



Africa's Geography

Africa's Geography

- **Main Idea (Objective)** :



- Africa has a vast and varied landscape.

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Africa's Geography

- **Lecture Focus (Essential Question):**



- How can geography discourage people from exploring a new place? Lets look at the geographic features that made it difficult for people to travel across parts of Africa.

Africa's Geography

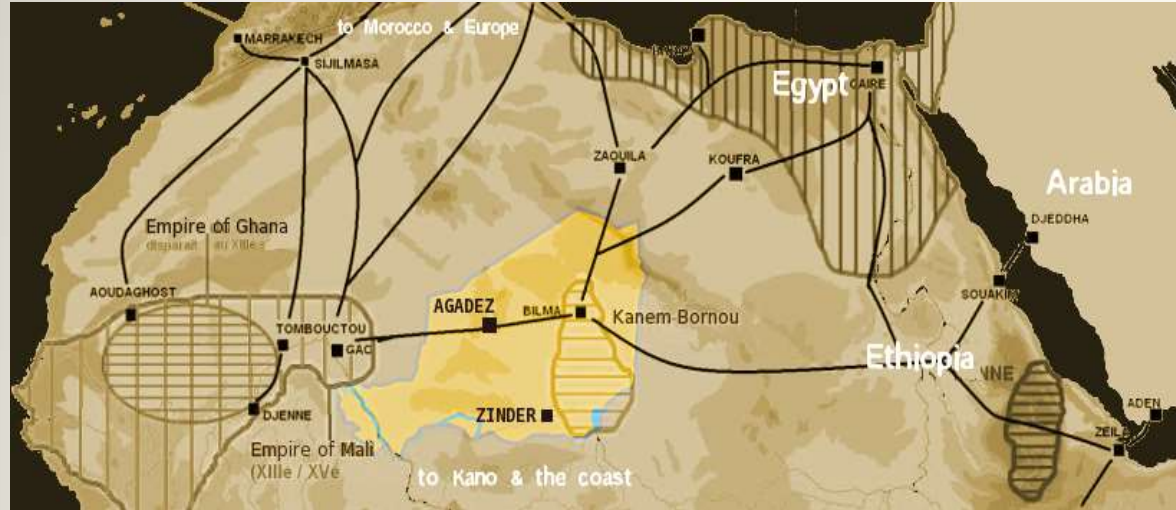


- In 1906 a teacher named **Hans Vischer** explored what he called the “**Death Road**”, a trade route connecting Western Africa to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. •

