Kush at a Crossroads

Trade, power, and cultural exchange along the Nile

AWH.C.3.2 "Identify the social and economic characteristics of ancient Nubia (Kingdom of Kush) including its lucrative trade in iron and gold, military rivalry with Egypt, and assimilation of Egyptian culture."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details about trade or production, circle details about social roles, write 1 beside evidence of military rivalry with Egypt, and write 2 beside examples of Egyptian culture adopted in Kush.

A Kingdom Connected by the Nile

1 At a busy market near the Nile in the Kingdom of Kush, a trader might offer gold from mines farther south or an iron tool made by a skilled worker. Kush controlled routes that linked central Africa with Egypt and lands around the Red Sea. Merchants moved gold, iron goods, ivory, and other products along these routes, gaining wealth through exchange. At Meroë, workers used furnaces to make iron tools and weapons, though historians debate how far its iron goods traveled. Farmers grew crops beside the Nile, while herders raised cattle. These workers supplied food and materials that helped Kushite towns and rulers thrive.

2 Trade did not mean everyone lived alike. Kushite kings collected resources and directed building projects, while officials, craftworkers, merchants, farmers, and herders had different roles. Royal women could hold remarkable authority: some queens, called kandakes, ruled in their own right. Families depended on the Nile's floods to support farming, but life also stretched into drier areas where people kept animals. Control of valuable goods helped support the royal court and armies. The same river that carried merchants north also brought armed forces to Kush's border with Egypt, making a trading connection a possible route for conflict.

3 Kush and Egypt sometimes fought for control of territory along the Nile. In the eighth century BCE, Kushite rulers conquered Egypt and founded its Twenty-fifth Dynasty; later, Assyrian armies drove them out of Egypt. Military rivalry did not prevent cultural exchange. Kushite rulers honored the Egyptian god Amun, used Egyptian-style royal images, and built pyramids for some royal burials. They adapted these practices rather than simply becoming Egyptian: Kush retained its own rulers and traditions, and Kushites later used their own written Meroitic language. A Kushite pyramid, then, could express both a connection to Egypt and a distinct Kushite royal identity.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which two valuable products supported Kushite trade, and what role did Meroë play in producing one of them?

2. Identify two social roles in Kush. How did one of those roles help Kushite towns or rulers?

3. What event shows that Kush was a military rival of Egypt, not only a trading partner?

4. Name two ways Kushite rulers adopted Egyptian culture and one detail that shows Kush kept a distinct identity.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label for a Kushite iron tool. Link the tool to a worker and trade, explain how trade supported another group in Kush, and show how Kush could fight Egypt while also adopting an Egyptian cultural practice.

ANSWER KEY

Kush at a Crossroads

HIGH SCHOOL · AWH.C.3.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details about trade or production, circle details about social roles, write 1 beside evidence of military rivalry with Egypt, and write 2 beside examples of Egyptian culture adopted in Kush. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two valuable products supported Kushite trade, and what role did Meroë play in producing one of them?	**Kush traded gold and iron goods. Workers at Meroë made iron tools and weapons.**
2	Identify two social roles in Kush. How did one of those roles help Kushite towns or rulers?	**Farmers grew food that helped support towns and rulers; herders raised cattle. Other supported pairs of roles are acceptable.**
3	What event shows that Kush was a military rival of Egypt, not only a trading partner?	**Kushite rulers conquered Egypt and founded its Twenty-fifth Dynasty.**
4	Name two ways Kushite rulers adopted Egyptian culture and one detail that shows Kush kept a distinct identity.	**Kushite rulers honored Amun and built pyramids for royal burials. Kushites also used their own written Meroitic language.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A Kushite metalworker made this iron tool, one of the goods traded for wealth along the Nile. That wealth helped support Kushite rulers and their armies. Those armies fought Egypt, and Kushite kings once ruled there. Even while competing with Egypt, Kushite rulers honored Amun, showing that they could adopt a neighboring culture without giving up their own kingdom.

Accept other passage-supported roles, conflicts, and Egyptian practices. For the museum label, look for a clear connection among work, trade, political power, rivalry, and cultural borrowing.