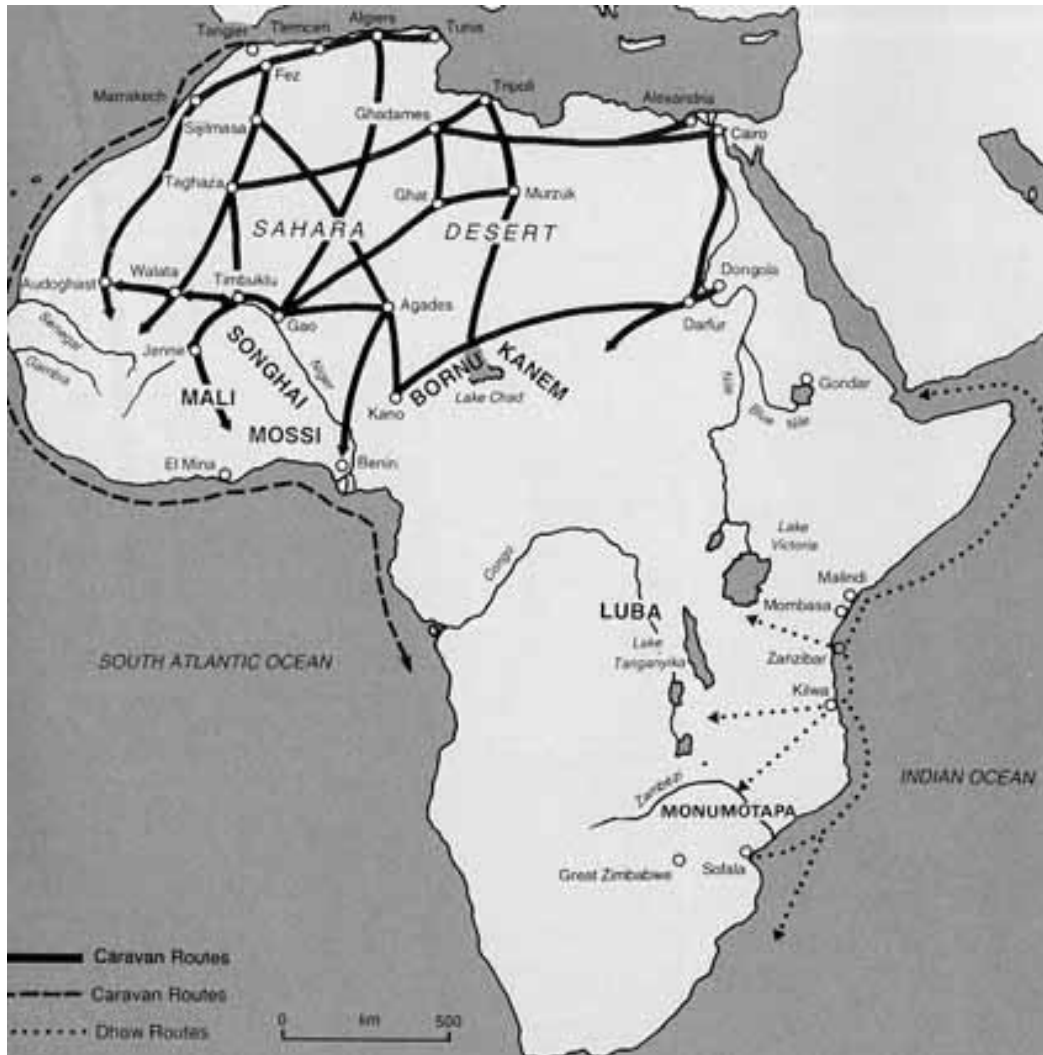
**Independent Practice:** Students use pencils, highlighters, and pre-cut strings to complete itemized tasks on Handout 2 and the multiple choice and short answer questions on Handout 3.

**Closure:** Students turn in their handouts upon completion. Teacher then places a completed map on the document camera and uses pre-cut string and the map scale to answer the questions on Handout 3. Teacher answers any student questions and confusions.

**Evaluation: *Formative:*** Teacher observes participation during Check for Understanding and Guided Practice. ***Summative:*** The teacher evaluates Handout 3 and examines the two maps for accuracy and evidence that student was following directions and understanding procedures.

**Background Information/Content:** Map scales are a vital tool for interpreting and using maps. When scaling down a map, all elements are reduced by the same amount in order to ensure that the distances on a map represent actual distance relationships on the ground. Ancient Mali's strength was based on its strategic location on the trans-Saharan trading routes. The exchange of natural resources of salt and gold comprised the bulk of Mali's economic trade. Salt has been mined in the Sahara Desert since the early 12<sup>th</sup> century and remains an important Mali trade item. Salt caravans take two weeks to traverse the approximately 500 miles to Timbuktu. Gold is mined in the forested regions south of the Niger River and in ancient Mali was brought to Timbuktu to trade with merchants Africa and Europe. Gold remains an important commodity in contemporary Mali. Located on the northern banks of the Niger River, Timbuktu was a major trading center in ancient Mali and a city of scholarship, learning, and architectural renown.

## Pre-Colonial African Trade Routes



<http://migrationstoriesofnigerianigbo.wordpress.com/2009/12/04/theories-of-ndi-igbo-origins-pt-1-ancient-hebrews/>

1) Highlight Empire of Mali and three African cities:

Cairo

Timbuktu

Taghaza

2) Draw a compass rose. Mark the 4 cardinal directions.

