

The People of Africa

Africa is a huge continent and has more independent countries in it than any other continent, over 50 countries. Since Africa extends thousands of miles from north to south and much of Africa sits on the equator, there is great variety in the climate and vegetation across the continent. All of these things influence the culture of people living in Africa. Unfortunately Africa is the world's poorest region and this



has a great impact on how the people of Africa live. Most people live in poor rural areas without roads connecting the villages and no electricity or clean water. Rural people who move to the cities to look for work end up living in terrible slums.

The cultures of Africa can be divided into North Africa and Africa south of the Sahara Desert. North Africa borders the Mediterranean Sea and these Africans, like those in Egypt, traded with Greeks, Romans and others thousands of years ago using the Mediterranean Sea for transportation of goods. Many of these people speak Arabic and share the ethnic and

religious heritage of the Mediterranean area.

Africa is home to a large number of tribal people. To give an idea of the diversity of African people, there are over 2,000 languages spoken by the people living there. For example, Nigeria has 500 languages and Ethiopia has 80. Africa also has many people of European descent who migrated there during the period of colonization. European countries colonized Africa like they colonized North and South America. But the countries of Africa did not receive their independence until the late 1900s. Namibia became independent in 1990 and Eritrea in 1993. The Europeans divided Africa into countries without considering old tribal territories and rival tribes continue to fight amongst each other. The people of Africa face many difficult problems to provide healthcare, education and a decent way of life for themselves and their children.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Multiple Choice Questions - People

Circle the correct answer.

1. Africa
 - a. Has more countries than any other continent
 - b. Has over 2,000 languages
 - c. Is the poorest area of the world
 - d. All of the above

2. North African people
 - a. Are culturally similar to people around the Mediterranean Sea
 - b. Speak 2,000 languages
 - c. Are of European descent
 - d. All of the above

3. The culture of Africa is influenced by
 - a. Climate
 - b. Many tribes
 - c. Both a. and b.
 - d. None of the above

4. People who live in rural African villages
 - a. Don't have electricity
 - b. Don't have clean water
 - c. Don't have good roads
 - d. All of the above

5. Countries in Africa that were European colonies received their independence in the
 - a. 1700s like the United States
 - b. 1800s
 - c. 1900s
 - d. None of the above

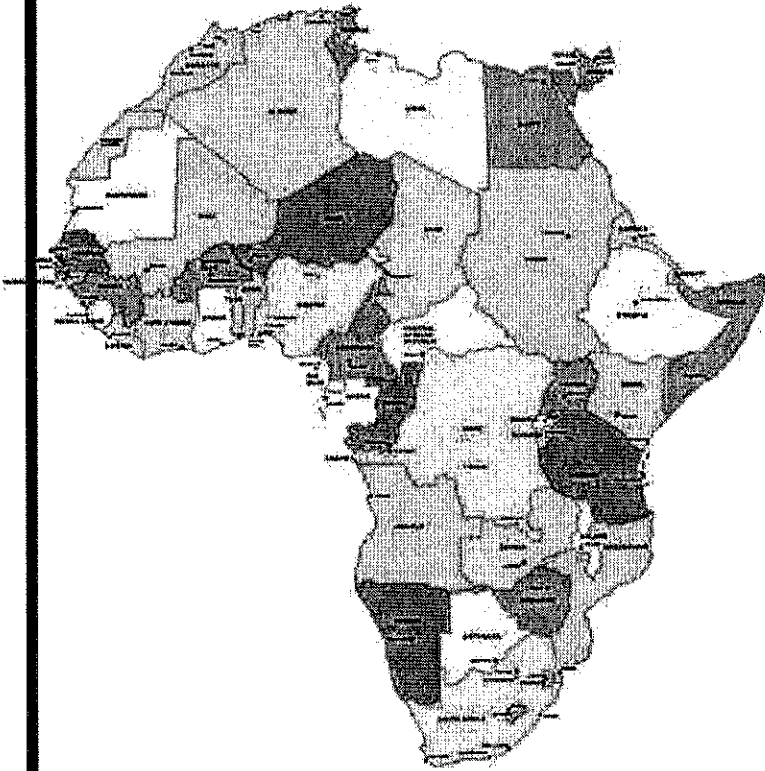
6. Which of the following countries are in Africa?
 - a. Egypt
 - b. Nigeria
 - c. Eritrea
 - d. All of the above

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Short Answer Questions - People

1. Look up the names of the countries of Africa that border the Mediterranean Sea. What are they?
2. What is life like for people who live in rural villages of Africa?
3. In North America most people speak English or Spanish. Where do all the languages spoken in Africa come from?
4. When rural people move to a city, they cannot find jobs and end up living in a slum. Explain what a slum is.
5. Are these rural people better off staying in their village or moving to the city? Explain your answer.
6. European countries colonized Africa like they colonized North America. What is one problem that occurred on both continents with regard to the people who were already living there?
7. List three major problems facing people who live in Africa today.

