

Routes to Riches

How Mali's land and waterways supported trade

3.8.b "connecting the geography of the ancient empire of Mali and its economy;"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words that tell where Mali was or how people traveled. Circle words that tell how those places helped Mali trade or earn wealth.

Mali's Trading Places

- ① Long ago, the empire of Mali stood in West Africa. Much of Mali lay south of the Sahara Desert and near the Niger River. The river gave people water and a way to travel by boat. Farther north, dry desert routes crossed the land. These different places helped Mali connect with many nearby trading partners.
- ② Traders carried salt from mines in the Sahara. Salt was valuable because people needed it to stay healthy and to preserve food. Gold came from areas south of Mali. In busy market towns, people traded gold, salt, cloth, and other goods. Mali's location between desert salt and southern gold made trade strong and important over time.
- ③ Cities along the Niger River became centers of trade and learning. Timbuktu, a city near the river, had markets where camel caravans brought goods from the desert. Boats could carry goods on the river. Rulers of Mali collected taxes from trade. These taxes helped the empire become wealthy and supported its cities and schools as well.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the Niger River help people in Mali trade?

2 How did Mali's location between the Sahara and southern gold areas help trade grow?

3 How did the desert and the Niger River give traders different ways to move goods?

4 How did trade help the empire of Mali become wealthy?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write two sentences explaining how two different geographic features helped Mali's economy.
Name each feature and tell what it made possible.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline words that tell where Mali was or how people traveled. Circle words that tell how those places helped Mali trade or earn wealth. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Niger River help people in Mali trade?	The river gave people a way to travel by boat and carry goods.
2	How did Mali's location between the Sahara and southern gold areas help trade grow?	Mali was between desert salt and southern gold, so traders could bring and trade these valuable goods.
3	How did the desert and the Niger River give traders different ways to move goods?	Camel caravans carried goods across desert routes, while boats carried goods on the Niger River.
4	How did trade help the empire of Mali become wealthy?	Mali's rulers collected taxes from trade, and the taxes helped the empire become wealthy.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Niger River helped Mali's economy because boats could carry goods to market towns. The Sahara Desert helped Mali's economy because traders carried valuable salt from desert mines.

Accept answers that correctly connect a geographic feature or location to travel, trade, goods, taxes, or wealth. For the open response, students should name two different features and give an accurate economic effect for each.