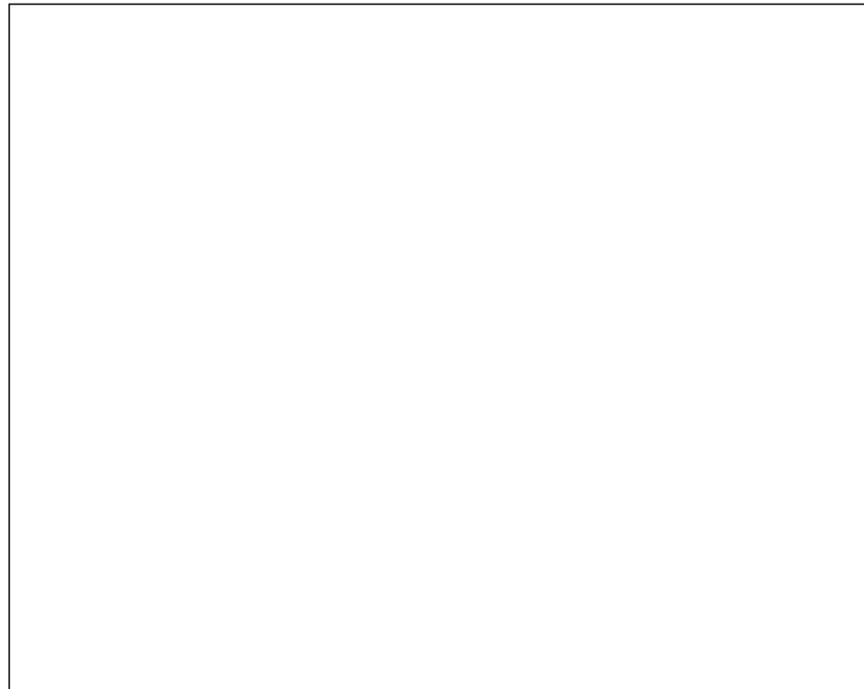


Lesson 1: Ways of Thinking About People and Places in the Past

Unit 2
Grade 4

Directions: Imagine that you had the power to travel back in time. Historians hire you to go back 600 years then report back on what you saw. In the box below, draw what a place where people lived 600 years ago looked like.

Directions - Part I: Imagine that you had the power to travel back in time. Historians hire you to go back 600 years then report back on what you saw. In the box below, draw what a place where people lived 600 years ago looked like.



Directions - Part II: Briefly explain your drawing and how it shows what a place where people lived 600 years ago looked like.

I want you to think about life long ago but in a different way. This time you want them to think about two things:

1. What are some things that people today would have a difficult time living without?
2. What might be a way to substitute for those things if people did not have them?

Resource 2: How to Survive Without Them

Directions: The left-hand column on the chart below contains a list of things that many people have today. For each thing, describe something people could not do without it and what people would have to do if they did not have it.

THING	Something people could not do without it	A way to substitute for what the "Thing" does
refrigerator	keep food cold	dig a deep hole to where the ground is cool, put a container in it, and put food in the container
lights		
running water		
electricity		
printer		
grocery store		
motors		
washing machine		
alphabet		
air conditioner		

You are now going to read about some of the ways that people think about people and places from long ago.

What do Historians Mean by "Deficit Past?"

It is not uncommon for people to think of themselves as better than other people. We may try not to think this way, but it can be difficult at times. Historians use the term "*deficit past*" to describe the idea that many people living today think that people in the past were dumb or not as smart as we are today. The word *deficit* is used to describe a falling or a shortcoming.

Consider this - in many ways, people in the past may have been just as smart if not smarter than us. Thousands of years ago people could predict the movements of stars and planets without telescopes and use that information to sail ships great distances without getting lost. How many people do you know who can do that today?

Thousands of years ago people invented alphabets and words to communicate. We take alphabets for granted but there was a time when they did not exist. Imagine what we could not do without an alphabet - write, read books, pass notes in class etc. Anyone who communicates in English like you is relying on what people long ago invented. Try to go one day without being able to communicate with letters or words. Good luck!

