

BENIN

Knowledge Organiser	Year: 5 Term: Summer	Theme and Concept: Hierarchy and Power
<u>What was the main reason for the decline of Benin?</u>		

Prior Knowledge: Children's understanding of trade is built upon from their study of the Stone Age to the Iron Age. Children will know how bronze is made and that trade was the cause of communities coming together, creating a class system between those that rule and those that work. Through the concept of exploration and empire, children know that countries travelled across the oceans to find other places to live and to trade with. The children understand that an empire is created through war and trade. Through the concept of hierarchy and power, children understand that there are people who rule over kingdoms called a monarchy. Through the concept of conflict and disaster, children know that people are judged by the colour of the skin many times during history, specifically Mary Seacole. This understanding will help to feed into an understanding of colonisation.

1. How is bronze made?	With copper ore and tin.
2. What is trade?	Buying and selling goods for service.
3. What does invasion mean?	Entering a country or region with an armed force.
4. What is a kingdom?	An area that is ruled over by a king or queen.
5. What is racism?	When somebody is treated unfairly because of the colour of their skin.
6. What is a monarch?	A king or queen who rules over a country.

Second Order (disciplinary) Concepts	Key Historical Knowledge	Key Historical Skill
Chronology	What is the chronology of Benin? Plot dates on a timeline in chronological order. Plot the three main periods of Benin: AD900-1300 Early Period, AD1300-1700 The Golden Age and AD1700-1897, The Period of Decline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ I can use dates and terms accurately in describing events. ✓ I can describe the main changes in a period of history. <p style="text-align: right;">*See timeline</p>
Cause and consequence	Why was Benin a successful civilisation? Around the year 900 groups of Edo people began to cut down trees and make clearings in the rainforest. At first, they lived in small family groups, but gradually these groups developed into a kingdom. The kingdom was called Igodomigodo. It was ruled by a series of kings, known as Ogisos, which means 'rulers of the sky'. In the 1100s there were struggles for power and the Ogisos lost control of their kingdom. The Edo people feared that their country would fall into chaos, so they asked their neighbour, the King of Ife, for help. The king sent his son Prince Oranmiyan to restore peace to the Edo kingdom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ I can describe the social, ethnic, cultural diversity of past society. ✓ I can use sources of information to form testable hypotheses about the past. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Explore the cause of Benin's success through trade. Why does trade build a successful civilisation? Plot on a map the trading routes with Benin. Explore the trading Benin did with the Portuguese</i></p>

	<p>Oranmiyan chose his son Eweka to be the first Oba of Benin. Eweka was the first in a long line of Obas, who reached the peak of their power in the 1500s. Oba Esigie expanded his kingdom eastwards to form an empire and won land from the Kingdom of Ife. Ozolua and Esigie both encouraged trade with the Portuguese. They used their wealth from trade to build up a vast army. The fourth warrior king was Oba Orhogbua. During his reign, the empire reached its largest size. It stretched beyond the River Niger in the east and extended west as far as present-day Ghana. The success of Benin was fuelled by its lively trade. Tradesmen and artisans from Benin developed relationships with the Portuguese, who sought after the kingdom's artwork, gold, ivory, and pepper. In the early modern era, Benin was also heavily involved in the West African slave trade. They would capture men, women, and children from rival peoples and sell them into slavery to European and American buyers. This trade provided a significant source of wealth for the kingdom.</p>	<p><i>and the consequences to trading with Europe.</i></p>
<p>Historical significance</p>	<p>Who were the Oba? The most important person in the kingdom was the king, known as the Oba. Hundreds of men and women lived at the royal court and devoted their lives to looking after the Oba and his family. Some people at court had very special jobs, working as acrobats, sorcerers or leopard hunters. The Oba rarely spoke in public, but when they did, they had the final say. The Oba were seen as gods and lived lavish lives in huge palaces decorated in rare materials. There were many Oba over the years. Oba Esigie was well known for his many skills of communication. He established the first European trading routes with the Portuguese, selling ivory, brass and peppercorn. Idia was the mother of Esigie, the Oba of Benin who ruled from 1504 to 1550. She played a very significant role in the rise and reign of her son, being described as a great warrior who fought relentlessly before and during her son's reign as the Oba of the Edo people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ I can describe the social, cultural or religious diversity of past society. ✓ I can describe the characteristic features of the past, including ideas, beliefs, attitudes and experiences of men, women and children. <p><i>Look at the masks made of bronze and ivory for both Idia and Esigie. Explore the rulers of Benin and what the people of Benin believed about them. Focus on Oba Esigie and his life. Explore how his mother, Idia, had a significant impact on the success of the Oba, at the time, leading many wars of conquest. Begin to explore how Esigie built up trade.</i></p>
<p>Evidence and Interpretation</p>	<p>What does Benin art tell us about life in Benin? The people of Benin made many different kinds of art. Village craft workers made simple pots, weapons and tools. They carved masks for ceremonies, and they moulded sculptures of gods out of mud. In Benin City, craft workers were organised into groups known as guilds. There were guilds for wood carvers, ivory carvers, leather workers, blacksmiths and weavers. Most important of all was the brass casters' guild. They were only allowed to work for the Oba (king). The art of Benin features people, animals and gods. It provides a fascinating guide to what life and religion were like in the kingdom of Benin. Some animals, such as crocodiles and leopards, appear many times in the art of Benin. They are used as symbols to demonstrate the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ I can use sources of evidence to deduce information about the past. ✓ I can select suitable sources of evidence, giving reasons for choices. <p><i>Explore different pieces of Benin art, carved in ivory and bronze. Look at the animals and symbols found in the art. What does this tell us about the culture? Were the people of Benin skilled people? Watch the BBC bitesize video of how they made the bronze (What can we learn from the art of Benin? - BBC Bitesize)</i></p>