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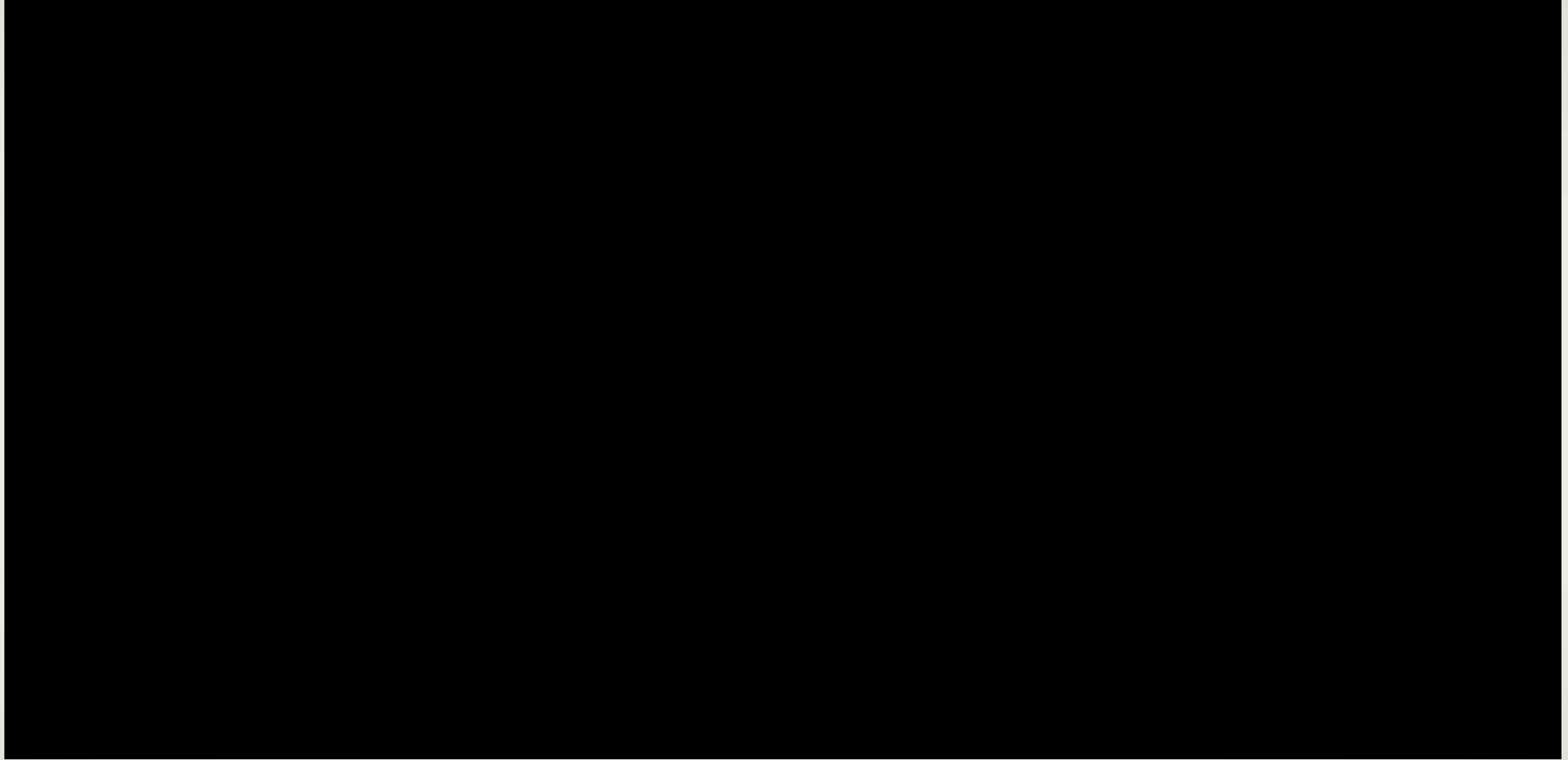
Africa's Geography

- No European or American had ever risked this particular journey before.



- The “**Death Road**” crossed more than 1,500 miles of the **Sahara Desert**, the world's largest desert.

Africa's Geography



- To get lost traveling through the Sahara meant certain death, however Vischer survived and change travel throughout Africa forever. •

Africa's Geography

- The word "Sahara" comes from the Arab word **Sahra**, meaning desert.



- • In terms of precipitation, only one place in the world receives less rain...the Polar desert of Antarctica.

Africa's Geography

- Only **Nomads** living in the region knew the way, but Vischer hoped to map the region properly.



- **Nomad** – people having no permanent dwelling, and who travel from place to place to find fresh pasture for their livestock.

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- Like the desert Nomads, Vischer's life depended upon finding **Oases**.



- **Oases** - a fertile spot in a desert where water is found.

Africa's Geography

- Upon his return to Europe, Vischer amazed people of his tales from the African Sahara.



- He recounted the stories of swirling sand winds and shifting sand dunes, which are phenomenon only found in a desert environment.

Africa's Geography

- **Questions:**
- **1)** Who was the teacher that explored the trade route in Africa known as the “death road”?
- **2)** What two areas did this trade route connect?
- **3)** How do you think that this particular area known as the “Death Road” got this brutal nickname?
- **4)** Why would people in Europe be amazed by Hans Vischer's stories of Africa's landscape?

Africa's Geography

- **Questions:**

- **1)** Who was the teacher that explored the trade route in Africa known as the “death road”?

- **Hans Vischer**

- **2)** What two areas did this trade route connect?

- **Western Africa to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea**

- **3)** How do you think that this particular area known as the “Death Road” got this brutal nickname?

- **Answers will vary!!!!!!!!!!**

- **4)** Why would people in Europe be amazed by Hans Vischer's stories of Africa's landscape?

