The Kingdom of Benin: Assessment

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

Read each question carefully. Ensure you provide full sentences for longer answers. Total marks: 25.

Ellie the elephant has been reading about the Kingdom of Benin, a powerful forest empire in West Africa that thrived for centuries. Known for its sophisticated government, walled capital city, and incredibly detailed bronze plaques, the kingdom was a major centre for trade and art long before European contact. The Oba was the spiritual and political leader, supported by skilled guilds of artisans who created masterpieces to record their history.

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

1. Identify one major role of the Oba in the Kingdom of Benin. (1 mark) (1 mark)

2. Name two items that were commonly traded by the people of the Kingdom of Benin. (2 marks) (2 marks)

3. Why were the 'guilds' of artisans important to the history of the kingdom? (3 marks) (3 marks)

4. Describe the layout of Benin City. What does this tell us about the people who lived there? (4 marks) (4 marks)

5. Explain how the geography of the tropical forest influenced the way the Kingdom of Benin developed. (5 marks) (5 marks)

6. How did the Kingdom of Benin maintain its influence and wealth in the region? (5 marks) (5 marks)

Draw: Draw a sketch of a Benin bronze plaque design. Think about the patterns and symbols you have learned about in class.

Extension challenge: Imagine you are an explorer arriving at the walls of Benin City for the first time. Write a short diary entry (approx. 100 words) describing what you see. Total: /25