

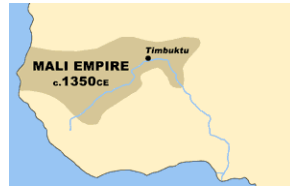
Name: _____

Date: _____

Sundiata

The griots of West Africa still tell the 700-year-old story of a sickly boy named Sundiata, who grew up to become a great warrior, defeated a brutal enemy, and united the Mandinka people.

Samanguru was a tyrant who ruled the small state of Kaniaga, but he managed to conquer a great deal of West Africa. Samanguru was hostile to the Mandinka



people who lived in that area. His taxes were high, he felt it was his privilege to carry off Mandinka women, and he failed to maintain law and order along the trade routes that once prospered in West Africa.

Sundiata was one of twelve sons of a Mandinka warrior. Samanguru killed all of Sundiata's brothers, but spared the future warrior.

Samanguru believed the young Samanguru was sickly and would soon die anyway. That mistake would lead to Samanguru's downfall. The ill child recovered and eventually assembled an army to confront Samanguru. Sundiata's forces killed Samanguru and destroyed his forces in the Battle of Kirina in 1235. Sundiata then became *mansa*, or king, of a new empire that we know today as Mali. Mali means "where the king resides."

Sundiata proved himself to be a great warrior, but he was less interested in power than in once again making West Africa a safe place to travel and trade. Most merchants and traders in West Africa at that time practiced Islam. Sundiata converted to Islam, but only as a gesture of goodwill to the merchants and traders. To his people, Sundiata presented himself as a champion of traditional West African religion.

Fill in the Blanks

Samanguru was a hostile w__r__i__r in thirteenth century West Africa. He mistreated the local M_____ people and f_____ to maintain l_____ and o_____ along West Africa's t_____ routes.

Sundiata was the warrior who defeated S__m__n__u__u. Sundiata was born a s_____ child. Samanguru k_____ Sundiata's t_____ brothers, but spared Sundiata because he believed the child would soon d_____ anyway. Sundiata r_____, and eventually assembled an a_____ to confront the *k__l__er of his *b__o__h__rs. Sundiata killed Samanguru *_____ years ago in the B_____ of K_____.

Sundiata then became the king, or m_____ of a new empire we know today as M_____. Sundiata ensured that Mali was a s_____ place to t_____ and t_____. He converted to I_____, but presented himself as a champion of t_____ West African religion to the common people of M_____.

Answer in Complete Sentences

*1. How do we know about the legend of Sundiata? How was it passed down from 1235 to today?

2. What was Sundiata's primary interest as the mansa of Mali?
