

AFRICA IN THE WORLD TODAY



Modern African Art African artists have influenced the development of modern art around the world. Senegalese artist Serigne N'Diaye paints on glass. This detail of his painting, *The City*, shows the artist's impression of life in Dakar. **Fine Art** Why are artists, musicians, and writers important to a society?

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- 1 Regional and Global Issues
- 2 The Republic of South Africa
- 3 Literature and the Arts

The magical beat of a talking drum pounds. Electric guitars run riffs up and down the scale. Above these sounds, Youssou Ndour sings in the Wolof language of Senegal. Ndour is among the most popular singers of West Africa. In the late 1980s, he gained worldwide fame during the “Human Rights Now!” tour. Along with other international stars like Bruce Springsteen and Sting, Ndour carried the message of human rights to audiences around the world.

Ndour’s music, known as *mbalax*, is one of many African musical styles. African popular music is as diverse as its people. Today, musicians from Senegal to South Africa are creating exciting new music by blending African sounds with western jazz, gospel, rock, and Latin beats.

“I’m an ambassador for African music throughout the world,” says Ndour. “If people become more interested in Senegal and if there is more interaction between

CHAPTER 5 REVIEW

Understanding Vocabulary

Match each term at left with the correct definition at right

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. guerrilla warfare | a. move toward multiparty system of government |
| 2. democratization | b. huge enterprise with branches in many countries |
| 3. multinational corporation | c. refusal to buy certain goods or services |
| 4. boycott | d. attachment to one's own group |
| 5. ethnicity | e. hit-and-run attacks by small bands of fighters |

Reviewing the Main Ideas

1. What means did Kwame Nkrumah use to help Ghana win its independence?
2. (a) Why is economic dependence a problem for African nations? (b) What steps have leaders taken to end economic dependence?
3. Describe three changes that are taking place in family life in Africa.
4. How has technology affected the lives of rural people in African nations?
5. Describe the achievements of Nigerians in (a) art, (b) music, (c) literature.
6. Why was land reform an important issue for Zimbabwe upon independence?

Reviewing Chapter Themes

1. At independence, African nations moved to modernize their economies. Explain how each of the following has affected economic development: (a) socialism, (b) multinational corporations, (c) development projects.
2. Colonial rule and ethnic diversity have shaped African nations. Explain how these two forces have affected Nigeria and Zimbabwe.
3. Many African nations have faced severe challenges to development. Describe how heavy debt and frequent drought have hindered economic progress.
4. Various forces are bringing change to African life. Choose three of the following and describe how each has affected life in Africa: (a) urbanization, (b) education, (c) westernization, (d) technology.

Thinking Critically

1. **Analyzing Ideas** Kwame Nkrumah said of Ghana in 1957, "Our independence is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent." (a) How does Nkrumah's statement reflect the idea of Pan-Africanism? (b) How did Ghana pave the way for other African nations?
2. **Making Global Connections** Why do you think many African students study in American universities?
3. **Defending a Position** Some African nations have adopted one-party or military rule. Give arguments to support or oppose these forms of government in Africa.

Applying Your Skills

1. **Analyzing Literature** Reread the lines from Senghor's poem "Black Woman" on page 108. (a) How does Senghor show pride in Africa? (b) How does this poem reflect the goals of the négritude movement?
2. **Constructing a Time Line** Use the map on page 110 to construct a time line showing when African nations won independence. Then answer these questions: (a) When did Guinea win independence? Botswana? (b) When did the greatest number of African nations win independence? (c) Which nations did not achieve independence until after the 1960s?
3. **Ranking** List six political, economic, and cultural challenges facing African nations. (a) Which two do you think are the most important? (b) Give reasons for your answer.

people of different cultures because of my music, that will be very good.”

In the arts, as in politics, people recognize the growing interdependence of the world. Through international concert tours, musicians raise money for causes such as famine relief and campaign for social and political change.

CHAPTER PERSPECTIVE

In the 1990s, music was just one way that Africans were taking their place on the world stage. The 54 independent nations of Africa make up a major part of the “global village.”

As you read, look for these chapter themes:

- ▶ Through regional and international organizations, the nations of Africa have worked for peace and economic development.
- ▶ Although African nations generally remained nonaligned, Cold War politics had an impact on them.
- ▶ Under internal and external pressures, South Africa has taken steps to end its policy of racial segregation.
- ▶ African arts and literature blend traditional and modern influences.

Literature Connections

In this chapter, you will encounter passages from the following works.

“Africa and Freedom,” Albert J. Luthuli
“Song for the Lazy,” Central African poem

Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe

For other suggestions, see Connections With Literature, pages 804–808.

1

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ISSUES

FIND OUT

How do the goals of the Organization of African Unity reflect the interdependence of African nations?

Why do African nations take an active role in the United Nations?

How did African nations respond to Cold War issues?

How are Africans using science and technology to solve problems?

