# West African Kingdoms Assessment

Name:

Date:

**West African Kingdoms Museum Exhibit**

**Reminder: Be sure to write about the medieval kingdom and NOT the modern-day country of the same name.**

## Step 1: Complete Chart (if you prefer, you can make a slide presentation instead)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **West African Kingdom** | **Artifact and Explanation** |
| **Ghana (insert artifact below)**  **Artifact and Explanation Artifact: A replica of a golden armlet crafted in the 9th century. Explanation: This artifact represents Ghana’s wealth derived from its control over gold mines and the trans-Saharan trade routes. Gold was a symbol of power and prosperity, often used in trade and as offerings to gods or rulers.** | ***Prominent Features***   * ***Economic: Thrived on gold and salt trade, becoming a hub of wealth and commerce.*** * ***Political: Centralized monarchy with a council of advisors.*** * ***Cultural: A blend of local animistic traditions and Islamic influences after interactions with North African traders.***   ***Historical Significance***   * ***Ghana’s gold resources fueled the trans-Saharan trade, enabling cultural exchanges and wealth accumulation that influenced the wider region.***   ***Cause of Decline***   * ***Repeated invasions by the Almoravids disrupted trade networks.*** * ***Depletion of natural resources and over-reliance on gold trade weakened the kingdom’s economy.*** |
| **Mali (insert artifact below)**  **Artifact and Explanation Artifact: A model of the Great Mosque of Djenné. Explanation: This mosque showcases Mali’s commitment to Islamic scholarship and architecture, epitomizing its role as a cultural and religious hub.** | ***Prominent Features***  ***Economic: Controlled and expanded gold and salt trade networks.***  ***Political: Strong leadership under Sundiata Keita and Mansa Musa.***  ***Cultural: Islamic scholarship flourished, with Timbuktu and Djenné as key centers of learning.***  ***Historical Significance***  ***Mansa Musa’s pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324 demonstrated Mali’s immense wealth and connected it to global Islamic trade networks.***  ***Cause of Decline***  ***Weak rulers following Mansa Musa led to political instability.***  ***External pressure from neighboring kingdoms and nomadic groups eroded Mali’s power.*** |
| **Songhai (insert artifact below)**  **Artifact and Explanation Artifact: A manuscript from Timbuktu’s Ahmed Baba Institute. Explanation: The manuscript represents Songhai’s intellectual legacy, highlighting its promotion of Islamic scholarship and its role as a repository of knowledge.** | ***Prominent Features***   * ***Economic: Dominated the gold-salt trade and built an efficient bureaucratic governance structure.*** * ***Political: A strong military and leadership under Sunni Ali and Askia Muhammad ensured stability and expansion.*** * ***Cultural: Islamic education thrived, particularly in Timbuktu and Gao.***   ***Historical Significance***   * ***Timbuktu became a renowned center for learning, attracting scholars from across the Islamic world and preserving African intellectual traditions.***   ***Cause of Decline***   * ***Moroccan invasion in 1591, with firearms outmatching Songhai’s traditional weapons.*** * ***Fragmentation into smaller states as centralized authority declined.*** |