

Super English



Level 7 - Unit 10

Lesson 1

Ancient Africa &
Early Empires



The World's First Home

Discuss the words in bold and answer the questions.

Africa is often called the **cradle of humanity**, and for good reason. Scientists believe early humans lived, migrated, and evolved there long before the idea of borders existed. But was ancient Africa simple or **primitive**? Not even close. People built tools, managed resources, and formed small communities. Over thousands of years, these groups **developed increasingly complex societies** connected by trade and shared knowledge. When we talk about “ancient Africa,” we aren’t talking about one place—we’re talking about a massive continent full of different cultures.

1. Why does the author argue that ancient Africa should not be viewed as a “single place”?
2. Do you think modern humans underestimate early societies? Why or why not?



Egypt: Power, Glory... and Drama



Discuss the words in bold and answer the questions.

1. Why does the author include the detail about nobles plotting against pharaohs?
2. Why do you think Egypt still prospered even though there was a constant fight for power?



Ancient Egypt is famous for pyramids, pharaohs, and **monumental** architecture, but its history wasn't all golden masks and peaceful rituals. Pharaohs fought for power, nobles **plotted** to gain influence, and **rival** kingdoms constantly challenged Egyptian borders. Even so, Egypt remained one of the world's most organized civilizations, with advanced farming, mathematics, and writing. How did they manage it? By controlling the Nile and treating agriculture like a science. Egypt's story shows that even great empires deal with **internal conflict and political rivalry**.

Idioms

Match the idioms to their meanings.

- In the long run
- A force to be reckoned with
- Walk a fine line
- A turning point
- Rule with an iron fist
- Stand the test of time

1. A moment when everything changes and a new direction begins.
2. To act very strict and control people with harsh rules.
3. Something or someone strong, powerful, and not easy to defeat.
4. To last for many years and still be respected or useful.
5. When your choice is difficult because both sides have risks.
6. What happens over a long period of time, not just right now.

The Golden Empires of West Africa

Discuss the words in bold and answer the questions.

In West Africa, kingdoms like Ghana, Mali, and Songhai became **economic giants** thanks to the gold–salt trade. Merchants traveled across the **Sahara** carrying goods, stories, and new ideas. Wealthy rulers like Mansa Musa built schools and encouraged learning, but leadership wasn't always stable. Power struggles, **succession fights**, and occasional rebellions made governing difficult. Still, these empires became **intellectual hubs** where scholars studied math, astronomy, and religion. So were they perfect kingdoms? No—but they were **sophisticated**, wealthy, and globally connected long before Europe took notice.



1. What evidence in the paragraph suggests that political instability was a major challenge?
2. Do you think wealth makes it easier or harder for an empire to stay stable? Explain.

Vocabulary

Match the vocabulary words to their definitions.

- stereotype
- dynamic
- primitive
- plot
- adopt
- distinctive

1. A special quality, feature, or style that makes something easy to recognize.
2. An idea about a group of people that is too simple and often unfair.
3. To accept or start using something new, such as an idea, habit, or way of doing things.
4. Full of change, energy, or movement; not quiet or still.
5. Very simple and old-fashioned; from an early stage of development.
6. A secret plan to do something, usually to gain power or cause trouble.

Dialogue 1: History Notes... or Not?



Read the dialogue and answer the question.

Jayden: Did you do the history homework?

Mia: I tried. Then the Internet said “Nile River Flood Cycle,” and my brain shut down.

Jayden: Ancient people probably understood it better than we do.

Mia: They had to. I can’t even manage my Google Calendar.

Jayden: Same. I’d fail at being an ancient farmer.

Mia: You’d fail at being a modern one, too.

Question: Why do you think some ancient skills were actually more advanced than modern ones?

Dialogue 2: Empires Are Complicated



Read the dialogue and answer the question.

Sara: So Africa had tons of empires, not just one giant lion-king kingdom?

Leo: Yup. Turns out the world is complicated.

Sara: Honestly, same. My life is basically a constant civil war between homework and sleep.

Leo: And sleep always loses.

Sara: True. My “empire” is unstable.

Leo: Especially when it gets invaded by surprise pop quizzes.

Question: What’s something in your life that feels like a “power struggle”?

Trade Routes = Information Highways

Read the text and answer the question.

Ancient trade routes in Africa weren't just for gold and salt—they were highways of ideas. Scholars, merchants, and travelers exchanged stories, technologies, and beliefs. This created intellectual cross-pollination, where cultures influenced each other in unexpected ways.

Discussion: How do you think traveling changes the way people think?



Final Activity



King for a Day: Make Your Choice!

(Students pick an option... then the next slide reveals what happens.)

A Rival Empire Is Growing Stronger

1. Strengthen your army and prepare defenses.
2. Send diplomats to negotiate a peace agreement or a trade deal.
3. Form an alliance with another nearby kingdom.



See you next time!

