



Diverse Cultures of Africa

SS7G4 The student will describe the diverse cultures of the people who live in Africa.

- a. Explain the differences between an ethnic group and a religious group.
- b. Explain the diversity of religions within the Arab, Ashanti, Bantu, and Swahili ethnic groups.
- c. Evaluate how the literacy rate affects the standard of living.

Ethnic group vs. religious group

- An ***ethnic group*** is a group of people who share **cultural** ideas and beliefs that have been a part of their community for generations. The characteristics they may have in common include **language, shared history, types of food, and a set of traditional stories, beliefs, or celebrations.**
- A ***religious group*** shares a **belief system in a god or gods, with a specific set of rituals and a sacred text.** People from different ethnic groups may share the same religion, though they may be from very different cultures.

Africa's 4 Ethnic Groups (that we are studying)

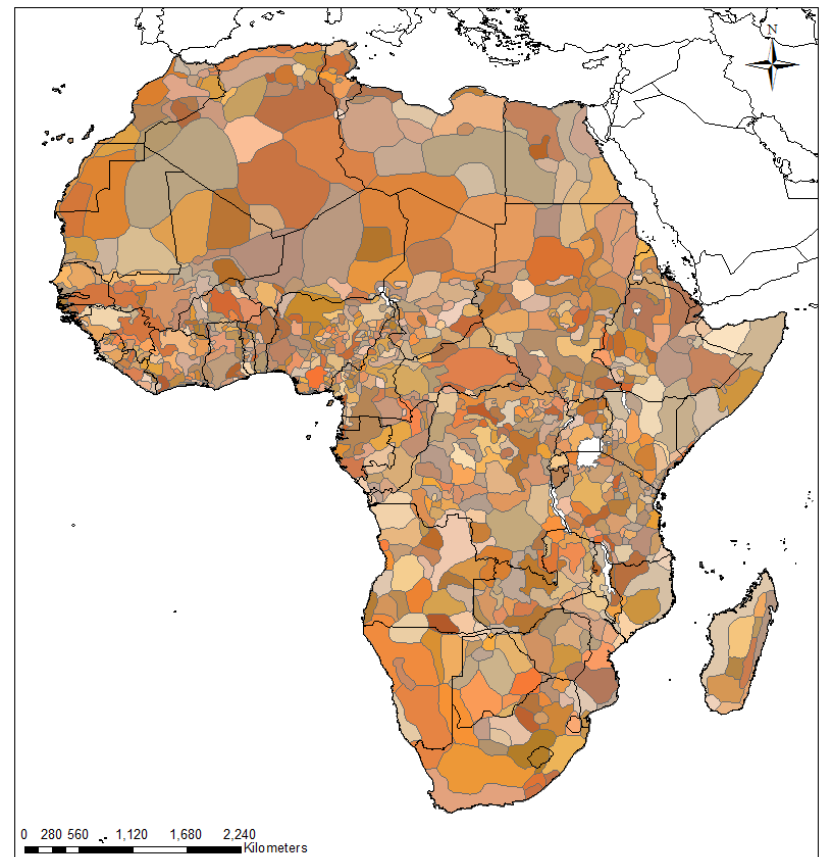
1) Arab

2) Ashanti

3) Bantu

4) Swahili

Murdock Ethnic Map (1959)



Arab



- **Arab** people began to spread into **North Africa** in the late **600s**
- Wherever the **Arabs** went, they took the religion of **Islam** and the **Arabic** language with them
- Arab traders traveled across the **Sahara**, to the **Sahel**, and beyond
- The Arabic language, religion of Islam, and other aspects of Muslim culture became part of Africa



Many Arabs are found in Africa- they make up a majority of the people living **along the Mediterranean coast and in some countries along the Indian Ocean**



Ashanti

- The **Ashanti** are found in the modern country of **Ghana**.



Ashanti



- They believe that their kingdom was founded in 1701 with the help of a holy man who produced a **Golden Stool** from the heavens (This stool symbolizes their power)
- Religions
 - The **traditional religion** is centered on a belief in a supreme god, or Nayme.
 - Others religions practiced by the Ashanti include **Christianity** and **Islam**.

