

# CPS SOURCE bySunday

What would you do if someone came into your house and told you that all your stuff now belonged to them? Think about the way you do everyday things and about your deeply held beliefs in religion, politics, or social relations. What if a group suddenly came and told you to forget those things (or else), and stated they were in charge? Most people would be, rightfully, really upset.

Throughout history land and possessions have been taken from whole countries of people. The idea of taking over another nation and claiming its people and resources as your own is called **imperialism**. During the Age of Imperialism (early 18th century to the mid-20th century), Europeans imposed their control over most of Africa.



#1998-0634  
Fishing Basket  
Congo, Central Africa  
ca 1915

Prior to the 1880s, Africans lived in a variety of ways. There were large kingdoms and urban centers, with smaller villages headed by elders and chiefs. Some Africans tended herds of animals while others were educated elites or Islamic religious leaders. Their lives centered on the family and clan. The fishing basket shown is very similar to early ones made before Europeans arrived - it reflects an item that was part of their daily lives.

Europeans changed these traditional ways and by imposing their beliefs and social structures. The first interaction between Europe and Africa occurred at coastal

outposts. Few Europeans ventured into the interior of the continent. But the Industrial Revolution brought new military technologies<sup>1</sup> to the hands of Europeans, along with motivations to exploit Africa's natural resources and raw materials.

The British, French, Belgians, Germans, and Italians increased their control over Africa to 90 percent by 1914. The changes Europeans brought drastically altered long-standing family structures and Europeans now stood atop a new hierarchy, with European-educated Africans below them, and with African workers at the very bottom. Small farms and pastures that dotted sub-Saharan Africa into commodity-producing plantations. The hats pictured above are what the Europeans colonists would wear while overseeing their new plantations to shield them from the sun.



#1998-0622  
Colonial Hats  
Congo, Central Africa  
ca 1915

Many cultural artifacts were taken out of Africa during this time and many of them have ended up in museums including collections are carved ivory and ebony. It is important to know that today in modern times it is illegal to collect ivory in most countries of the world.



#2008-12-001  
Ivory Fork and Spoon  
Congo, Central Africa  
ca 1900

<sup>1</sup> Technologies like the Maxim Machine Gun

## EXPLORE

To see more artifacts from Africa in the General Collection, visit the Museum of Anthropology's online databases:  
<https://anthromuseum.missouri.edu/?q=online-databases>

**Database Search Words:**  
Africa, Ivory, Ebony

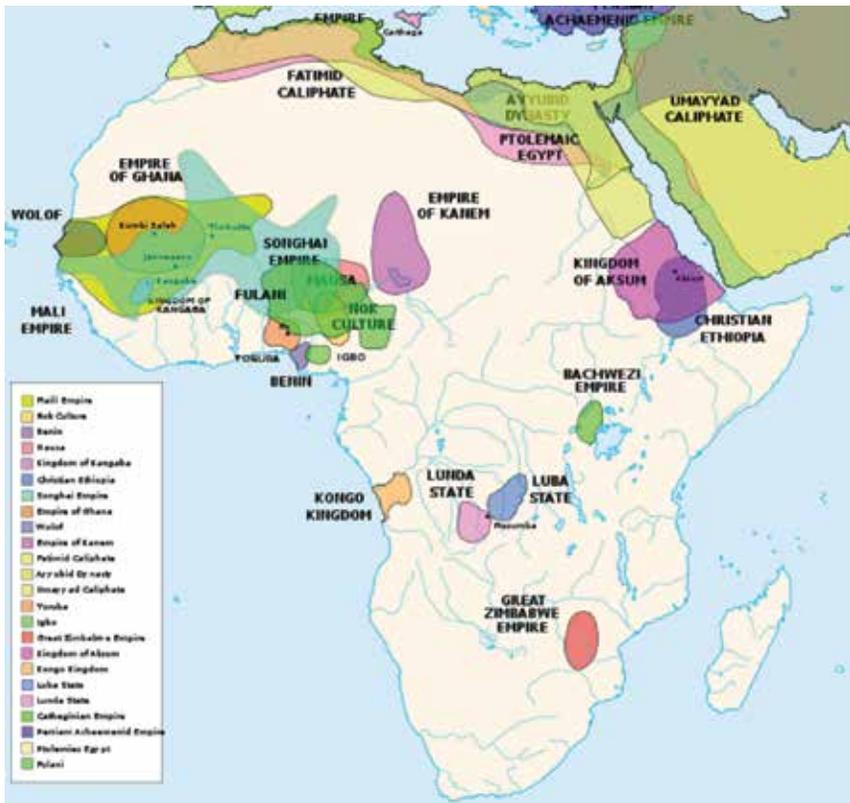
### Tips for Using the Museum Databases

- Log in as a "Guest."
- Enter search terms into one or more fields and click the "Perform Find" button in the status area on the left-hand side of the screen.
- Use the book icon in the status area to move from one record to another in the found set.
- Click on the magnifying glass icon to return to find mode and perform additional searches.
- When finished working with a database, please be sure to click the "Log Out" button in the status area to close your session.

