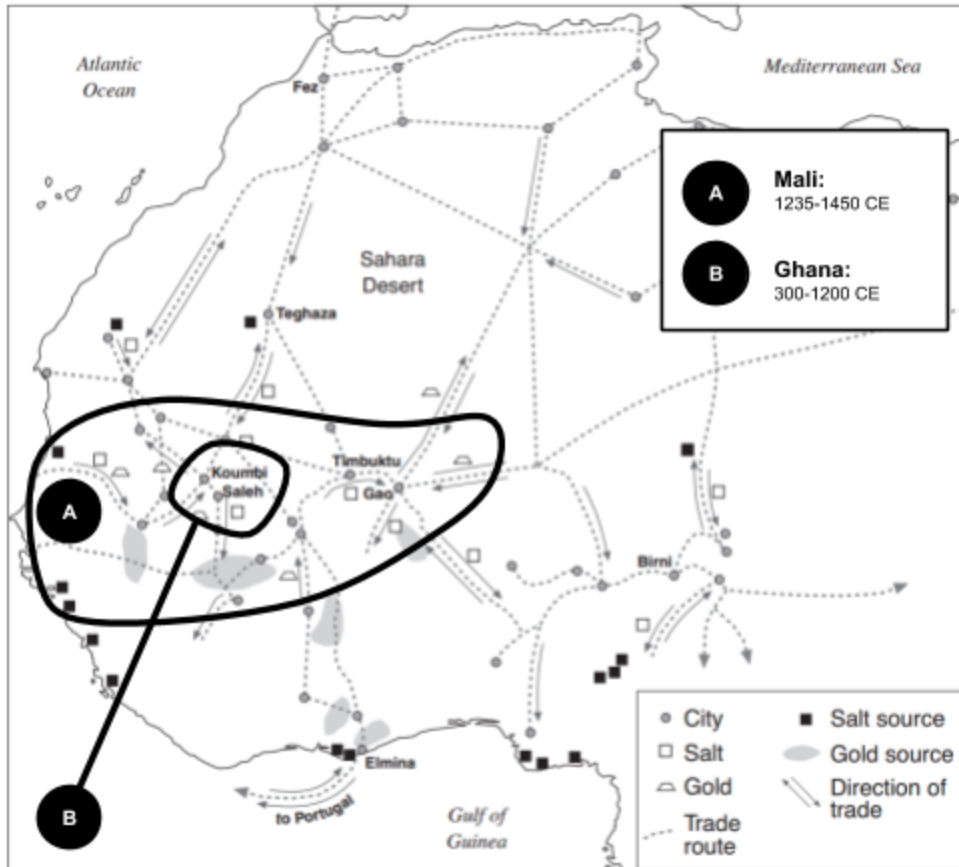


**Objective:****Why were West African Empires prosperous? What were the effects of Mansa Musa's rule and hajj?**

- Explain why post-classical West African Empires were prosperous.
- Describe the effects of Mansa Musa's rule and hajj.

**Introduction**

➡ **Directions:** Examine the map below and answer the question that follows.



Map from the NYS Global History and Geography Regents Exam, modified by New Visions.

**Think Like a Geographer**

Why do you think the empires of Mali and Ghana were in the locations identified on the map to the left rather than some place else?

# Why were West African Empires prosperous?

➡ **Directions:** Read the text below and examine the map, then respond to the question that follows.



