

Exploring the Kingdom of Benin: Flashcards

Learning objective: To identify and understand key features, societal structures, and historical significance of the Kingdom of Benin.

Use these flashcards to test your knowledge of the Kingdom of Benin. Read the front, try to recall the answer, then check if you were correct.

Who was the ruler of the Kingdom of Benin?

The Oba, who was considered the spiritual and political leader of the kingdom.

What was the capital of the kingdom called?

Benin City, which was famous for its massive defensive walls and organized streets.

What material is the Kingdom of Benin most famous for casting into intricate plaques?

Brass, often used to create detailed artworks documenting history.

What were the groups of skilled workers called who specialised in crafts like ivory carving or brass casting?

Guilds, which were organisations of artisans who protected their trade secrets and standards.

What defensive structure surrounded the city to protect its inhabitants?

Earthworks, consisting of massive banks and ditches that served as a protective perimeter.

How did the Kingdom of Benin gain wealth and influence?

Through trade, specifically exchanging goods like pepper, ivory, and cloth with merchants from other lands.

Why were the brass plaques attached to the Oba's palace walls?

They acted as a historical record, documenting the achievements, ceremonies, and life of the Oba.

In what modern-day country was the Kingdom of Benin located?

Nigeria.

What did the size of the Oba's palace represent to visitors?

It symbolised the power, status, and wealth of the kingdom.

What does the term 'craftsmanship' mean in the context of Benin history?

The high level of skill and artistic quality shown by the people who created items like masks, beads, and bronze works.