Vocabulary nonalignment

“Anyone who wants to participate in a peaceful and democratic transition in our country is welcome,” said an Ethiopian government leader in 1991. After almost 30 years of civil war, peace was returning to the battered land. A center of fighting had been Eritrea, a region on the Red Sea that finally won independence. War had also raged in the Ogaden region, where people of Somali descent fought Ethiopian rule. During the long war, each side had received aid from one of the superpowers. After the Cold War ended, peace seemed possible.

While Ethiopians welcomed peace and planned elections, wars flared in other African countries. To resolve such conflicts, African nations turned to regional and international organizations.

Regional Cooperation

As you read, in the 1950s Kwame Nkrumah called for a politically united Africa, like the United States. Although this goal of Pan-African unity was never reached, the dream never died. Even as individual nations won independence, Pan-Africanism remained a strong force.

African Union In 1963, the independent nations of Africa formed the Organization of African Unity, or OAU. By 1991, all African nations except South Africa had joined the OAU. Through the OAU, they supported independence movements and promoted peace. In 1963, the OAU stopped a brief war between Algeria and Morocco. It also helped settle a border dispute between Kenya and Somalia.

However, bringing peace to nations that were torn by civil war proved difficult. Many nations did not want the OAU to meddle in their internal affairs. African leaders came to the conclusion that the OAU had outlived its usefulness.

In 2002, they formed a new organization, the African Union, or AU. They hoped to attract foreign investment by promoting good government and human rights. Leaders warned, however, not to expect that they would transform the continent overnight.

"People were expecting us to run before we walk," said Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo. "I think people should be patient with us, bearing in mind that even the Western countries . . . took time to [become democracies]."

Other regional groups. Many African nations belong to regional groups. Like the AU, these groups encourage economic development. Because many African nations are small and have limited resources, these efforts are meant to strengthen their position in the world.

The nine-nation Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) helped members reduce their dependence on South Africa. For example, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Botswana, which are landlocked, used to ship goods through South African ports. By improving rail links through Mozambique and Tanzania, SADCC gave the three landlocked nations another route for trade. The 16-nation Economic Community of West African States (ECWAS) helped members by ending customs duties and supporting joint transportation and energy projects.

International Ties

At independence, each African nation joined the United Nations (UN). Since then, Africans have taken an active role in that world body. They have worked for policies favorable to developing nations. For example, developing nations want access to new technology. They also want to be able to sell their manufactured goods in markets traditionally controlled by the industrial world. Although African nations agree on some issues, they do not always vote the same way in the UN.

Through the UN, African nations seek international cooperation on issues such as the environment, education, and agricultural development. UN agencies send farm experts, engineers, and teachers to help developing nations. They have also provided emergency relief to areas faced with famine. In Africa, as elsewhere, UN peacekeeping forces have at times tried to restore order in war zones such as Somalia or Rwanda.

African nations belong to a variety of other international organizations. Algeria, Libya, and Nigeria are members of OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting countries. OPEC includes major oil-exporting nations from Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia. It was set up to regulate oil prices.

Many African nations also have strong economic and cultural ties to former colonial powers. Most former British colonies belong to the Commonwealth of Nations. This group includes more than 40 countries that Britain once ruled. Many African nations once ruled by France have linked their currencies, or money, to the French franc. They also give preference to French products. Nearly all the cars in Senegal, for example, are French.

The Cold War and After

African nations won independence during the Cold War. Because Africa is rich in mineral resources and is centrally located, both the United States and the Soviet Union wanted to win allies among the new nations.

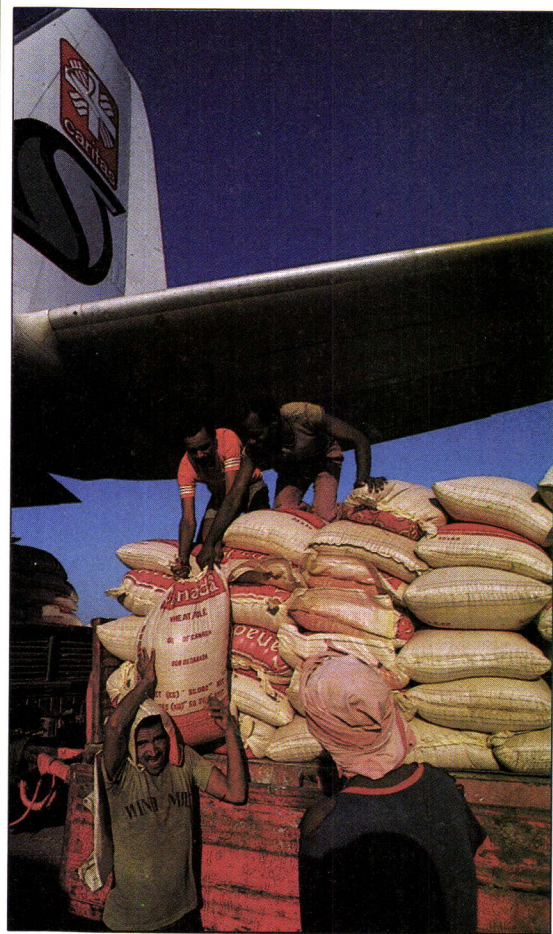


Famine Aid Workers, below right, unload food sent by the International Red Cross. Above, other aid workers distribute food to refugees who had fled the fighting during the civil war in Ethiopia. War combined with severe drought caused crop failures and famine in both Ethiopia and Somalia. **Human Rights** What responsibility, if any, do people have to help those in need?

