

Introduction to Africa



Did you know?

- ▶ Africa has more countries than any other continent.
- ▶ The Sahara is a desert that is the size of the U.S. It's the world's largest desert.
- ▶ Most of the world's gold and diamonds come from Africa.
- ▶ More than 800 languages are spoken in Africa.

Africa's Landforms

- ▶ Africa is located between the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean. It has a long, smooth coast, so it does not have many harbors or ports. This makes it hard for Africans to use the seas for trading.



SS7G1 The student will locate selected features of Africa.

a. Locate on a world and regional map the Sahara, and the Atlas Mountains.



The Sahara, which is Arabic for desert, stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. It's the world's largest desert. Years can pass without rain.



The Sahara divides Africa into two regions.

* North Africa includes the Sahara and the region south of the Mediterranean.

* The rest of Africa is sub-Saharan Africa or Africa below the Sahara.



A huge plateau covers most of Africa. This is a broad area of high, flat land. This makes it higher in eastern and southern Africa than in other parts. A plateau is one of the four basic landforms. A narrow coastal plain surrounds the plateau in Africa. This is the Waterburg Plateau in Namibia.



The Atlas Mountains are in northwest Africa. There are no mountain chains south of the Sahara, but there are some high mountains. The highest mountain in Africa is Mount Kilimanjaro which is on the border of Kenya and Tanzania. There is always snow on top.



The Great Rift Valley is an important landform in east Africa. It is made of deep, wide cracks in the Earth's surface. Many lakes are in this valley. This is a portion of the GRV in Kenya.



SS7G1 The student will locate selected features of Africa.

► a. Locate on a world and political-physical map: Congo River, Niger River, Nile River, Nile River.



Rivers

- ▶ Africa has four large rivers.
- ▶ The Nile River in east Africa is the longest river in the world.
- ▶ The Niger, Congo and Zambezi are other long African rivers.



These rivers have many waterfalls.
Waterfalls make it difficult to travel
on the rivers.

This has made it hard
for Africans to travel and trade with
each other.



Waterpower from African rivers produces electricity called hydroelectricity.

Hydroelectricity is electricity produced from waterpower. This is the Kariba Dam in Zimbabwe and Zambia.



Climate and Vegetation

- ▶ Almost all of Africa lies in the tropics, though Africa has five climate regions. Each region has different vegetation, or plants such as trees, shrubs, and grass.





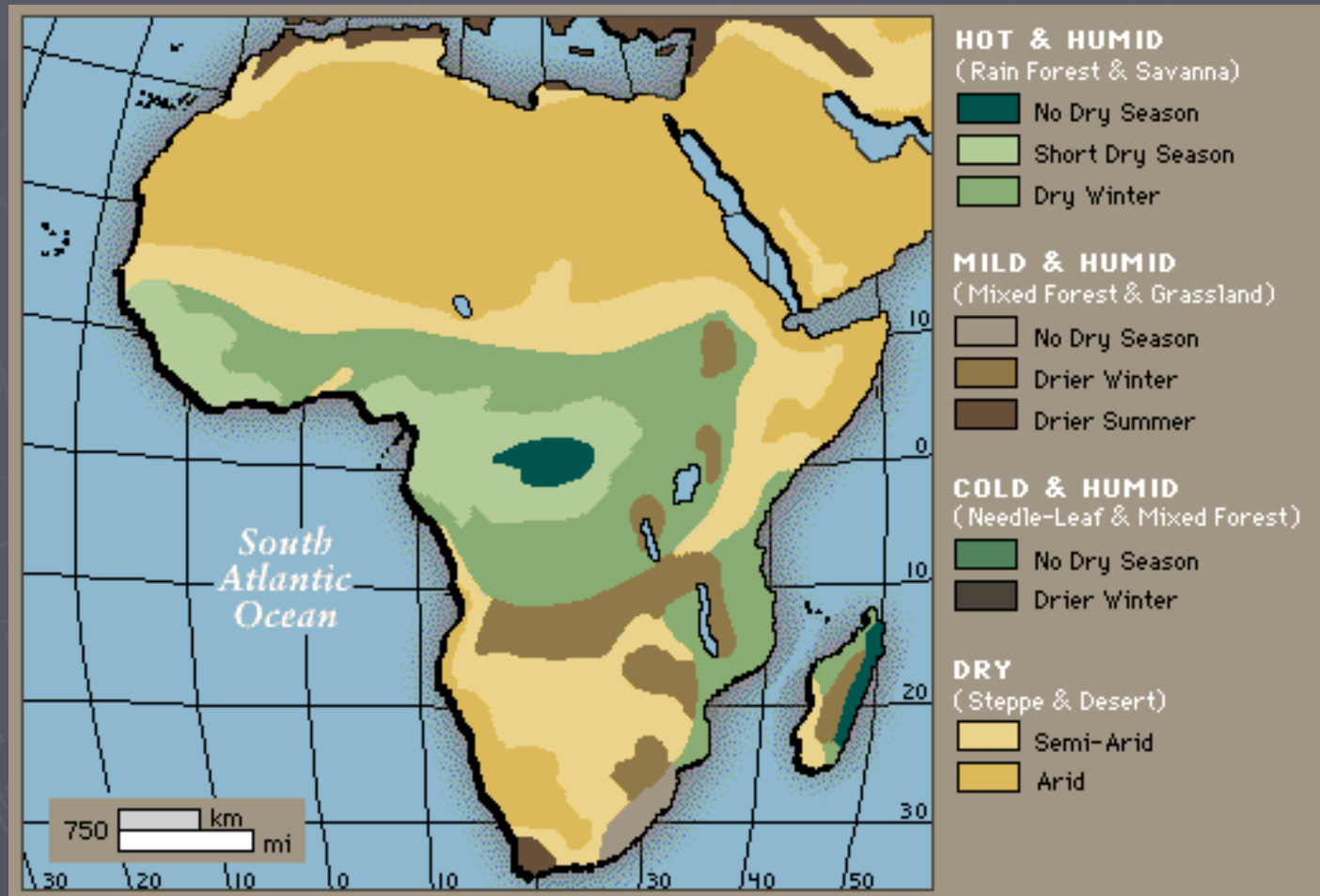
► **SS7G3** The student will explain the impact of location, climate, and physical characteristics on population distribution in Africa.

