Map of Africa
Information about Africa

- Africa is the second-largest continent after Asia. Present-day Africa was once part of a large continent known as Gondwanaland, which included Australia, Antarctica, South America, Madagascar, and the Indian subcontinent. Later, these continents drifted apart.

- Africa has about 12% of the world's population — approximately 700 million people (second only to Asia).

- The earliest-known prehuman fossils were found in Africa (Kenya, Tanzania).

- Early African civilizations and influences include: ancient Egypt, the Romans, the Phoenicians, Arab culture and the Muslim faith, and powerful African kingdoms including Ghana, Mali, Kanem-Bornu, and Songhai, Ashanti, Benin, Kongo, Oyo, Dahomey, Ankole, Buganda, Bunyoro, Luba, and Lunda.

- During the 19th Century, European countries (Portugal, France, England, Belgium Germany, The Netherlands) colonized Africa and the spread the Christian faith.

- In the 20th Century, most countries have become independent of colonial rule.

- The geography of Africa varies from deserts such as the Sahara (the largest desert in the world) to rain forest jungles, mountains, high plateaus and grasslands, rivers and lakes, and the Great Rift Valley (a giant trough that runs from the Dead Sea to Mozambique and Swaziland — 4,300 mi).

- African climates are mostly tropical, but some subtropical and temperate climates exist at northern and southern extremes as well as high elevations.

- Africa's major rivers include the Congo (13 percent of the world's hydroelectric power potential), the Nile (the world's longest river — 4,132 mi), the Zambezi (includes Victoria Falls), the Niger, the Ubangi, and the Orange. Lake Tanganyika is the world's second-deepest lake (4,710 ft).

- Animal life in Africa is very diverse and includes elephants, gorillas, chimpanzees, monkeys, wild pigs, bongos, crocodiles, hippopotamuses, lizards, snakes, an abundance of bird life (flamingos, pelicans, herons, storks), rhinoceroses, wildebeests, giraffes, zebras, buffalos, antelopes, lions, leopards, cheetahs, hyenas, jackals, many insects, and fish.

- Africa's largest game reserves are Tanzania's Serengeti National Park, Kenya's Tsavo Park and Amboseli Game Reserve, and South Africa's Kruger National Park.

- Africa has approximately 40% of the world's hydroelectric potential.

- Africa's plentiful minerals resources include petroleum, iron ore, copper, manganese, platinum, chromium, vanadium, gold, aluminum ore, bauxite, diamonds, cobalt, and zinc.

- Africa is a mosaic of peoples, languages, and cultures. Most Africans identify first with members of their own tribe or nation. In the 19th century, colonial boundaries created by Europeans split some tribes and created uncomfortable relationships for others. Even though most countries are free of colonial rule, intertribal rivalries still exist in many areas.

- Over 800 languages are spoken in Africa.

- The dominant religion of northern Africa is Islam (155 million believers). Christian churches claim a membership of 140 million (mostly south of the Sahara). Many traditional African religions also exist.
Traditional Instruments of Africa (South of the Sahara)

African Musical Instruments today include a wide variety of traditional instruments (below) plus modern Western instruments such as electric guitars, saxophones, basses, trumpets, and keyboards of all types. The names of instruments vary with each region and tribe.

IDIOPHONES (main parts vibrate)

**Dawuro** – one of many types of single iron bells shaped like a curled up leaf; played with metal beater

**Gankogui** (see Video, 8) – metal double bell found throughout West Africa; played with wooden stick

**Mbira** (also known as sansa or kalimba) – a handheld hollow box or board with metal tongues plucked with thumbs; often played inside a large gourd resonator; it may have bottle caps or other metal attached to produce a buzzing sound

MEMBRANOPHONES (membrane vibrates)

**Apentemna** – a goblet-shaped drum carved from one large log; found among the Akan people of Ghana; played with hands or sticks

**Donno** (see Video, 16) – one of the many names for the hourglass-shaped talking drum; throughout West Africa; played with an L-shaped stick

**Sogo** – a barrel drum found among the Ewe people of Ghana; played with hands or sticks; a gankogui — double bell — is pictured in front

**Shekere** (see Video, 2) – a medium-sized calabash gourd which has outer netting with attached seeds or shells

**Slit Drums** – (not pictured) also known as slit gongs are large hollow logs played with large wooden beaters; they are the ancient relatives of the modern wood block or tongue drums
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**Frame Drums** (see Video, 15) – may be round or rectangular; played with the hand

**Djembe** – a goblet-shaped drum played throughout West Africa

**CHORDOPHONES** (string(s) vibrates)

**Musical Bow** – a single stringed instrument; played by plucking or hitting the string with a stick; often with an attached gourd resonator

