

West African Empires: Explain why your assigned African Empire was great. Each breaks stereotype of poor African kingdoms.

Location	Ghana 800-1000 AD	Mali 1235-1400 AD	Songhai 1400-1500 AD
Type of Government	King – acted as religious leader, chief judge and military commander. Other chiefs paid taxes	King led military (+100,000 male military)	Kings – centralized government; Administrative divisions within government
Important Leaders	Ghana means “war chief” King controlled trade	Mansa means emperor. Mali means where kings lives. Sundiata – Mali’s first emperor or Mansa. Great leader. Mansa Musa (1280-1337) was wealthy ruler from 1312-1332. Traveled to Mecca 1324 and showcased African wealth.	Sunni Ali (grew through military conquest) Askia Muhammad (excellent administrator)
Basis of Economic Life	Gold & Salt. King collected gold and salt as taxes.	Built on Gold. Gold-salt trade.	Trade Control of trade routes
Reasons for Growth	Rulers grew rich by taxing goods traders carried through territory.	Trade routes shifted east from Ghana to Mali Gold led to important trade routes Mansa Musa was tolerant of various religions.	Broke apart from Mali Built up an army. Gained control of important trade routes. Empire through military conquest Tax system through centralized government
Reasons for Decline	Muslim Almoravids (1062) of North Africa battled Ghana and badly disrupted gold-salt trade	Mansa Musa’s successors lacked ability to govern. Gold trade shifted eastward as new gold fields were developed elsewhere. Declined in 1400s.	Lack of modern weapons Used swords and spears versus others (gunpowder and arrows)
Islamic Influences	Islam spread through trade. Muslim merchants and teachers spread & introduced faith after settling. Encouraged spread of literacy. Many never converted to Islam. 11 th century rulers converted to Islam	Some of Mali’s rulers became Muslim. Mansa Musa was devout Muslim.	Sunni Ali & Askia Muhammad were both Muslim rulers.