a. Explain how the characteristics of the tropical rain forest affect where people live, they type of work they do, and transportation.

► **SS7G1** The student will located selected features of Africa.

a. Locate on a world and political-physical map: rain forest

The region in central Africa near the Equator has a hot, wet tropical climate.



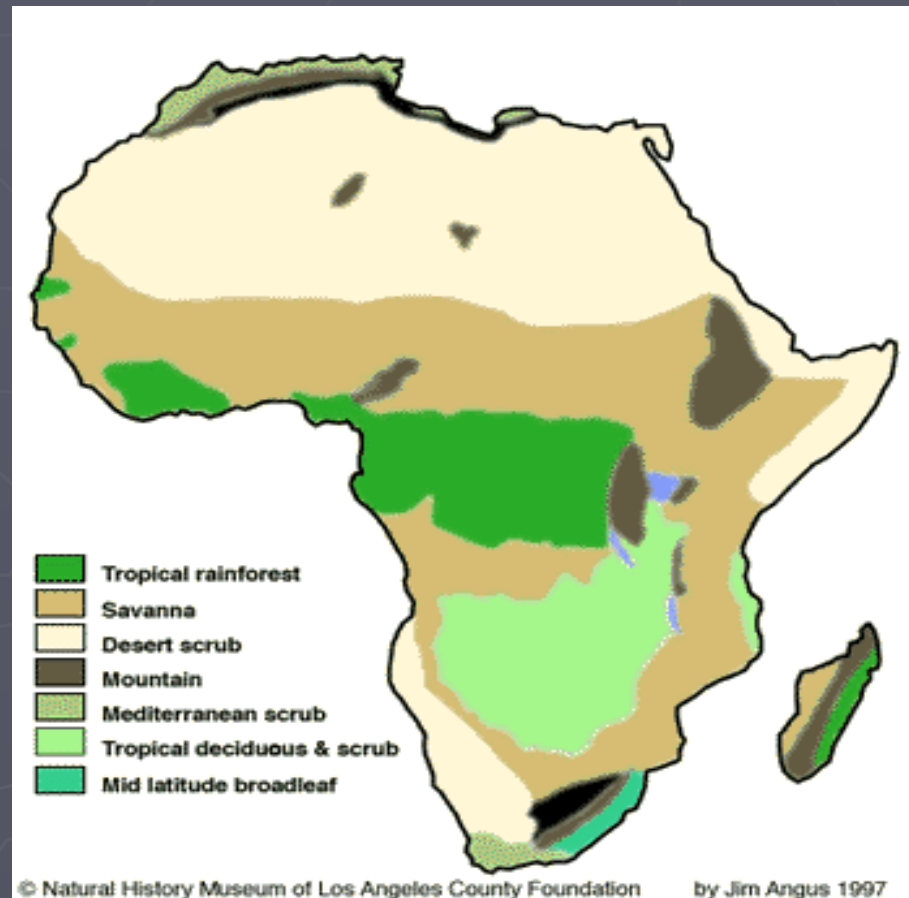
In the tropical areas near the equator, there is heavy rain almost everyday.

Tropical rain forests grow in this climate. Logging, however, is destroying much of the rainforest.