**AEROPHONES** (air column vibrates)

**Natural Horn** – made from an animal horn (kudu horn pictured); blown like a trumpet

**Flute** – natural wooden flutes of all sorts are played throughout Africa

**Tube Zither** – strings (may be from the body of the tube) around a hollow wooden tube

**Panpipes** – a bundle of reeds or hollow wooden tubes of graduated lengths; played by blowing over the top

**Arched Harp** – one of many types of stringed harp-like instruments (including the *Kora*) found throughout parts of Africa; plucked
Music of West Africa: Characteristics

- Music is used for a wide variety of purposes such as:
  - Recreation - dancing, singing, drumming, concerts
  - Rituals and ceremonies - celebrating the life cycle, tribal or national functions, medical rites, religious gatherings
  - Occupational - work songs, preparing food
  - Social - child care, story telling, social games, parties
  - Language - drumming and signalling are used to send messages

- Master musicians, such as master drummers or master mbira players, are common and represent the musical "stars" of African music. They often lead drumming, singing, and dancing activities. Younger children learn by apprenticeship.

- Most West African languages are tonal and musical patterns and names of instruments reflect this.

- West African music is one of the two musical systems (combined with European music) which has given birth to the many forms of American music such as jazz, rock, and other forms of popular music.

- West African musical style and practice:
  - Almost all music is taught and learned orally/aurally.
  - West Africans sing and play together easily; unity and teamwork is easily achieved. An example of this would be the rhythmic singing and clapping children's games.
  - One of the most common forms is call and response — alternation between a leader and the group. This common form carries over into African American spirituals, work songs, blues, and jazz.
  - The texture of the music is often complementary layered patterns. This is sometimes referred to as polyrhythm or polymeter (multiple rhythms and meters occurring at the same time — particularly 3-against-2).
  - Ensembles of drums, bells, and rattles organize themselves around a time line, most often played by a bell or double bell which can cut through the drums, rattles, and singing.
  - Off-beat phrasing called syncopation is common. This also becomes a hallmark of African American music.
  - Music is a part of most activities and is frequently combined with other art forms such as dance. Music and movement are usually linked to each other.
  - Buzzy (or raspy) tone quality is favored in both singing and on instruments. Loose wires or bottle caps are often attached to instruments or gourd resonators to provide a constant buzz when an instrument is played. This has become the favored sound quality of African American music, jazz, and rock.
Africa Quiz: Map and Other Information

Find the 10 numbers on the map, and write the names of the countries in the blanks below.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 

Multiple Choice: Write the letter of the best answer in the blank to the left of each question.

11. Africa is the: (a) first (b) second (c) third (d) fourth largest continent in the world.
12. Which of these civilizations or countries had little or no influence on Africa before 1900? (a) France (b) Egypt (c) Greece (d) Rome (e) Portugal (f) Arab culture (g) The Netherlands
13. The longest river in the world is the: (a) Mississippi (b) Nile (c) Amazon (d) Congo (e) Zambezi.
14. The main religion of northern Africa is: (a) Christianity (b) Hinduism (c) Islam (d) Buddhism.
15. The word used to describe a group of people in Africa with their own culture and language is: (a) tribe (b) clan (c) country (d) assembly (e) region.
16. Which answer best describes the number of languages spoken in Africa? (a) over 100 (b) over 300 (c) over 500 (d) over 800

Matching: Write the letter of the best matching item from the right columns in the blank to the left.

d. Ghana e. Kenya f. Tropical
g. Dead Sea to Swaziland h. Tanganyika
18. Early pre-human fossils found here i. Serengeti
19. World’s second deepest lake j. Somaliland
20. Early large continent which included Africa k. Sahara
21. World’s largest desert l. Niger gorge
22. Large African game reserve m. Ethiopia
23. The main climate of Africa n. Gondwanaland
Quiz: African Music and Instruments (South of the Sahara)

Write the names of the instruments in the blanks below.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

Multiple Choice: Write the letter of the best answer in the blank to the left of each question.

7. The musical leader who leads drumming, singing, and dancing is called the:
   (a) soloist  (b) kwane  (c) master drummer  (d) mbira  (e) chief

8. When an African musical leader plays or sings a short solo followed by the group answering with a set pattern, the form is called:
   (a) echo  (b) call and response  (c) question and answer  (d) rondo

9. Off-beat phrasing — accenting off the beat is called:
   (a) syncopation  (b) polytonal  (c) meter  (d) agogo  (e) dawuro

10. The time line in African drum ensembles is most commonly played by a:
    (a) drum  (b) rattle  (c) guitar  (d) bell

11. The buzzy quality found on many African instruments comes from:
    (a) a loose drum head  (b) extra strings  (c) attached pieces of metal  (d) scraping with a stick

12. Multiple meters or beats (such as 3-against-2) occurring at the same time in African music is called:
    (a) call and response  (b) polyrhythm  (c) syncopation  (d) question and answer

Short Essay: Describe how African drum ensembles work — how bells, rattles, various types of drums and soloists all fit together to make music.