- **Opinion...**

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A Vast and Diverse Continent



- Africa is the world's second largest continent.
- The United States actually fits into the African continent three times...with room to spare.

A Vast and Diverse Continent

- The **Equator** slices through the middle part of the continent and helps to create a hot, steamy rain forest that stretches along each side of it.



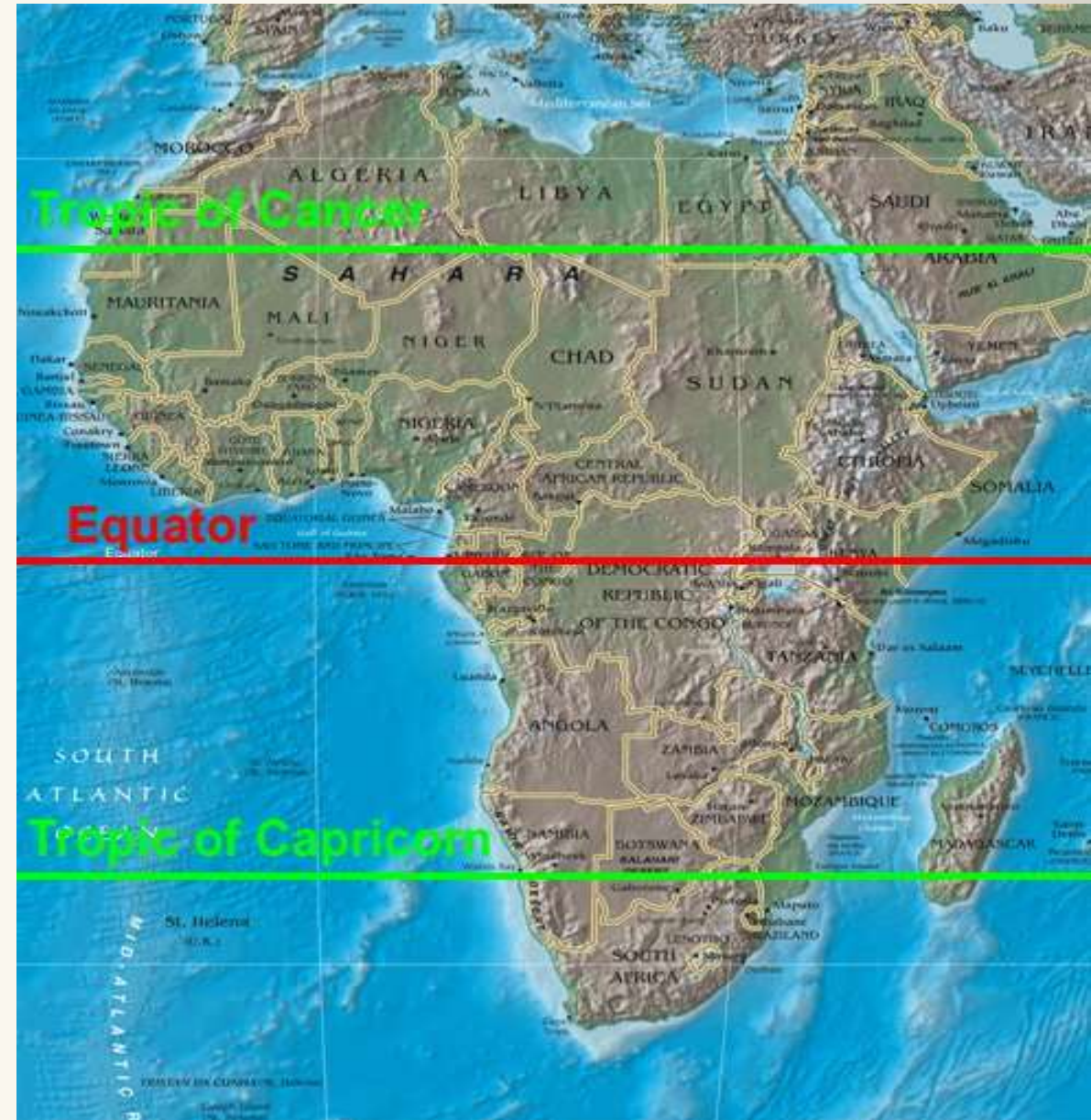
- Despite the size of these rain forest, they only cover about ten percent of Africa's total land mass.

