

Teacher Discussion Guide After Museum Exhibit Presentations

CQ: Did trade increase the welfare and security of the African communities?

Have students “step out of” or “drop” their assigned roles. They have heard all the information from their classmates, so what do they think about the CQ?

- Did the trade improve/diminish the quality of life for the people?
 - Rulers?
 - Merchants/farmers?
 - Enslaved?
 - Religious beliefs?
- Do you think this increased trade made them more or less safe?
 - Did it lead to conflicts? Did they become more of a target for invaders?
 - Did it give them more power to discourage other kingdoms to try to conquer you?
 - Did it increase or decrease religious wars/conflicts?
 - Facts: Sunni Ali was considered heretic and murdered by his devout (Muslim) commander
 - Did it diminish warring between tribal groups or clans?
 - Ibn Battuta quote about Mali – safe/secure
 - We noticed each kingdom rules for a shorter time period – is this correlated to increasing trade?
- Was opening up to foreign cultures and new ideas good or bad? Should these societies have remained isolated or should they have opened up to trading and exchanging with other kingdoms?
- How did trade influence power dynamics of politics and economics in the kingdoms?
 - Political power allows for political alliances with other kingdoms
 - Farmers – access to new markets – sell goods to others
 - Farmers – started making cash crops more – maybe less food for survival?
 - Merchants had opportunity to buy and sell products to larger markets

Now students take a position for the museum exhibit. Write a 3-paragraph “essay” that will be the final plaque as people leave the exhibit on whether trade was helpful/harmful to the kingdoms.