



LESSON 3.2.4 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #16 Mansa Musa and Islam in Africa

PREVIEW

John teaches you about Sub-Saharan Africa! So, what exactly was going on there? It turns out, it was a lot of trade, converting to Islam, visits from Ibn Battuta, trade, trade, some impressive architecture, and several empires. John not only cover the the West African Malian Empire, which is the one Mansa Musa ruled, but he discusses the Ghana Empire, and even gets over to East Africa as well to discuss the trade-based city-states of Mogadishu, Mombasa, and Zanzibar.

PURPOSE

Crash Course World History #16 provides the history of Mansa Musa and Islam in Africa. Mansa Musa, a devout Muslim,

was the wealthy ruler of Mali. During his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324, Musa reportedly traveled with an entourage of thousands and freely spent his riches. He built houses in Cairo and in Mecca for his attendants and caused runaway inflation wherever he traveled. He was well educated, knowing details of places he visited before arriving, and the world was fascinated with both he and his homeland. Crash Course videos should be used as an introduction to new ideas and concepts, an instruction to core ideas of the unit, and should serve as a reinforcement of previously learned events.

PROCESS

As with all of the videos in the course, ask students to watch the video before class. Remind students of John's fast-talking and play the video with captions. Pause and rewind when necessary. As students watch the video, have students consider how historical bias influences impressions on a region or culture. Why are some histories considered "uncultured" compared with others?

LINK

- [Crash Course World History #16 – Mansa Musa and Islam in Africa](#)

Video questions for students to answer during their viewing



LESSON 3.2.4 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Use these questions and prompts at the appropriate stopping points to check in with students and ensure they are getting the key concepts covered in the video.

1. (:40) What prejudices have been applied to Africa with regard to its history?

SAMPLE ANSWER: That true history is one in which it's recorded in texts; that the writing of history is civilized and those societies without written histories (those with oral traditions) are uncivilized.

2. (1:30) What interesting event happened when Mansa Musa visited Alexandria?

SAMPLE ANSWER: In bringing along so much gold and freely spending it, he caused runaway inflation that took years to recover from.

3. (2:10) What were European impressions of Mansa Musa and how did that impact Africa?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Europeans saw Mansa Musa as such a wealthy person that they assumed West Africa was a land of gold. This further supports the notion that undermines stereotypes of Africa, that people were poor and lived in tribes, rather than an advanced society.

4. (2:50) What assumptions should we make about Mansa Musa?

SAMPLE ANSWER: We should assume that Mansa Musa was a devout Muslim, was well educated as evidenced that he was very familiar with places and customs of lands he visited before getting there, and that he promoted a network of connectedness because Europeans were fascinated with him and where he came from.

5. (3:30) What types of trade occurred between North Africans (Berbers) and West Africans?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Trade was typically an exchange of salt and gold. However, because of this trade, ideas such as the Islamic faith were exchanged. This is a recurring theme in trade networks: the idea of converting or adopting another religion as to improve economic relations.



6. (4:00) How and why did Islam spread from North to West Africa?

SAMPLE ANSWER: As previously hinted at in the past response, Islam spread along trade routes amongst traders and merchants who benefitted from having both an economic and religious connection with trading partners. Kings and elites followed suit because sharing a religion would give them prestige and access to scholars and administrators who helped cement their power/legacy.

7. (5:10) How is it that we know so much about the nation of Mali?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Mali was visited by Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan cleric and scholar, who wrote of his experiences in Mali. Ibn Battuta was adored the world over for being one of the most famous travelers ever and kept records of all of the lands he visited.

8. (7:00) What is the Swahili civilization?

SAMPLE ANSWER: The Swahili civilization was a collection of city states like Zanzibar, Mombasa and Mogadishu, which were all part of a trade network. While not unified into a single nation, the civilization was united by trade, language and religion.

9. (7:20) As noted, the Swahili civilization was linked by language (Bantu), which was originally spoken in West Africa. What significant ideas were brought from this migration from West to East Africa?

SAMPLE ANSWER: The original speakers of Swahili were from West Africa whose migration to East Africa not only changed linguistic traditions, but they also brought ironwork and agricultural methods to the region. Until this point, most of East Africa had remained hunter-gatherers.

10. (8:30) When did Swahili civilizations reach their height?

SAMPLE ANSWER: These port cities and their economies were determined by the strength of trade, and because of this, saw their peak between the 13th and 16th centuries.



LESSON 3.2.4 | WATCH | Conceptual Thinking

Answer the following question to make connections across different concepts and think more critically about the information presented in the video.

1. Why are there distorted and perhaps unfair assumptions of African history? How might we better view the histories of the “uncivilized?”