Like other developing nations, however, most African countries chose a policy of **nonalignment**—that is, they did not favor either side in the Cold War. Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah wrote:

“ Our attitude, I imagine, is very much that of America looking at the disputes of Europe in the 19th century. We do not wish to be involved. ”

Although they remained nonaligned, many African nations looked to the superpowers for aid. The Soviet Union provided arms and economic aid to African countries that adopted socialist systems. At the same time,



the United States supported governments that were friendly to its interests. Sometimes, that meant backing harsh dictators.

Foreign interference. To promote their interests, the superpowers often interfered in the internal affairs of African nations. For example, the Soviet Union and the United States backed rival groups in civil wars in Ethiopia and Somalia. They did this because they wanted to build naval bases along the Red Sea, where these nations are located.

Former colonial powers have also remained involved in African affairs. Both Belgium and France have sent troops into former colonies during times of conflict.

After the Cold War. As the Cold War ended, both the United States and the Soviet Union backed peace efforts in Namibia and other trouble spots. For years, South Africa had controlled mineral-rich Namibia. Namibians waged a decades-long war for freedom. In the 1980s, South Africa's hold weakened, and Namibia won independence in 1990.

Conflicts continued in other parts of Africa. In Angola, a UN-backed peace accord fell apart within a few years. After a long war, Eritrea gained independence from Ethiopia. Then, the two nations clashed along their borders. Civil wars within Sierra Leone, Liberia, and the Congo spread to involve other African nations. The UN and OAU tried hard to end such conflicts.

Debt and AIDS

Economic factors outside their control affect emerging nations in Africa and elsewhere. All are influenced by global trends such as shifts in prices of important natural resources. When prices for their exports are high, African nations benefit. When prices fall, budgets are squeezed and the debt burden of these nations worsens.

The debt burden. African nations spend billions each year to repay old loans. Efforts to ease the burden have had little success. Many African nations want rich nations to cancel the debt. They believe that will help Africa rid itself of its debt burden. Yet many experts are

concerned that wealthy nations will not lend money to poor ones if they fear the loans will not be repaid. African nations are also seeking help from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Both these lending agencies have demanded that debtor nations reform their economies before receiving further loans.

AIDS. Debt is linked to the AIDS epidemic that is sweeping across Africa. Medical experts believe that more than 25 million Africans have AIDS. Millions have already died from the disease. Many are adults in their most productive years. Many others are children. African nations have little money to teach about AIDS prevention and control or to treat the deadly disease.

The disease is taking a terrible toll on the future of African nations. A global effort is underway to raise billions to help African nations slow the epidemic. Two nations have already made some progress. Uganda has reduced its infection rate while Senegal has managed to keep its infection rate low. However, many African nations simply do not have the resources to cope with the epidemic.

Ongoing Challenges

In dealing with AIDS and other problems, African nations are seeking solutions that are appropriate to their societies. However, they also rely heavily on global assistance.

Limiting family size. Africa's population growth has put a strain on the economies of African nations. The UN and other groups are working with African governments to set up programs that teach family planning.

The traditional view that African men should father many children works against family planning. Many nations are trying to combat this way of thinking. In Zimbabwe, social workers like Apollonia Chirimuta speak to groups of men in the villages. She asks them: "What do your children want? Land?" The men answer yes. "Well," she continues, "there won't be enough land for them because your families are too big." Officials are spreading a



Making the Desert Bloom Using a mixture of fertilizers and products that help soil retain moisture, scientists in Africa have had some success in making dry soil productive. Experiments conducted on the dry volcanic soil of the Cape Verde Islands have shown that unproductive soil can be made to support crops. **Technology** What impact might such an innovation have on nations in arid regions of the world?

similar message in countries from Egypt to Kenya to Mozambique.

Science and food production. African nations are also finding ways to increase food production. A successful program has introduced dry-season farming. By digging wells and irrigation ditches to link ponds and fields, farmers can grow corn and wheat during the dry season. Dry-season farming has allowed farmers to produce two crops a year. Says Adamou Sani, a farmer in Niger:

“ Dry-season crops are such a normal practice now that everyone grows them. Before, each year after the harvest I went to the city to look for work. But today, with the dry-season crops, I have work in the village. Truly it is a good thing. ”

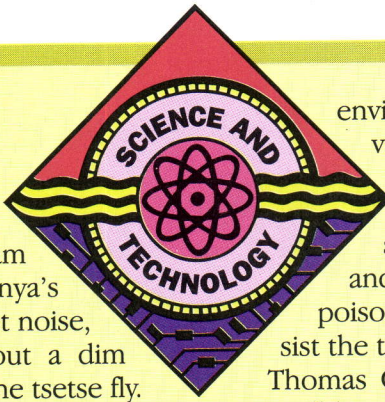
Researchers have worked to save the important cassava (kuh SAH vuh) crop, which was threatened by insects. About 200 million Africans depend on cassava as their main

source of calories. (Many Americans know this plant as the source of tapioca.) In the 1970s, mealybugs attacked the cassava crop, causing crop losses of up to 80 percent. To solve the problem, scientists bred wasps that eat mealybugs and then released the wasps from airplanes. This method of using insects to fight other insects is called biological pest control.

