

2024

AP[®]



AP[®] African American Studies

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

Inside:

Short-Answer Question 2

- ✓ **Scoring Guidelines**
- ✓ **Student Samples**
- ✓ **Scoring Commentary**

Image of Mali Equestrian Figure, Thirteenth to Fifteenth Century



Smithsonian National Museum of African Art

-
2. Using the image, respond to parts A, B, C, and D.
- A. Describe one significant feature of the Mali Empire represented by the figure depicted.
 - B. Describe one way figures like the one depicted serve as evidence challenging misconceptions about early African societies like that of the Mali Empire.
 - C. Using a specific example, explain one way Mali's strength as an empire was similar to or different from another African empire before 1650.
 - D. Using a specific example, explain one way an artistic or cultural practice in the African diaspora after 1650 incorporated elements of African traditions.

Question 2: Non-Text Source**4 points**

-
- (A) **Describe one significant feature of the Mali Empire represented by the statue depicted.** **1 point**

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- A feature of the Mali Empire represented by the statue is their use of horses to extend their power over neighboring groups.
- The Mali Empire's wealth and access to trans-Saharan trade routes enabled its leaders to crossbreed powerful North African horses and purchase steel weapons.
- The statue serves as evidence of the military might of the Mali Empire, as Mansa Musa's calvary is said to have included 10,000 soldiers.

-
- (B) **Describe one way sculptures like the one depicted serve as evidence challenging misconceptions about early African societies like that of the Mali Empire.** **1 point**

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- This figure demonstrates the complexity of Africa, countering notions that the continent was not connected to the larger global community before the Atlantic slave trade.
- The sculpture from the Mali Empire serves as evidence of the powerful societies that existed in Africa. This artifact demonstrates Africa as a diverse continent, countering perspectives of Africa's contributions to humanity.
- Sculptures like the one depicted in the image challenge misconceptions about early African societies like Mali by showcasing the artistic and cultural sophistication of these societies.

-
- (C) **Using a specific example, explain one way Mali's strength as an empire was similar or different to another African empire before 1650.** **1 point**

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- The strength of both the Mali Empire and the Kingdom of Zimbabwe came from wealth accumulated through trade. The Mali Empire was the center for trade in gold, salt, and enslaved people along the trans-Saharan trade routes. Similarly, the Kingdom of Zimbabwe flourished through its trade in gold, ivory, and cattle resources with states along the Swahili Coast.
 - While the strength of both the Mali Empire and Aksumite Empire came from wealth accumulated through trade, their trading routes were different. The Mali Empire grew its wealth from trade along the trans-Saharan trade routes, while the
-

Aksumite Empire emerged in east Africa and expanded due to its trade along the Red Sea and Mediterranean maritime trade networks.

- The Mali Empire and the Kingdom of Zimbabwe were both powerful empires/kingdoms but differed in their approaches to defense. The Mali Empire's use of North African horses and use of steel weapons allowed it to extend power over neighboring groups. The kingdom of Zimbabwe, on the other hand, used a more defensive approach and built stone structures to provide military protection for the kingdom and its resources.
- Strengths of both the Mali Empire and Kingdom of Kongo were drawn in large part from wealth accumulated through trade. The Mali Empire grew its empire and wealth from trans-Saharan trade in gold, salt, and enslaved people. The Kingdom of Kongo gained its wealth through trade and through its political ties with the Portuguese. Ivory, salt, copper, and textiles were the primary goods traded by the Kingdom of Kongo to increase its wealth.

(D) Using a specific example, explain one way an artistic or cultural practice in the African diaspora after 1650 incorporated elements of African traditions. 1 point

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- African Americans developed instruments such as the banjo, drums, and rattlers from gourds to recreate instruments similar to those used in West Africa. They were able to create musical genres using elements from Africa.
- African descendants incorporated African rhythmic and performative elements such as call and response, clapping, and improvisation with biblical themes which would later form the foundation for American musical genres such as gospel and blues.
- As enslaved Senegambians arrived in large numbers in Louisiana, they brought with them the fodele musical system. This musical system would later influence the development of American blues.
- The Black is Beautiful movement celebrated and encouraged African Americans to strengthen their connections to Africa by embracing their natural hair, African dress such as dashikis and African headwraps, and using Akan adinkra symbols such as the Sankofa bird.
- In Haiti, Brazil, and various parts of the Southern United States, members of the African diaspora incorporated African cultural and religious practices to develop their own traditions; these syncretic practices included ancestor veneration in various forms as a common practice.

Total for question 2 4 points

A. One significant feature of the Mali Empire represented by the figure is the empire's crucial role in trans-continental trade. The Mali Empire, led by wealthy leaders like Mansa Musa, was a key player in the Trans-Saharan trade network by trading gold and ivory for valuable goods from across the Sahara desert. A man on horseback, which is depicted, was a key aspect of Trans-Saharan trade. Furthermore, the valuables on the horse and the rider and the horse demonstrate the immense wealth the Trans-Saharan trade brought to the Mali Empire.

B. The figure depicted serves as evidence challenging misconceptions about early African societies by demonstrating how citizens in the Mali empire rode horseback to participate in dynamic trade networks. One main misconception about African societies is that residents were nomadic and didn't participate in many activities past survival. However, this figure demonstrates how the Mali empire participated in the Trans-Saharan trade network because travel on horseback was a key aspect of the trade network. Because it displays the complexity of the Trans-Saharan trade network, the figure challenges the misconceptions of early African society.

