

Mali's River Routes

Read how place, trade, and culture shaped an empire.

3.8 "The student will apply history and social science skills to describe the geographic, political, economic, and social structures and innovations of the ancient empire of Mali by locating the ancient empire of Mali on a map of the world..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words that tell where Mali was or describe its land and water. Circle each sentence that explains how Mali's geography helped people farm or trade.

Mali: Place, Power, and Culture

- ① Long ago, the ancient empire of Mali grew in West Africa. On a world map, West Africa is below the Sahara Desert and across the Atlantic Ocean from North and South America. The Niger River flowed through parts of Mali. River water helped farmers grow crops, and routes across the Sahara linked Mali to people in North Africa.
- ② Mali became wealthy because it traded gold, salt, and other goods. Gold from West Africa was valuable in faraway places. Salt was needed to preserve food and stay healthy. Camel caravans carried goods across the hot, dry Sahara. Traders met in busy towns near the Niger River, where river travel and land routes helped goods move.
- ③ Mali was ruled by a mansa, or emperor. The mansa led the army, collected taxes, and chose leaders for parts of the empire. Mansa Musa's trip to Mecca made Mali known in many lands. In Timbuktu, scholars wrote books by hand, and artists decorated some books. Builders made tall mosques from mud brick, with wooden beams. This West African building style influenced later mosques in the region.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Where would you look for ancient Mali on a world map? Name the part of Africa and the desert north of it.

2 How did the Niger River and the Sahara routes help Mali's economy? Give one way for each.

3 What was a mansa, and name two jobs a mansa did.

4 Name one learning or art activity in Timbuktu. Then explain how Mali's mosque style influenced later buildings.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label about why Mali mattered. Include its West African location, one geography-and-economy link, the mansa's role, and one cultural legacy.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline words that tell where Mali was or describe its land and water. Circle each sentence that explains how Mali's geography helped people farm or trade. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Where would you look for ancient Mali on a world map? Name the part of Africa and the desert north of it.	Look in West Africa, below the Sahara Desert.
2	How did the Niger River and the Sahara routes help Mali's economy? Give one way for each.	The Niger River gave farmers water for crops and helped goods travel. Sahara routes let camel caravans carry trade goods, such as gold and salt.
3	What was a mansa, and name two jobs a mansa did.	A mansa was the emperor. The mansa led the army, collected taxes, and chose leaders for parts of the empire.
4	Name one learning or art activity in Timbuktu. Then explain how Mali's mosque style influenced later buildings.	Scholars wrote books by hand, or artists decorated books. Mali's mud-brick mosque style influenced later mosques in West Africa.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Ancient Mali stood in West Africa, below the Sahara Desert. The Niger River helped farmers grow crops, while desert routes helped traders move gold and salt. A mansa led the empire and chose local leaders. Mali's handwritten books and mud-brick mosques showed skills that influenced later West African mosques.

Accept equivalent descriptions supported by the passage. For the museum label, check for all four requested parts and a clear connection between geography and the economy.