

## Africa 1500-present: The Big Picture

**Geography:** The two oceans that surround Africa are Atlantic on the west and Indian on the east. Sub-Sahara Africa is the area south of the Saharan desert. Africa's coasts are smooth, which means it has few natural harbors for trade. Rivers in Africa often have many waterfalls and rapids, which means they aren't used much for trade. The geography of Africa has meant most people in Africa have been historically isolated and there has been little cultural diffusion or spread of culture from Africa to the rest of the world.

Africa was dominated by animistic faiths in the sub-Sahara region and by the religion of Islam in the north.

African goods such as salt were traded from the Songhai Empire across the trans-Saharan trade routes. 1500-1800: Slave trade in West Africa. Chief country that set up trading ports for slaves: Portugal.

Great Britain stops slave trade in 1800's through naval blockades and economic sanctions (refusal to trade with countries).

"Scramble for Africa" Countries from Europe create colonies in Africa. Reason: Desire to get market for industrial goods, Acquire resources for industry growth, to Introduce Christianity, because of pride in country or Nationalism. 1870's: Egypt becomes a colony of Great Britain. Britain controls Suez Canal.

Post WWII: United Nations charter say all countries have "right to self-determination" African nationalism leads to an end of European imperialism. Africa wants independence.

*Kenya*—wins violent struggle for freedom from Great Britain. Led by Kenyatta. *Algeria* wins bloody war of independence from France. West Africa has peaceful transition to independence. Some African countries involve communists, thus the two superpowers, US and USSR send arms and supplies.

South Africa forced strict racial segregation called apartheid. Ended in early 1990's

Today: Africa—poor, developing, has a serious AIDS epidemic, yet rich in natural resources. Rule of law is not common.