Farm experts are developing new kinds of crops, such as corn and sorghum, that yield larger harvests. Ordinary farmers are experimenting with new crops and new techniques, too. In Burkina Faso, Halodou Sawadogo wanted to grow and store potatoes. He dug a 10-foot-deep storage pit and devised a system to keep it cool and dry. “The agricultural experts told me, ‘It’s impossible to store potatoes in this climate without them sprouting.’ Well, I’ve proved you can,” said Sawadogo proudly.

Scientists are working with farmers to stop soil erosion. Nigerian farmers are trying “alley-cropping.” They plant long rows, or

Trapping the Tsetse Fly



Members of the research team paused on the trail, deep in Kenya's Rift Valley. Above the usual forest noise, the African scientists picked out a dim sound—the menacing buzz of the tsetse fly.

The bite of the tsetse can cause sleeping sickness—a disease often fatal to humans and cattle. The tsetse fly thrives in some parts of the African savanna. Each year, the flies cause more than 20,000 new cases of sleeping sickness among people. The disease also kills thousands of cattle, causing the loss of 3 billion pounds of beef annually. Sometimes, people have had to abandon their communities because of the tsetse fly.

The high cost in human life and great economic losses have spurred scientists to hunt for ways to control the tsetse fly. Kenyan scientist Thomas Odhiambo founded the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) in Nairobi, Kenya. The ICIPE is the only scientific institution in the world devoted solely to the study of insects and the control of insect-related problems.

In the past, people used drastic measures against insect populations. A common tactic was to set fire to large areas to destroy insect breeding grounds. The only alternative was to spray highly toxic pesticides. Yet these killed many other things besides “pests.” Neither of these destructive measures solved the insect problem.

Today, ICIPE scientists use techniques that destroy tsetse flies without harming the

environment. One research team invented a simple trap that can catch more than 20,000 tsetse flies in a week. Constructed of some blue cloth, a few staples, and a plastic bag, the trap uses no poisons at all. Tsetses just cannot resist the trap's bait—ox-breath perfume.

Thomas Odhiambo hopes that the next step will be to discover ways in which seemingly harmful insects can serve useful functions. He poses the question, “Did you know that termites make excellent chicken food?”

1. What is the function of the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE)?
2. **Applying Information** How might worldwide benefits be gained from insect research in Africa?



alleys, of crops such as corn and yams. In between, they plant rows of fast-growing trees and vines that can be harvested for firewood.

Fighting disease. As you read in Chapter 3, many diseases flourish in the tropical climates of Africa. Researchers have curbed tropical diseases such as malaria and sleeping sickness. (See the feature above.)

Since the late 1970s, AIDS has swept across much of the continent, infecting millions of African men and women. AIDS has hit urban areas the hardest. Many victims are between the ages of 19 and 40. Because of the worldwide impact of the disease, scientists in many countries are seeking vaccines or cures for the AIDS virus.

SECTION 1 REVIEW

- 1. Identify:** (a) Organization of African Unity, (b) International Monetary Fund.
- 2. Define:** nonalignment.
- 3.** (a) How is the OAU an example of Pan-Africanism? (b) How do regional organizations help African nations strengthen their economies? Give an example.
- 4.** What role do African nations play in the UN?
- 5.** (a) How did the Cold War affect African nations? (b) What effect did the end of Cold War tensions have on Africa?
- 6.** How do science and technology offer Africans hope for the future?
- 7. Synthesizing** How is the debt crisis an example of global interdependence?
- 8. Writing Across Cultures** Reread the statement by Kwame Nkrumah, on page 135, comparing African attitudes during the Cold War to American attitudes toward foreign involvement in the 1800s. Write a paragraph explaining what Nkrumah meant by this statement.

2

THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

FIND OUT

- What was the purpose of apartheid?
- How did apartheid affect the lives of South Africans?
- Why did South Africa move toward democracy?

Vocabulary apartheid

“Free at last,” proclaimed Nelson Mandela in 1994 as South Africa held its first ever all-race elections. In a landslide victory, Mandela became the first black president of South Africa.

The elderly leader had spent 27 years in prison for opposing the racial policies of the old white-dominated South African government.

“Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all,” declared Mandela as he took office. “The time for the healing of wounds has come.” South Africans of all races hoped that healing would take place.

A Policy of Forced Segregation

In 1910, Britain granted South Africa self-rule. Until 1994, a small white minority governed the nation. Whites make up about 16 percent of South Africa’s population. The majority of South Africans—70 percent—are black. Other groups include people of mixed racial background (11 percent) and Asians (3 percent).