A Vast and Diverse Continent



A Vast and Diverse Continent

- Most of Africa lies in what is known as the **tropics**.
- Here dry, sweeping grass lands grow for thousands of miles.
- Most of the tropical grasslands, known as **Savannas**, have high temperatures and uneven rain patterns.



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A Vast and Diverse Continent



- These wide-open grasslands are perfect for raising herds of animals, which was how the African Nomads survived in this harsh environment.

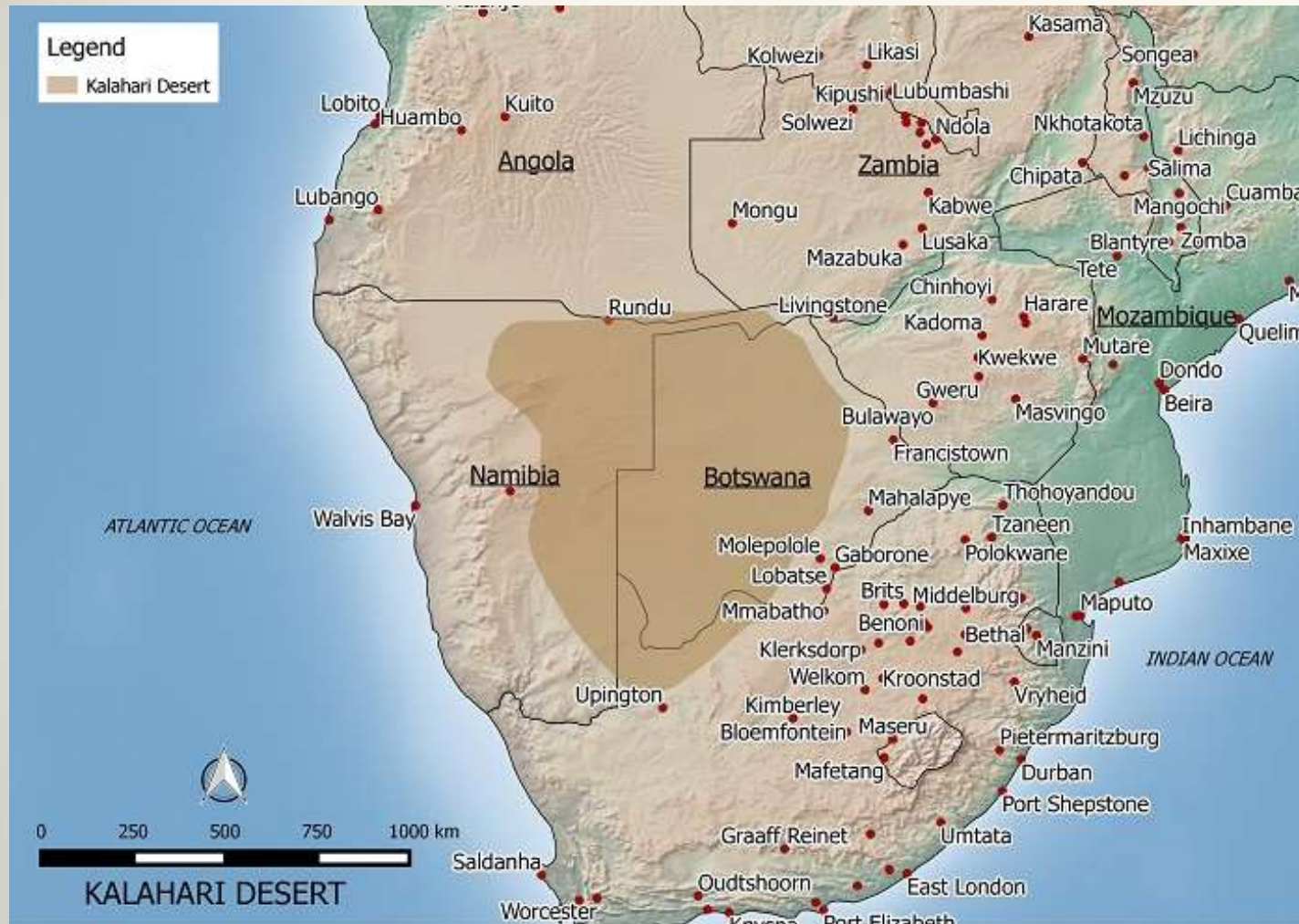
A Vast and Diverse Continent



- Actually for most of Africa's history, the people of the Savanna were hunters and herders.

