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DOCUMENT BASED QUESTION

**Was Mansa Musa the richest person
who ever lived?**

WEST AFRICAN KINGDOMS

Mini Document Based Question: *Was Mansa Musa the richest person who ever lived?*

LESSON TITLE	BIG IDEA	STUDENT OBJECTIVE
Evaluating evidence to determine if Mansa Musa was the Richest person in history	Big Idea: Some questions may remain unanswered Essential Questions: (1) Was Mansa Musa the richest person who ever lived? (2) How do we conduct research on the internet in order to answer a historical question?	Students will evaluate the credibility and reliability of online resources to determine if Mansa Musa was the richest person in history.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will read a timeline about Mansa Musa to establish context about Mansa Musa; following, students will conduct internet research on who the richest people in the world are. Students will then practice their sourcing skills to find credible and reliable sources on the internet in order to answer the question, "Was Mansa Musa the richest person who ever lived?" This lesson will require students to evaluate three levels of historical sources and develop their own critical historical narrative based on the evidence.

PURPOSE OF LESSON

It is difficult for students to navigate the internet and find appropriate primary and secondary sources. In this lesson students will learn how to effectively research a historical question while simultaneously learning about West African Kingdoms during the Middle Ages.

TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. (Optional) As a class review the timeline of Mansa Musa's Life and watch Ted Ed Video on Mansa Musa (4 minutes).

2. Explain to the class that they will be determining if Mansa Musa was the "richest" person who ever lived by researching various sources on the internet (Note: Many sources claim Mansa Musa was the richest person who ever lived, but there is very little evidence to truly determine if this claim is accurate). Read the timeline in order to establish context.

3. Students will conduct research online and complete page 2 Mini Mansa Musa DBQ. They will be searching for who the richest person alive as well as the five richest people who have ever lived (Note: Most top searches will claim Mansa Musa is, but none cite their evidence). Students will answer questions 1-5 on page two regarding the research they found.

4. (Discussion) Once students have completed the initial research, as a class evaluate the sources where they found the information (Did they cite their evidence? Does the site have advertisements? What kind of source is it: news, entertainment, blog, education etc.? Would any of these sites be credible or reliable to cite in an academic paper?)

5. Students will then analyze the sources and answer the questions on the following pages. Each of these sources are either level 2 (credible and reliable sources) or level 3 (Primary sources). Students must analyze the two sources and determine if they answer the DBQ question, "Was Mansa Musa the richest person who ever lived?" (Answers may vary. Technically there is not wrong answer, as long as they reflect on the source as evidence to answer a historical question). For students who need additional support, provide the website links for students to access (see below). **Note: Use the Internet Research Guide to help students find appropriate resources online.**

6. Once students have completed the evidence that was provided, students must attempt to find sources that are credible and reliable and a primary source that attempts to answer the historical question, highlight the authors provided to help find primary sources. (Note: This will be difficult. There is very little evidence that definitively "proves" that Mansa Musa was the richest person or not- which is the point of the lesson).
   a. (Discussion questions) Was there a lot of evidence to support that Mansa Musa was the richest person who ever lived? Where did the "news reports" and level 1 sites get their information? Is there enough evidence to support if he was the richest man who ever lived?

7. After students have searched for evidence to determine if Mansa Musa was the richest person who ever lived, students will need to develop a claim. They can create their own claims or for more scaffolded support, provide the claims for them: 1) Mansa Musa was the richest man who ever lived. 2) Mansa Musa was not the richest man who ever lived. 3) There is not enough evidence to support if Mansa Musa was the richest man who ever lived.
   a. Students will defend their claims, using the evidence that they had found be writing a well constructed 2 paragraph essay. They should establish a claim, use historical evidence to support their claim and either confirm, refute or challenge the DBQ question.