Africa at a Glance



Africa is a vast and beautiful continent that is home to a diversity of people, cultures, scenic splendors and animals and plants that can be found nowhere else on earth. One example of the diversity in Africa is that the people speak over 2,000 languages. Unfortunately, beautiful scenery and unique animals are not enough and Africa remains the poorest region of the world. Even though there are major cities with modern conveniences, most people live in unsanitary conditions lacking in clean water and proper sanitary facilities.

Rural people have little or no access to education and healthcare while the majority of people in the cities don't fare any better as they live in terrible slums.

These living conditions lead to poor health and many young children die from preventable diseases like diarrhea. In most of the poor or politically unstable countries of Africa the life expectancy is only 40 to 45 years. Malaria, a disease carried by mosquitoes, kills about 1 million people per year and 90% of the deaths from malaria in the world occur in Africa. About 75% of the people in the world with HIV/AIDS live in Africa. In 2002, there were 11 million orphans across Africa left when both parents died from AIDS and the number is expected to reach 20 million. Some villages have only children and old people because of HIV/AIDS deaths.

When European countries established colonies in Africa, the continent was divided without considering existing tribal boundaries. As colonies were given independence in the late 1900s, tribal wars resulted. These wars make the situation in Africa worse; many people are killed or starve due to war and political problems. While there are many good things happening in Africa today, on the whole the people in Africa face major problems that are difficult to solve.

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Short Answer Questions – Africa at a Glance

1. List four major problems that people living in rural Africa face.
2. In some of the poorest areas of Africa the life expectancy is only 40 to 45 years or less. What is the life expectancy of people in the United States?
3. Name three diseases that affect many people in Africa.
4. Why are there tribal wars going on in Africa today?
5. We don't hear about malaria in the United States but there used to be mosquitoes in the U.S. that carried malaria. Find out when malaria was eradicated from the United States.
6. This report paints a sad picture of the conditions in Africa. To see some positive aspects of Africa, look up tourist information about the countries in Africa and list 10 places in Africa you would like to visit.
7. Do you think the people of Africa can solve the problems they face? Explain why or why not.
8. New York City is the largest city in the United States with a population of about 8 million people. Compare the number of orphans left from HIV/AIDS now in Africa to the population of New York City. Next compare the number of expected orphans left from HIV/AIDS in Africa to the population of New York City.

The Major Regions of Africa

Africa occupies 20% of the world's land mass and can be divided into five geographic regions. These regions are simply known as North Africa, East Africa, West Africa, Central Africa and Southern Africa. Remember that Southern Africa is a region made up of several countries, one of which is South Africa.

North Africa is made up of the countries that border on the Mediterranean Sea and are north of the great Sahara Desert. Egypt is the most populated country in North Africa due the fertile Nile River that runs through it. The Nile River is the longest river in the world. Most of the countries, except for Sudan, are relatively prosperous because of long-time trading with countries around the Mediterranean. The climate of North Africa is warm enough to be considered tropical to subtropical.

West Africa is defined as the area of the western bulge of the African continent south of the Sahara Desert eastward to the highlands of Cameroon. West Africa occupies 25% of the African continent but has about one-third of Africa's population. The West African climate is typically hot and tropical but the areas near the Sahara Desert lack rain and experience great changes in temperature.

East Africa contains the beautiful scenery we associate with Africa. East Africa is the location of Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa, and the Serengeti Plain, home to the most beloved species of African wildlife. Most of the people in East Africa make their living by farming and are greatly affected when there is a drought. Even though these countries sit on the equator, highland plateaus keep the temperatures moderate.

Central Africa is the mid-content area below Africa's western bulge. This central area also sits on the equator and remains hot because it is below the highlands of East Africa. Much of the area is rainforest, getting 80 or more inches of rain per year. Central Africa is home to the famous mountain gorillas. Most of the people of Central Africa live on or near the coast of the Atlantic Ocean.