Origins of apartheid. In 1948, the Nationalist party came to power in South Africa. It drew support from conservative white farmers. Many of them were descended from Dutch settlers who held strong views on white superiority. South Africa was already segregated along racial lines, and the Nationalists strengthened the divisions. They set up the strict legal system of **apartheid** (uh PAHRT hayt), or rigid separation of races.

Under apartheid, the government classified all South Africans as white, black, “coloured” (people of mixed race), or Asian. It then passed laws to keep the races separate. Nonwhites could not vote. They were also restricted as to where they could live and work.

The government assigned black ethnic groups, such as the Zulus and Xhosas, to live in a number of bantustans, or homelands. Supporters of apartheid claimed that separation allowed each group to develop its own culture. The homelands, however, were located in dry, infertile areas. Four fifths of South Africa, including its rich mineral resources and fertile farmlands, remained in white hands.

Strict laws. Because South Africa needed black workers, the government allowed some blacks to live outside the homelands. To control their movement, it enacted pass laws. The pass laws required all black South Africans living in a town or city to carry a passbook. The



MAP STUDY

South Africa is the largest nation in Southern Africa and the most industrialized in all of Africa. Its natural resources include gold, diamonds, iron ore, chromium, and coal.

- 1. Location** Describe the relative location of South Africa.
- 2. Location** In what areas of South Africa are the major cities located?
- 3. Making Global Connections** Why do you think economic sanctions by other nations helped pressure South Africa to end apartheid?

passbook included a record of where they could travel or work, their tax payments, and a record of any criminal convictions. It had to be carried at all times and produced upon demand.

Pass laws divided families. A man might have a job in town, while his wife had to remain in the homeland. One South African

newspaper reported how Mathilda Chikuye was fined \$25 for letting her husband live with her. She had permission to be in town, but he did not.

Apartheid enforced a system of inequality. Blacks were forbidden to ride on “white” buses, swim at “white” beaches, or eat at “white” restaurants. Apartheid also extended to education. Black schools received much less money and other support than white schools. As a result, literacy remained low among black students, and many dropped out of school. Only a very few black South African students received higher education.

Struggle Against Apartheid

From the start, blacks and some other South Africans opposed apartheid. Leaders such as Albert J. Luthuli (luh too lee) urged nonviolent resistance. Luthuli won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1960. In his acceptance speech, he stated,

“ [Apartheid] is a museum piece in our time, a hangover from the dark ages . . . a relic of an age that everywhere else is dead or dying. . . . These ideas survive in South Africa because those who sponsor them profit from them. ”

Later, another black South African leader, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, won the same prize. Like Luthuli, Tutu strongly opposed apartheid but rejected violence. (See Connections With Literature, page 804, “The Ultimate Safari.”)

The South African police and government forces used violence, however. In 1960, protesters staged a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, a township near Johannesburg. The police opened fire, killing more than 60 people. The “Sharpeville massacre” aroused anger worldwide. As protests continued, the government banned opposition groups, such as the African National Congress (ANC). Black leaders, including Nelson Mandela, went into hiding. Mandela was captured and sentenced to life in prison in 1964.

Women and students. Many South African women joined the struggle against apartheid. At one rally, more than 20,000 women marched through Pretoria to demonstrate against the pass laws. During the years of struggle, many women lost their lives or went to prison for their beliefs.

In 1976, students in Soweto (suh WEE toh), a black township located outside Johannesburg, protested a new law requiring the use of Afrikaans in all public schools. Afrikaans is the language of white South Africans who are descended from Dutch settlers. When the government responded with violence, the protests spread.

Pressure grows. While South Africans demanded change from within, international pressure grew. From its founding, the OAU had worked to end apartheid. It urged members to boycott South Africa. Other groups also pressed for change in South Africa. The United Nations placed an arms embargo on South Africa. International sports organizations such as the Olympic Committee barred South African athletes from competition.

During the 1980s, many nations, including the United States, imposed economic sanctions. This meant that they cut off trade in many items and ended financial dealings with South African businesses.

Protesting Apartheid In the long struggle against apartheid, black South Africans held demonstrations such as this to demand change and win worldwide sympathy for their cause. In white-dominated South Africa, blacks had no political rights and little hope for economic freedom. **Justice** Under what conditions can nonviolent protest be effective?





The New South Africa

An integrated school in Johannesburg symbolizes the progress that South Africa's democratic government has made. Integrated schools give black South Africans better educational facilities and provide more long-term job opportunities than the old segregated schools did.

Justice In what other areas has South Africa made progress in recent years?

Steps Toward Change

Protests and economic sanctions had an effect. As sanctions slowed South Africa's economy, white business leaders pressed for change. A growing number of white South Africans came to believe that apartheid must end in order for the country to grow.

An end to apartheid. By the mid-1980s, historic changes were underway. The government repealed the hated pass laws. It also opened some segregated facilities to all South Africans. In 1989, South Africa's president, F.W. de Klerk, lifted the ban on the ANC and other groups opposed to apartheid. A year later, the government freed Nelson Mandela and other ANC leaders from prison and began to hold talks with black leaders.