SS7G1 The student will locate selected features of Africa.

- ▶ a. Locate on a world and political-physical map: savanna



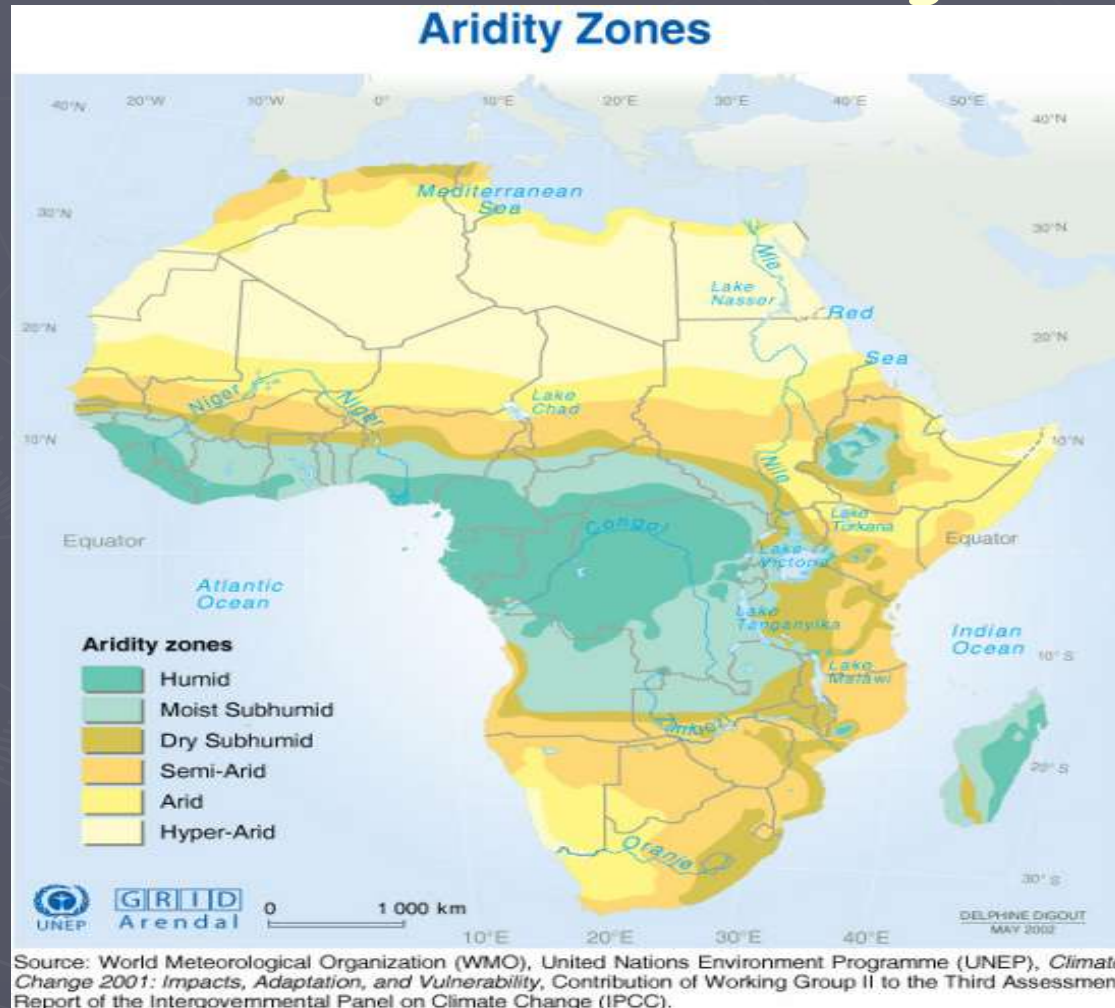
The second climate region is north and south of the rainforests.
The climate is hot, with both rainy and dry seasons.



Savannas cover this region. Savannas are large land areas with long, thick grass and short trees. Many wild animals live on the savannas.



North and south of the savannas, the climate is semi-arid which means that the climate is hot with both rainy and dry seasons. There may be only ten inches of rain during the year.



Source: World Meteorological Organization (WMO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*, Contribution of Working Group II to the Third Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

SS7G1 The student will locate selected features of Africa.

- ▶ a. Locate on a world and regional political and physical map: the Sahel.

