

The Benin Kingdom: Social Studies / History Assessment

Learning objective: To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Benin Kingdom, its societal structure, and its artistic achievements.

Read each question carefully. Use your historical knowledge to provide detailed answers. Ensure you use full sentences for written responses.

Ellie the elephant has been studying the mighty Benin Kingdom, located in what is now modern-day Nigeria. She has learnt that it was a highly organised society ruled by an Oba, or king. The city was famous for its intricate bronze sculptures and its massive defensive walls, which were some of the largest earthworks in the world. The people of Benin were expert traders, exchanging goods like pepper, ivory, and cloth with visitors from across the sea.

Word bank: Oba · Bronze · Benin City · Trade · Craftsmen · Empire · Plaques · Walls

1. Who was the ruler of the Benin Kingdom and what was his title? (1 mark)

2. Identify two goods that the people of Benin traded with visitors. (2 marks)

3. Describe the purpose of the bronze plaques found in Benin City. What do they tell us about the people who lived there? (3 marks)

4. Explain why the defensive walls of Benin City were considered an impressive engineering feat for the time. (3 marks)

5. Compare and contrast the life of a craftsman in the Benin Kingdom to the life of a trader. How did their roles support the wealth of the kingdom? (4 marks)

6. Justify your answer: Why do historians consider the Benin Kingdom to be a sophisticated and powerful civilisation? (4 marks)

7. Extended Writing Task: Imagine you are an artist living in Benin City during the reign of a powerful Oba. Describe a day in your workshop. What are you creating, and why is your work important to the Oba and the people of your city? (8 marks)

Draw: Draw a detailed scene of a Benin bronze plaque, featuring symbols of power such as the Oba or local wildlife like leopards.



Extension challenge: What might happen if the trade routes to Benin City were suddenly closed? How would this affect the Oba's ability to maintain his status and the city's infrastructure? Write a paragraph explaining the potential consequences. Total: /25