Think Like a Geographer



Contextualize

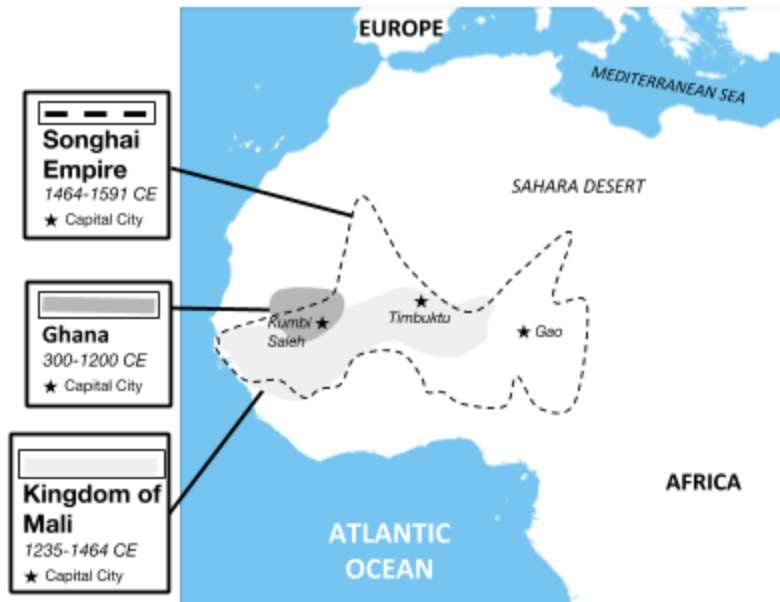


Connect Cause and Effect

The West African Trading Empires of **Ghana** (800-1050 CE), **Mali** (1235-1464 CE), and **Songhai** (1464-1591 CE) were powerful and wealthy states that controlled the gold and salt trade in West Africa. Their cities were located at the intersections of trade routes.

The Kingdom of Mali, sometimes called the Mali Empire, experienced one of the golden ages of West Africa. **Islam** came to West Africa through trade and the rulers of Mali, who were called **Mansas** were Muslim. The capital city of Mali, **Timbuktu**, was a prosperous center of trade and learning. Islamic scholars came to Timbuktu to study at the Sankoré University which was a fully staffed university that could house 25,000 students and had one of the largest libraries in the world.

## Kingdoms of West Africa



## The Mali Capital of Timbuktu

The excerpt below was written by a Swedish explorer in the early 1900s, but his observations were as true when Mali ruled the area as they were hundreds of years later.

*The remarkable features of Timbuktu are, then, its situation and its trade. We have only to take a look at the map to perceive that this town stands like a spider in its web. The web is composed of all the routes which start from the coast and converge on Timbuktu...*

*Caravans from the northern coast bring cloth, arms, powder, paper, tools, hardware, sugar, tea, coffee, tobacco, and a quantity of other articles to Timbuktu. But when they begin their journey through the Sahara, only half the camels are laden [loaded]. The other half are loaded with blocks of salt on the way, for salt is in great demand at Timbuktu...On the return journey northwards the [camels] are laden with wares from the Sudan, rice, manioc, honey, nuts, monkey breadfruit, dried fish, ivory, ostrich feathers, india-rubber, leather, and many other things...The largest caravans contain five hundred or a thousand [camels] and five hundred men at most. The goods they can transport may be worth twenty-eight thousand pounds [money] or more.*

Source: Hedin, Sven. *From Pole to Pole*. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1914. Page 297. Adapted from the Global History Measures of Student Learning NYC Performance Assessment 2013-2014.

300-1200	1200-1235	1235-1464	1464-1591
Ghana		Kingdom of Mali	Songhai Empire

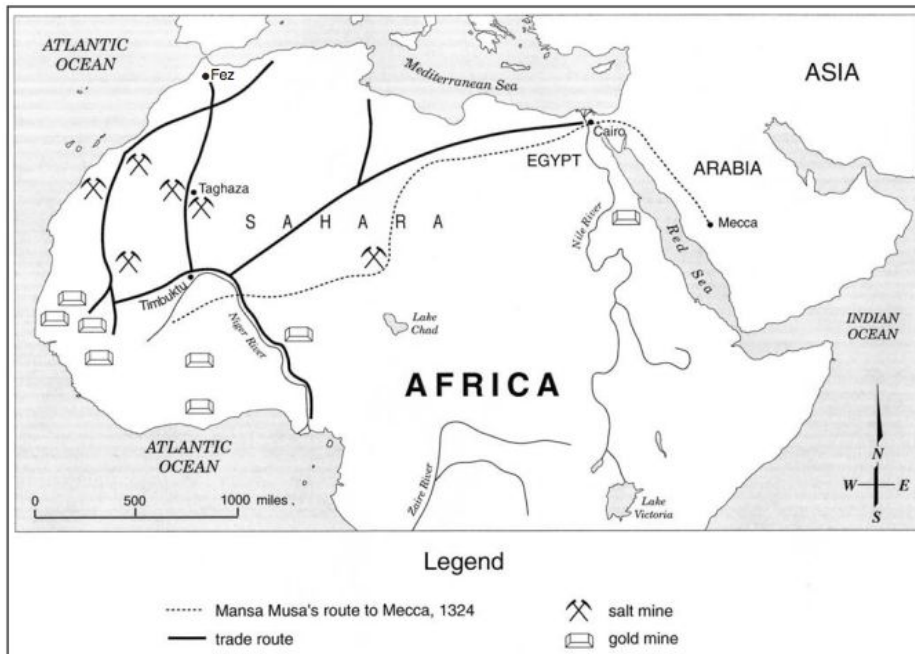
**1. Why were Ghana, Mali, and Songhai wealthy and prosperous empires? Identify two pieces of evidence that support your claim.**