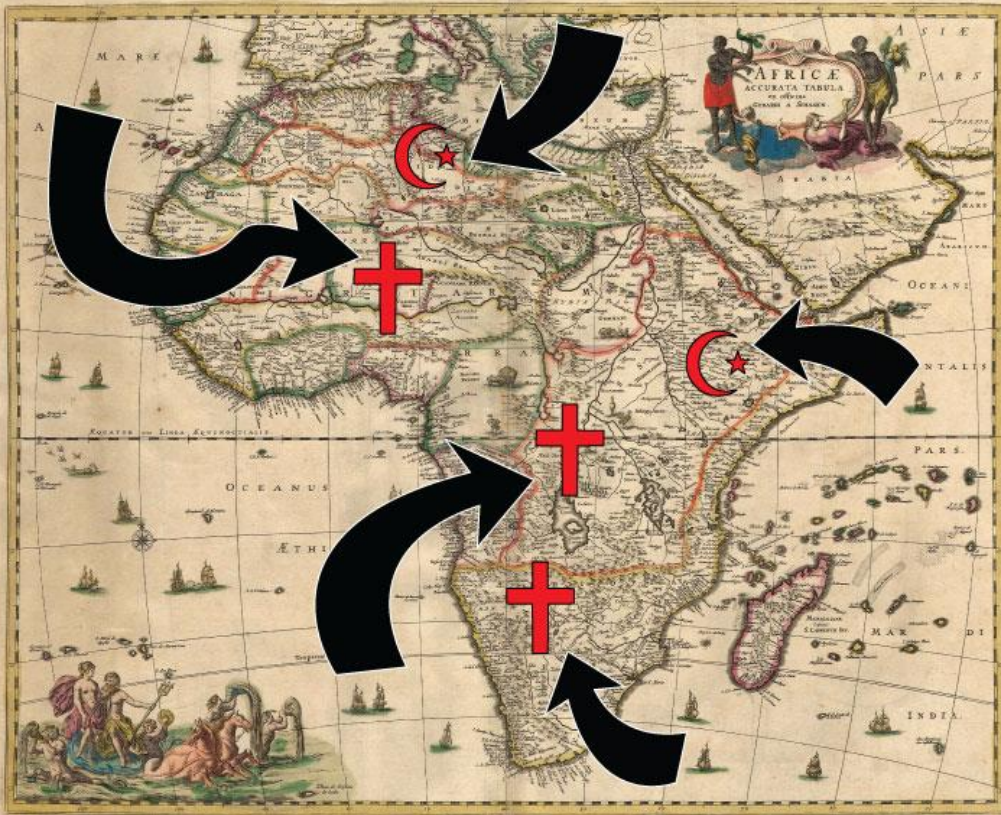
Bantu

- The **Bantu**-speaking people of Africa migrated in many waves from **the region just south of the Sahara to the central and southern parts of Africa** over **2,000** years ago
- Settled as far south as the southern tip of Africa
- The Bantu migration was **one of the largest movements of people** in Africa's history
- Today, the speakers include many **different ethnic groups** (hundreds of related languages)
- Over **60 million** people in central and southern Africa speak **Bantu**-based languages and share some part of Bantu culture



Bantu

- Religion
 - **Traditional** religions
 - Animists believe spirits are found in natural objects and surroundings
 - Some are **Christian**, and some are **Muslim**
 - Religion is based on **where they are located** (dominant religion of where they are located)



Bantu + Arab = Swahili

Swahili

- The Swahili community developed along the coast of **East Africa** when **Arab and Persian** traders began to settle there and intermarry with the local **Bantu**-speaking population
- The resulting **Swahili** culture is a mix of people who can claim ancestors in Africa, in Arabia, and across the Indian Ocean.
- Swahili is considered a **Bantu** language, but there are many **Arabic** elements in it as well
 - Swahili comes from Arabic and means **“one who lives on the coast”**



Swahili



- Religions
 - Because of historical contact with Arab traders, most Swahili today are **Muslims**. Islam helped create a common identity for such a diverse group of people.
 - Many among the Swahili also follow **traditional religions/local beliefs** that have been a part of their culture since before the Muslim traders arrived. These local beliefs are known as **mila**. (One belief of mila is that there are spirits that can possess a person.)



Literacy Rate and the Standard of Living

- Literacy has a huge effect on the standard of living in a country
 - Those who cannot read or write have difficulty finding decent jobs
 - Lack of education limits highly skilled jobs that countries need in order to improve



Literacy Rate and the Standard of Living

Country	Total Literacy Rate	Literacy of Males	Literacy of Females	GDP, per capita*
Burkina Faso	21%	21.8%	15%	\$1,300
Congo	67%	80.9%	54.1%	\$300
Egypt	71.4%	83%	59.45%	\$5,500
Ghana	51.9%	66.4%	49.8%	\$1,400
Kenya	85.1%	90.6%	79.7%	\$1,700
South Africa	86.4%	87%	85%	\$9,800
Sudan	61.1%	71.8%	50.5%	\$2,200
United State (for comparison)	99%	99%	99%	\$45,800

* *Gross Domestic Product* is the value of all goods and services produced within a country in a given year (converted into US dollars for comparison). When divided into a value *per capita* (or per person), it can be used as a measure of wealth or living conditions in the country. The higher the GDP value, the better the living conditions in the country.