

Ibn Battuta: African Explorer Student Page

Introduction:

In 1325, an African explorer named Ibn Battuta began a journey of tens of thousands of miles. It was almost thirty years before his travels ended, and by that time he had visited countless kingdoms and empires of medieval Africa, Arabia, Southwest Asia, Central Asia, and Europe. Battuta wrote a book about his journey, leaving us with a valuable record of the cities he visited, the people he observed, and the friends and acquaintances he made. In this lesson, you will study a portion of his book that describes the medieval kingdom of Mali.

All Web links for this lesson can be found at:
<http://www.socialstudies.com/worldlinks.html>.

Directions:

Ibn Battuta: Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1354-ibnbattuta.html>

This is a lengthy text. You will begin simply by skimming it.

1. Scroll through the text. Read the **bold** headings and list 10 places Ibn Battuta visited in his journey.
2. Based on your knowledge of world geography, identify three continents or world regions through which Battuta traveled.

Use your computer's "find" function or scroll through the text to reach the section titled "Ibn Battuta meets the king of Mali."

Read the passage that follows, then answer the following questions:

3. What text (book) was read throughout the King's banquet? Based on this fact, what religion was the King?
4. Based on your reading of this section, why did Ibn Battuta call the King "miserly" (cheap or poor)?

Continue by reading the sections that begin, "The court ceremonial of king Sulayman of Mali" and "Festival ceremonial," then answer the following questions:

5. How did the King display his wealth and power at the ceremonials?
6. How did people who appeared before the King show that they were submissive? Scroll down to the section that begins, "Their piety."

7. Summarize three reasons why Ibn Battuta concluded that the people of Mali were pious (devoutly religious).

Continue on to the section that begins, “The nakedness of the women.”

8. What are two of the “bad qualities” Battuta describes in this section?

9. In conclusion, summarize those aspects of Mali culture and society that Ibn Battuta found good or impressive. Summarize those aspects that Battuta viewed negatively. Does Battuta seem to be a fair judge of Mali culture, or does he appear to be biased? Include specific examples in your response that support your point of view.