

Vegetation Regions of Africa

History from Visuals

Interpreting the Map

As students examine the vegetation zones on the map, point out that Africa is divided by the equator. Ask: How might this affect climates in Africa? (*Climates range from tropical near the equator to more temperate farther north and south.*)

**Extension** Find the approximate location of the Tropic of Cancer (running through the word *Sahara*) and the Tropic of Capricorn (running just above the Kalahari Desert) on the map. Explain that the tropics lie between these lines. Ask students to calculate about how many of Africa's 11.7 million square miles lie in the tropics. (*about 7 million*)

SKILLBUILDER Answers

- Place** about 40 percent for each
- Region** The zones more or less match up: rain forest with rain forest, savanna with savanna, desert with desert, and Mediterranean with Mediterranean.

More About . . .

Savanna Vegetation

Savanna vegetation has developed various "strategies" for survival. For example, acacia trees have tough bark, which protects them against grass fires. Small leaves and deep roots help them endure droughts. In addition, the trees have thorns and harbor biting ants, which discourage animals from eating the leaves.

1 The deadliest creature lurking in rain forests is a small fly called the tsetse fly. Tsetse flies carry a disease that is deadly to livestock and can cause fatal sleeping sickness in humans.



2 Sahel means "coastline" in Arabic. African people may have named it this because the Sahara seemed like a vast ocean of sand.

4 The dense trees and lack of edible vegetation in the humid rain forest make it an unwelcoming environment for most people.



3 The savannas are home to herds of animals such as giraffes, wildebeest, and antelope. They also support grain crops of millet, wheat, and maize (corn).



**GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps**  
 1. **Place** About what percent of Africa is desert? savanna?  
 2. **Region** If you were to fold a map of Africa in half along the equator, what do you notice about the similar vegetation zones above and below the fold?

DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION: STRUGGLING READERS

Comparing Maps

**Class Time** 30 minutes

**Task** Studying maps to identify key ideas

**Purpose** To emphasize how geography influences exploration

**Instructions** Show Geography Transparency GT5 and recall with students their learning about ancient Greek exploration. Then have students compare the ancient Greek map of Africa with the map on this page. Point out how the Greek depiction of Africa is both similar to and

different from the modern-day depiction. For example, both maps show Africa's Mediterranean and Red Sea coasts, as well as the Nile River. The maps differ in how they show Africa's southern limits. Point out that the Greeks were familiar with the north coast of Africa, but they did not travel far inland. Stress the challenges of Africa's geography, and point out that many explorers over time struggled to map the continent accurately. Ask students to study the map on this page and identify African geography likely to hinder exploration.



Geography Transparencies

**Welcoming Lands** The northern coast and the southern tip of Africa have welcoming Mediterranean-type climates and fertile soil. Because these coastal areas are so fertile, they are densely populated with farmers and herders.

Most people in Africa live on the **savannas**, or grassy plains. Africa's savannas are not just endless plains. They include mountainous highlands and swampy tropical stretches. Covered with tall grasses and dotted with trees, the savannas cover over 40 percent of the continent. Dry seasons alternate with rainy seasons—often, two of each a year. Unfortunately, the topsoil throughout Africa is thin, and heavy rains strip away minerals. In most years, however, the savannas support abundant agricultural production.

## Early Humans Adapt to Their Environments

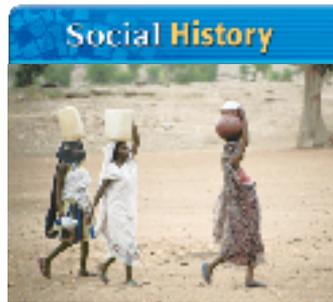
The first humans appeared in the Great Rift Valley, a deep gash in Earth's crust that runs through the floor of the Red Sea and across eastern Africa. As you learned earlier, people moved outward from this area in the world's first migration. They developed technologies that helped them survive in—and then alter—their surroundings.

**Nomadic Lifestyle** Africa's earliest peoples were nomadic hunter-gatherers. Today, some of the San of the Kalahari Desert and the BaMbuti (bah•uhm•BOO•tee) of the rain forests of Congo are still hunter-gatherers. The San, for example, travel in small bands of a few related families. The men hunt with spears and bows and arrows, and the women and children gather roots and berries.

Other early Africans eventually learned to domesticate and raise a variety of animals for food. Called herders, or pastoralists, these people kept cattle, goats, or sheep. They were nomads who drove their animals to find water and good pastures for grazing during the dry season. Millions of modern Africans are pastoral herders as well. The Masai (mah•SEYE) of Tanzania and southern Kenya, for example, still measure their wealth by the size of their herds.

