




African Civilizations






Geography
 Earliest People
 Families
 Religion
 Language
 Government
 Massive Migration

Geography:

- 2nd largest continent in the world
- 1/5 of the earth's land
- Has few harbors, ports, & inlets
- Made up of everything from sand dunes to rain forests
- 40% = desert (hard to migrate & travel)
- 136 degrees in the summer
- Sahara Desert is the size of the U.S.
- Largest # of people live in the savannahs or grassy plains
- Major Crops = grains, millet, rice, wheat, & corn
- Each year the desert takes over more & more of the continent. This steady drying of the soil is called desertification.

Earliest People:




- Appeared in the Great Rift Valley
- They were nomadic people: San & BaMbuti continue in hunter gathering societies to this day
- Learned to domesticate animals
- Around 10,000 experienced an agricultural revolution
- More food = More population

Families:





- African cultures are very much centered around extended families.
- Ties often expand to the clan—a group that shares common ancestors
- Lineage is also important.
 Includes: spirits of ancestors, those living, those who are not yet born

Religion:



- Nearly all religions in Africa are based on a single creator
- Most also include the concept of animism—belief that spirits play a constant role in everyday life.


Language:

- Although all African societies had a language, most were not written languages. History & culture were shared orally by storytellers called griots.


Government:

- Usually based on lineage.
- No central power base. Power was balanced among families. This is known as a stateless society.




Aksum:

- Civilization south of Egypt strongest between 325-600AD.
- Believed in one god
- Traded salt & gold w/ those around them
- Merchants brought them the message of Jesus Christ
- King of the Aksumites, Ezana, converts—most of the people do too
- Dispute happens over the nature of Christ (spirit vs. flesh)
- Divide into Egypt & Ethiopia
- Will lose their power when they are invaded by Islamic peoples



Massive Migrations:


- Language is an issue of division in Africa.
- The Niger-Congo group of languages includes over 900 dialects.
- The second family of languages is the Proto-Bantu.
- People who speak a form of Proto-Bantu are called the Bantu Peoples.
- Had to migrate due to geographic & defensive reasons
 - As they migrated they came into contact w/ other African cultures
 - Followed the Congo River, then traveled all the way to the southern coast
 - The Bantus often fought territorial wars as they migrated
 - There are 60 million Bantu speaking people in Africa today.



Now For a little game!

**Migrate Across Africa:
Choose Your Own Adventure**

Everyone starts at **(A)** with 5,000 people in their clan.




A: While living along the Congo River there is an invasion of Tsetse Flies do you. . . .

Migrate east to escape the poisonous bugs **(B)**
Stay & tough it out **(C)**





B: You journey until you find the Nile River do you. . . .

Cross the river **(F)**
Go around it to the South **(G)**



C: You have lost 1/2 of your family to the diseases. You also have another problem. The Sahara Desert is taking over the place where you have settled. This is called Desertification, do you . . .

Migrate South (D)
Stay and tough it out (E)



D: While migrating South you run into an enemy clan, do you . . .

Fight them off (H)
Run Away (I)



E: Everyone dies due to dehydration, you are **DEAD!!**

F: You are swallowed up in a violent current of the river, you are **DEAD!!**

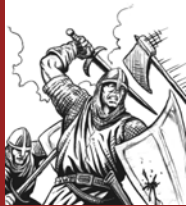


G: Lose 2,000 people to dehydration due to the length of your journey (J)

H: Lose another 2,000 in battle
If your entire family has now perished, you are **DEAD!!**
If you have family still living, migrate to (I)

J: Your new lands are invaded by Islamic warriors who wish for you to give up your religion, do you. . .

Convert **(K)**
Refuse to deny God **(L)**



The slide features a dark background with a glowing sun and a view of Earth from space in the top right corner. The text is white, and the bottom half of the slide is a solid red color. An illustration of a warrior in a turban and armor, holding a sword and a shield, is positioned to the right of the text.

K: You and your family live in slavery the rest of your lives.

L: You are immediately killed.

I: You continue traveling South, do you. . .

Go along the coast line **(O)**
Go through the Kalahari Desert **(P)**

P: Die of Dehydration along the way

O: You make it to safe land! Start a new civilization at **(Q)**