

Exploring the Benin Kingdom with Ellie the Elephant

Learning objective: To understand the social structure, trade, and artistic achievements of the Kingdom of Benin.

Ellie the Elephant has been reading about the rich history of the Benin Kingdom. Use the Word Bank to correctly fill in the blanks to complete the historical facts about this powerful West African civilisation. Each word can only be used once.

Word bank: Oba · bronze · craftsmen · trade · walls · Edo

1. 1. The ruler of the Benin Kingdom was known as the _____. He was considered the spiritual and political leader of the people. (1 mark)
 2. 2. The kingdom was located in what is now modern-day Nigeria, and the people living there spoke the _____ language. (1 mark)
 3. 3. The city of Benin was famous for its massive defensive _____, which protected the city and controlled movement in and out. (1 mark)
 4. 4. Highly skilled _____ created beautiful plaques and statues to decorate the royal palace. (1 mark)
 5. 5. These famous artworks were primarily cast in _____, a metal alloy that shows the high level of technical skill the kingdom possessed. (1 mark)
 6. 6. The Benin Kingdom became very wealthy because they controlled the _____ of goods like ivory, pepper, and textiles with other regions. (1 mark)
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Draw: Imagine you are a royal artist in the Benin Kingdom. Draw a scene featuring a plaque that tells a story about a great achievement of the Oba, incorporating patterns and symbols you might see in traditional Benin art.



Extension challenge: Research why the Benin Bronzes are so significant to world history today. Write two sentences explaining why many of these items are now kept in museums across the globe.