**Activity 1. The Salt Mines of the Sahara**

The main stopping point of caravans moving south across the desert was the salt mines of Targhaza. In this activity, you will find out how the salt was obtained and why it was so important in the West African trade networks.

* Access [Trans-Saharan Gold Trade](http://web.archive.org/web/20060214175900/http:/www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/gold/hg_d_gold_d1map.htm). Find Targhaza, and Timbuktu. 1. Describe where they are.
* Go to [The Topic: Salt](http://42explore.com/salt.htm). 2. What are the main uses of salt?
* Access [Saharan Salt Trade](http://www.the153club.org/salt.html). 3. What are two ways of obtaining salt in the Sahara? Now go to [Salt-hauling camel trains](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/05/0528_030528_saltcaravan.html). Scroll down to “Biblical Scene.” 4. Who mined the salt in ancient times?
* Access [On the Edge of Timbuktu](http://web.archive.org/web/20040229095721/http:/www.npr.org/programs/re/archivesdate/2003/may/mali/). Click on the video entitled *Trek to the salt mines of Taoudenni*. 5. Write a short summary.

**Activity 2. Ghana Corners the Gold Market**

The salt that was brought down from the Sahara was usually traded for gold. The gold was mined in the forests of Guinea, near the source of the Niger, and carried downstream to the markets along the Niger in dugout canoes. Many local merchants became quite wealthy. Ghana, West Africa’s first kingdom, depended upon income from trade. It became so rich it was known as the Land of Gold.

* Access the [Map of salt and gold mines](http://lostislamichistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/timbuktu.jpg). These are the major salt mines (near Targhaza) and the gold mines (in the regions of the upper Niger). Return to [Trans-Saharan Gold Trade](http://afriques.revues.org/docannexe/image/1174/img-1-small580.png). Locate the gold fields.6. Describe their location. **Be specific.**
* Go to [Ghana Empire](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ghan/hd_ghan.htm), After reading the text, click on the map to enlarge it. Now go to [Ghana Empire](http://www.ushistory.org/civ/7a.asp). 7. What are some of the other products traded in Ghana? 8. How did the ruler of Ghana make a big profit?
* SKIP!! Go to [Mali: Geography and History](http://www.vmfa.state.va.us/mali_geo_hist1.html). Scroll down to *History*, then read paragraph 8 (beginning “trade took place far from the gold mines…”) Discuss the “silent trade.” What might have been the reasons for this unusual practice?

As king of the Land of Gold, Ghana’s ruler made certain that he looked the part.

* Access [Ancient Ghana](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/4chapter1.shtml). Scroll to the box entitled *Royalty Gorgeously Attired*. Click on the audio and listen to a description of the king and his court as recorded by an Arabic visitor. 9. Write a short summary.

**Activity 3. Muslim Merchants Flock to Mali**

The expansion of Islam across North Africa in the 7th century led to a great increase in West African commercial activities, as Muslim merchants became actively involved in the trans-Saharan trade routes.

* Access [Islam](http://www.mrdowling.com/605-islam.html), a link through EDSITEment-reviewed resource Internet Public Library. 10. Define the words *Islam* and *Muslim*. 11. Who was Muhammed? 12. What is the Qur’an? 13. What is a mosque? 14. Where is Mecca, and what is its importance to Islam? Now go to [The Birth of Islam](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/isla/hd_isla.htm), from the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](http://www.metmuseum.org/) website. 15. What does the word Qur’an mean? 16. What are the teachings of the Qur’an? 17. What is the Ka’ba? Explain the change in color. 18. Who were the caliphs? 19. In what direction did Islam first expand from Arabia?
* Go to [Trans-Saharan Gold Trade](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/gold/hd_gold.htm). Read the first section: *Gold Trade and the Kingdom of Ancient Ghana*. 20. Why did people in the north want the African gold?
* Return to [Ancient Ghana](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/4chapter1.shtml). Scroll down to the sections entitled Islam and *Muslims in Africa*. 21. Did Islam coexist peacefully with local tribal religions? 22. How do you think Muslims in other parts of the world might have thought about this? 23. Could there have been pressure for the African rulers to convert?

On the map of Africa label:

The Sahara Desert

The Great Rift Valley

The Mediterranean Sea

The Nile River

The Red Sea

Mediterranean Sea

24. Define :

a) Savannas

b) Cataracts

c) Desertification

d) Bantu

Shade the map by geographic region: (Map on page 342)

Deserts

Rain forests

Savannahs

Dry woodlands

25. How was settlement of Africa affected by the geography?