C. Mali's strength as an empire was similar to Kongo's strength as an empire because both empires became powerful and wealthy from trade. As previously stated, the Mali empire grew valuable from trading gold and ivory along the Trans-Saharan trade network. Similarly, the Kongo kingdom grew wealthy from trading slaves to the Portuguese as part of the Columbian exchange or the Trans-Atlantic trade network. While differing in trade networks, both empires grew wealthy from trade.

D. One cultural or artistic practice in the African diaspora that incorporated elements of African traditions is Hip Hop. Hip Hop developed in New York around the start of the 20th century and it incorporated many traditional African elements including syncopated movements and call and response. Both syncopated movements and call and response are traditional elements of African song and dance that were incorporated into Hip Hop and other African diasporic music like the Blues.

A. One significant feature of the Mali Empire depicted by the image is their use of horses for trade. The Mali Empire were renowned for their strong, capable horses and frequently used them in trade and travel to expand their empire's reach across both Africa and intercontinental routes. Mansa Musa, the most powerful leader of the Mali empire, made great use of the region's horses to expand their trade routes and make his *Mecca*.

B. Figures like the one depicted serve as evidence challenging misconceptions of early African societies as primitive or lacking culture. The figure depicted serves as a testament to the art and culture in Mali, just as many other figures unearthed in Africa provide evidence of a multitude of strong cultures.

C. One way Mali's strength as an empire was similar to another African empire before 1640 was its abundance of gold, similar to many other African empires in the West Central African region like the Nok. Both Mali and the Nok, found in present-day Nigeria, were extremely wealthy due to large gold mines in their empires borders. This wealth made both empires strong trading powers across all of the Sahel and beyond.

D. One way an artistic or cultural practice in the African diaspora after 1650 incorporated elements of African tradition was the use of Queen Idia of Benin in the Second Festival for Black Arts and Culture, as a part of the Black Arts Movement in the United States. The festival celebrated Queen Idia's resistance to colonization and enslavement and used the famous mask of Queen Idia discovered as an artifact. This diasporic movement incorporated the tradition of Benin and their queen mothers into their celebration of Black Arts.

The jewelery displayed on the man and the horse is a prime example a significant feature of the Mali Empire, this jewelery depicts riches and value among both the man and the horse

Figures like the one presented challenge the previous narratives about early African societies because the man is presented with a helmet and armored gear as a sense of protection and many believe early African societies had no knowledge of common practices today like safety

Mali's strength as an empire is similar to

The practice of storytelling was prominent within African diasporic regions, this stemmed from elements of African traditions because it created a sense of unity and safety among people who were facing hardship under European leadership. Storytelling was prominent in Africa because it allowed for community engagement and enjoyment in times of difficulty

Question 2 – Commentaries

Sample Identifier: 2A

Score: 4

- The response earned 1 point for Part A for describing a significant feature of the Mali Empire: “One significant feature of the Mali Empire represented by the figure is the empire's crucial role in trans-continental trade. The Mali Empire, led by wealthy leaders like Mansa Musa, was a key player in the Trans-Saharan trade network by trading gold and ivory for valuable goods from across the Sahara desert. A man on horseback, which is depicted, was a key aspect of Trans-Saharan trade.”
- The response earned 1 point for Part B for describing one way the figure challenges the misconceptions about early African empires “by demonstrating how citizens in the Mali empire rode horseback to participate in dynamic trade networks.” The response continues, “One main misconception about African societies is that residents were nomadic and didn't participate in many activities past survival. However, this figure demonstrates how the Mali empire participated in the Trans-Saharan trade network because travel on horseback was a key aspect of the trade network.”
- The response earned 1 point for Part C because it uses a specific example to explain how Mali was similar to Kongo with regards to powerful trade networks: “the Mali empire grew valuable from trading gold and ivory along the Trans-Saharan trade network. Similarly, the Kongo kingdom grew wealthy from trading slaves to the Portuguese as part of the Columbian exchange or the Trans-Atlantic trade network.”
- The response earned 1 point for Part D for using hip-hop as a specific example to explain the relationship between the “syncopated movements and call and response.” It continues, “Both syncopated movements and call and response are traditional elements of African song and dance that were incorporated into Hip Hop and other African diasporic music like the Blues.”

Sample Identifier: 2B

Score: 3

- The response earned 1 point for citing travel and trade as a significant feature of the Mali Empire and the figure being symbolic of that travel and trade.
- The response for Part B earned 1 point for describing how the figure represents the vast presence of art and “strong” culture within the Mali Empire, and it references other similar figures from Africa that serve as additional evidence of “strong cultures.”
- The response for Part C did not earn the point because while the Nok were a strong and sophisticated people, the reference to the Nok region being similar to Mali based on both cultures having “large gold mines” as the foundation for their strength and wealth is inaccurate.

- The response for Part D earned 1 point by highlighting cultural touchstones like the Black Arts movement in the United States after 1965. The response notes that this “diasporic movement incorporated the tradition of Benin and their queen mothers into their celebration of Black Arts.”

Sample Identifier: 2C

Score: 1

- The response did not earn the point for Part A because it does not describe a significant feature of the Mali Empire as depicted in the image.
- The response did not earn the point for Part B because it does not adequately describe how the figure (and similar ones) challenged misconceptions of early African societies. The statement, “the man is presented with a [helmet]...as a sense of protection” is not enough to address the prompt sufficiently.
- The response did not earn the point for Part C because it is incomplete.
- The response earned 1 point for Part D by sufficiently explaining the significance of storytelling as a cultural practice in the African diaspora post 1650. The response adequately states, “Storytelling was prominent in Africa because it allowed for community engagement and enjoyment in times of difficulty.”