Southern Africa is the narrow southern tip of the continent and includes the island of Madagascar. Because Southern Africa is the furthest part of Africa from the equator, it experiences the greatest fluctuation in temperature of all of Africa. Southern Africa does not get enough rain to grow thick forests. Southern Africa has trees in open woodlands and grassy regions known as Highveld. The far south region is heath land filled with shrubs and flowering plants. There are about 340 different mammals in Southern Africa.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Multiple Choice Questions – Regions of Africa

Circle the correct answer.

1. North Africa is the name given to the countries of Africa that border the
 - a. Mediterranean Sea
 - b. Atlantic Ocean
 - c. Indian Ocean
 - d. Red Sea

2. About one-third of the population of Africa lives in which region?
 - a. North Africa
 - b. Southern Africa
 - c. East Africa
 - d. West Africa

3. East Africa is home to
 - a. Mount Kilimanjaro
 - b. The Serengeti Plain
 - c. Favorite African wildlife
 - d. All of the above

4. Central Africa is mainly hot jungle and rainforest so people live
 - a. In houses raised up on poles
 - b. In the mountains
 - c. Along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean
 - d. None of the above

5. Why does Southern Africa have the greatest changes in temperature compared with the rest of Africa?
 - a. This is the location of the Sahara Desert
 - b. Southern Africa is furthest from the equator
 - c. Mount Kilimanjaro has a glacier at the top
 - d. None of the above

6. The Nile River
 - a. Is the longest river in the world
 - b. The Nile River flows through Egypt
 - c. Both a. and b.
 - d. None of the above

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Short Answer Questions – Regions of Africa

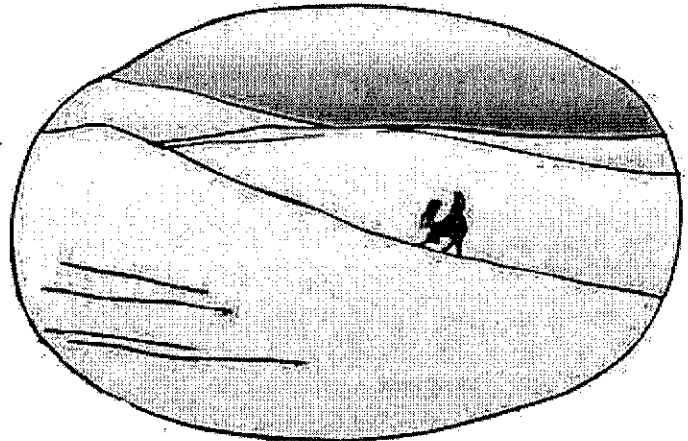
1. Explain why North Africa is, in general, more prosperous than the rest of the continent.
2. What is the influence of the Nile River on Egypt?
3. What is the impact of the Sahara Desert on communication among people and trade between North Africa and the rest of the continent?
4. The countries of East Africa are very close to the equator but do not have a tropical rainforest climate. Why?
5. Describe the climate of Central Africa.
6. Describe the kinds of plants and trees found in Southern Africa.
7. Which area of Africa would you like to visit? Why?

The Climate and Weather of Africa

Africa is the second largest continent next to Asia and Africa is nearly 5,000 miles long from north to south, from the Mediterranean Sea to the tip of the country of South Africa. As you travel north and south across North America the climate gets colder as you get closer to the North Pole and warmer in Florida and Mexico. But the same is not true for Africa because the equator runs east and west through the middle of Africa. The earth is the hottest at the equator.

Most people think of Africa as having a hot, steamy jungle climate but this is not true for the entire continent. Many places along the equator like the Congo do have a hot climate. The Congo rainforest receives 80 inches of rain per year.

But, for example, Kenya is also on the equator and its climate is mild and drier because there are high plateaus in Kenya. This gives just right climate for growing coffee. Can you believe that it snows in Africa and that there is snow near the equator? Mount Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain in Africa and it sits on the border between Tanzania and Kenya near the equator. The top of Mount Kilimanjaro has a permanent glacier and snow. Nearby Mount Kenya also has snow.



The Sahara Desert, the largest desert on earth, influences the climate of Africa. The Sahara can have 5 inches of rain in a year but in other drought years there is no rain at all. While very few people live in the desert, people do live in the arid (dry) areas around the desert. These people suffer terribly when there is a period of drought because they cannot grow food. Temperatures in the desert can reach 130 degrees F in the daytime and drop to freezing at night. At one time thousands of years ago the land of the Sahara was not a desert but today the size of the Sahara Desert is expanding and influencing the lives of many Africans.

