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| TEACHER GUIDE: Chapter 2 Meanwhile, in a West African kingdom | | | | | |
| Story summary | A trader visits Benin City | | | | |
| Why teach this topic?  (Curriculum intent) | In this story summary, students will learn about Benin City in 1600 (allowing them to build on the work in Book 1 on Mali and medieval Africa). By looking at the city from a trader’s perspective it provides a good contrast with the other chapters in this section, setting the scene before students investigate expanding worlds. Students will have the opportunity to think about the key features of a flourishing West African kingdom before the changes that take place with the introduction of the trade in enslaved peoples. | | | | |
| Linked resources | * Teaching slides * Planning podcast | | * Teaching podcast * Quiz | | |
| Key dates | **1600** The year that the trader in the chapter is visiting Benin City | | | | |
| Key words and terms | **Benin City**  **plaques** | **Oba**  **spiritual** | | **Bini**  **rebellions** | **iyoba**  **Ipkotopi** |
| Key people | **Ehengbuda N’Obo** Ruler of Benin in 1600  **Iyoba** The queen mother | | | | |
| Key takeaways from story summary as a whole | **Substantive**   * This chapter is designed to help secure student understanding of West Africa as a thriving area where trade and skilled craftsmen supported a vibrant culture and way of life. * Benin was a thriving city, one of the only places recognised by Europeans as a city in Africa in 1600. * Benin was ruled by an Oba (king). * The city was home to a range of people from the king and royal family, who lived in palaces, to servants, merchants, and skilled smiths who lived in thatched mud houses. * Trade was central to Benin City. * Europeans, especially the Portuguese, were interested in Benin and in taking control of their trade and had tried to convert Benin to Catholicism. * Benin was becoming less powerful but the Oba was still able to resist European control. | | | | |
| Consider connections to previous and future study | **For example …**  **Previous**  How does this chapter build on students’ understanding of West Africa? (Book 1 Mali and medieval Africa)  **Future**  How does this chapter prepare students for understanding the impact of European expansion on civilisations (Chapters 8 and 10)?  How does this chapter enable students to appreciate the resistance and rebellion against European expansion (Chapters 19, 20 and 27)? | | | | |
| Guidance on structuring the story summary | *See also the* ***planning and teaching podcasts****, which provide some useful context to the chapter.*  **Introduction**  Chapter 2 is an introduction to Benin in 1600. This should be completed in a lesson although there is scope for using it as a starting point for students to undertake some research of their own outside the classroom. It may be worth prefacing students’ study of Benin with an introduction to its purpose (see ‘Why might you want to teach this topic?’ and ‘Key takeaways from enquiry as a whole’ above). If you want to build your knowledge a little bit around this area the links to historical scholarship provide a short, easy-to-read summary.  The lesson activities below are suggestions of how you may wish to help students to process this story and use it to confirm/disrupt prior learning; equally you may choose to simply read the text and furnish their understanding with questions.  **Lesson activities**   * Depending on whether students have studied medieval Mali in Year 7 you may want to start the lesson using the map (**slide 2**) as well as some recap questions about medieval Mali so that students are able to build on their prior learning. If they haven’t studied medieval Mali you might want to explain that West Africa was not a ‘backward’ society as many people believed and that it is important we understand this before we get to later chapters in the book looking at enslaved peoples. * Once students are secure in the geographical location of Benin, explain that their task is to give guidelines to a reconstruction artist about what they should include in an image of Benin city in 1600 for this textbook (**slide 3**). Ensure students are clear about what a reconstruction artist does and that they are looking for knowledge about the city, the people, trade and religion and power before you start reading. * You could read aloud the first section up to the Benin plaques and then show students **slide 4**. Ask them to look carefully at what they can see and point out that it looks like pieces of coral on the Oba’s clothes. It might be worth explaining that historians have found out a lot about life in Benin City from looking carefully at the bronzes. * Ask students to jot down any details that could be useful to help the reconstruction artist in their notes. * Continue to read through the text together, stopping to pull out key ideas of change, e.g. Benin was less powerful than it had been 100 years previously. When you mention leopard skins, pause and ask how students think we know about leopards being important – the answer is from the Benin plaques. Give students the opportunity to add to their notes. * Once students have read about the Portuguese in Benin you could pause and ask what this suggests may happen in the future for Benin. * Continue with read aloud until the end of the chapter, pausing to consolidate understanding before giving students time to reread the text on their own to pull out any extra details that they could use in their description for the reconstruction artist. * Once students have their notes compiled and you have had class feedback, (**slide 5**) give students an opportunity to think about how they will explain ideas to the reconstruction artist (**slide 6**). You might want to show students an image of Benin City from the 1600s ([Kingdom of Benin (1200 to the present)](https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/benin/)) and say that the publisher is looking for something that shows the city more clearly for students but that they want it to be historically accurate. * If you want to check student understanding you could use the true or false knowledge quiz provided (**slides 7 and 8**).   *The additional Multiple Choice Questions can be used, with or without multiple choice responses, as a quick knowledge recall aid/check at relevant points in the story summary.* | | | | |
| Suggested homework | Students could extend and consolidate their knowledge of Benin with a research task looking at some of the other Benin plaques to see how historians know about Benin City. This link: [The British Museum – Benin: An African Kingdom (PDF)](https://www.britishmuseum.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/Benin_art_Nov2015.pdf) has some plaques explained that you could give to students to use. | | | | |

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| Building subject knowledge | **Historical scholarship**   * OCR’s A Level teacher guide is a useful starting point:[OCR A Level History A African Kingdoms: A Guide to the Kingdoms of Songhay, Kongo, Benin, Oyo and Dahomey c.1400 – c.1800 (PDF)](https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/208299-african-kingdoms-ebook-.pdf) * Green, T. *A Fistful of Shells* (Penguin, 2019), Chapter 5   **Podcasts/Documentaries**   * [Civilisations: Benin Bronzes](https://era.org.uk/streaming-service-resource/bbc-four-civilisations-series-1-first-contact-benin-bronzes/) –David Olusoga visits the Benin Bronzes at the British Museum * [BBC A History of the World in 100 Objects: Benin plaque – the Oba with Europeans](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00tt59m) |