Unit: Cross-Cultural Exchange on the Trans-Saharan Trade Routes

# HOW DO HISTORIANS KNOW ABOUT CULTURAL AND GEOGRAPHIC INTERSECTIONS?

#### Activity 1: Songs of Slavery Along the Trans-Saharan Trade Route

#### INDIVIDUAL REPORT

1. Why was it important to have portable (able to be carried) instruments on the trans-Saharan trade route? What words or phrases in the song give information about events that took place on the trans-Saharan trade route? Based on the song, what was an important resource traded along these routes?

2. What do the instruments, musicians, and the song lyrics show about how musical traditions developed and intersected between West Africa and Islam along the trans-Saharan trade route?

3. How are songs about historical events different from stories about historical events?

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### Activity 2: What The Songs of Berber Nomadic Tribeswomen Tell Us

#### INDIVIDUAL REPORT

1. What topics did Berber women and men sing about? What words or phrases in the songs give information about nomadic life? What did they value and what other things can you tell about their dress and lifestyle?

2. What can you tell about the rhymes and rhythms used in the songs? Considering nomadic lifestyle and lack of education, why might songs be short and need to rhyme?

3. How are poems and songs about events and issues different from stories or articles about events and issues?

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#### Activity 3: Nomadic Lifestyle in the Saharan Desert and Atlas Mountains

#### INDIVIDUAL REPORT

1. What do these photographs and artifacts show you about how nomadic tribes lived? How did they survive and what did they do as part of a daily routine?

2. What does the architecture of the nomadic dwellings tell you about how nomads adapted to their environment? Why was it important for nomads to live and travel as a part of a tribe? What benefits did they gain by doing so?

3. What do you think were the roles of men and women in the tribe? What were the roles of children?

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### Activity 4: Ibn Battuta's Account of Crossing the Desert by Caravan

### INDIVIDUAL REPORT

1. What was the length of Ibn Battuta's journey and what supplies did he prepare or need to make it successfully through the desert? How did geographic conditions (e.g. climate, terrain, etc.) play a role in his journey?

2. What difficulties did travelers face when crossing the Sahara? What unusual places or resources did he encounter in the desert that you would not have expected?

3. Why do you think it was important to travel as part of a group (caravan)?

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Activity 5: Accounts of the Gold-Salt Trade between North Africa and the Kingdom of Mali

#### INDIVIDUAL REPORT

1. What geographic difficulties (climate and terrain) did the trading routes between North and West Africa pose to merchants and traders? And what resources and opportunities could be found there as well?

2. Why was the king of Mali so powerful and wealthy? What did he have that made him this way and how do you think he maintained his power?

3. If you wanted to convince a fellow merchant to make this difficult journey, what would you say to make him want to go to Timbuktu and the kingdom of Mali?

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# Activity 6: Ibn Battuta's Description of the Importance of Islam, the Qu'ran, and the Arabic Language

#### INDIVIDUAL REPORT

1. What does Ibn Battuta's story show about what was valued in terms of education? What did they consider it was important to know?

2. How is what they value in education similar or different to the education you are receiving and what is taught in school now in the United States?

3. In West Africa at that time and even in the present much of the schooling is based on the religion of Islam. Do you think that education should be based on a religion or learning about religious beliefs? Why or why not?

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# Activity 7: The Intersection of Islam and West Africa in Trans-Saharan Designs

## INDIVIDUAL REPORT

1. Based on the photographs, map, and artifacts, what special kinds of clothing did people wear on the trans-Saharan trade routes? What elements of their clothes helped them adapt to traveling through a desert?

2. According to the description of the King of Ghana and his court, how did people dress? What does this show about their status/importance and how did Islam intersect with the religion already there?

3. How do these craftworks and architectural designs show the influence of Islam on West Africa? Conversely, how do these craftworks and architectural designs show West Africa's influence on Islam?

Pick one of the primary sources or artifacts from your group and complete the primary source investigation.

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Title of Source:

WHO?	WHEN & WHERE?
Author of Source:	Place and Time of Publication:
Audience:	Historical Context:

Description of Source:	Meaning:
What I see Evidence of	What the objects, words, etc. mean
Message/Argument: The author is trying to tell me	Questions I Still Have:
	I wonder My reaction to the source is
Focus Question: What does this source show about the topic our group explored?	
The	by
shows us that the author thought	
<b>0</b> •	
because in the source	/

The relates to our group's topic because \_\_\_\_\_\_.