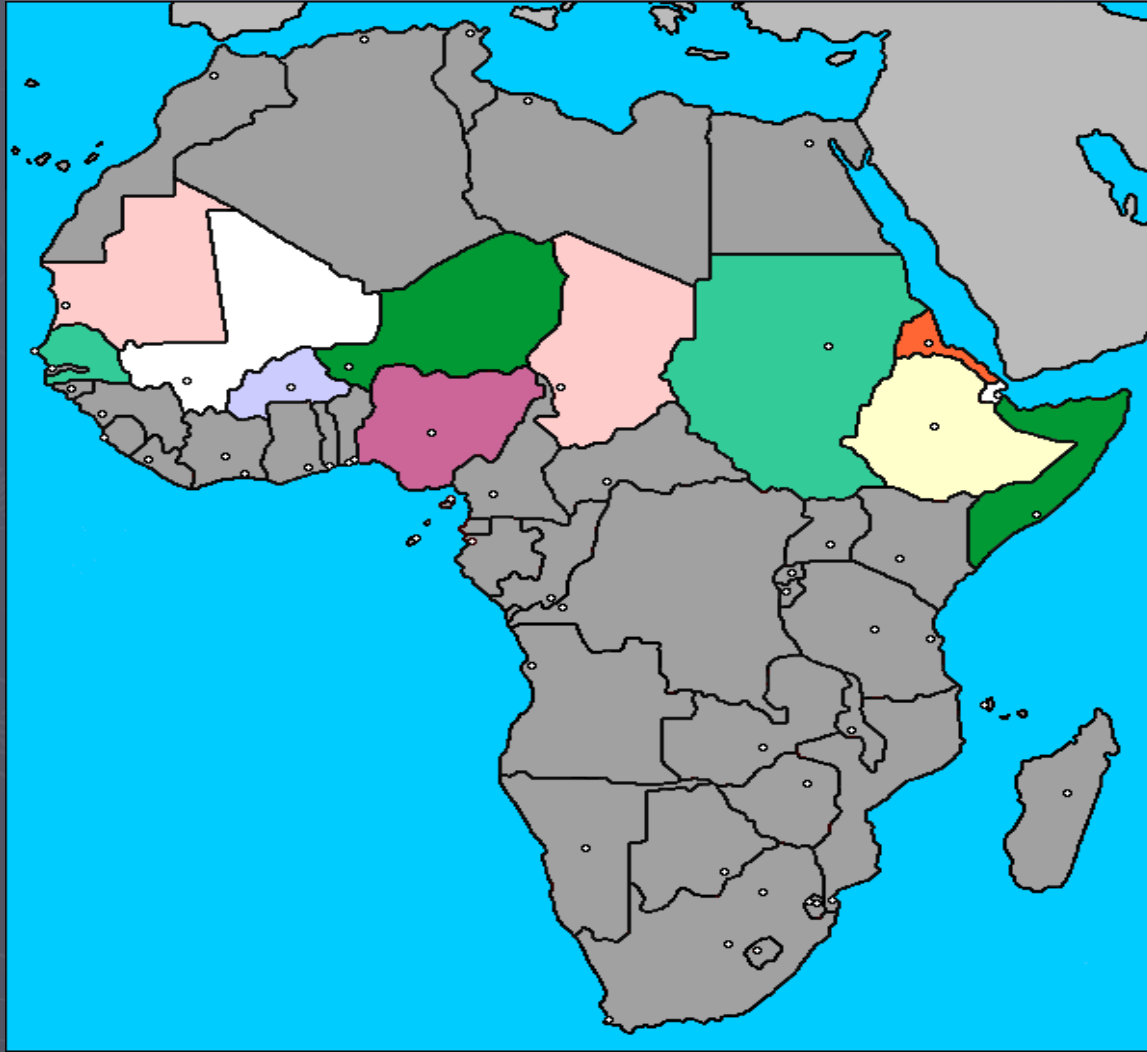


The semi-arid zones of Africa are part of the Sahel. The Sahel is a region of dry grasslands south of the Sahara.

The word "sahel" is Arabic for "edge of desert" or "border."



The Sahel stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. Twelve countries are in the Sahel.