(For students who need support, you can provide these resources)

Level 1 Sources: Basic sources to gain background knowledge
1. Blog (with primary sources)
2. Mr. Dowling.com on Mansa Musa
3. Encyclopedia Britannica

Level 2 Sources: Secondary Sources
1. Blackpast.org
2. Jim Jones (Educational website with primary sources)
3. Met Museum: African History

Level 3 Sources: Primary Sources
1. Al-Umari cited in Levitzion and Hopkins Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History (Cambridge University Press 1981) pp. 269-273.
2. British Museum (Multiple Primary sources)

WEST AFRICAN KINGDOMS

Question: *Was Mansa Musa the richest person who ever lived?*
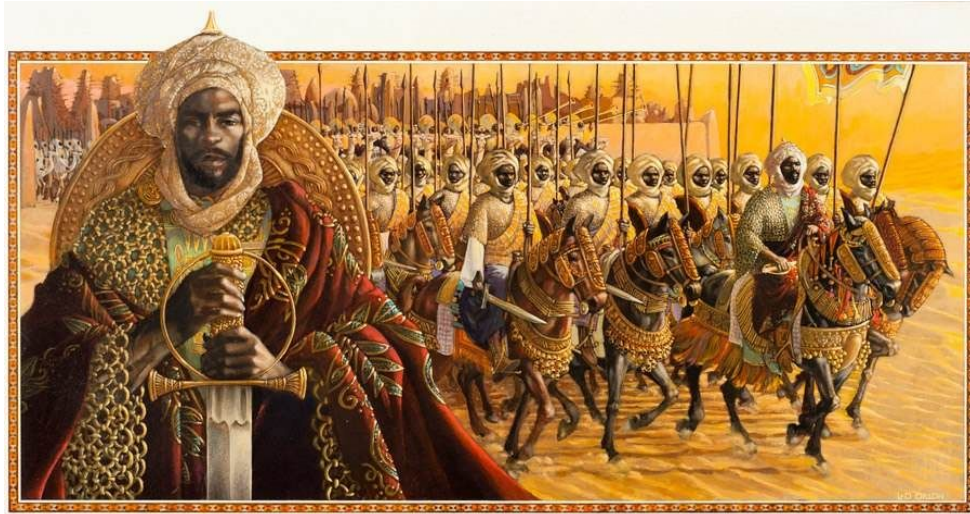
Establishing Context: Timeline

Approximately 1280 CE	Mansa Musa, also known as Musa Keita I of Mali was born in the kingdom of Mali.
Approximately 1311-1312 CE	The King of Mali, Abu Bakr II left on his Hajj to Mecca with over 2,000 boats, he left Musa in charge as Emperor. When Abu Bakr never returned Mansa Musa was declared King.
1324 CE	Mansa Musa starts his pilgrimage to Mecca with over 60,000 men, 12,000 slaves and enough provisions and gold to last the trip.
1324 CE	Musa Visits the Sultan of Egypt in July.
1325 CE	Mansa Musa returned to Mali, bringing with him scholars and architects.
1325 CE- to the end of his reign	Mansa Musa's army conquer nearby cities. Mansa Musa makes Timbuktu a center of trade, scholarship, culture and Islam.
1325 or 1337 CE	Mansa Musa died, reports vary when he passed away.
1339 CE	Mali appeared on the Map of the World in Europe.
1354 CE	Ibn Battuta visits Mali
1375 CE	Another map is produced in Europe with Mansa Musa at the center with a gold nugget in his hand.

STUDENT RESEARCH

Question: *Was Mansa Musa the richest person who ever lived?*
Evaluating Sources Activity

Internet Research
Google Search: *Richest person alive today*

1. _____Approx. Net Worth_____

Internet Research
Google: *Richest people who ever lived*

1. _____Approx. Net Worth_____

2. _____Approx. Net Worth_____

3. _____Approx. Net Worth_____

4. _____Approx. Net Worth_____

5. _____Approx. Net Worth_____

Questions to answer:

1. What is the name(s) of the internet sources that you used?

2. Do they have advertisements for products on the sides or bottom of the website? (yes or no)

3. Does the Author cite their sources where they found this information? If so, what articles or who do they cite where they got their information?

4. Should we trust the information on this site to determine who was the "richest person who ever lived?" Why or why not?

5. What questions would you need answered to determine how rich someone is or was in the past?

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

Question: *Was Mansa Musa the richest person who ever lived?*
Evaluating Sources Activity Level 1-2 Sources/ Research

Source 1

"The North African Scholar, al-Omari, who lived in Cairo a few years after Mansa Musa's visit and wrote about it, declared that of all the Muslim rulers of west Africa Musa was 'the most powerful, the richest, the most fortunate, the most feared by his enemies and the most able to do good to those around him.'"

