Ma'at Cultural Curriculum Consultants

Building Critical Scholars Rooted in Culture, Driven by Inquiry, Empowered by Knowledge

Mansa Musa and Mali's Atlantic Legacy

African Maritime Inquiry, Historical Evidence, and Indigenous Worlds

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Date: _____ Class: _____

Grades 6-12 | Five-Day Research Simulation Task | Ma'at Standard

CENTRAL QUESTION: How do the account preserved from Mansa Musa and African scholarship illuminate Mali's Atlantic ambitions and reshape the meaning of discovery?

OBJECTIVE: Trace the transmission of an account, analyze African scholarly interpretations, connect evidence to historical claims, and explain Indigenous presence and sovereignty in an Atlantic context.

DOL: Develop an evidence-based interpretation drawing on three published sources, explain the relationship between evidence, interpretation, and historical language.

NJSLS Social Studies: 6.1 U.S. History; 6.2 World History/Global Studies; historical inquiry practices: seek diverse perspectives, evaluate sources, and develop claims with evidence. Amistad connection: African and African American intellectual contributions and agency.

NJSLS ELA: Grade 6 anchors RI.CR.6.1, RI.CI.6.2, RI.PP.6.5; Grade 8 extensions RI.AA.8.7 and W.AW.8.1. CCSS/CCLS Literacy: RH.6-8.1, .6, .9; WHST.6-8.1, .9; RH.9-10.6, .9; RH.11-12.6, .9; WHST.9-10.1; WHST.11-12.1. Descriptions and grade adaptations are in the teacher guide.

INTERDISCIPLINARY: history, philosophy, civics, ELA, and research methods. CONCEPTS: mansa (ruler); hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca); agency (capacity to act); provenance (origin and history); corroboration (independent support); guanin (gold-copper-silver alloy); sovereignty (self-governing authority)

Source note: Short quotations are marked; numbered paragraphs are attributed instructional paraphrases of identified publications. Editorial records are identified separately. Cite source letters and paragraph numbers. Full access links appear in the teacher guide.

Day 1 | Mansa Musa's Account and African Agency

DO NOW

What can a ruler's decision to support an ocean expedition reveal about the questions and priorities of a society?

SOURCE A | Al-Umari preserves Mansa Musa's account

Fourteenth-century Masalik al-absar; Mansa Musa's Cairo conversation in 1324, relayed by Ibn Amir Hajib. Attributed paraphrase of the passage translated in Levtzion and Hopkins, pp. 268-269, also reproduced by Gomez, pp. 100-101.

SHORT EXCERPT: "That was the last we saw of him"

[A1] In the account preserved by al-Umari, Mansa Musa explains how he became ruler. His predecessor wanted to investigate the Atlantic's farthest extent. He first sent vessels with people and a matching fleet carrying supplies. One captain returned, describing a powerful current that the other ships had entered. The captain had turned back and could not report their destination.

[A2] The predecessor then equipped a larger expedition: 1,000 vessels for himself and his men and 1,000 for water and provisions. Mansa Musa remained as deputy. The account connects the ruler's departure and failure to return with Mansa Musa's accession.

[A3] The passage preserves an African ruler's explanation through several speakers: the returning captain, the predecessor's court, Mansa Musa, Ibn Amir Hajib, and al-Umari. It names neither an American landing place nor the predecessor. The familiar name Abubakari II belongs to later identification, rather than this passage's wording.

SOURCE ANALYSIS 1: Identify two decisions attributed to the predecessor. Explain how each shows inquiry, planning, or leadership, using A1-A2.