## Contextualization:

# Africa Before Imperialism

For thousands of years, Africa has been host to some of the most complex things in the Universe: the human species, large brains capable of collective learning, the energy bonanza of agriculture, and the rise of powerful empires. After having agriculture and agrarian civilizations for thousands of years, sub-Saharan Africa was placed at a disadvantage to the rest of the world. Rising complexity was happening everywhere else-- Industrialism. In all, however, the height of imperialism in Africa only lasted from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. This period of domination was a few decades compared to the centuries of the slave trade that damaged the continent's societies and cultural fabric. The legacy of European colonialism echoes into Africa's troubles and challenges today. How Africa will recover and progress in the modern age is still uncertain.



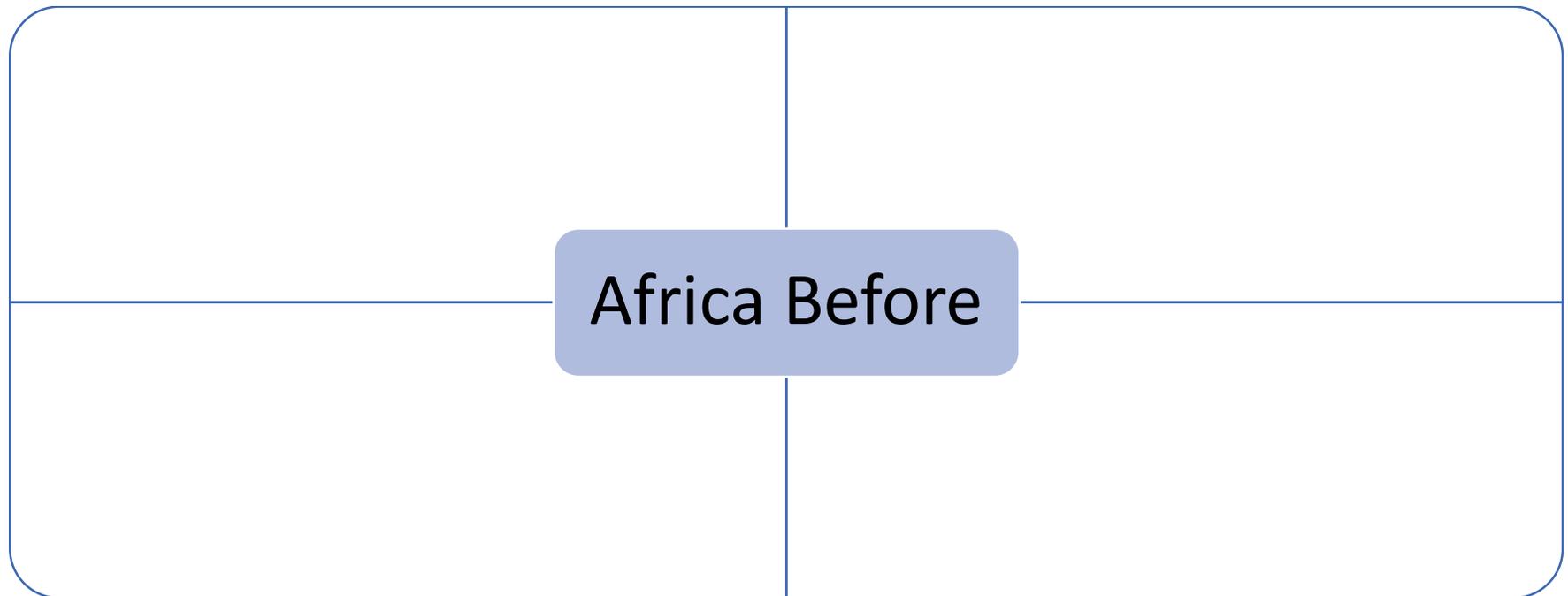
# Africa After Imperialism

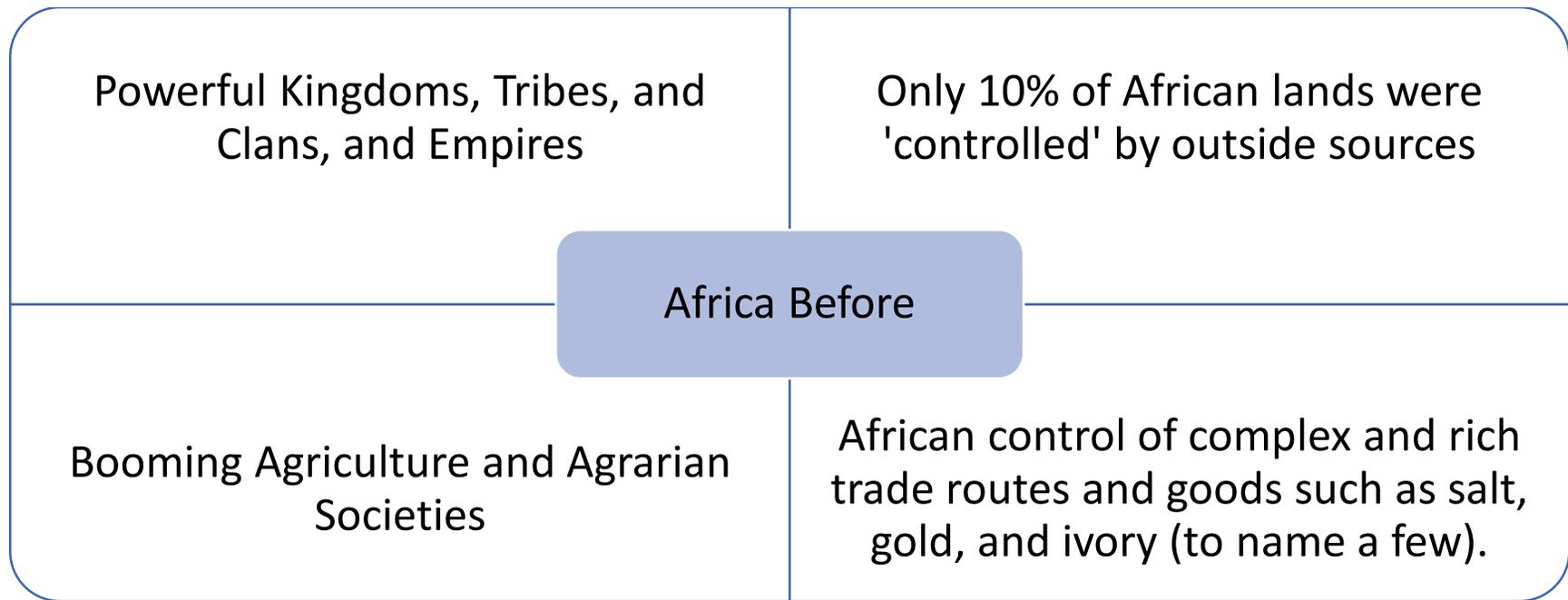
In the nineteenth century, a small European presence could dominate thousands of square miles in Africa and millions of people. Regions were not divided into African language or ethnic groups, but territories based on which European power dominated them. This had a ripple effect in the post-colonial era, as the borders of countries today still do not much reflect the cultures within them, but the lines drawn by Europeans. In extreme cases, like Rwanda, this placed two hostile ethnic groups within the same country. The result was war and genocide in the late twentieth century. During the period of European imperialism, raw materials were exported from Africa. Local African economies were not able to develop. If a region is sapped of its wealth, it means that more people are trapped in subsistence living, where they have to scrape by day by day. In contrast, an economy with resources can offer new jobs and new positions. In this kind of economy, collective learning can bloom. In this way, European imperialism in Africa deprived the entire world of the collective learning of millions of Africans. Lives were destroyed, entire peoples were transported to the other side of the world, and the human cost of this crime is still being felt by their descendants today.



*Africa before European Imperialism: C/C Activity*

Create a four-corner foldable, Label the center 'Africa Before'. Utilize your historical background knowledge, the article, the artifacts, the contextualization, and the maps to fill out one fact in each corner about what Africa was like before European Imperialism. Share with a partner and then discuss how Imperialism altered/changed African society, politics, culture, economy, and human and environmental interaction.





*Writing: Citing and Explaining Evidence (Supporting Details)*

Observe: Examine the images in the article. What are three important details you observe in the images in the article? Elaborate by explaining why these details are important using evidence from the article to support your thinking.