Source: Davidson, Basil, 1914-2010. West Africa before the Colonial Era: A History to 1850, Longman, London;New York, 1998.
(This book is considered a secondary source, but he includes many primary sources to support his claims, such as the quote above)

1. Does this source help us answer the DBQ question? Why or why not?
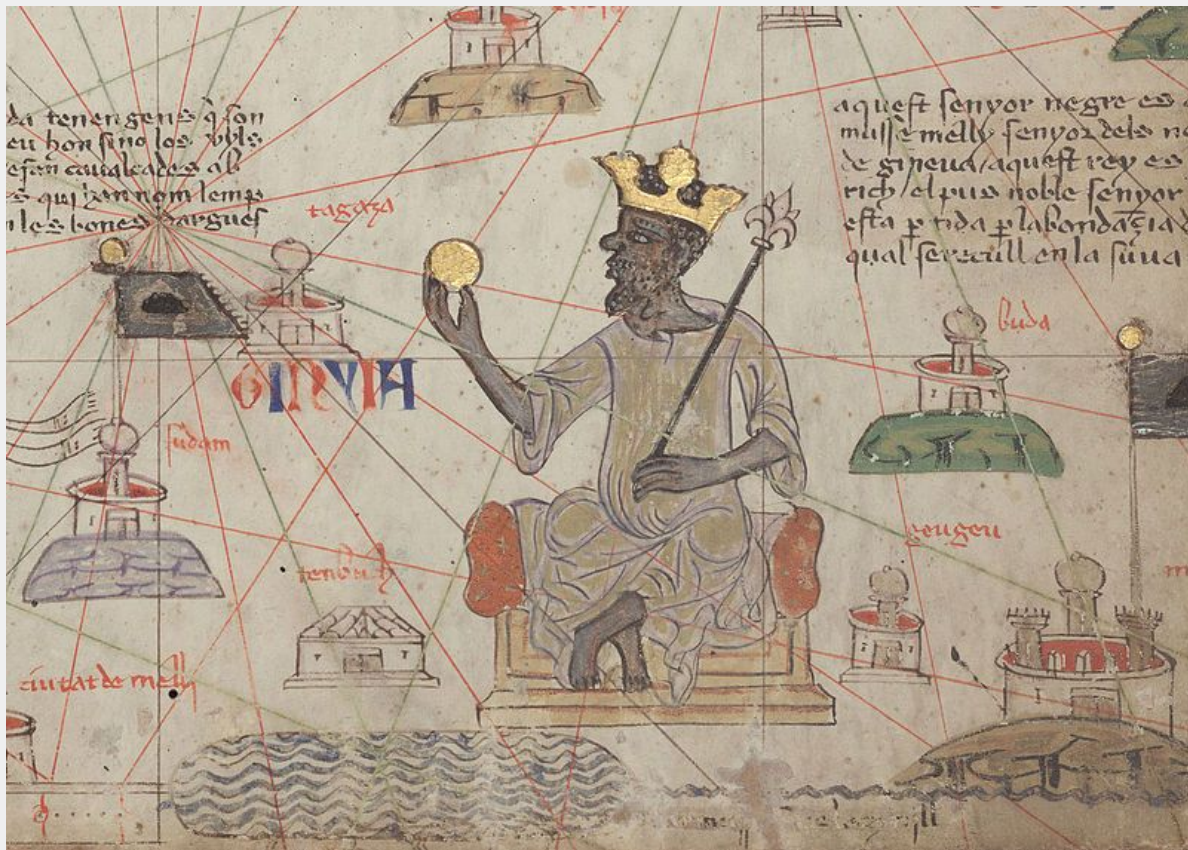
Your turn:

Find a quote (1-2 sentences) from a Level 2/3 web source that answers the DBQ Question:

Write the Source (Author, title of source and year of publication):

2. How does this help us answer the DBQ Question?

Source 2:

Type of Source: Painting (Atlas in pen and colored inks)
Date of Publication: 1375
Artist: Abraham Cresques

3. Does this source help us answer the DBQ question? Why or why not?

Your turn:

Find a quote (1-2 sentences) from a Level 3 (primary source) web source that answers the DBQ Question:
Hint: Here is some authors who wrote about Mansa Musa close to when he was alive: Ibn Battuta, Al-Umari, Mahmud Kati, Al-Dukhari.

Write the Source (Author, title of source and year of publication):

4. How does this help us answer the DBQ Question?

Writing Response 2-3 well crafted paragraphs
Remember: Use evidence and cite your sources. You may only cite evidence from various sources.

