

Inquiry Journal

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Directions: Read each of the supporting questions. For each “K,” write what you already **KNOW** about the topic. For each “W,” write what you **WONDER** about the topic.

Topic 1: Examining African Kingdoms Supporting Questions	
LESSON 1	<i>What insights do archaeological evidence and first-hand accounts provide about the Swahili civilization?</i>
	K:
	W:
LESSON 2	<i>How did political, religious, and economic factors contribute to the long reign of the Solomonic dynasty?</i>
	K:
	W:



Topic 1: Examining African Kingdoms
Compelling Question

How did African kingdoms gain and maintain power in the early modern era?

Directions: Read the compelling question. Explain what you **LEARNED** throughout the unit with a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) paragraph.



Directions: Read each of the supporting questions. For each “K,” write what you already **KNOW** about the topic. For each “W,” write what you **WONDER** about the topic.

Topic 2: Slave Trade & Resistance Supporting Questions	
LESSON 3	<i>How has limited public knowledge about the transatlantic slave trade’s context affected understanding of its global impact?</i>
	K:
	W:
LESSON 4	<i>What do sources reveal about both the brutality of slavery and the strength of those who endured it?</i>
	K:
	W:
LESSON 5	<i>In what ways did Africans shape—not just react to—the transatlantic slave trade?</i>
	K:
	W:
LESSON 6	<i>How did the slave trade shift internal social, economic, and political systems within and between African communities?</i>
	K:
	W:



Topic 2: Slave Trade & Resistance

Compelling Question

What does African agency during the transatlantic slave trade reveal about power, resistance, and legacy?

Directions: Read the compelling question. Explain what you **LEARNED** throughout the unit with a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) paragraph.



Essential Question

To what extent did African agency shape both the expansion and destabilization of African societies from 1400 to 1750?

Directions: Read the essential question. Explain what you LEARNED throughout the unit with a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) paragraph.



Paragraph Template

Claim, Evidence, Reasoning

CLAIM (Your argument)	
EVIDENCE #1 (Facts, examples, sources)	
REASONING #1 (Explanation of how the evidence supports the claim)	
EVIDENCE #2 (Facts, examples, sources)	
REASONING #2 (Explanation of how the evidence supports the claim)	



Unit 3: Africa: Agency & Resistance

Inquiry Journal (Exemplar)

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Directions: Read each of the supporting questions. For each “K,” write what you already **KNOW** about the topic. For each “W,” write what you **WONDER** about the topic.

Topic 1: American Societies– Examining African Kingdoms Supporting Questions	
LESSON 1	<i>What insights do archaeological evidence and first-hand accounts provide about the Swahili civilization?</i>
	K: Archaeological discoveries, like ancient buildings, pottery, and trading artifacts, provide clues about their society.
	W: Are there any significant differences or conflicting information between the oral histories and archaeological evidence about the Swahili civilization?
LESSON 2	<i>How did political, religious, and economic factors contribute to the long reign of the Solomonic dynasty?</i>
	K: Often a strong military and trade play a strong role in maintaining power.
	W: How did the Solomonic Dynasty relate to other powers in Africa and the world at the time?



Topic 1: Examining African Kingdoms

Compelling Question

How did African kingdoms gain and maintain power in the early modern era?

Directions: Read the compelling question. Explain what you **LEARNED** throughout the unit with a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) paragraph.

African kingdoms in the early modern era gained and maintained power by using trade, religion, and political centralization to legitimize authority and control diverse populations. The Swahili City-States gained power through their control of Indian Ocean trade routes. Their coastal location allowed them to become wealthy trading hubs, exporting gold, ivory, and enslaved people while importing luxury goods from Asia and the Middle East. They adopted Islam, which helped them build diplomatic and economic relationships with other Muslim regions, further strengthening their influence. In contrast, the Solomonic Dynasty maintained power through claims of divine ancestry. By tracing their lineage to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, rulers legitimized their authority as God-ordained. They expanded through military conquest and unified the Ethiopian highlands under a centralized Christian monarchy. Religious texts like the *Kebra Nagast* and the close alliance with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church solidified loyalty among their people. These examples show that African kingdoms did not rely solely on military might; they used a combination of trade wealth, religious authority, and political power to build lasting control.



