

# Year 7 Learn Sheet

## Final Assessment **Medieval Mali**

**Location:** **West Africa** (at its largest Mali was about the size of the USA)

**Landscape:** The **Niger River** ran through Mali, feeding fields of onions, tomatoes and millet (grain)

**Trade:** Mali was rich in salt and gold. **Salt** preserved food, **gold** was traded around Africa and Europe (most of the gold in European king's crowns was from Mali)

**Religion:** people worshipped several different religions, but the dominant religion was **Islam** (that made many Malians, **Muslim**). Many of the Mande (Malian people) believed in spirits and magic (it is witches that make the prophecy about Sundiata).



### Key cities:

**Niani** was the capital city of Mali

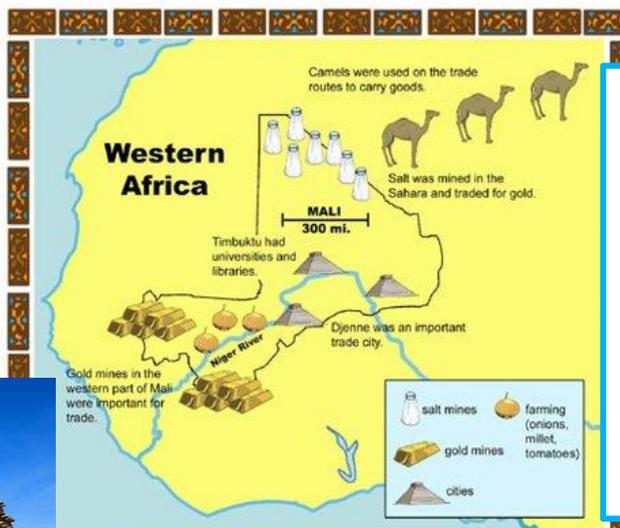
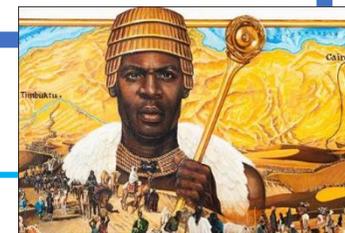
**Timbuktu** became the most important city during Mansa Musa's reign (1312-1337 AD). Mansa Musa encouraged the building of the **Djinguereber Mosque**, the building of a library that contained **2 million books** and a **cultural centre** which saw scholars from all over Africa, Asia and Europe visit.

### Famous rulers:

**Mansa Sundiata** – the founder of the Malian Empire. He won the **Battle of Kirina** against the King of Sosso fulfilling the prophecy. He was also known as the '**Lion King**'.

**Abu Bakr II** – he was interested in exploring the rest of the world. Abu Bakr II built a fleet of 2000 ships to find out what was on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. He never returned, leading to...

**Mansa Musa** – he **doubled** the size of the Mali Empire and became famous for his wealth. On the **Hajj** (the pilgrimage [holy walk] to Mecca in Arabia) Mansa Musa handed the people of **Cairo** gold nuggets to show his charity.



### Culture and key concepts:

**Griots** – much of Mali's history was passed down by griots – oral storytellers. By passing stories down verbally griots could give characters voices and make the stories 'come alive'. However, griots might also exaggerate the stories or change parts that are less interesting.

**Prophecies** – the idea of being destined to do something in life was important to the Mande (Malian) people. Sundiata was prophesied to become the 'Lion King'.

### How was Mali viewed by other places in the world?

Much of what we know about the Malian Empire comes from Asian, European and North African travelers. This is a **problem** because they will have only experienced a tiny part of the rich culture of Mali.

- the **Catalan Atlas**, drawn in 1375, shows a Mansa holding a gold coin and ruling many well-connected and prosperous cities;
- **Leo Africanus** visited **Timbuktu** and described it as a busy trading city and cultural centre;
- **Sir John Mandeville** made up facts about West Africa such as the water was 'spiced' and there were a people who lived there with only one leg.