



“Africa”

Reading Comprehension – Informational Passages



Directions: Read the passage. Then answer questions about the passage below.

Africa is the second–largest continent after Asia. It also has the second–largest population after Asia. About one billion people live in Africa. That is almost 15% of the world’s population. There are currently 54 countries on the continent of Africa, when including island countries and the Western Sahara. The number of countries sometimes changes because many of the countries were made by colonial powers. Colonial powers are countries that made colonies in Africa when it was first being discovered by outsiders.

There are about 2,000 different languages in Africa. Most of the languages belong to one of four large language groups. The four large language groups are Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Congo, and the Khoisan languages. People also speak some non–African languages in Africa. About 20% of the population speak Arabic, mostly in northern Africa. About 10% speak Swahili, mostly in southeastern Africa. About 5% speak Hausa, mostly in western Africa. Many people also speak English, French, and Portuguese. One African country, Nigeria, has 250 different languages!

There are many different tribes and cultures in Africa. For example, there is the Ashanti people. They live in Ghana. They are famous for their beautiful Kente cloth. Kente cloth can be different colors. Ashanti people wear clothing made of Kente cloth for important events. There are also the Madinka people. They live in West Africa - mostly in Senegal, Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau. Some Madinka people also live in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Cote d'Ivoire. The Madinka people are famous for their music. They tell their history with music.

Most scientists think that the first humans came from Africa. The first written information in Africa comes from Egypt at around 3300 B.C.E. (B.C.E. means Before the Common Era., or before the year “0”). Egypt is one of the oldest African civilizations. At that time, Egypt traded with Phoenicia, which is now Lebanon, and includes parts of Israel, Palestine, and Syria. Egypt was discovered by the ancient Greeks, who were the first Europeans to go to Africa.

In the late 1800s, European countries went to Africa. France, Britain, Portugal, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Italy, and Algeria made colonies in Africa. That means they controlled the governments there. The European powers took land by force. This enabled them to send many raw materials home to their countries. Raw materials are resources that are basic, and have not been made into anything else.

Many African countries became free after World War II. Some countries became free in a peaceful way. Some countries had to fight to be free. The time after colonial rule is commonly referred to as “post–colonial Africa.” Post–colonial Africa has had some very big problems. After the colonial powers left, there were problems with government. Between 1960 and 1980, there were 70 coups. (pronounced “koo”) A **coup** is the overthrow of a government. There were 13 presidential assassinations. That means 13 African presidents were murdered. In the 1970s, there was a huge **famine** in Ethiopia. A famine is a time of little or no food. Hundreds of thousands of people died of **starvation**, which means they died of hunger. There have been wars. There has been a big conflict in Darfur, Sudan, and many people have died. And the AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) disease has caused much sickness and death in post–colonial Africa.

Africa has many natural resources. There are eight oil exporting countries in Sub–Saharan Africa. They are Nigeria, Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Sudan. Africa has about 7% of the oil reserves in the world. South Africa is the largest gold producer in the world. Ghana, Mali, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Rwanda and the DRC also have a lot of gold. The DRC has copper and cobalt. The DRC produces 22% of world’s diamonds every year. Botswana, Sierra Leone, and South Africa also have a lot of diamonds. Mozambique, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, and Liberia all have a lot of **timber**, which is wood. The business in gas, oil diamonds, timber and tourism is very good.

People visit Africa because the landscape is beautiful. There are many animals in Africa. Many tourists visit Kruger National Park in South Africa. The park has 517 species of birds! The park also has 147 species of mammals! The park even has webcams so people can watch the animals using their computer.

Some tourists go on **safari** in Africa. The word “safari” is a Swahili word. It comes from the Arabic word **safiara**, which means travel. It is a trip where people can watch and take pictures of animals. Sometimes it is a hunting trip. Most modern safaris are trips to look at animals. Some safari trips are in cars or trucks, helicopters or air balloons. This way, people can watch the animals from a safe place.

Soccer is the most popular sport in Africa. The Confederation of African Football (CAF) is the organization in charge of soccer. The first members of the organization were Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, and South Africa. The CAF is the biggest of the six continental soccer associations around the globe, and the African Cup of Nations is the main contest for men's national soccer teams in Africa.

The continent of Africa is rich with resources, people and culture. Unfortunately, this has contributed to its **chaotic** history. Africa is currently working on increasing education and jobs. Many organizations are working together to build schools, hospitals, and industry to improve the future of the African nation.



Questions:

- 1) How many large language groups are there in Africa?
 - A. 4
 - B. 8
 - C. 25
 - D. 2,50
 - E. 2,500
- 2) Where does Kente cloth come from?
 - A. Mali
 - B. Ghana
 - C. Gambia
 - D. Senegal
 - E. Nigeria
- 3) Which country had colonies in Africa?
 - A. Germany
 - B. France
 - C. Britain
 - D. Portugal
 - E. Both A and B are correct
 - F. All of the above
- 4) How many different kinds of birds can you see at Kruger National Park?
 - A. 13
 - B. 70
 - C. 147
 - D. 517
 - E. 1,250
- 5) Why do people go on safaris?
 - A. To look at animals
 - B. To purchase diamonds
 - C. To take pictures of animals
 - D. To play with live animals
 - E. Both A and C are correct
 - F. All of the above

Vocabulary:

- 1) A **coup** is...
 - A. a government takeover.
 - B. a group of people.
 - C. a colonial power.
 - D. a refugee.
 - E. Both B and C are correct.
- 2) A **famine** is ...
 - A. a time without food.
 - B. a peaceful change.
 - C. a time of extreme conflict.
 - D. a family group.
 - E. a government.
- 3) What is **starvation**?
 - A. War
 - B. Hunger
 - C. Industry
 - D. Freedom
 - E. Disease
- 4) Where does **timber** come from?
 - A. Oil
 - B. Trees
 - C. Mines
 - D. Factories
 - E. None of the above
- 5) A **safari** is a...
 - A. trip.
 - B. tour.
 - C. search.
 - D. Both A and C are correct.
 - E. All of the above
- 6) If something is **chaotic**, it is...
 - A. carefully organized.
 - B. sick and diseased.
 - C. crazy and demented.
 - D. turbulent and disorderly.
 - E. evil and maligned.