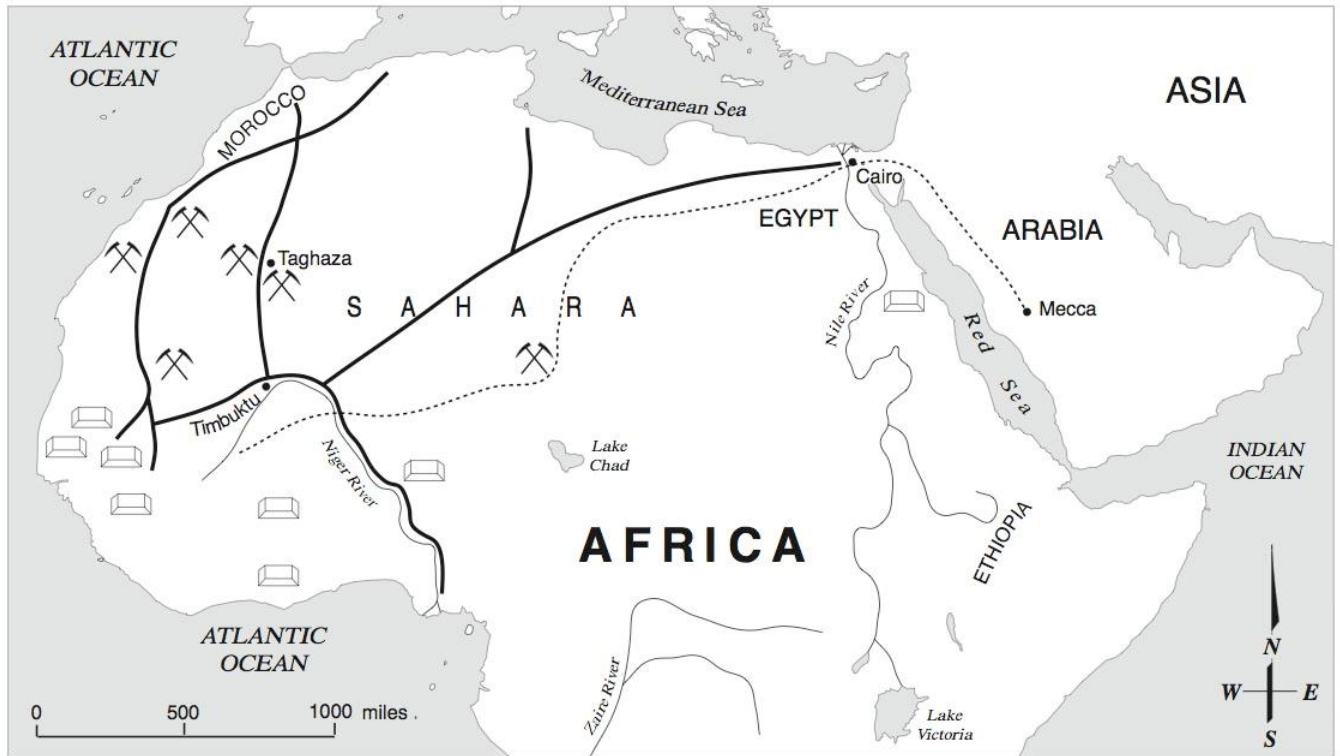
3) Trace the Niger River with a blue pencil.

4) Trace a trade route from Timbuktu to Cairo with green pencil.

5) Lay a piece of string flat beneath the Map Scale. Check that the black marks on the string line up at the 0 and 500 mile marks.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Timbuktu: A Center for Trade



### Legend

SOURCE:

- ..... Mansa Musa's route to Mecca, 1324
- trade route
-  salt mine
-  gold mine

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/1982>

Circle the compass rose. Highlight the "W" indicating West.

Use highlighter to mark three African cities: Cairo, Timbuktu, and Taghaza

Trace the Niger River with a blue pencil.

Use the Map Legend to mark symbols on the map.

Color the gold mine symbols yellow.

Color the salt mine symbols red.

Trace the trade routes with green pencil.

Lay your piece of string flat beneath the Map Scale. Check that the black marks on the string line up at the 0, 500, and 1000 mile marks.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Using Map Scales

1. Timbuktu is located \_\_\_\_\_ miles up the Niger River from the Atlantic Ocean.
  - a. 100
  - b. 500
  - c. 1000
  - d. 2000
2. The salt mines of Taghaza are located \_\_\_\_\_ miles from Timbuktu.
  - a. 100
  - b. 500
  - c. 1000
  - d. 2000
3. The gold mines west of Timbuktu are \_\_\_\_\_ miles from Timbuktu.
  - a. 100
  - b. 500
  - c. 1000
  - d. 2000
4. How many miles was the trade route from Timbuktu to Cairo?
  - a. 100 miles
  - b. 500 miles
  - c. 1000 miles
  - d. 2000 miles
5. List three reasons why Timbuktu was an important trading city in Mali.

**Resources:**

Ezi, Ms. (2009, Dec. 4). Theories of Ndi Igbo Origins Pt. 1: Ancient Hebrews? [Map: Pre-Colonial African Trade Routes]. A Genetic Migration Story of a Nigerian Igbo.

Retrieved October 1, 2010 from

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<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/standardsk-4-4-7.html>

National Geographic Society. (2010). Mali Desert [Video file]. Retrieved October 3, 2010 from

[http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/places/countries-places/mali/mali\\_malidesert.html](http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/places/countries-places/mali/mali_malidesert.html)

Virginia Department of Education. (2010). *The standards & SOL-based instructional resources*.

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