Social Studies Vocabulary: Medieval Africa

1. Ibn Battuta – young Arab lawyer from Morocco who set out to explore the Muslim world in 1325; he traveled for almost 30 years
2. Mansa Musa – last strong king of the Mali kingdom; Mali began a slow decline after his death
3. Sundiata Keita – great warrior-king known as the "Lion Prince" of Mali; ruled Ghana from 1230 to 1255
4. Mali – West African kingdom which conquered the kingdom of Ghana
5. griots – West African story tellers
6. plateau – an area of high, flat land
7. Timbuktu – founded in the 11th century by the Tuareg, it became a major trading center (primarily for gold and salt) by the 14th century.
8. dhow – an Arab sailboat
9. clan – group of families related by blood or marriage
10. sultan – military and political leader with absolute authority over a Muslim country

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1. Swahili – refers to the culture and language of East Africa
2. migrations – movements of large groups of people
3. African diaspora – the spreading of African peoples and cultures around the world
4. matrilineal – refers to a group that traces descent through mothers rather than fathers
5. mosque – Muslim house of worship
6. climate zones – a system for classifying geographic places based on native vegetation, as well as average temperatures and precipitation
7. desert – region with extremely low rainfall, usually less than 16 inches (40cm) per year
8. Mediterranean – a climate with warm to hot, dry summers and mild to cool, wet winters.  Examples include the lands around the Mediterranean Sea, much of California, parts of Western and South Australia, southwestern South Africa, sections of Central Asia, and in parts of central coastal Chile.
9. rain forest – forest with a high rainfall, typically 70 or more inches (175 – 200 cm) per year
10. savanna – grassland, often with some tree cover