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Multiple Choice Questions - Climate

Circle the correct answer.

1. In Africa

- a. There are vast areas of no rainfall
- b. There are areas of rainforest with 80 inches of rain per year
- c. There is snow and ice
- d. All of the above

2. Kenya is located on the equator but is not a rainforest because

- a. The elevation is higher
- b. It is part of the Sahara Desert
- c. There is snow on Mount Kenya
- d. All of the above

3. Africa can experience periods of drought. Drought means

- a. The desert
- b. Lack of rain
- c. Temperature of 130 degrees F
- d. None of the above

4. The African continent does not have a winter like Canada because

- a. The Sahara Desert is in Africa
- b. The Congo is a rainforest
- c. The equator divides Africa in half
- d. All of the above

5. Mount Kilimanjaro

- a. The highest mountain in Africa
- b. Is not as high as Mount Kenya
- c. Is 5,000 miles from the equator
- d. None of the above

6. The Sahara Desert

- a. Was not a desert thousands of years ago
- b. Is expanding in size today
- c. Both a. and b. above
- d. None of the above

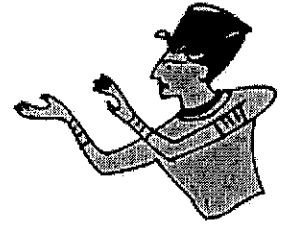
Name: _____ Date: _____

Short Answer Questions - Climate

1. Explain why Africa does not have a winter with snow and cold temperatures.
2. Why do you think so many movies show Africa as a jungle and rainforest climate?
3. Why does Mount Kilimanjaro have snow and ice?
4. Explain what a rainforest is.
5. Look up the answers to these questions. Are there any rainforest areas in the United States? If so, where are they?
6. What parts of Africa are the coldest?
7. Based on climate, what part of Africa would you like to visit? Explain why.

Africa's Contributions to the World

Modern people around the world continue to be fascinated with ancient Egyptian culture that dates back thousands of years. Archaeologists continue to explore the Egyptian desert in search of new clues into the great mysteries of the tombs of the Pharaohs, the rulers of ancient Egypt. The craftsmanship of the ancient remains like King Tutankhamen's mask found in his burial chamber is amazing.



Archaeologists and scientists continue to debate how the ancient Egyptians could move the giant stones used to build the pyramids that were the tombs of the

Pharaohs. Scholars continue to be intrigued by the writings left behind in hieroglyphics, a written language made up of pictures. Each picture stands for an object or an idea.



Archaeologists have found the remains of large cities with elaborate buildings in the desert. What was life like for these people and how did they construct the fabulous buildings that they had? What did it take to construct these huge statues?

Ancient Egypt was home to many scholars who wrote information on scrolls instead of books and copies of all the scrolls were kept at the library in the city of Alexandria. When the library was destroyed by fire, the entire world lost one of its greatest treasures. If we had these scrolls and could read them today we could have a great understanding of what ancient people knew.

Egypt is located on the Mediterranean Sea. Today we think of Egypt as a country in the Middle East but Egypt is really a country in North Africa. The contributions of Egypt to world culture are African contributions. As archaeologists explore more of Africa, they are finding the remains of other advanced cities like those of Egypt. Some archaeologists believe that they are finding places that are described in the writings of the Bible.

Another advanced civilization, called the Benin Empire, was located in what is now called Nigeria. Nigeria is on the Atlantic Coast of Africa. The Benin Empire dates back thousands of years B.C. like Egypt and, unlike the Egyptian Empire, remained powerful through the 1600s. Artists of the Benin Empire created many elaborate bronze pieces of art.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Multiple Choice Questions – Africa's Contributions

Circle the correct answer.

1. The rulers of ancient Egypt were
 - a. Called Pharaohs
 - b. Buried in pyramids
 - c. Buried with elaborate artwork
 - d. All of the above

2. Hieroglyphics are
 - a. An alphabet to make words
 - b. Pictures that represent objects and ideas
 - c. Are the alphabet of Egypt today
 - d. None of the above

3. Archaeologists have found remains from ancient Egypt including
 - a. Pyramids
 - b. Giant statues
 - c. Artwork
 - d. All of the above

4. Egypt is a country in
 - a. North Africa
 - b. Southern Africa
 - c. East Africa
 - d. West Africa

5. Ancient Egyptians had an important library in the city of
 - a. Cairo
 - b. Rome
 - c. Alexandria
 - d. Athens

6. The Benin Empire was located on the coast of the
 - a. Atlantic Ocean
 - b. Indian Ocean
 - c. Mediterranean Sea
 - d. All of the above

