Chapter 22: West Africa

Unit 6
Section 1: Physical Geography
Landforms

• West African countries:
  – Benin
  – Cape Verde
  – Cote d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast)
  – Gambia
  – Ghana
  – Guinea
  – Guinea-Bissau
  – Liberia
  – Nigeria
  – Senegal
  – Sierra Leone
  – Togo
Landforms

- Mostly a tropical region, but does vary in some areas
- Desert
- Shoreline
- Low Plains
- Highlands
- Rain Forests
Landforms

• Lagoons—shallow bodies of water that are separated from the ocean by islands, these islands lie parallel to the shoreline
• Largest lagoon in West Africa= Ebrie Lagoon
  – 218 sq. miles
• Used to see many rain forests in this region...what happened?
Landforms

• Mountains and Plateaus:
  – Guinea Highlands
    • Nimba Range
    • Loma Mountains
    • Tingi Mountains

• Other areas are dry:
  – Sand dunes
  – Salt flats
  – Gravel plains
  – Stone plateaus
  – Dry valleys
Water Systems

• Important to people, animals, and vegetation

• Lagoons and Mangrove swamps
  – Shelter for marine animals
  – Food for people: crabs, clams, oysters, fish
  – Mangrove trees can provide firewood

• Marshes
  – Habitats for raising marine animals
  – Place for migrating birds to rest and eat
Water Systems

• Atlantic Ocean
  – Fishing

• Lake Chad
  – Was second-largest wetland in Africa
  – Still used for irrigation for crops
  – Still used for fishing

• Lake Volta
  – Man-made lake
  – Water is used to supply farms, homes, and business with freshwater
Water Systems

- Senegal River
- Niger River
- Volta River
- River Plain—plain formed by the deposit of sediment over a long period of time by one or more rivers.
  - Great agricultural land.
Climates, Biomes, Resources

- Northern areas to Southern Areas:
  - Desert
  - Semi-arid steppe
  - Savanna grassland
  - Tropical

- Rain??
Climates, Biomes, Resources

- Oil
- Natural Gas
- Coal
- Gold
- Uranium deposits
- Conflict/Blood Diamonds
Section 2: Human Geography
History and Government

• Ghana Empire was the first empire to emerge from this region
  – Very rich trading civilization in the area
  – Salt mines in the Sahara
  – Gold mines farther south
  – 300-1200s (AD)
  – Islam became prevalent
History and Government

• Mali Empire developed later
• 14\textsuperscript{th} century: Songhai Empire
  – Broke away from Mali Empire after Mansa Musa died
  – Continued into the 1600s, conquered by the Moroccans
• Hausa city-states-located between the Niger River and Lake Chad
  – Formed around 1000 AD, independent and had alliances with other empires.
• Kingdom of Benin developed into a major empire from 1200-1800s.
  – Traded with Portuguese and Dutch
  – Slave trade
Colonization

• Lots of resources which attracted powerful foreign countries

• Berlin Conference (1884-1885):
  – Result: countries of Africa that we see today
  – No African input, only European powers made decisions

• Liberia???
Decolonization

• Issues arose:
  – Boundaries were drawn between countries without consideration for the Africans that lived there
    • For example: different language groups being forced to live together, or Christian and Muslims who had historically fought being put within the same country
  – Government corruption and power struggles
  – Adaption of European style...African countries could not create their own identity
Society and Culture Today

• Thousands of ethnic groups in the area
• Hundreds of languages spoken
  – Lingua Franca
• Religions: Islam, Christianity, animism
• Education and health care varies by levels of wealth
Economics

• Some people run their own small businesses
  – E-commerce-
    buying/selling on the internet
    • Allows people to sell all over the world
• Most people are subsistence farmers
• Small percentage works in commercial farming
• Mining and oil
• Trade
Section 3: Human-Environment Interaction
Managing Resources

- Corruption
- Environmental issues
- Food scarcity
- Carrying Capacity
- Erosion
- Fisheries