

Ghana: A West African Trading Empire

To what extent did trans-Saharan trade lead to Ghana’s wealth and success?

P R E V I E W

You are traveling to Ghana with a few cattle to trade. In the “Original Rank” column in the chart below, rank the trade items by placing a “1” next to the item you would most want to trade for. Rank the other items based on how much you would want to trade for them until you place a “5” next to the item you would least want to trade for.

Trade Items	Original Rank	Scenario 1 Rank	Scenario 2 Rank
two ounces of gold			
one pound of salt			
a bundle of wool			
several hides of leather			
two sacks of grain			

1. What factor or factors did you consider as you ranked these items?
2. Your teacher will give you Scenario 1. Write it in your notebook. Then rank the items again, based on this scenario. Did your rankings change? Why or why not?
3. Now your teacher will give you Scenario 2. Write it in your notebook. Then rank the items again, based on this scenario. Did your rankings change again? Why or why not?

R E A D I N G N O T E S

Key Content Terms

As you complete the Reading Notes, use these terms in your answers.

- Ghana
- matrilineal
- trans-Saharan trade

Section 2

1. Write three statements to describe Ghana’s king.
2. What two groups helped the king govern? How?
3. Who would inherit the throne after a king died? Why?

Section 3

1. Draw and label three products a North African trader might bring to trade in West Africa. Draw and label three products the people of the southern forest areas might bring to trade with the North African traders.
2. Why was travel across the Sahara challenging?
3. What two factors led to the growth of trans-Saharan trade?

Section 4

1. Create the chart below in your notebook. Then fill in details about the gold-salt trade in West Africa.

	Gold	Salt
Why it was valuable to West Africans		
Where it came from		

2. How did the gold-salt trade benefit Ghana?

Section 5

1. Explain, from his perspective, what a North African trader does during silent bartering. Then explain, from the other perspective, what a Wangaran gold miner does during silent bartering.
2. What were two advantages of the silent-barter system?

Section 6

List and describe two reasons why the kingdom of Ghana declined.

P R O C E S S I N G

Cut out the figures below and tape them in your notebook. For each, write a paragraph that the figure might say. Each paragraph should explain how that figure benefited from trans-Saharan trade.



North African trader



Wangaran gold miner



King of Ghana