A Vast and Diverse Continent

- North and South of the Savannas are deserts...the Sahara to the north and the Kalahari to the southwest.



- For many years, these unmapped seas of sand blocked travel...people had to follow the coastline if they wanted to get past the deserts.

A Vast and Diverse Continent

- Areas of mild climate, good for growing crops, are found along the Mediterranean Sea in northwest Africa and in the very south of the continent.



- These areas are vastly different from the center of the continent.

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A Vast and Diverse Continent

- **Questions:**
- **1)** What does the Equator help to create as it slices through Africa?
- **2)** What are Savannas?
- **3)** What are the names of the two major deserts located in Africa?
- **4)** How did travelers get past these deserts?

A Vast and Diverse Continent

- **Questions:**

- **1)** What does the Equator help to create as it slices through Africa?

- **It creates hot, steamy rain forests along each side of it.**

- **2)** What are Savannas?

- **Tropical grasslands that have high temperatures and uneven rain**

- **3)** What are the names of the two major deserts located in Africa?

- **The Savana Desert and the Kalahari Desert**

- **4)** How did travelers get past these deserts?

- **They had to travel along the coastlines to avoid these hazards**

The African Plateau

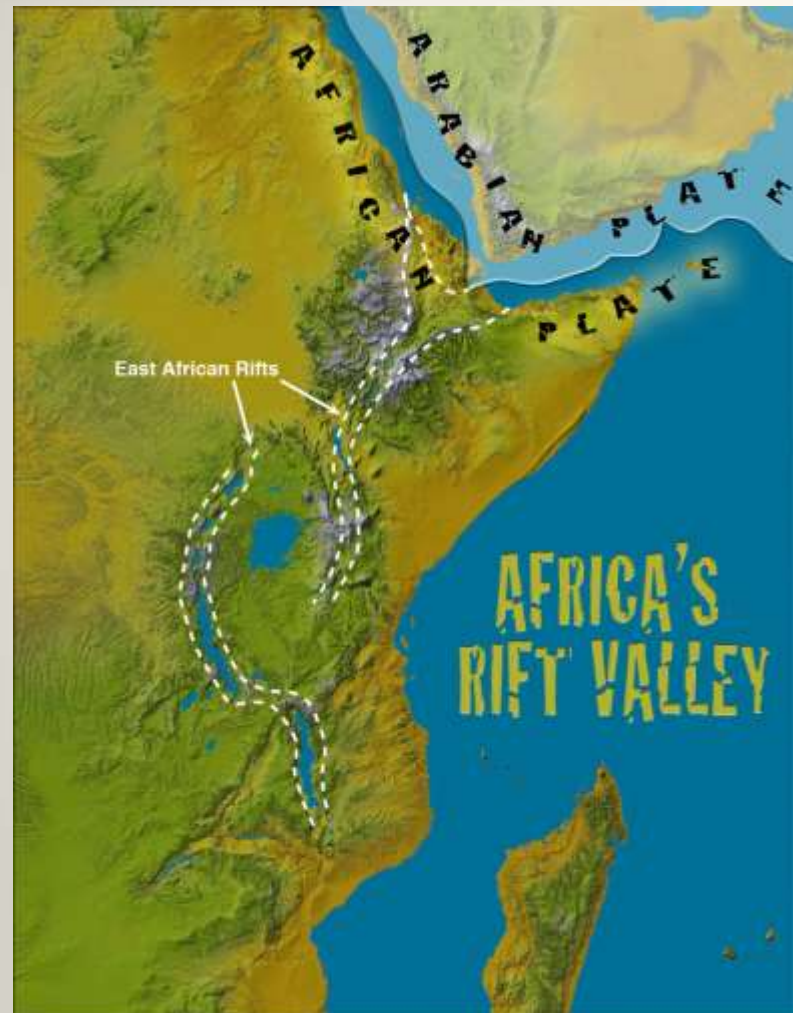
- Almost all of Africa except the coastal plains, rests on a **Plateau**.



