Who Ruled the Land?

Pan-Africanism, independence, and political boundaries

MWH.C.7.5.A "Explain the effects of Pan-Africanism on changing political boundaries and the development of anticolonialism."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions that challenged colonial rule, and circle changes in who governed a territory. Number two places where an action helped bring about a change.

Independence Without New Lines

1 In 1945, anticolonial organizers from Africa and its diaspora met at the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester, England. They argued that people under European colonial rule should govern themselves, rather than wait for imperial governments to grant limited reforms. Delegates, including Kwame Nkrumah, called for organized workers, political parties, and mass action. Their shared Pan-African outlook linked struggles in separate colonies: a victory in one place could strengthen demands elsewhere. Yet the congress did not itself change a border. It helped build networks and political goals that activists carried into campaigns at home.

2 After returning to the British colony of the Gold Coast, Nkrumah helped organize a mass independence movement. Boycotts, strikes, elections, and negotiations challenged British authority; many people also made sacrifices locally. In 1957, the colony became independent Ghana, with its own government in place of British colonial rule. This changed a political boundary in a crucial sense: territory once controlled by an empire became a sovereign state. It did not require drawing an entirely new outline around the territory. Ghana then offered diplomatic support and a meeting place for activists from other colonies, turning independence into a platform for wider anticolonial cooperation.

3 By 1963, leaders of independent African countries formed the Organization of African Unity, or OAU, to coordinate support for the end of colonial rule. Its Liberation Committee aided movements fighting colonial governments, including Portuguese rule in Angola. Angola became independent in 1975, although its own activists and other forces shaped that outcome. The OAU also favored keeping the borders inherited at independence, rather than redrawing the continent along ethnic lines. Pan-Africanism thus helped replace imperial control with independent governments across Africa, while many colonial-era borders remained. Political authority changed more often than the lines separating territories.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could the Manchester congress advance independence even though it did not change a border?

2. What changed when the Gold Coast became Ghana, and what did not need to change?

3. How did Ghana's independence help anticolonial efforts beyond its own territory?

4. How did the OAU support a change in political control while favoring continuity in boundary lines?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 100 word editorial responding to this claim: "Pan-Africanism redrew Africa's borders." Use evidence from Manchester, Ghana, and the OAU to connect anticolonial action to its effects, and distinguish changes in political control from changes in boundary lines.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · MWH.C.7.5.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions that challenged colonial rule, and circle changes in who governed a territory. Number two places where an action helped bring about a change. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could the Manchester congress advance independence even though it did not change a border?	**It built networks and shared goals that activists could use to organize anticolonial campaigns at home.**
2	What changed when the Gold Coast became Ghana, and what did not need to change?	**An independent Ghanaian government replaced British colonial rule. Independence did not require an entirely new territorial outline.**
3	How did Ghana's independence help anticolonial efforts beyond its own territory?	**Ghana gave activists from other colonies diplomatic support and a place to meet.**
4	How did the OAU support a change in political control while favoring continuity in boundary lines?	**Its Liberation Committee aided movements against colonial rule, including in Angola, while the OAU favored keeping borders inherited at independence.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Calling Pan-Africanism a project to redraw Africa's borders misses its main effect. The 1945 Manchester congress urged anticolonial organizing, and Nkrumah carried that approach into the Gold Coast's independence movement. When Ghana gained independence in 1957, its territory passed from British control to an African government without needing an entirely new outline. Ghana supported other anticolonial activists, while the OAU later aided liberation movements, including in Angola. The OAU also favored inherited borders. Pan-Africanism helped change who governed territories more than where their borders lay.

Accept responses that explain how Pan-African cooperation strengthened independence movements without claiming it was the sole cause of independence. Students should distinguish a change in sovereignty from a change in the lines between territories.