5. Based on your historical research can you answer the question: Was Mansa Musa the richest person who ever lived? Is there enough evidence to suggest he was or is there evidence lacking (missing)?

Possible claims to defend:
1) *Mansa Musa was the richest person who ever lived.*
2) *Mansa Musa was not the richest person who ever lived.*
3) *There is not enough historical evidence to support whether or not Mansa Musa was the richest person who ever lived.*

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INTERNET RESEARCH GUIDE

How to use the internet to find credible and reliable information
to answer your historical questions

First, break apart your research question:
Example: How did Ghana and Mali become powerful empires in West Africa
during the 300-1600's? You can search for "Mali Empire" "Ghana Empire" "Empires of West Africa" "West Africa in the
300-1600's" "Rise of Ghana and Mali"

① Level 1: The beginning of your research

Steps in historical research	Types of Resources	Dos and Don'ts
1. Get a general overview of of your topic.	❏ Wikipedia ❏ Youtube ❏ Educational Websites (These are usually produced by teachers for educational purposes) ❏ News sites (Not recommended) ❏ Reference Websites ❏ Blog Posts (Be careful, people can lie or make things up)	Dos! ✓ Read through the various websites. Take notes on a google doc and copy and paste any website URLs that you want to remember for later reference. ✓ Find out where the author got the information, take notes on any books or names of historians they used. ✓ Read with a purpose, keep trying to answer your historical question. Don'ts! ✘ Avoid sites with advertisements ✘ Stay away from blogs or Reference websites ✘ Never give your personal information like email or phone number

② Level 2: Start searching for credible (is the author an expert?) and reliable (are the facts accurate?) sources

Steps in historical research	Types of Resources	Dos and Don'ts

2. Search for credible and reliable sources (Secondary). (Start taking notes and compile a list of URLs for reference).	❏ Museums (Search: Museums Ghana Empire)
	❏ Encyclopedias (by a reputable organization)
	❏ Books (Search: Books on Ghana Empire)
	❏ University Research (Search: University research on Ghana and Mali)
	    ❏ University of Michigan
	    ❏ Boston University
	    ❏ Stanford University
	❏ References from other sources (Example: Wikipedia- Scroll down to notes and see where the authors got their information).
	❏ Textbooks (But make sure you cite who published it)
		Dos!
		✓ Use research that has the name of who wrote it (Unless it's from a university or museum)
		✓ Google the author that wrote it. Are they experts in that field (Like a professor or wrote multiple books)
		✓ Make a list of books you want to read and ask your librarian (at school or the city library) if they have the books. Don't forget to ask really nicely.
		✓ Copy and Paste the URL and pieces of evidence in your note taking template.
		✓Use URLs ending in: .EDU & .ORG
		
		Don'ts!
		✘ Don't give up. Research takes a long time.
		✘ Don't use information if you don't know where it came from (meaning, don't use it if you don't know the author or the institute or company that made it)

		✘ Don't use sources with URLs ending in .COM

③ Level 3: Start searching for primary sources

Steps in historical research	About the Resources	Dos and Don'ts

3. Find primary sources to help support your thesis (answer to your historical question)	❏ Search for "Primary source documents on Ghana and Mali"
	  ❏ Example, but now find the original source. The original source is from "Abu Ubayd Al-Bakri" and the title of his book is called: Books of roads and kingdoms.
	  ❏ British Museum Compiled Primary sources
	❏ For US history, search the Library of Congress of primary sources
		Dos!
		✓ Use educational websites, from universities or museums.
		✓ Google the authors or source titles and try to find the original. (Example: I googled Abu Ubayd Al-Bakri and went to images. An image of his original manuscript.)

Thank you
for your purchase

My Mission

I believe that students need to learn how to think critically in order be successful in the 21st Century Workplace. By implementing Historical Thinking Curriculum you are giving your students the opportunity to acquire new strategies that will help them be critical consumers of information.

The Curriculum

The Curriculum was designed for middle-high school students of all abilities. The lessons are rigorous and challenging but provide many opportunities for student differentiation and support. Each lesson was designed to be aesthetically age appropriate with minimal distractions. The goal of each lesson to to build a repertoire of new critical thinking skills that will serve our students for a lifetime.

Thank you for your support and your commitment to your students. Follow my blog for more resources for your classroom:

www.TeachHistoricalThinking.com