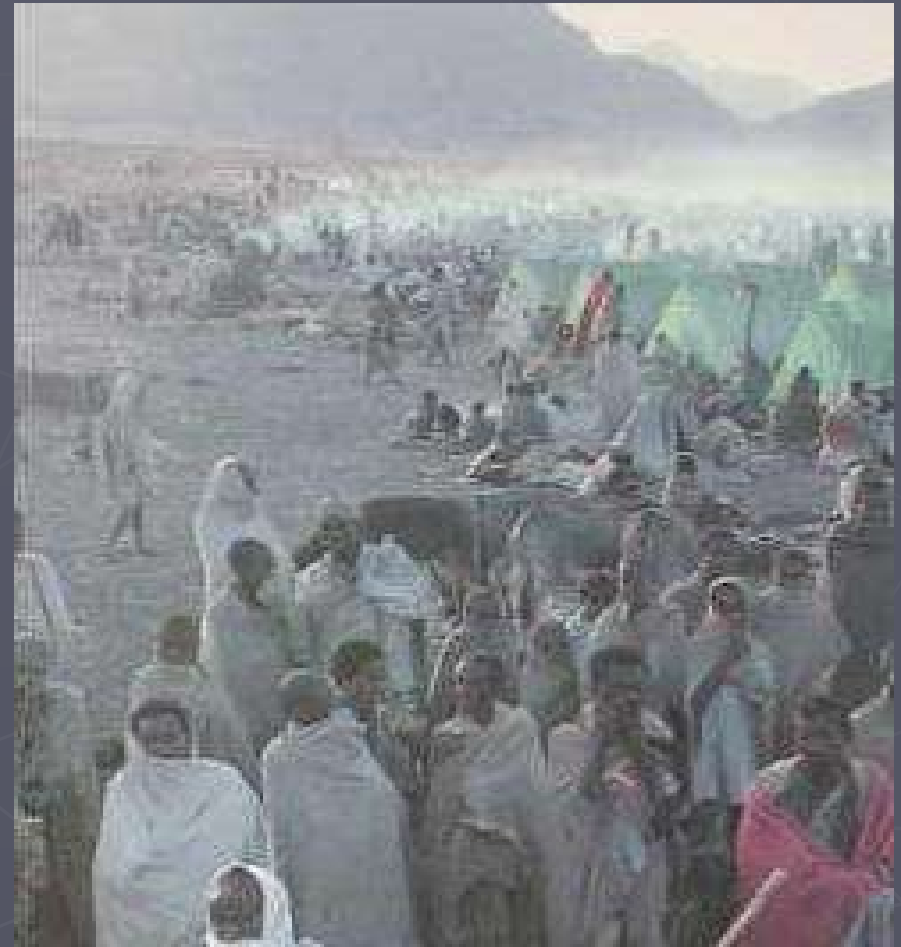




- ▶ SS7G3 The student will explain the impact of location, climate, and physical characteristics on population distribution in Africa.
 - a. Explain how the characteristics of the Sahel affect where people live, they type of work they do, and transportation.
- ▶ SS7G2 The student will explain the impact of desertification on the environment of Africa from the Sahel to the rainforest.

The Sahel has long periods without rain called droughts.

- ▶ This photo shows people of the Sahel region that have to travel long distances in search of food and water.



The Sahel has been heavily affected by the process of desertification. This means that the land is turning to desert. Desertification happens because of both physical and human factors. The term *land degradation* tends to be linked to the human factors, with *desertification* being linked to climate change.



SS7G1

The student will locate selected features of Africa.

- ▶ a. Locate on a world and political-physical map: the Sahara and the Kalahari Desert.



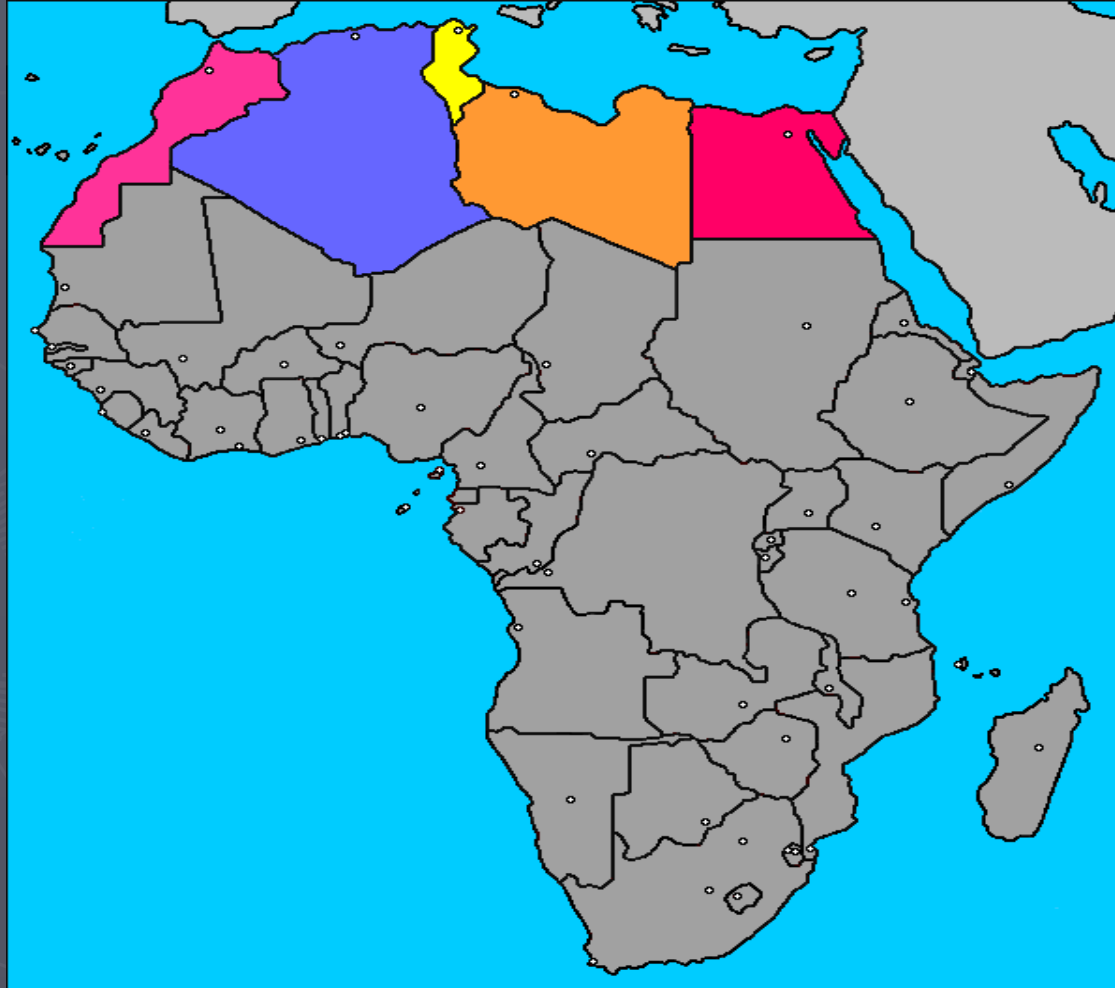
The fourth climate region of Africa is a desert climate. The Sahara Desert is north of the short grasslands. There are also smaller deserts at the southern end of Africa.



