

LDC Argumentative Writing - Student Work Samples - Social Studies - Grades 9-10

Scroll down to view two authentic pieces of student work that resulted from this 9-10th Grade Social Studies LDC Real Works assignment:

What was Mansa Musa's role in the colonization of Africa? After reading primary and secondary sources on the Kingdom of Mali and European exploration of Africa, write a causal analysis in which you argue the extent to which Mansa Musa's pilgrimage to Mecca caused European exploration of the African continent. Support your position with evidence from the text/s.

After each piece of student work, you will also find how each one was scored using the associated [rubric](#), and you will also find a written rationale for each score.

Mansa Musa is known to be the richest man of the middle ages and someone who contributed to the colonization of Africa. With his riches and the wealth of the Kingdom of Mali, he attracted the eye of Europeans. Through his riches and the wealth of Mali, Mansa Musa contributed to the colonization of Africa

One way Mansa Musa contributed to the colonization of Africa was through money. Mansa Musa was so rich that his generous handouts single handedly broke an entire country's economy. The article Kingdom of Mali Primary Sources goes to say, "This man [Mansa Musa] flooded Cairo with his benefactions... The Cairenes made incalculable profits out of him and his suite in buying and selling and giving and taking... They exchanged gold until they depressed its value in Egypt and caused its price to fall." Because of Mansa Musa's great wealth, a myth was created where Europeans believed Africa was a place of gold- this belief pushed them to explore the continent.

Mansa Musa also contributed to the exploration of Africa through the riches of Mali, which Musa helped them gain. Musa gave out very generous handouts to the people of Mali- even Mali's slaves had silver and golden fillets. Because of Musa, Mali was one of the richest kingdoms around. The article Ibn Battuta: Travels in Asia and Africa depicts Dugha appearing with his 4 wives and 100 slave-girls, the slaves wearing "beautiful robes, and on their heads they have gold and silver fillets, with gold and silver balls attached." This contributed to Europeans believing Africa was a place of wealth.

Mansa Musa was of great value in the colonization of Africa. He contributed considerably through his copious amounts of riches, and through him, Mali became one of the richest kingdoms- These factors ultimately led to the Europeans exploring the continent. Through his riches and the wealth of Mali, Mansa Musa contributed to the colonization of Africa.

Dimension	Score	Explanation of the Score / Evidence / Rationale
Controlling Idea	3	While the controlling idea is somewhat minimal in the introduction paragraph, it is clearly stated in the concluding paragraph. There the claim is that Mansa Musa contributed considerably through his riches, helping Mali become a rich kingdom which led to European exploration. It is clear, specific and credible, addressing all aspects of the prompt, but it does not acknowledge the complexity.
Selection & Citation of Evidence	3	Both of the quotes used support the claim and consistently cite the sources using the titles of each source for citation.

Development / Explanation of Sources	2.5	Two body paragraphs accurately explain ideas and source material in support of argument. One explanation (“Because of Mansa Musa’s great wealth, a myth was created where Europeans believed Africa was a place of gold- this belief pushed them to explore the continent”) accurately explains how the quote supports the argument, but the other is incomplete, saying only, “This contributed to Europeans believing Africa was a place of wealth.”
Organization	3	The relationship between claim, evidence, and reasoning is clear through sequenced body paragraphs but placement of the thesis at the end of the essay causes lapses in coherence.
C3 Concept: Cause and Effect	2	Discusses causes (riches creating the myth that Africa was full of gold) and effects (single handedly broke the economy) but does not discuss multiple causes or effects.

In 1324 the King of Mali, Mansa Musa, had gone on a Hajj and visited many different empires. One of the locations Mansa Musa visited was Cairo, the capital of Egypt. On his travels he flooded these areas with gold, and the people had become so rich the value of gold had depressed. Several years later, Europeans had begun exploring Africa in search of valuables such as gold. The Europeans caused great damage to the empires of Africa, and to some it's easy to say Mansa Musa's pilgrimage was at fault. Ultimately, Mansa Musa was not responsible for European exploration of Africa, but there were also many other influences involved. Mansa Musa had brought gold throughout Africa, but Europeans had begun searching Africa because they had help from many people inside Africa, a group had developed in order to sponsor trips to the continent, and they had information about Africa for many years.

The Europeans had plenty of help from people inside the continent of Africa. This includes African kings and rulers that were interested in earning the Europeans' trust, and other African men that the Europeans hired. A reliable source simply titled *European Exploration of Africa*, states that, "Explorers' travels also helped pave the way for European conquest, but the explorers themselves had little to no power in Africa for much of the century. They were dependent on the African men hired and the assistance of the African kings and rulers, who were often interested in acquiring new allies and new markets." Based on this information, it can be concluded that Europeans were greatly assisted by the help they received from Rulers inside the continent of Africa.

