Trade Routes that Linked Classical Civilizations
What are the Four major trade routes that linked Classical Civilizations?

- The Silk Road
- Indian Ocean Trade
- Trans-Saharan Trade
- Sub-Saharan Trade
Sahara Desert

Trans-Saharan Routes
spread goods such as Gold and Salt across the great desert.
Indian Ocean

Routes from India to the Arabian Peninsula and Africa
Bantu

- Among the most influential people of ancient Sub-Saharan Africa were those who spoke the Bantu languages.
- Bantu people showed an early readiness to migrate.
  - Canoes enabled the Bantu to move easily.
• Ethnic groups descended from the Bantu include the **Shona**, the **Xhosa**, the **Kikuyu**, and the **Zulu**, of the Eastern Bantu **language** branch; and the Herero and Tonga peoples, of the Western Bantu language branch.

• **750-600 BCE**: Kush or Nubia (upper or southern reaches of Nile River) rules Egypt from capital Meroe; with metal technology, widened economic influence in sub-Saharan Africa.

• **500 BCE**: Ancient **Nok** culture thrives in forests of central Nigeria (to CE 200). Claimed by the Yoruba peoples as ancestors, the Nok are justly revered for their art and terra cottas.
• **C. 300 CE**: Rise of Axum or Aksum (Ethiopia) and conversion to Christianity. (By CE 1st century, Rome had conquered Egypt, Carthage, and other North African areas; which became the granaries of the Roman Empire, and the majority of the population converted to Christianity). Axum spent its religious zeal carving out churches from rocks, and writing and interpreting religious texts.

• **600-1000 CE**: Bantu migration extends to southern Africa; Bantu languages will predominate in central and southern Africa.
Trans-Saharan Trade Routes: Ancient trade routes connected sub-Saharan West Africa to the Mediterranean coast. Among the commodities carried southward were silk, cotton, horses, and salt. Among those carried northward were gold, ivory, pepper, and slaves.
What am I?
I am the tip of a camel’s nose and mouth! I am very important to the camel, because my nostrils can close up completely to keep out the sand. My mouth helps the camel get the most protein and energy out of poor-quality food in the desert. By swallowing and regurgitating all day, chewing and chewing and chewing with sideways grinding motions, my special mouth pulverizes food and sucks out every last bit of nutrition.
Economic Exchange: Camels

Camels came to north Africa from Arabia, by way of Egypt and the Sudan, around the 7th Century B.C.

A caravan took 70 to 90 days to cross the Sahara, so the camel’s ability to travel long distances without water made it very useful.

After about 300 A.D., camels had replaced horses and donkeys as the preferred means of transportation across the Sahara.
People have been using camels for over 4,000 years mostly as pack animals and for transportation. They use their hair for felt, and they are used for their meat and milk as well. Their dried manure can even be used as fuel.
Camels can be gross! They spit, burp, and even worse!

Camels have adapted to their environment. The secret is in its blood cells (erythrocytes), which can absorb water and expand up to 240% their original size! Camels can drink 40 gallons of water at once and store it in their blood. The humps store 80 lbs. of fat which nourishes the camel in times of scarce food. When the camel uses the fat, the humps shrink. When it eats again, the humps swell up.
Camels have a third eyelid that goes over the eye like swimming goggles to protect its eyes from the sand!

The camel's feet are huge and they allow them to walk on the sand like snow shoes.

Camels live about 40 years and have 1 baby every 12-15 months.
Will you be my FRIEND?
Camel Racing
Ghana

- OLD AND POWERFUL
- CONTROLLED THE GOLD AND SALT TRADE
- ADOPTED ISLAM: 985 A.D.
  - GENERATED FURTHER CONVERSION TO THE WEST
- PROSPEROUS
- CONQUERED BY BERBERS AND TUAREGS
The Kingdom of Ghana became the most important commercial site in west Africa because it was the center for trade in gold.

Ghana itself did not produce gold but the kings obtained gold from lands to the south and became wealthy by controlling and taxing the trade.

Muslim merchants were especially eager to procure gold for customers in the Mediterranean basin and the Islamic world.

Ghana also provided ivory and slaves.

In exchange they received horses, cloth, small manufactured wares, and salt.
Mali

- SUCCESSOR STATE
- FELL HEIR TO MOST OF THE TERRITORY AND COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES OF GHANA
Economic Exchange: Gold

- Mali benefited from trans-Sahara trade even more than did Ghana.
- From 13th until the late 15th Century Mali controlled and taxed almost all the trade passing through West Africa.
- The most prominent period was under the reign of Mansa Musa from 1312 to 1337.
Native Religion

- Many African recognized a creator god as the single divine force responsible for setting the world in motion and providing it with order.

- Beneath him were many lesser gods associated with the sun, wind, rain, trees, rivers, and other natural features.
  - Unlike the supreme creator god, these lesser gods actively participated in the workings of the world.

- Diviners were religious specialists who had the power to mediate between humanity and supernatural beings.
Influence of Trade on Religion

- Contact with Muslim merchants encouraged sub-Saharan west Africans and coastal east Africans to adopt Islam
- It served as a cultural foundation for business relationships
  - Yet African ruling elites and merchants did not convert for purely mercenary reasons; they took their new faith seriously
Specialization

West African gold merchants using weights and measures
Specialization

- Textile and pottery production
- Metal-smithing
- Leatherworking
- Mining
- Architecture
- Trading
- Religious scholars
Trans-Saharan Slave Trade
Trans-Saharan Slave Trade

- Between North Africa and Black Africa
- 7th CE – introduction of the camel and the caravan trade routes
- Trans-Saharan route mutually beneficial for Islamic world and savanna states of Africa
- 9.4 million traded between 650-900 AD (many died en route)
Trans-Saharan Slave Trade

- The Saharan trade extended from the Sub-Saharan West African kingdoms across the Sahara desert to Europe. The Saharan Trade linked such African empires as Ghana, Mali, and Songhay to the European world.
Trans-Saharan Slave Trade

While the Sudan, where the Empire of Ghana was situated, possessed a large amount of gold, the region lacked adequate salt for the survival of Empire's population. The Desert regions of present day Morocco and Algeria, however, contained huge salt resources, and desert inhabitants were always in search of valuables. Not surprisingly, the gold-salt trade between the Ghana Empire and the Arab desert merchants flourished.
Trans-Saharan Slave Trade

- Trade involved mostly gold and slaves going north
- Involved mostly salt going south
- The history of the gold trade and the adoption of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa were closely linked
Trans-Saharan Slave Trade

- **5th C.** – camels allowed Berber-speaking people to begin crossing the Sahara Desert
- **8th C.** – annual trade caravans followed routes
Trans-Saharan Slave Trade

- 7th – 11th C. – trade linked Mediterranean economies that needed gold (sub-Saharan) to sub-Saharan economies that needed salt (Mediterranean had this)
Trans-Saharan Slave Trade

- Merchants transported more than valuable commodities along the trans-Saharan routes. Just as Buddhism reached the Chinese Empire via Indian merchants traveling the Silk Road, Islam reached West Africa through Arab Merchants on Saharan caravan routes. Arab merchants brought the Koran and the written language Arabic to the traditionally oral cultures each empire encompassed.