In the early 1990s, a new constitution was written to guarantee blacks basic rights. In 1994, voters elected a new government. In this historic election, black South Africans voted for the first time. Mandela was swept into office as South Africa's new president. "We are starting a new era of hope and reconciliation, of nation-building," he said.

Majority rule. Mandela hoped to "heal the wounds of the past." He backed the work of a government commission that was established to gather data about crimes committed under apartheid. Uncovering the truth was

meant to free South Africa from its oppressive past.

Mandela called for a new order "based on justice for all." He wanted to bring services such as electricity, housing, and decent schools to millions of black South Africans. That goal posed a huge challenge, especially because years of apartheid left black South Africans eager for rapid change.

Mandela faced many problems. The gap between rich and poor in South Africa was one of the largest in the world. In addition, ethnic and political tensions between Mandela's ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party, led by Chief Buthelezi (boo tuh LEE zee), flared into violence at times. Then, in the late 1990s, economic woes hit the nation.

South Africa's future. Mandela retired in 1999 at the age of 80. The new president, Thabo Mbeki, faced the challenge of making South Africa's multiracial democracy work. However, economic hardships and charges of corruption plagued his government. Also, South Africa was one of the nations that was hardest hit by the AIDS epidemic.

Despite these issues, South Africa has abundant resources. Mbeki has pledged to promote economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve the lives of people who suffered under apartheid.

SECTION 2 REVIEW

- 1. Identify:** (a) Nelson Mandela, (b) Albert J. Lutuli, (c) Desmond Tutu, (d) Sharpeville massacre, (e) F. W. de Klerk.
- 2. Define:** apartheid.
- 3.** (a) How did apartheid divide South African society? (b) How did it promote social inequality?
- 4.** Why did the South African government change its racial policy?
- 5. Applying Information** How has the legacy of the pass laws contributed to violence among black South Africans today?
- 6. Writing Across Cultures** Write a letter to Nelson Mandela, looking back on the struggle against apartheid. Explain why you think the victory against apartheid in South Africa was important to people in the United States.

3

LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

FIND OUT

- How do themes in African literature reflect African life?
- How has African art influenced other cultures?
- What are the unique features of African music?

Vocabulary griot

Captain Africa is a superhero. In popular comic books, he fights a constant battle against evildoers and ignorance. In one story, a college graduate learns that her parents have arranged for her to marry “the notorious Chief Eza.” In the nick of time, Captain Africa arrives to right the wrong that has been done.

“We have our own culture, our own heritage,” says Mbadiwe Emelumba, head of the Nigerian firm that publishes the Captain Africa comics. The comics deal with current issues, but also include themes from the past. Above all, they tell a good story, and storytelling has long been a feature of African culture.

We can understand a people’s culture by looking at their literature, music, and other arts. Through these forms of expression, people communicate their feelings, beliefs, and ideas to other members of their culture and to the rest of the world.

African Literature

The peoples of Africa have developed a rich oral and written literature. Oral literature includes poems, histories, folk tales, and myths that were passed on by word of mouth from one generation to the next. Written literature began with ancient Egyptian works.

Oral literature. In traditional African societies, the storyteller, or **griot** (GREE oh), held a place of honor. The griot spoke the praises of the ruler and recited events from history. Storytellers also recited riddles, poems, and tongue-twisters. Many of the stories or poems that griots told contained a moral, or lesson, such as this “Song for the Lazy” from Central Africa:

“ If you are hungry
Use your hoe,
The only drug
The doctors know. ”

Some themes appear in many stories. One favorite theme is that the universe has a moral order. If people disturb that order, they will suffer misfortune. Another common theme is that people must respect the environment if they wish to prosper. “If one wants to catch a large fish,” states a West African proverb, “one must give something to the stream.”

In villages today, people gather around the storyteller to hear familiar tales and poems. They can also hear storytellers on the radio. Tapes with poets reading both new and old poems are also available.