Name: _____ Date: _____

Short Answer Questions – Africa's Contributions

1. List three mysteries of ancient Egypt that still puzzle archaeologists and scientists today.
2. Work by yourself or with some classmates to make up some of your own hieroglyphics and make a sentence. Ask your friends if they can read your sentence.
3. What does a scroll look like? Make a scroll and write your hieroglyphics on it like an Egyptian scholar.
4. What was the impact on the entire world of the fire at the library of Alexandria?
5. What is an archaeologist? Would you like to go exploring with an archaeologist? Explain why or why not.
6. Explain what the Benin Empire was.
7. Would you like to visit the tombs of the Pharaohs in the pyramids of Egypt? Explain why or why not.

Answer Key

The People of Africa Multiple Choice

1. d.
2. a.
3. c.
4. d.
5. c.
6. d.

The People of Africa Short Answer

1. Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Egypt
2. There is no electricity or clean water; there are no roads or jobs.
3. There are thousands of tribes in Africa, each with its own language.
4. A slum in Africa means people don't have decent houses, clean water or anything but they live in the city.
5. Africa is the poorest area of the world. Life for most people isn't very good no matter where they live.
6. Tribal lands were taken from the people who already lived there.
7. The people of Africa face many difficult problems to provide healthcare, education and a decent way of life for themselves and their children.

Answer Key

Africa at a Glance Short Answer

1. Lack of clean water; lack of sanitary facilities; lack of healthcare; lack of education.
2. About 77 years
3. Diarrhea for children, malaria and HIV/AIDS
4. Different tribes want to rule the new countries of Africa. Africa was divided into colonies by European countries without considering tribal lands.
5. 1951
6. Individual response
7. Individual response
8. 11 million orphans today/8 million = 1.37 \approx 1½
20 million expected orphans/8 million = 2.5 times population of New York City

Answer Key

Major Regions of Africa Multiple Choice

1. a.
2. d.
3. d.
4. c.
5. b.
6. c.

Major Regions of Africa Short Answer

1. Most of the countries, except for Sudan, are relatively prosperous because of long-time trading with countries around the Mediterranean.
2. Egypt is the most populated country in North Africa due the fertile Nile River that runs through it.
3. The vast Sahara Desert is a huge barrier separating the continent of Africa.
4. The countries sit on a high plateau which keeps them cooler.
5. Central Africa is the mid-content area below Africa's western bulge. This central area also sits on the equator and remains hot because it is below the highlands of East Africa. Much of the area is rainforest, getting 80 or more inches of rain per year.
6. Southern Africa does not get enough rain to grow thick forests. Southern Africa has trees in open woodlands and grassy regions known as Highveld. The far south region is heath land filled with shrubs and flowering plants.
7. Individual response

Plants and Animals Multiple Choice

1. c.
2. a.
3. c.
4. b.
5. d.
6. d.

Answer Key

The Climate of Africa Multiple Choice

1. d.
2. a.
3. b.
4. c.
5. a.
6. c.

The Climate of Africa Short Answer

1. The equator divides Africa in half from north to south. Being on the equator keeps Africa from experiencing winter like North America has.
2. Individual response
3. It is the highest mountain in Africa.
4. A rainforest is an area that gets about 80 inches of rain per year.
5. There are rainforests in the U.S. in Alaska, Hawaii and Oregon.
6. Sahara desert reaches freezing at night. Top of Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya has snow and ice.
7. Individual response

Answer Key

Africa's Contributions Multiple Choice

1. d.
2. b.
3. d.
4. a.
5. c.
6. a.

Africa's Contributions Short Answer

1. Choose 3 from 1) how they moved the stones to build the pyramids; 2) what was life like in the cities; 3) how they built the huge statues; 4) how they built their buildings
2. Individual activity
3. A scroll is a long piece of paper rolled up. Egyptian scrolls were on wooden rods.
4. The knowledge of Egypt was lost in the fire. We would know more about how Egyptians did things if we still had the scrolls.
5. Archaeologist – one who studies ancient history by observing remains.
6. Another advanced civilization, called the Benin Empire, was located in what is now called Nigeria. The Benin Empire dates back thousands of years B.C. and remained powerful through the 1600s. Artists of the Benin Empire created many elaborate bronze pieces of art.
7. Individual response