As the exploration of Africa became more popular, groups had come together in order to assist with the continent's exploration. One of these groups was the "African Association", a European group formed in order to sponsor explorers' travels to and from the continent. This is confirmed with information from the article *European Exploration of Africa*, which reads, "In the late 1700s, a group of British men, inspired by the Enlightenment ideal of learning, decided that Europe should know much more about Africa. They formed the African Association in 1788 to sponsor expeditions to the continent." The African Association was interested in Africa, and believed that Europe should have information about the continent. That being said, education was not the main reason Europeans explored Africa. They were more interested in treasure than anything else they would've gained from Africa. A familiar article states, "The new scientific interest in Africa was never wholly philanthropic, however. Financial and political support for exploration grew out of the desire for wealth and national power. Timbuktu, for instance, was believed to be rich in gold." The African Association was formed to sponsor expeditions to Africa, and ultimately, education was not the major reason behind European exploration of the continent.

Finally, the exploration of Africa had also been assisted by the information Europeans had prior. The catalan atlas, for example, was created by Europeans in 1375, and it contained information such as, "many

African coastal cities, the Nile River, and other political and geographical features.” They also had a detailed description of Africa that was created by El Hasan ben Muhammed el-Wazzan-ez-Zayyati, an African man who was captured by Christian pirates. The source *Leo Africanus: Description of Timbuktu From The description of Africa* states, “Still a young man, he was captured by Christian pirates and presented as an exceptionally learned slave to the great Renaissance pope, Leo X. Leo freed him, baptised him under the name “Johannis Leo de Medici,” and commissioned him to write in Italian the detailed survey of Africa which provided most of what Europeans knew about the continent for the next several centuries.” The survey created by Johannis Leo provided most of what Europeans knew about Africa, and this was enough information for them to know how to start travelling the continent.

Mansa Musa's pilgrimage to Mecca had spread his wealth all throughout Africa. From Cairo, the capital of Egypt, to Mecca, the final destination of the Hajj, Mansa Musa's benefactions had flooded markets to the point that gold had lost its value. His gold had become important around the world, but this importance was not the main reason European exploration began. Many African rulers helped the explorers travel safely through the continent. Inside Europe, many groups had come together to fund these expeditions into Africa. Finally, different descriptions of Africa had allowed Europeans to know more about Africa, and made them more interested. These three reasons are precisely why Europeans began exploring Africa, and Mansa Musa's pilgrimage was only one piece of the puzzle.

Dimension	Score	Explanation of the Score / Evidence / Rationale
Controlling Idea	3.5	There is a clear controlling idea in the introduction and the conclusion which establishes a clear, specific and credible claim - that despite Mansa Musa's bringing gold, there are other factors that caused European exploration of Africa more than Mansa Musa. While the controlling idea does attempt to acknowledge the complexity of the issue and addresses all aspects of the prompt, the essay does not go on to adequately address that complexity and seems to leave Mansa Musa out of the analysis keeping it from rising to a 4.
Selection & Citation of Evidence	2.5	Most quotes are relevant and used effectively to support the claim. Supporting ideas are consistently cited by the title name, with just one using the “familiar article” to reference the previously identified source. One quote used in the final paragraph that is not relevant to the claim, “Still a young man, he was captured by Christian pirates and presented as an exceptionally learned slave to the great Renaissance pope, Leo X. Leo freed him, baptised him under the name “Johannis Leo de Medici.” Additionally, the <i>Catalan Atlas</i> is used incorrectly, as it was created before Ibn Battuta's travels but not before Mansa Musa's pilgrimage, which results in a weak third paragraph.
Development / Explanation of Sources	2.5	The essay attempts to develop and explain each quote, but some explanations are incomplete. The first two body paragraphs accurately explain ideas and develop the argument with the influence of people inside the African continent aiding Europeans and the creation of groups (due to Enlightenment influence) to assist in exploration of the African continent. In the final body paragraph, explanation is incomplete as evidence is irrelevant

		and incorrect. All explanations lack connection to Mansa Musa's role in spreading gold throughout the continent and sparking European interest in exploration (as suggested by claim).
Organization	3	The essay sets out in the introduction with a clear controlling idea and ideas are sequenced in a logical progression to develop a cohesive argument. Each body paragraph includes a claim, evidence and reasoning. The essay concludes by restating the controlling idea. Relationships among claim, reasons, and evidence are clarified but not quite precise.
C3 Concept: Cause and Effect	3	The essay explains reasonable relationships between multiple , complex causes by claiming that Mansa Musa's pilgrimage was only one piece of the puzzle but lacks analysis of Mansa Musa and his role (in body of essay).