# What were the effects of Mansa Musa's rule and hajj?



➡ **Directions:** Watch the [TED-Ed video Mansa Musa, one of the wealthiest people who ever lived](#) and follow the transcript below, then watch this [National Geographic Video](#), examine the map and image below and respond to the questions that follow.

Map of Mansa Musa's Hajj, 1324



[Image](#) is in the public domain.

This image of Mansa Musa, from a map called the Catalan Atlas, was created by a European mapmaker in 1375. It demonstrates that the king of Mali and his wealth were known in Europe soon after his Hajj.

Source: <http://fga.freac.fsu.edu/> (adapted) from the NYS Global History and Geography Regents Examination, January 2010.

## Transcript of the TED-Ed Video “Mansa Musa, one of the wealthiest people who ever lived”

If someone asked you who the richest people in history were, who would you name? Perhaps a billionaire banker or corporate mogul, like Bill Gates or John D. Rockefeller. How about African King Musa Keita I? Ruling the Mali Empire in the 14th century CE, Mansa Musa, or the King of Kings, amassed a fortune that possibly made him one of the wealthiest people who ever lived. But his vast wealth was only one piece of his rich legacy.

When Mansa Musa came to power in 1312, much of Europe was racked by famine and civil wars. But many African kingdoms and the Islamic world were **flourishing**, and Mansa Musa played a great role in bringing the fruits of this flourishing to his own realm. By strategically annexing the city of Timbuktu, and reestablishing power over the city of Gao, **he gained control over important trade routes between the Mediterranean and the West African Coast, continuing a period of expansion**, which dramatically increased Mali's size. The territory of the Mali Empire was rich in natural resources, such as gold and salt.

The world first witnessed the extent of Mansa Musa's wealth in 1324 when he took his **pilgrimage to Mecca**. Not one to travel on a budget, he brought a caravan stretching as far as the eye could see. Accounts of this journey are mostly based on an oral testimony and differing written records, so it's difficult to determine the exact details. But what most agree on is the extravagant scale of the excursion. Chroniclers describe an entourage of tens of thousands of soldiers, civilians, and slaves, 500 heralds bearing gold staffs and dressed in fine silks, and many camels and horses bearing an abundance of gold bars. Stopping in cities such as Cairo, **Mansa Musa is said to have spent massive quantities of gold, giving to the poor, buying souvenirs, and even having mosques built along the way. In fact, his spending may have destabilized the regional economy, causing mass inflation.**

This journey reportedly took over a year, and by the time Mansa Musa returned, tales of his amazing wealth had spread to the ports of the Mediterranean. Mali and its king were elevated to near legendary status, cemented by their inclusion on the 1375 Catalan Atlas. One of the most important world maps of Medieval Europe, it depicted the King holding a scepter and a gleaming gold nugget. Mansa Musa had literally put his empire and himself on the map. But material riches weren't the king's only

concern.

As a devout Muslim, he took a particular interest in Timbuktu, already a center of religion and learning prior to its annexation. Upon returning from his pilgrimage, he had the great Djinguereber Mosque built there with the help of an Andalusian architect. He also established a major university, further elevating the city's reputation, and attracting scholars and students from all over the Islamic world.

Under Mansa Musa, the Empire became urbanized, with schools and mosques in hundreds of densely populated towns. The king's rich legacy persisted for generations and to this day, there are mausoleums, libraries and mosques that stand as a testament to this golden age of Mali's history.

1. What actions did Mansa Musa take to make Mali more powerful and wealthy?	3. Identify two effects of Mansa Musa’s hajj.
2. Why did Mansa Musa travel to Mecca?	4. What actions did Mansa Musa take to nurture the growth of Islam in Mali?