- **Plateau** – An area of high, flat land.

The African Plateau

- In the east, movements of the Earth's crust millions of years ago cracked the continent and parts of the plateau's surface dropped.



- This event formed the **Great Rift Valley**, where some of the earliest human fossils have been found.

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The African Plateau



The African Plateau

- Africa's Great Rift Valley is a 6,000 mile crack in the earth's crust, stretching from Lebanon to Mozambique.
- Geologists know that the Rift Valley was formed by violent subterranean forces that tore apart the earth's crust.
- These forces caused huge chunks of the crust to sink between fault lines and force up molten rock in volcanic eruptions.
- Today there are numerous boiling hot springs located along the rift valley.



The African Plateau

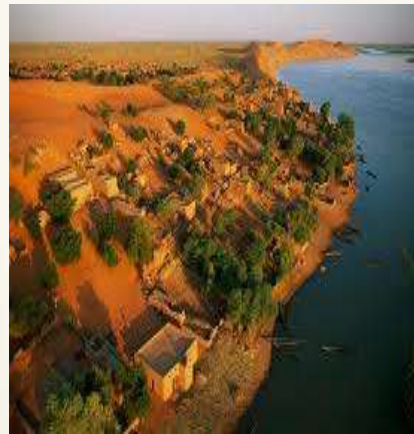
- Africa has many long rivers.



- You have already learned about the Nile River and the Egyptian and Kush empires that formed along its banks.

The African Plateau

- In West Africa, the **Niger River** is very important.



- The rich soil along the Niger helps to produce generous crops that gave rise to several very powerful civilizations.

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The African Plateau

- The Niger River also served as a way to unite the regions various peoples.



- Merchants and travelers spread goods, ideas and even religions along the banks of the Niger River.

The African Plateau

- **Questions:**
- **1)** Explain what a Plateau is?
- **2)** What is the Great Rift Valley and how was it formed?
- **3)** How was the Niger River important in the development of early African civilizations?

