* **The Three Empires of West Africa**
* **Ghana, Mali and Songhai**
* **7.4.1, 7.4.3, 7.3.5**

**Ghana: Chapter 3, Section 1**

**Rise of Ghana**

* **One of three great civilizations that arose along the Niger River**
* **Ghana was located between salt and gold mines**
* **Ghana’s power came from their use of iron weapons to conquer neighboring tribes and for farming along the Niger River**
* **The Nok people from this region were the first to use iron to make farming tools and weapons for defense**
* **Salt merchants from North Africa crossed the Sahara Desert to trade with gold miners south of Ghana**
* **Ghana taxed traders passing through their trade route**
* **~~Salt is needed to preserve and flavor food, and to restore PH balance from sweating~~**
* **Koumbi (Kumbi), was a trading center and a capital of Ghana. It became the wealthiest city in W. Africa**
* **Decline of Ghana**
* **Almoravids, fought for control of Ghana for 14 years.**
* **Overgrazing - Almoravids brought herding animals to Ghana. The herds ate the grass and left the ground exposed to sun, which made soil hard to farm**
* **Internal Rebellion - Rebels weakened Ghana and it was eventually attacked by neighbors**
* **Mali: Chapter 3, section 2  
  Rise of Mali**
* **Territory twice the size of Ghana, along the Niger River**
* **King Sundiata conquered Ghana and led Mali to become a powerful trading empire**
* **Sundiata & the Economy of Mali**
* **Sundiata concentrated on agriculture, rice, onions, beans, cotton**
* **Economy based on trade, that crossed the Sahara (sub-Saharan trade) with help of the Berbers**
* **The Berbers - A group of northern African people that lead desert caravans through the Sahara**
* **Mali discovered more gold mines and became the most powerful kingdom in Africa**
* **The Niger River became a busy highway for all kinds of trade**
* **Mansa Musa’s Rule**
* **Another of Mali’s greatest rulers during the empire’s height**
* **Was a devout Muslim, but he tolerated other religions (allowing non-Muslims to keep their own religion)**
* **Mansa Musa’s Pilgrimage**
* **Made an impressive pilgrimage to Mecca with 50,000 people. Slaves carrying gold staffs, 80 to 100 camels carrying 100 pounds of gold**
* **In Cairo, Egypt he gave out so much gold that the local gold coin depressed for a decade**
* **He became famous and introduced the world to the Mali Empire**
* **Muslims scholars impressed by his wealth, were invited to be a part of his Empire**
* **Under Mansa Musa’s reign Muslim culture and education flourished**
* **He hired architects to build mosques, he sent Muslim scholars to study in Morocco and he stressed the importance of learning Arabic to unify his empire**
* **The city of Timbuktu became center for learning**
* **The Decline of Mali**
* **After Mansa Musa’s death there was weak leadership**
* **Invaders weakened empire and burned schools in Timbuktu**
* **The empire had grown so large that it was difficult to control, slowly outer areas began to break away**
* **Chapter 3, Section2  
  Birth of Songhai Empire**

**Rise of Songhai:**

* **After Mansa Musa died, kings were unable to protect the territory**
* **Songhai rises to power after attacking Mali from all sides**
* **Sunni Ali’s Leadership of Songhai**
* **Sunni Ali organized, strengthened and unified Songhai**
* **He unified Songhai by encouraging people to work together, ~~and he participated in both Muslim and local religions~~**

* **Askia the Great**
* **Askia the Great rose to power. Songhai became great center for learning**
* **Askia welcomed Muslims to trade by making similar laws**
* **Songhai grew into the greatest trading empire in West Africa**
* **Timbuktu and Djenne were centers of learning and trade**

* **The Decline of Songhai**
* **Morocco’s rulers captured Songhai’s salt mines; they also wanted the gold in West Africa**
* **Songhai would stay around another 150 years, but not the same well-organized empire, instead it became a series of military camps**