Directions: Read each of the supporting questions. For each “K,” write what you already **KNOW** about the topic. For each “W,” write what you **WONDER** about the topic.

Topic 2: Slave Trade & Resistance Supporting Questions	
LESSON 3	<i>How has limited public knowledge about the transatlantic slave trade’s context affected understanding of its global impact?</i>
	K: If you don’t understand the beginning of something, you can’t truly understand its legacy.
	W: Why don’t people know more about the transatlantic slave trade?
LESSON 4	<i>What do sources reveal about both the brutality of slavery and the strength of those who endured it?</i>
	K: People who were enslaved faced horrible conditions and usually had not way to get their freedom.
	W: Are there any sources from enslaved people that have survived?
LESSON 5	<i>In what ways did Africans shape—not just react to—the transatlantic slave trade?</i>
	K: People use multiple methods and strategies for resistance that could include negotiation or violence.
	W: Did any African societies fully avoid the slave trade, especially those on the Atlantic coast?
LESSON 6	<i>How did the slave trade shift internal social, economic, and political systems within and between African communities?</i>
	K: Enslaved people were taken from Africa by Europeans and sent to the Americas.
	W: How did the slave trade affect everyday life in African communities?



Topic 2: Slave Trade & Resistance

Compelling Question

What does African agency during the transatlantic slave trade reveal about power, resistance, and legacy?

Directions: Read the compelling question. Explain what you **LEARNED** throughout the unit with a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) paragraph.

African agency during the transatlantic slave trade shows that Africans were not just victims, but also leaders, decision-makers, and resisters who shaped the course of history. For example, King Nzinga Mbemba of Kongo wrote to the king of Portugal in 1526, asking him to stop merchants from illegally taking people, including nobles and free citizens, out of his kingdom. His letter shows political leadership and concern for the social damage caused by the slave trade. Another example is Queen Nzinga of Ndongo and Matamba, who negotiated directly with Portuguese officials. When they tried to make her sit on the ground during a meeting, she sat on the back of one of her attendants to show she was their equal. She also formed alliances and led her armies in battle to protect her people. Even enslaved Africans resisted: some jumped overboard during the Middle Passage, others revolted on ships like the *Amistad*, and many kept their cultures and traditions alive despite being enslaved. These actions show that Africans used many forms of power—political, military, cultural, and personal—to resist slavery and protect their communities.



Essential Question

To what extent did African agency shape both the expansion and destabilization of African societies from 1400 to 1750?

Directions: Read the essential question. Explain what you LEARNED throughout the unit with a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) paragraph.

African agency played a significant role in the expansion of African societies before the transatlantic slave trade began. In East Africa, the Swahili city-states grew powerful through Indian Ocean trade by actively engaging with merchants from Arabia, India, and China. Their leaders built wealthy coastal cities, which became centers of commerce and culture, showing how Africans controlled their own economic growth through maritime trade. Meanwhile, the Solomonic Dynasty expanded its political and religious power by claiming a direct lineage to King Solomon and using Christianity to unify and legitimize rule. The dynasty built alliances and strengthened state structures to maintain control over diverse territories. These examples highlight how African rulers and merchants used trade, religion, and strategic leadership to grow and stabilize their societies before European interference.

During the transatlantic slave trade, African agency also shaped how societies responded to European demands, both expanding and destabilizing their communities. Some African leaders, like Nzinga Mbemba of Kongo, tried to regulate or resist the trade, expressing concern about its impact on their people. Others, like Queen Nzinga of Ndongo and Matamba, used diplomacy and military resistance to push back against Portuguese control. Meanwhile, some African groups participated in the slave trade by capturing and selling rivals, gaining access to European goods and weapons. This created internal divisions and conflicts as the trade became tied to political and economic power. These choices show that Africans made decisions based on their own goals, but those decisions had long-term consequences that weakened many societies over time.

