

Abstract

The ancient Saharan trade routes linked sub-Saharan African peoples with the peoples of the Maghreb, Europe, and the Levant. Although the Trans-Saharan trade has not been as thoroughly researched as that of the Silk Road or the Indian Ocean, its historical importance is becoming more apparent as scholars devote more of their energies to uncovering its treasures.

This unit is designed for the World History instructor who desires to fill this knowledge gap. The unit contains a series of lessons intended to engage and inform students of the significance and the rich history of the Trans-Saharan trade routes. The time period covered in the lessons is 700 C.E. to 1450 C.E.

Student activities include a study guide and a series of lessons comprising several aspects of the Saharan trade that will place students in the role of amateur historians. Students will be assessed through a journal assignment and a culminating round table discussion.

It is my sincere hope that this unit will provide my colleagues with something of value that they may incorporate into their lessons.

Lesson Summary

Lesson One: The History of the Trans-Saharan Trade Routes

Utilizing the web sites provided students will study the history of the Saharan trade routes.

Lesson Two: A Pictorial Overview

Students will access pictures of sites along the trade routes as they exist today.

Lesson Three: Arts and Crafts of the Saharan Trade

Students will examine pictures of various artifacts traded along the Saharan routes noting a syncretic blending of Berber and Islamic styles.

Lesson Four: Moroccan Sayings

Students will examine examples of several quotes from various Moroccan sources. Using their newly acquired knowledge students will interpret the meaning of each quote.

Lesson Five: Round Table Discussion

Students will engage in a role play. They will be assigned a fictional character and simulate a discussion with other students playing different roles.

Note: As an enrichment exercise students could compare the Trans-Saharan trade with the Silk Road and Indian Ocean trade routes.

Materials

Students should have access to computers.