There is one more thing to think about. Thousands of years ago people invented things like the wheel (widely considered to be one of humankind's greatest inventions), the clock, the compass, paper, the printing press etc. Think about how important all of these are for us today. Again, people who lived in the past were smart and gave us all of this so we can build on these things and do equally smart things.

Misconceptions - What are They?

Most human beings have misconceptions. A **misconception** is an idea or opinion that is not correct because it is based on faulty thinking. For example, some people have the misconception that the reason that we have seasons is because the earth moves closer and further away from the sun during the year. This is not true. The reason we have seasons is because the earth is tilted, and the sun's direct rays hit the earth in different places throughout the year.



Think of another misconception that people have and share it with a partner.

Stereotypes - What are They?

Many people also hold stereotypes. A **stereotype** can be defined as an unfair and untrue belief that a person has about other people or things. For example, many people have stereotypes about tall people. They assume that tall people enjoy and play basketball. This is simply not true.



Think of another stereotype that people have and share it with a partner.

So, What is the Point Here?

Ways of thinking that include deficit pasts, misconceptions, and stereotypes can prove dangerous. Why? Because they can lead people to think of others as inferior. When people think of other people or things as inferior, they are more likely to think that they can mistreat them. Sometimes people stereotype entire places because they are different.

This has happened throughout history and has led some people to do things to other people that are not only unfair, but extremely harmful. An example that you will be learning about later is that, throughout history, some people enslaved other people.

As we begin to think about things that have happened in American history, it is helpful to be aware of **deficit** ways of thinking as well as misconceptions and stereotypes because they will help us understand what caused some people to do bad things to others. Studying history can help us understand and, hopefully, not repeat this.



What is the main idea of the three paragraphs that you just read? What detail does the author offer to support this main idea?

What is an Example of a Significant Stereotype that People Had in History?

People who lived on different continents like Europe, Asia, Africa, and America had little contact with one another before 1491. When they encountered one another, they realized that they were different in many ways - their languages, their customs, their religions, their technology, the clothes they wore, the colors of their skin, hair, and eyes etc. They viewed the people who they encountered as "others" who were not like themselves, and often as inferior because they were different. In some instances, people living on entire continents came to believe that the "other" people living on "other" continents were inferior. This was true then, and it is still true in some cases today.

It is also true that people lived in very different ways even within every continent. Some hunted, some fished, some grew food on farms. Some lived in huts and small villages while others lived in houses and cities just like we do today. In some places people wore few clothes because the weather was usually warm, while people in other places wore clothing not that much different from what we wear today (skirts, pants, shirts, coats etc.), in part because the weather was different or there were different resources available.



What negative effects can arise when people encounter "other" people and places that are different? How might you use what you learned from this to become a better person?

You are about to look at images of cities that existed long before 1491 - over 600 years ago!

Think about the following as you analyze the images.

1. What are your first impressions as you look at the images of the cities?
2. In what ways are the cities similar?
3. Guess which continent the cities were on. Why did you guess this continent?
4. Do the images match what you had in mind when you did the warm-up? If not, how do the images differ from what you had in mind?



Think about the following as you analyze the images.

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Image 1: America/Tenochtitlan (14th Century)

Think about the following as you analyze the images.

1. What are your first impressions as you look at the images of the cities?
2. In what ways are the cities similar?
3. Guess which continent the cities were on. Why did you guess this continent?
4. Do the images match what you had in mind when you did the warm-up? If not, how do the images differ from what you had in mind?



Image 2: Asia/Forbidden City, Beijing (15th Century)

Think about the following as you analyze the images.

1. What are your first impressions as you look at the images of the cities?
2. In what ways are the cities similar?
3. Guess which continent the cities were on. Why did you guess this continent?
4. Do the images match what you had in mind when you did the warm-up? If not, how do the images differ from what you had in mind?



Image 3: Europe/London (12th Century)

Think about the following as you analyze the images.