Deserts have few plants, but these plants need almost no water.



The fifth climate region has a Mediterranean climate. Summers are hot and dry. Winters are short and rainy.



This climate is found in North Africa near the Mediterranean Sea. Grapes, olives, oranges, and other crops grow in this climate which is found also at the tip of Africa.



Africa's History and Economy

- ▶ People have lived in Africa for thousands of years. It is sometimes called the "cradle of civilization."



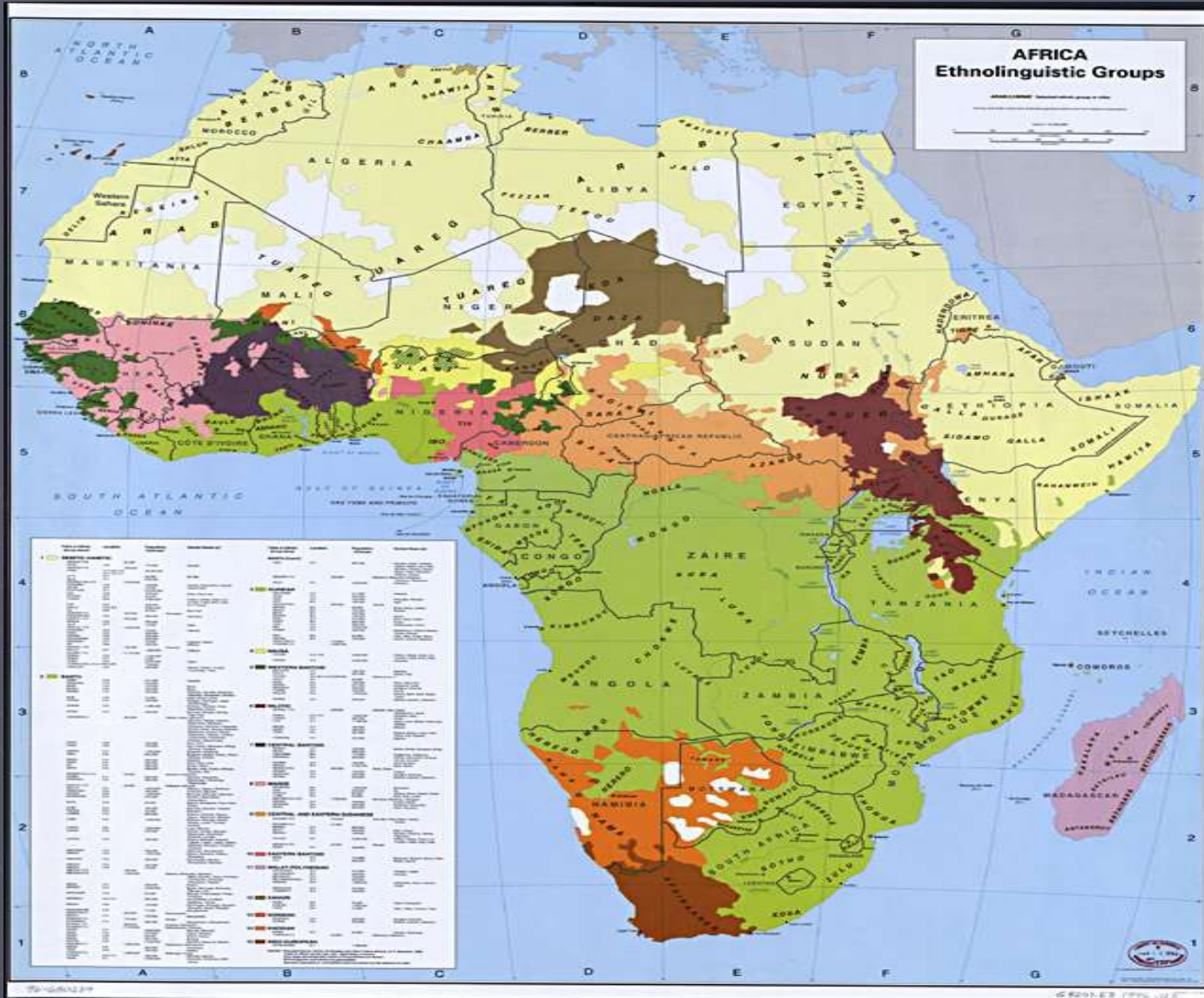
SS7G4 The student will explain the diverse cultures of the people who live in Africa.