**Transition to a Settled Lifestyle** Experts believe that agriculture in Africa probably began by 6000 B.C. Between 8000 and 6000 B.C., the Sahara received increased rainfall and turned into a savanna. But about 6000 B.C., the Sahara began to dry up again. To survive, many early farmers moved east into the Nile Valley and south into West Africa. Some settled on the savannas, which had the best agricultural land. Grain grew well in the savannas. In addition to growing grain, Africans began to raise cattle. In areas where the tsetse fly was found, it was not possible to keep cattle. However, south and east of the rain forests, cattle raising became an important part of agricultural life. Other Africans learned to farm in the rain forest, where they planted root crops, such as yams, that needed little sun.

Agriculture drastically changed the way Africans lived. Growing their own food enabled them to build permanent shelters in one location. Settlements expanded because reliable food supplies led to longer, healthier lives and an increased birthrate. The increased food supply also freed



### Social History

#### Collecting Water

Finding and collecting water traditionally has been the job of women, whether they have a settled lifestyle or a nomadic one.

Each day they set out to find clean water for their families. Drought in Africa, which has lasted for many years, has increased the difficulty of finding clean water. In the past, it was estimated that women spent about nine minutes a day collecting water. In 2003, that time increased to 21 minutes, and women had to walk as far as six miles (about 10 kilometers) to find the water.

Obtaining clean water will continue to be a challenging daily task, even for people who have made the transition to a settled lifestyle on small plots of land.

#### INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

**INTERNET ACTIVITY** Create a photographic report outlining African clean water problems and solutions. Go to [classzone.com](http://classzone.com) for your research.

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## Early Humans Adapt to Their Environments

### Critical Thinking

- What do you think daily life is like for the San of the Kalahari Desert? (Possible Answer: very difficult, with daily struggles for water and food)
- Why would complex settlements require more government than smaller communities? (Possible Answer: to organize who would do which tasks)

## Social History

### Collecting Water

African vegetation needs water too. Drought in Africa has led to shortages of feed grasses. In the drought of 1997, Masai herders traveled hundreds of miles in search of grass for their starving cattle. The cattle ate whatever grass they could find, including several acres surrounding the transmitters of the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation. KBC officials ultimately allowed the Masai to use the land, possibly to avoid the cost of cutting the grass.

#### INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

**Rubric** Successful reports should

- clearly explain the problems.
- identify and discuss solutions.
- incorporate vivid visuals.

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Making Inferences

Why might Africans continue living in a nomadic lifestyle?

#### A. Possible Answer

They have no reasons to change a lifestyle that has suited their culture for thousands of years.

## SKILLBUILDER PRACTICE: IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

### Learning to Recognize Stated and Inferred Problems

**Class Time** 15 minutes

**Task** Identifying environmental problems facing early Africans

**Purpose** To practice the skill of identifying problems

**Instructions** Identifying and summarizing the difficulties people face at a certain time in history can lead to a thorough grasp of a situation. In reading history, students will find that some problems are stated directly and some are implied by the ways people act. For example, gang violence probably indicates that larger problems exist in a community. Ask students the following questions, and discuss.

- What were some environmental problems for early Africans? (*lack of reliable food and water, desertification, lack of sunlight in the rain forest*)
- Were the problems stated directly in the text, or were they implied by people's actions? (*Some, such as the drying up of the Sahara, are stated directly. Most are implied. People's movement in search of food and water, for example, suggests a lack of these resources.*)

Have students use the Skillbuilder Practice worksheet for more questions and practice.

**SKILLBUILDER PRACTICE Identifying Problems**

**Section 1**

When you identify problems, you look for challenges a particular people faced at a certain time and see how they handled those challenges. You can read and find for problems that are stated directly in text or problems that are implied by the actions people take. Write your answers on separate sheets of paper.

**Directions:** **Desertification, Desertification, and Drought** Around 6000 B.C., the Sahara Desert was a lush savanna. In the 1970s, a major drought hit the Sahel. Farmers in the region could not grow crops, and many died of starvation. In the 1980s, many people fled to the Sahel from the rain forest. There they had to struggle to survive.

**Using the passage, identify environmental problems that were stated directly in the text and problems that were implied by the actions people took. Write your answers in the table below.**

Problems	Solutions	Desires

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In-Depth Resources: Unit 2