Objectives

• Understand why gold and salt were important in early Africa.

• Describe how the rulers of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai built strong kingdoms.

• Summarize how other West African societies developed.
Terms and People

- **surplus** – more of something than is needed

- **commodity** – valuable product

- **Ghana** – a kingdom created around 800 A.D. in the V made by the Niger and Senegal rivers

- **Sundiata** – the sole survivor, according to tradition, of the Mandinka people who founded the empire of Mali by 1235
Terms and People (continued)

- **Mali** – an empire in Africa founded in 1235 in the upper Niger River region

- **Mansa Musa** – the greatest ruler of the kingdom of Mali, who came to the throne in 1312 and led for 25 years

- **Songhai** – a kingdom that developed in the 1460s at the bend in the Niger River
How did the kingdoms of West Africa develop and prosper?

As trade in Africa expanded, cities such as Gao and Timbuktu developed and became wealthy centers of commerce.

Between 800 and 1600, several kingdoms gained control of prosperous cities such as these.
When farmers created surpluses, trade expanded across Africa.

• A trade network took goods from the savannah across the Sahara.

• Gold and salt were two of the most traded commodities.

• As trade grew, cities developed on the northern edges of the savanna.

• Monarchs gained control of trade routes and built powerful kingdoms.
Trade routes criss-crossed the African continent between 1000 B.C. and 1600 A.D.

- Travel along desert routes was long and dangerous.
According to tradition, the kingdom of Mali was founded in 1235 by a young man named Sundiata.

The kings of Mali, or mansas, took control of gold-mining regions and salt supplies.
The greatest ruler of Mali, Mansa Musa, came to power in 1312.

He conquered additional territory and converted to Islam.

He made the pilgrimage to Mecca and brought back Muslim scholars and architects to Mali.
In the 1400s a new West African kingdom, Songhai, developed.

The soldier-king Sonni Ali brought trade routes and cities under his control.

When he died, the emperor Askia Muhammad expanded Songhai territory, holding court at Gao.

He formed strong ties to the Muslim world.
The Songhai kingdom experienced disputes over succession in the late 1500s.

- In 1591, invaders from Morocco conquered the empire.
- Though the invaders couldn’t maintain control, the glory of the Songhai kingdom was over.
Great Kingdoms of West Africa

<table>
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<th>Kingdom</th>
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In addition to the great kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, there were several smaller societies in the region.

- **Benin** rose on the Guinea Coast during the 1300s. Its people knew how to cast bronze and brass.

- The Hausa of West Africa became prominent in the 1300s. They built walled cities for protection. They were quite progressive—many of their rulers were women.
Section Review

QuickTake Quiz

Know It, Show It Quiz