- ▶ Hundreds of ethnic groups live together in close groups called tribes. Each ethnic group has its own language, religion, and culture which can sometimes cause conflicts.



This map shows where the different tribes in Africa live.



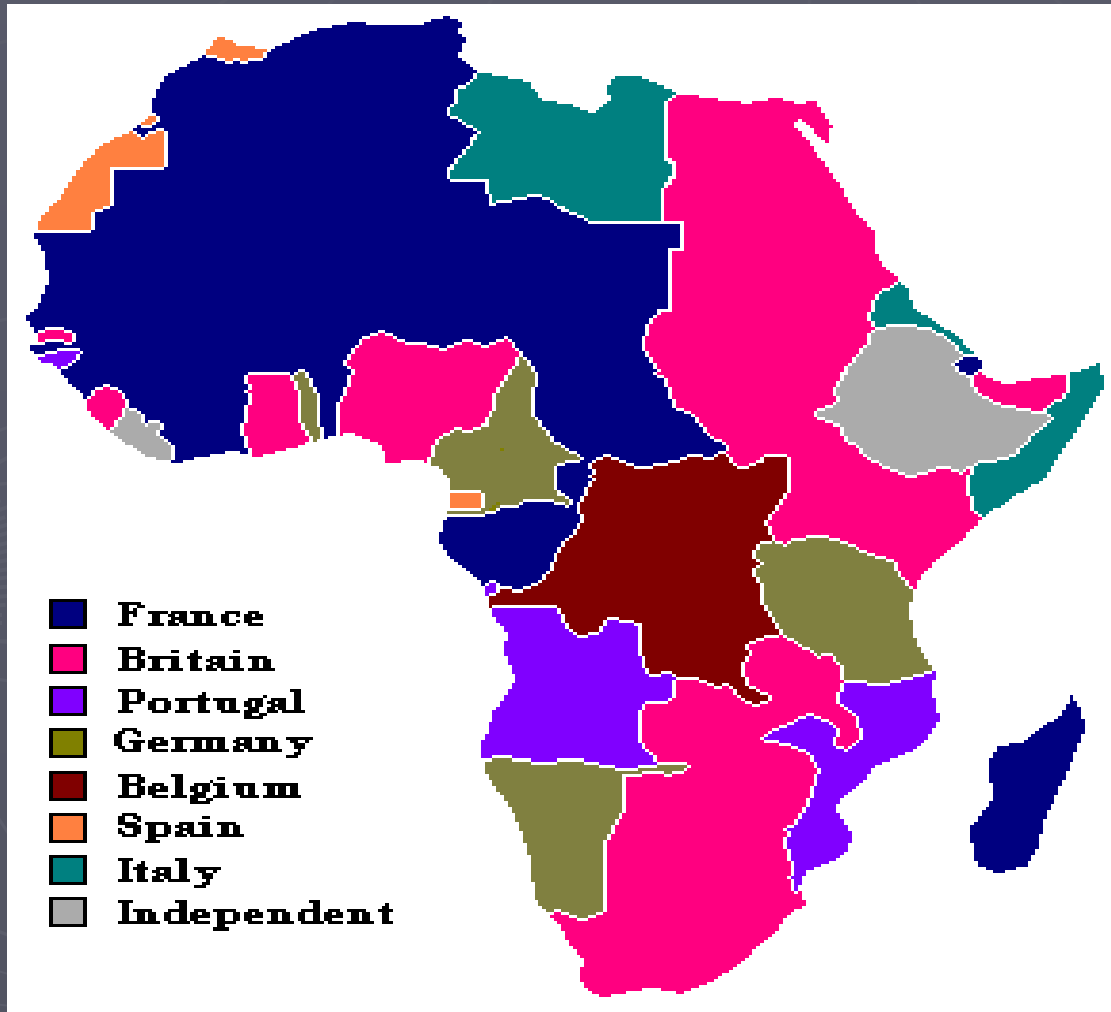
SS7H1 The student will analyze continuity and change in Africa leading to the 21st century.

a. Explain how European partitioning across Africa contributed to conflict, civil war, and artificial political boundaries.

