UNIT 7- ANCIENT AFRICA GRAPES NOTES

**G= GEOGRAPHY**

* West Africa is an oasis along an important trade route and falls between the Senegal River and the Niger River
* Wet rainforests had mosquitoes that spread Malaria
* Cool dry places had the tsetse fly that spread sleeping sickness which was deadly to domesticated animals like ox, camel, donkey
* Sahara desert provided natural boundary, protection, and isolation
* Six major ecological zones from North to South:
  + Mediterranean – temperate
  + Northern Sahel - northern shore of the desert
  + Desert - Sahara Desert
  + Southern Sahel – southern shore of the desert
  + **Savanna** – grasslands
  + Tropical rainforest

**R= RELIGION**

* Native beliefs focused on spirits
* Animals considered gods
* Some followed special priests.
* Others followed the ruler of the clan.
* Celebrated with rituals, songs, dance, and prayers
* Believed in a single creator and that every living and nonliving thing had a spirit
* **Swahili-** a culture and language that combines several African cultures and languages together.
* ISLAM— (3rd largest monotheistic religion)
  + Origin-- on the Arabian Peninsula in the city of Mecca (in modern day Saudi Arabia)
  + Founder—Mohammed (@570-June 8, 632)
  + Principles--
    - Allah speaks through prophets - Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed
    - Allah is just and rewards man according to his deeds
    - **Jihad**- a military or peaceful “struggle”
    - 5 Pillars of Islam—
      * Faith-- recite the shahadah--“There is no god but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet”
      * Prayer-- pray 5 times a day while facing Mecca
      * Alms--donate to charity 2.5% of income
      * Fasting--don’t eat from sunrise to sunset during the month of Ramadan - the month that Mohammed received the Koran from Allah
      * **Pilgrimage**--make at least one pilgrimage or hajj to Mecca economically and physically possible

Text--Koran or Qu’ran

* Spread--
  + When Muslims conquered the Middle East, Persia, and the Arabian peninsula
  + Spread to West Africa, India, and Central Asia through trade
  + Spread into West Africa through peaceful means (converting)
  + Spread by individual choice for the following reasons:
    - Easily accessible and straight-forward nature of the text- literacy and education
    - Islam’s association with lucrative long-distance trade
    - Its related, more general association with wealth and power
    - Opportunity that becoming a Muslim gave to join a vast cultural as well as religious community beyond an individual’s village or clan- sense of belonging
    - 8th – 16th centuries mainly in elite, urban regions
* Two major denominations—
  + Shiites
  + Sunnis
  + Based on legitimate line of succession to authority after Mohammed’s death
* Other influences of Islam–
  + Trade
  + Government
  + Education
  + Architecture—building of **mosques**- places of worship for Islam
* Timbuktu: leading center of Islamic scholarship
* Non-Muslims had to pay taxes, couldn’t hold office, and were not allowed to marry Muslims.

**A= ACHIEVEMENTS**

* Iron weapons
* Art and music reflected strong appreciation for children
* Trans-Sahara trade route- trade centers; connected West Africa with China’s Silk Road
* Islam brought the spread of architecture and education

**P= POLITICS**

* First Kingdom formed in 300 AD and the chief was known as king of gold
* King considered father of his people, religious leader, chief of the army, highest judge, and leader
* Princes oversaw provinces (similar to states)
* Three African Empires--
* Ghana—
  + Kumbi-Saleh-- important trade city near Sahel transition from savanna to desert kingdoms capital
  + Islamic
  + dominant from 8th -12th centuries AD
* Mali--
  + Timbuktu and Gao-- most important trade centers
  + located on northern part of Niger river (east of Kumbi-Saleh on transition from savanna to desert)
  + Islamic
  + dominant from 1235-1470
* Songhai--
  + Timbuktu and Gao-- most important trade centers
  + Islamic
  + Dominant from 1470-1591
  + Wealth from agriculture and long-distance trade supported large complex governments, large powerful armies, and rich cosmopolitan urban cultures
* End of African Empires:
  + 1591 Morocco staged surprise invasion of Songhai to take over the southern end of the trans-Saharan gold trade
  + Songhai quickly defeated by elite force of 4,000 Moroccan soldiers with up-to-date weapons
  + Had immediate short-term economic gains
  + Ongoing local resistance and logistical problems cause by trying to control a territory so far away proved impossible for Morocco to overcome
  + Political control in savanna West Africa fragmented
  + Trans-Saharan gold trade, already diverted south to Atlantic coast and European ships dwindled
  + Towns and cities declined
  + Ended after 800 years

**E= ECONOMICS**

* African Kingdoms-- typically abundant grain based economy- agricultural but also taxed lucrative trade centers
* Major resources by climate zone—
  + Mediterranean-- cloth, spices, weapons
  + Northern Sahel -- trade centers created where they had to switch modes of transportation
  + Desert - Sahara-- rock salt
    - used camels for transportation- good in sand (**caravans**)
  + Southern Sahel -- trade centers created where they had to switch modes of transportation
  + Savanna: gold, grain, rice, cattle- milk, meat hides, and cotton
    - used donkeys and cattle for transportation, good in mud
    - Bambuk-Bure goldfields located in the western savanna- present day Mali
    - Akan goldfields located in southern savanna- present day Ghana
  + Tropical Rainforest: gold, kola nuts
    - used humans and river as much as possible because of tsetse fly- causes sleeping sickness, which is deadly to domesticated animals
* Major long distance trade routes ran North to South through the major trade centers of Kumbi-Saleh, Timbuktu, and Gao, then across the desert and finally to Morocco
* During 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries international commerce or trade dominated by the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade
  + disruptive and destructive
  + took best people and resources
  + lost whole generations of people

**S= SOCIAL STRUCTURE**

* Early History—
  + Family or clan was accountable for any crimes committed by individual members
  + Used good deeds and gifts, rather than physical punishment, to settle disputes
  + Wore little clothing- only as protection from heat and to cover face during dust and sandstorms
  + Clothing made from woven plant fibers or animals
  + Clothing could indicate social rank
  + Wealth was measured by the size of the family
  + Clans headed by oldest male
  + Ancestors very important
* African Empires—
  + Ruled by King
  + Priests
  + Nobles
  + Craftspeople/merchants
  + Farmers
  + Slaves