1. What are your first impressions as you look at the images of the cities?
2. In what ways are the cities similar?
3. Guess which continent the cities were on. Why did you guess this continent?
4. Do the images match what you had in mind when you did the warm-up? If not, how do the images differ from what you had in mind?



Image 4: Africa/Egypt - Pi-Rameses City (13th Century)

One misconception that people have had is that Africa was not as advanced as other continents around the time that Christopher Columbus landed in the "New World" (in 1492). Some relatively modern history books have contributed to this deficit way of thinking.

Most of the Africans who were eventually brought to America around the time of Columbus (about 600 years ago) came from the western parts of Africa. The peoples of West Africa had rich and diverse histories and cultures hundreds of years before Europeans arrived in the 1400s. Africans had kingdoms and empires, each with its own language and culture. The empire of Songhai and the kingdoms of Mali, Benin, and Kongo were large and powerful with kings and queens who ruled over well-developed governments that served hundreds of thousands of people. In other areas, there were smaller governments for people living in villages. Remember, places were diverse then as they are now.

Art, learning and technology flourished i.e., the achievements in Africa were reaching new heights. Africans were especially skilled with medicine, mathematics, and astronomy. Before the Europeans started exploring Africa, African people were making fine luxury items in bronze, ivory, gold, and terracotta. See some examples below.

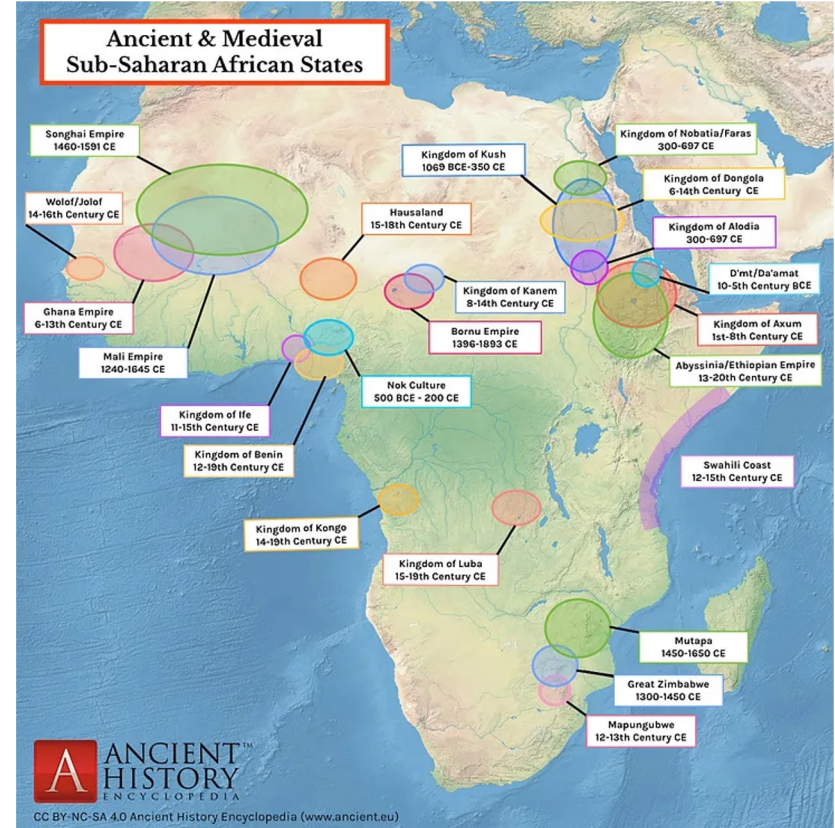


Sources of art images: [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

West Africans traded with Europeans through merchants in North Africa for hundreds of years. The first traders to sail down the west coast of Africa were from the European country of Portugal in the early 1400s. The Dutch, British, French, and Scandinavians followed. They were interested in valuable resources found in Africa such as gold, ivory, and spices, particularly pepper because it was so valuable (pepper helped cover up the taste of food that was often nasty because there were no refrigerators). But the Europeans brought their stereotypes and soon became interested in something else - African people. Those stereotypes and biases caused Europeans to view Africans as inferior. Those stereotypes and greed would cause great harm to Africa and its people.