	power of their king, the Oba. The materials that the artists used were believed to have magical properties. Coral was seen as a gift from the god of the sea, Olokun. Ivory was seen as a symbol of purity and strength. Carved ivory tusks stood by the Oba's throne, and ivory pendants and bracelets were worn by the Oba and other important chiefs.	
Similarity and difference	<p>What was the main reason for the decline of Benin?</p> <p>By the 1800s the Kingdom of Benin began to lose power and the Obas struggled to rule their people. Benin was also under threat from Britain. The British wanted to gain control of Benin so they could get rich by selling its palm oil and rubber. The Oba tried to stop all contact with Britain, but the British insisted on their right to trade. Benin began to lose power during the 1800s, as royal family members fought for power and control of the throne. Civil wars broke out, dealing a significant blow to both Benin's administration as well as its economy. In its weakened state, Benin struggled to resist foreign interference in its trading network, particularly by the British. A desire for control over West African trade and territory ultimately led to a British invasion of Benin in 1897.</p>	<p>✓ I can compare some of the times studied with those of the other areas of interest around the world.</p> <p><i>Explore the sources of the times written by different Europeans about the people of Benin. Contrast this to the poem: The Benin Bronze by George the Poet</i></p> <p>George the Poet – The Benin bronze - YouTube</p> <p><i>What are the differences between how the Oba saw the Europeans to how the Europeans saw Benin? Base these on the sources written by Olfert Dapper in 1668 about the Oba courts.</i></p>
Change and continuity	<p>What happened after the British entered Benin without permission?</p> <p>In 1897 a group of British officials tried to visit Benin. They were sent away because the Oba was busy with a religious ceremony, but they decided to visit anyway. As they approached the borders of Benin, a group of warriors drove them back and several British men were killed. This attack made the British furious. They sent over a thousand soldiers to invade Benin. Benin City was burnt to the ground and the kingdom of Benin became part of the British Empire. Benin belonged to the British empire until 1960. Today, the Oba of Benin only lead religious ceremonies, but no longer rule.</p>	<p>✓ I can identify periods of rapid change in history.</p> <p>✓ I can understand the concepts of continuity and change over time.</p> <p>✓ I can use appropriate historical vocabulary to communicate change and continuity.</p> <p><i>Explore the invasion of the British army and the Benin Massacre. Explore the Benin Punitive expedition and the destruction of Benin City. Begin to look at how Benin changed over time to the modern day. Explore where the Oba are now, and how they no longer rule.</i></p>

Key Vocabulary	Significant People
<p>animism: A belief that all things have souls including plants, animals, rocks, rivers and objects.</p> <p>cowrie shells: A seashell used as currency to trade with the Africans</p> <p>civil war: A war between people who live in the same country.</p> <p>colonisation: Establishing control over an area inhabited by indigenous people.</p>	 <p>The Oba: The Oba are the ruling class of Benin. They are believed to be Gods and are still alive to this day, but no longer rule. The Oba commissioned a lot of the bronze (brass) artwork we have today.</p> <p>Oba Esigie: Oba Esigie was well known for his many skills of communication. He established the first European</p>

Edo: The name of the people who lived in the ancient kingdom of Benin.

Igomodomigodo: The original land of the Kingdom of Benin.

Ife: A city near the Kingdom of Benin, ruled over by the Yoruba people. The city was called the Holy City of life.

ivory: A hard substance made from elephant tusk.

Ogisos: The first kings of Benin. Ogisos means, "Rulers of the sky."

trade: The exchange of goods.



trading routes with the Portuguese, selling ivory, brass and peppercorn.

Queen Mother of the Oba, Idia:

Idia was the mother of Esigie, the Oba of Benin who ruled from 1504 to 1550. She played a very significant role in the rise and reign of her son, being described as a great warrior who fought relentlessly before and during her son's reign as the Oba of the Edo people.

Resources



[The kingdom of Benin - BBC Bitesize](#)

[MORE ONLINE SESSIONS | primaryhistory \(wixsite.com\)](#) < Interesting debate topic... should the Benin Bronzes be returned to Nigeria?

[The Kingdom of Benin | National Geographic Society](#)

[Benin Bronzes | British Museum](#) < Key artefacts for enquiry

[Oba Esigie | Encyclopedia.com](#)



Timeline

AD400

The Yoruba people start using iron tools to enable them to clear forests and land effectively.

AD600

The area became the IFE kingdom, one of the earliest kingdoms in West Africa.

AD900

Benin Kingdom is first established when small villages join together in a conglomerate.

AD110

The last Ogiso of Igodomigodo, Owodo, dies and there is nobody to rule.

AD1489

The Edo people begin trading with the Portugese, who call the place "Benin."

AD1400

European sailors begin to sail to Africa.They buy things such as gold, ivory and pepper.

AD1300-1700

The golden age of Edo. It has a large army and skilled craftspeople.

AD1180

The Ogiso dynasty comes to an end. Eweka becomes the new ruler. He changes Igodomigodo to Edo. He calls himself the Oba.

AD1504

Esigie, and Oba of Benin, begins his rule. His mother, Queen Idia, plays a significant role.

AD1553

The first British ships arrive in Benin. Britain becomes a major power in the slave trade and is keen to gain more control.

AD1897

The British enter Benin City without permission. Fighting breaks out. The British launch the Benin Punitive Expedition and destroy Benin City.