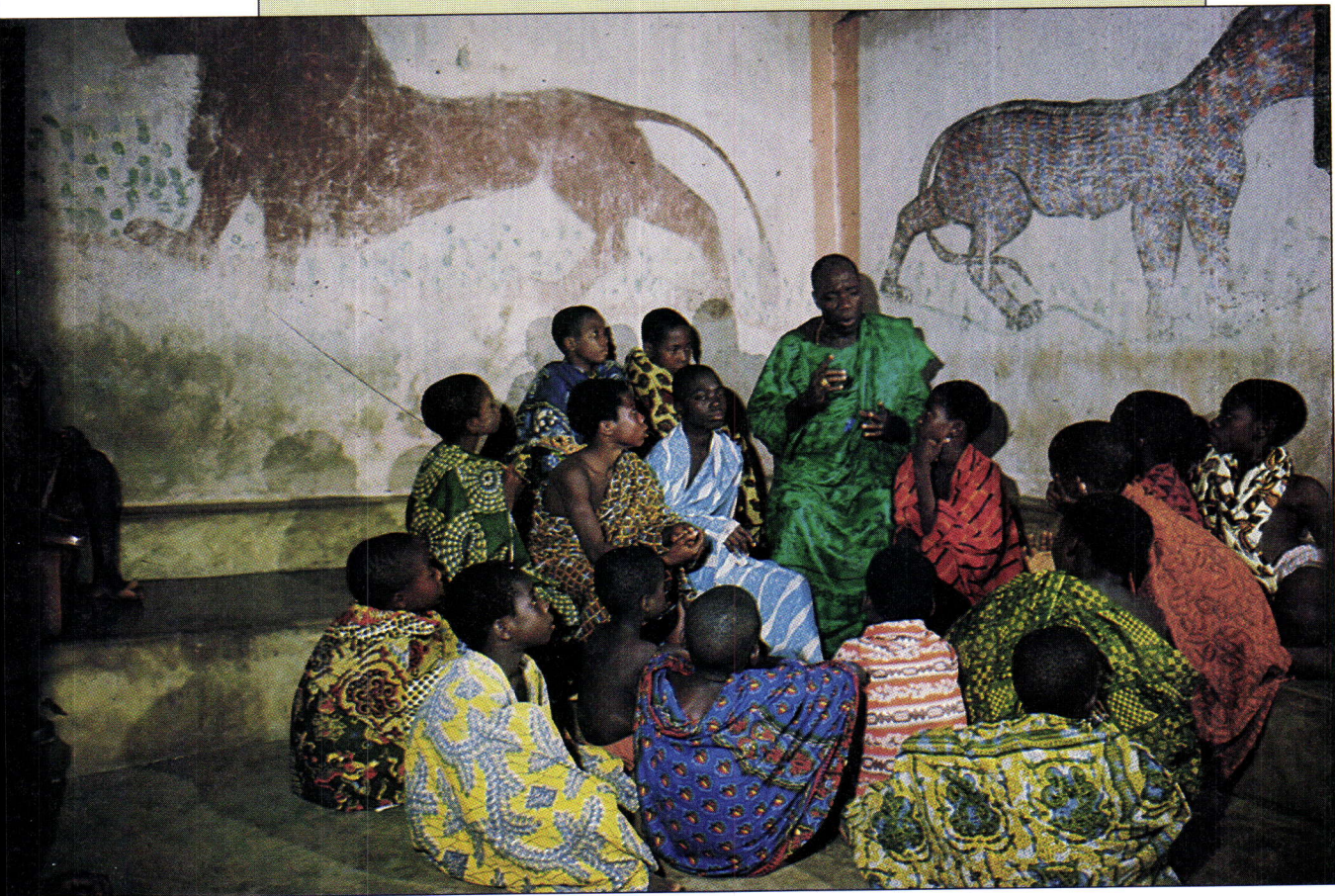
Written works. Modern African writers often write about the conflict between old and new ways. Some focus on how Africans can preserve what is good in traditional societies while moving ahead with technological progress. Others examine the problems faced by villagers who move to cities.

In the years after independence, writers such as Hamidou Kane (KAH nuh) of Senegal wrote about the effect of western culture on Africa. In *Ambiguous Adventure*, Kane's hero is a Fulani boy who goes to study in France. There, he loses touch with his Islamic faith and his Senegalese roots. "The cannon compels the body," notes the author, "the school bewitches the soul."

Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe writes of problems created by imposing European culture on traditional African values. One of his best-known novels, *Things Fall Apart*, shows how the arrival of the British in Nigeria disrupted the age-old patterns of African village life. The novel's main character, Okonkwo says:

“ [The white man] is very clever. He came quietly and peacefully with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart. ”

Storytelling in Africa Storytelling has long been an important tradition in Africa. As these children of the Cote d'Ivoire listen to the storyteller's tales, they learn about the history, customs, and values of their society. **Change** How may the use of books and television affect the ancient art of storytelling?





Film in Africa This dramatic scene is from the film *Yaaba*, which is based on a tale that its director, Idrissa Ouedraogo, heard as a child. The movie has been widely praised for its compelling portrayal of the lives of people in a West African village.

Culture Why do you think many Africans would enjoy movies such as *Yaaba*?

Things Fall Apart was both a critical and popular success. Translated into more than 40 languages, it has sold more than 2.5 million copies worldwide. Other novels by Achebe include *No Longer at Ease* and *Arrow of God*.

African women have also written about the conflict between traditional customs and modern ways. In *So Long a Letter* by Mariama Bâ, a Senegalese woman writes a letter to her daughter in which she describes how society has changed. In *The Bride Price*, Nigerian author Buchi Emecheta tells of a young woman who escapes from an arranged marriage because she is in love with someone else. (📖 See Connections With Literature, page 804, *Things Fall Apart* and “Snapshots of a Wedding.”)

