

Exploring the Kingdom of Benin

Learning objective: To understand the significance, achievements, and daily life of the Kingdom of Benin in West Africa.

Use your knowledge of the Kingdom of Benin to answer the questions below. If you need help, look at the word bank for key terms.

Ellie the elephant is visiting the historical archives to learn about the powerful Kingdom of Benin. Located in what is now modern-day Nigeria, this kingdom was famous for its complex society, skilled metalwork, and its impressive capital city. The people of Benin were master traders and artists, creating beautiful plaques and sculptures that told stories of their history and their ruler, the Oba.

Word bank: Oba · Benin City · Bronze · Trade · Craftsmen · Wall · West Africa

1. Who was the traditional ruler of the Kingdom of Benin, and what role did they play in the society? (2 marks)

2. The people of Benin were famous for their metalwork. What material were they particularly skilled at casting to create decorative plaques? (1 mark)

3. Why was the 'Great Wall' of Benin considered an incredible engineering feat for its time? (2 marks)

4. Explain one way that trade helped the Kingdom of Benin grow and become wealthy. (2 marks)

5. If you were a craftsman in the Kingdom of Benin, what kind of scene might you choose to carve onto a bronze plaque to record history? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene of the bustling streets of Benin City, including the palace of the Oba and some of the artistic bronze sculptures that decorated the city.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are a trader visiting Benin City for the first time. Write three sentences describing what you see, hear, and smell in the busy marketplaces.