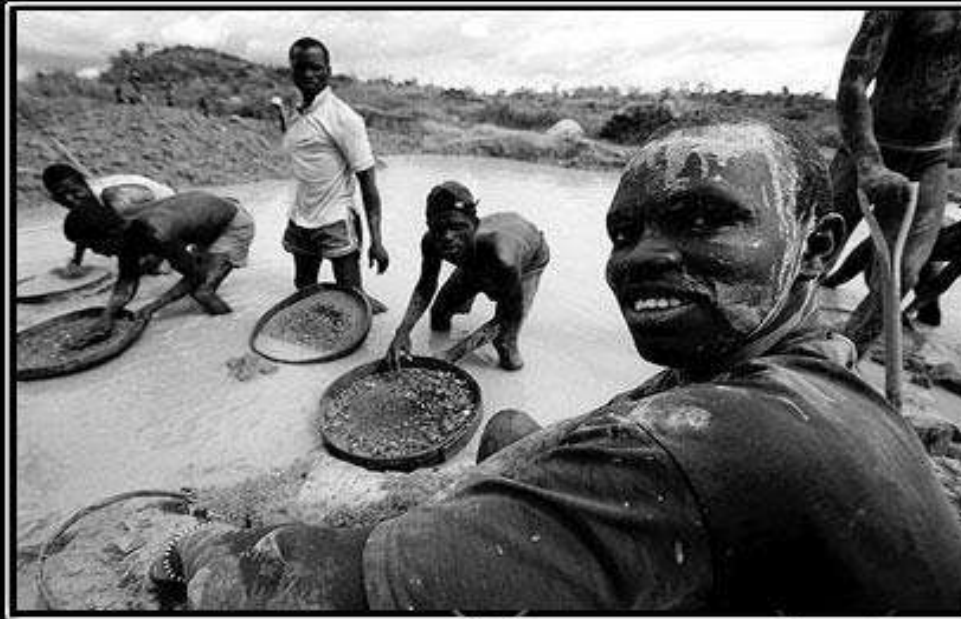


Colonialism in Africa

- ▶ From the 1800s to the 1960s, European countries ruled most of Africa.



The European countries wanted to own Africa's gold, diamonds, copper, and other resources.



DIAMONDS

NOTHING SAYS 'I LOVE YOU' LIKE A SUPERFICIAL AND OVERVALUED ROCK
CLAWED FROM THE GUTS OF THE EARTH BY AFRICAN SLAVE LABOUR.

Europeans divided most of Africa into colonies. Often different ethnic groups were forced to live together in one country causing conflicts. Liberia (left) and Ethiopia (right) are the only countries that were never colonies.



Many of these ethnic groups were enemies and could not get along. Today fighting among ethnic groups is still a problem.



- ▶ "We are fighting every day because we are Hutu and they are Tutsis. We cannot mix, we are always in conflict," the tribesman said. "We will stay enemies forever."
(left, Hutu soldiers in Rwanda)

The Europeans needed modern transportation, so they built roads, railroads, and seaports throughout Africa. They used these ports to ship minerals and raw materials to Europe.



Raw materials are products from nature such as cotton, metal, and wood. The Europeans used them to make factory goods that they would sell to their African colonies.



Europeans also started plantations. A plantation is a large farm that grows cash crops. Plantations in colonial times grew cash crops such as coffee, sugarcane, and cotton.



During the 1960s, Africans began ruling themselves. They were no longer colonies, or lands ruled by distant countries. Now all African countries are independent.



Life Today

- ▶ Today most Africans earn a living by farming.
 - ▶ They use traditional methods like using animals to pull plows instead of modern farm machinery like tractors.



Most Africans are subsistence
farmers which means they
struggle just to grow enough food
for their families.



Africans also work in mines and export its minerals to many nations.



Each African nation earns most of its money by exporting only one or two farm or mineral products.



Today, most countries in Africa are still developing nations. This means that except for the country of South Africa, the nations in Africa have a low standard of living and poor industry or technology.



Today, Africans are still working to improve their countries.