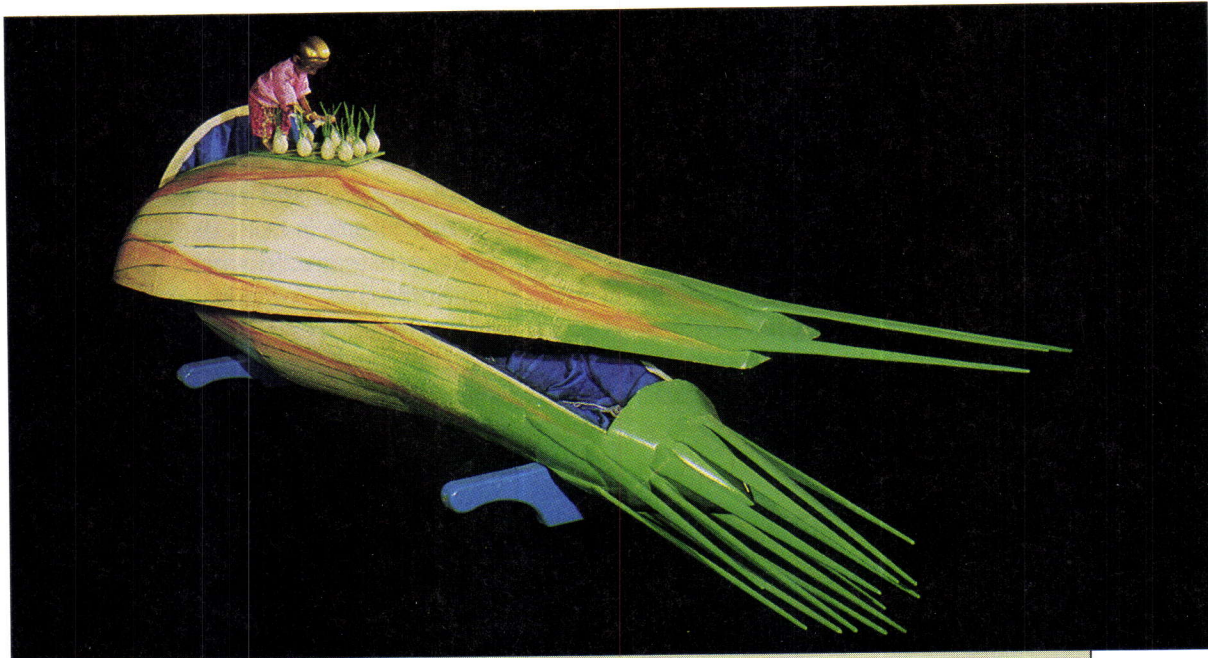
Drama and Film

African playwrights and filmmakers have built on the tradition of the griots, who acted out the characters in their tales by putting on

masks or using puppets. Today’s plays address modern issues but use traditional methods. A popular playwright from Ghana is Ama Ata Aidoo. In *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, she shows what happens when a student returns to his village with an African American wife.

African filmmakers reach a wide audience in the cities. Like filmmakers everywhere, they sometimes use historical events as subjects. In *The Camp at Thairoye*, Senegalese director Sembene Ousmane examines a massacre of African soldiers by the French army in 1944. The soldiers, who had fought for France during World War II, are waiting in a camp in Senegal to leave the army. When they learn that the French do not plan to pay them as promised, the soldiers revolt. In response, the French fire on the men during the night, as they sleep, killing the entire force.

Other films retell popular village tales. In *Yaaba* (“Granny”), director Idrissa Ouedraogo captures the story of two children who make friends with an old woman whom people think is a witch.



Onion Coffin Present-day African artists are exploring new forms of art. Kane Kwei's coffins have caught the imagination of people around the world. A farmer's family asked Kwei to design the coffin shown here. The artist used enamel paint on wood and carved a farmer planting onions. **Fine Art** How can an item made to serve some practical purpose also be considered a work of art?

was a hen accompanied by her chicks. A coffin could cost an amount equal to one year's wages. Sometimes, entire extended families contributed money to pay for one.

As Kwei's reputation spread, people from other villages came to admire his work. Today, Kwei heads a large workshop that produces coffins for local people and for tourists. Even international art critics have come to recognize the artistic value of his work. ■

Music

As you have read, popular music in Africa builds on many traditions. Styles and instruments vary from region to region. In Southern Africa, the *mbira*, or thumb piano, is popular. Stringed instruments are also widely used. In Botswana, cattle herders use cowbells to create music.

Much African music relies on percussion instruments, such as xylophones and drums. "Talking drums" imitate human speech and

have many functions, including religious ones. Among the Akan people of West Africa, drummers create music that sounds like poetry. On important occasions, drum-poets play special greetings to leaders. For example, the drums might suggest the message: "I am addressing you, and you will understand."

SECTION 3 REVIEW

- 1. Identify:** (a) Hamidou Kane, (b) Mariama Bâ.
- 2. Define:** griot
- 3. Describe** three concerns of Africans today that are reflected in African literature.
- 4. How** has African art served more than one purpose?
- 5. Synthesizing** Why do you think that the arts and music of Africa are so varied?
- 6. Writing Across Cultures** Jot down five things that an African might learn about your culture from American popular music.