Mansa Musa

Mansa Musa captured the attention of the Arab world when he left his home in the West African kingdom of Mali to make a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324. Unlike his grandfather Sundiata, Mansa Musa was a devout Muslim. A Muslim is a person who practices Islam. Islamic law requires that all faithful Muslims make a hajj, or holy visit, to the city on the Arabian Peninsula where Islam developed.

Mansa Musa was a very rich king. He was said to have taken more than 500 people with him on the hajj, each carrying a staff of solid gold. When Mansa Musa passed through the Egyptian city of Cairo, legends say he gave away so much gold that the price of gold fell, and the economy was affected for more than twenty years. The appearance of a wealthy king from a faraway land made a deep impression on the people he encountered, causing Mali to appear on maps throughout the Middle East and Europe. For the first time, sub-Saharan Africa became well-known north of the great desert, as well.

The kingdom of Mali eventually weakened, and the neighboring kingdom of Songhai developed into the last black empire of pre-colonial West Africa. Songhai was destroyed after a bloody war with Morocco. Morocco’s sultan wanted West African gold, so in 1590, he sent an army of 3000 men south across the Sahara Desert. The spears and lances of the Songhai warriors were no match for the cannons and muskets of the Moroccans, but the fighting continued long after the Songhai government had been destroyed. After ten years, the Sultan lost interest and abandoned his army in Songhai. The Moroccan soldiers were either killed or absorbed into the local population. The Moroccan invasion destroyed Songhai and the trade routes that had brought prosperity to the region for hundreds of years.

Answer in Complete Sentences

1. How was Mansa Musa’s religious faith different from that of Sundiata?

2. Explain why the price of gold fell after Mansa Musa passed through Cairo?

3. What kingdom replaced Mali in West Africa?

*This is a higher order learning question. Any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.

**Fill in the Blanks**

Mansa Musa was a M___n__i__k__n (language group) *m__n__r__h (another word for king, but not mansa) from M______ (kingdom). He made a pilgrimage to M________ (Islamic holy city) because he was a M________ (religious faith).

Mansa M______ was both rich and generous. The legends say he took more than ______ people with him, each carrying a s________ of solid g______. When M________ Musa passed through the E_____________ city of Cairo, he gave away so much gold that the p______ fell and the e____________ was affected for more than t__________ years. The w_________ of Mansa M_______ caught the attention of the rest of the world. Soon, M_______ began to appear on m_______ throughout the Middle E_______ and E__________.

M________ Musa’s successors were less able, and in time, M_______ was replaced by another k_________ named S__________. Songhai flourished until fighting a bloody war with M___________. Three thousand Moroccan s__________ crossed the d___________ in 15_____. They were badly outnumbered, but the s_________ and l_________ of the S___________ warriors were no match for the c___________ and m_________ of the Moroccan army. The two sides fought for more than t______ years, until the S___________ lost i___________ and a___________ his a______ in S___________. The Moroccan i___________ was unsuccessful, but it destroyed S_____________ the t___________ routes that brought p__________________ to West Africa for hundreds of years.

**Answer in complete sentences**

4. How was Songhai destroyed?

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5. Why were the warriors of Songhai outmatched despite having a larger army than Morocco?

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*6. Why didn’t another kingdom develop in West Africa after the fall of Songhai?

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