The African Plateau

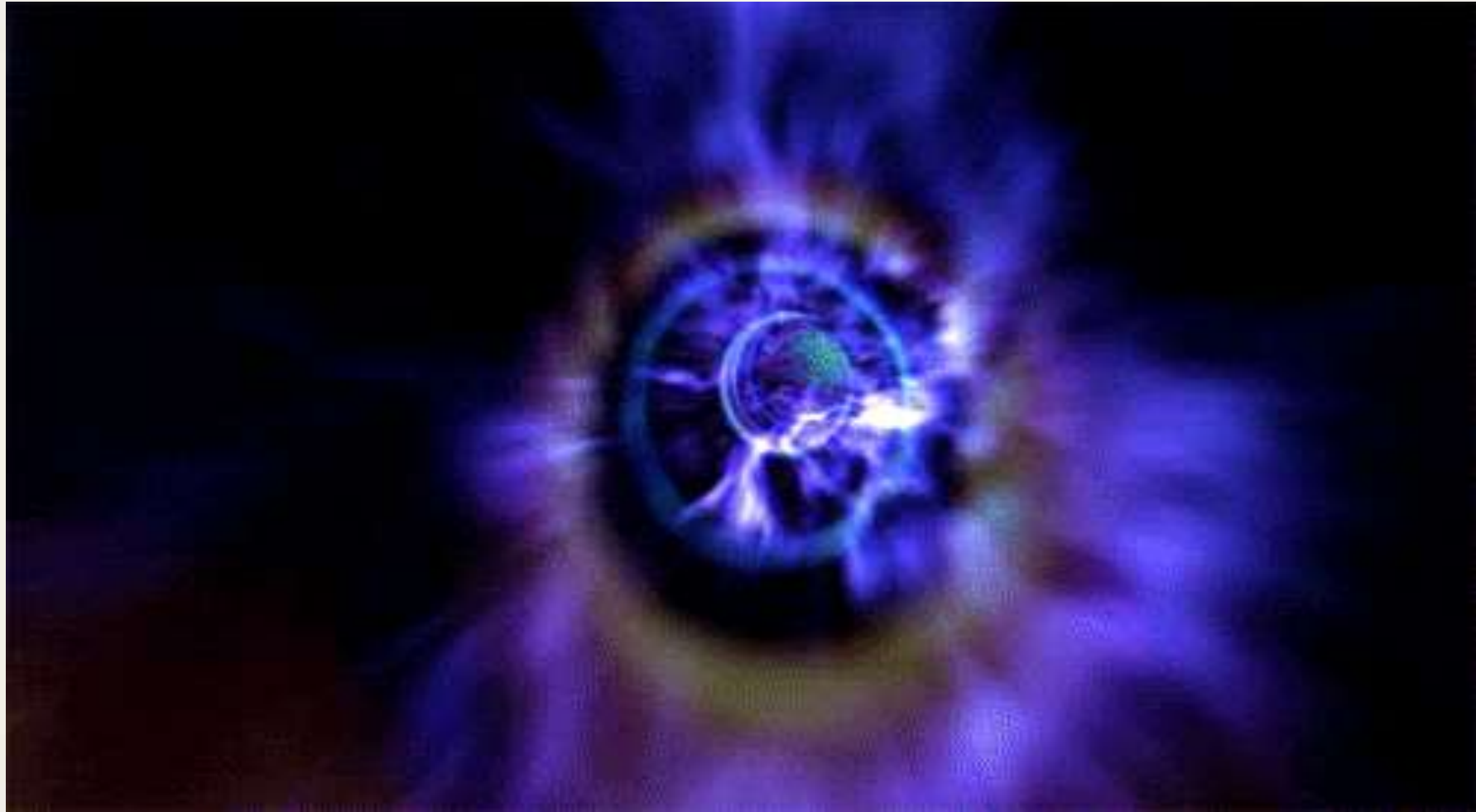
- **Questions:**
- **1)** Explain what a Plateau is?
 - **An area of high flat land**
- **2)** What is the Great Rift Valley and how was it formed?
 - **A 6,000 mile long crack in Eastern Africa that was formed subterranean and volcanic forces.**
- **3)** How was the Niger River important in the development of early African civilizations?
 - **It helped unit the region by allowing travelers and merchants to share goods and ideas**

The African Plateau

- **Lecture Check:**
- Answer the following question in a well crafted 2-3 sentence response.
- **Think about natural disasters that occur throughout our world...earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, mudslides etc. How would New Jersey and North Plainfield be effected by a geological disaster like the Great Rift Valley, How would life change?**

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The African Plateau



- Time Travel Time: **Contenders for Earliest Modern Human**

The African Plateau

- **Paleoanthropologists** (**The Study of ancient Humans**) agree that modern humans evolved in Africa about 200,000 years ago.



- The problem is fossil evidence for the earliest ***Homo sapiens*** is scarce...and it is difficult to recognize true modern humans in fossil form.

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The African Plateau



- Despite the challenges of identifying early humans, there are several candidates for the earliest known members of our species...here's a look at some of the top contenders.

The African Plateau

- The **Omo remains** are a collection of hominin bones discovered near the Omo River, in Ethiopia and are almost 195,000 years old.



- The bones were recovered by a scientific team from the Kenya National Museum.

The African Plateau

- The **Skhul/Qafzeh hominids** are hominid fossils discovered in the Qafzeh and Es Skhul Caves in Israel and are about 100,000 years old.



- Skhul Cave is on the slopes of Mount Carmel; Qafzeh Cave is a rockshelter in Lower Galilee.

The African Plateau

- **Cro-Magnon 1** is a fossilized human skull of the sub-species *Homo sapiens sapiens*...and this skull was one of the first ancient *Homo sapiens* fossils ever found.



- It was discovered, with other Cro-Magnon specimens, in Les Eyzies, France by Louis Lartet in 1868 and is about 30,000 years old.

The African Plateau