The key point that you want to have in your mind at this time is that much of Africa and its people were remarkably advanced when Europeans started exploring the continent in the 1400s.

What was Western Africa like before people from Europe started exploring the continent?



AFRICA

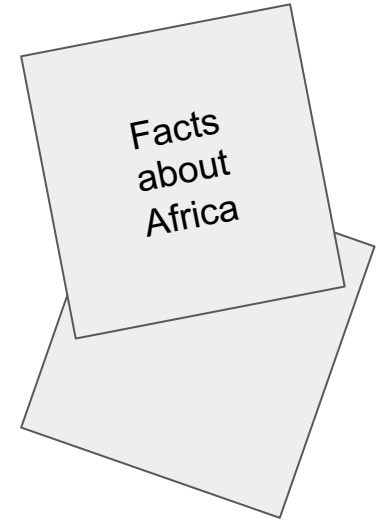
What comes to mind when you think about Africa today.

Make the Mis Dis

We are going to play a game where we are going to try and identify misconceptions about Africa and make the misconceptions disappear.

I will present one statement about Africa.

1. Partner 1 is assigned to the first statement and the rest of the odd statements.
2. If the statement is a misconception or false about Africa, turn it over, so it disappears. If you do not think it is a misconception and is true, keep it face up.
3. After Partner 1 shares their answer, Partner 2 can agree or disagree and try to talk Partner 1 out of their conclusion if they do not agree.
4. Partner 2 is assigned to the second statement and all even statements.
5. Repeat steps 1-4 for all 10 statements.



Is this a misconception?

Statement #1

Africa is a country.

Is this a misconception?

Statement #2

Africa is a little bigger than the United States.

Is this a misconception?

Statement #3

**The climate in Africa is hot, dry
and sunny.**

Is this a misconception?

Statement #4

People who live in Africa are poor.

Is this a misconception?

Statement #5

Africans live in huts.

Is this a misconception?

Statement #6

All Africans are dark skinned.

Is this a misconception?

Statement #7

Africans share the same culture.

Is this a misconception?

Statement #8

Africans do not have modern technology.

Is this a misconception?

Statement #9

People in Africa speak African.

Is this a misconception?

Statement #10

**All people in Africa live among
wild animals.**

Misconception!

Africa is a
continent with
over 50
countries!



Misconception!

Africa is more
than 3 times the
size of the United
States!



Misconception!

Africa is a diverse continent with a huge variety of landscapes and temperatures. There are even places where it snows in Africa!



Misconception!

Africa has at least 18 billionaires, some of whose names appear on the right.

#1	Aliko Dangote	\$13.9 B
#2	Johann Rupert	\$11 B
#3	Nicky Oppenheimer	\$8.7 B
#4	Nassef Sawiris	\$8.6 B
#5	Abdulsamad Rabiu	\$7 B
#6	Mike Adenuga	\$6.7 B
#7	Issad Rebrab	\$5.1 B
#8	Naguib Sawiris	\$3.4 B
#9	Patrice Motsepe	\$3.1 B
#10	Koos Bekker	\$2.7 B

Misconception!

Nearly half of the people in Africa live in urban areas like the places shown on the right.



Lagos, Nigeria
21 Million People



Cairo, Egypt
20.5 Million People



Luanda, Angola
8.4 Million People

Misconception!

Africans are very
diverse!



Misconception!

There are over 50 countries in Africa and within each country there is no single culture.



Misconception!

67% of people in Africa
have cell phones.



Misconception!

There is no such language as “African”.



Misconception!

While some people live in areas where wild animals roam (just like in the United States), many Africans live in cities where wild animals do not roam.



Cape Town, South Africa



EVERYDAY AFRICANS
BUST MYTHS ABOUT AFRICANS

5 MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT AFRICA





**Myths
&
Misconceptions**

Let's Reflect

1. What are some misconceptions about other places and the people who live in them?



Victoria Falls

1. What effects have these deficit ways of thinking had?



South Africa