**What can we learn from the kingdoms of Benin and Asante about African histories?**

**Structure of the lessons: Benin then Asante enquiry**

**Week 1: The rise of the Kingdom of Benin**

* Lesson 1: Who were the ‘rulers of the sky’?
* Lesson 2: What was life like in Great Benin?

**Week 2: The fall of the Kingdom of Benin**

* Lesson 3: How far did the Kingdom of Benin resist transatlantic slavery?
* Lesson 4: How did the rulers of the sky end up in the British Museum?

**Week 3: The rise of the Asante Kingdom**

* Lesson 5: Who were the Asante?
* Lesson 6: What was the power of gold in Asante?

**Week 4: The fall of the Asante Kingdom**

* Lesson 7: How far did the Asante Kingdom collaborate with the slave trade?
* Lesson 8: Why were the Asante forced to hide the Golden Stool?

**Week 5: Assessment**

* Lesson 9: What can we learn from the kingdoms of Benin and Asante about African histories?

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| **Theme per week** | **Lesson question** | **What substantive content?** | **What will pupils do with this content? (Activities)**  | **Subject knowledge for teachers** |
| **Week 1: The rise of the Kingdom of Benin** | 1. Who were the ‘rulers of the sky’? | 1. Introduction to the enquiry question. What do we already know about African histories?2. Explain the role of a creation story with reference to Benin, including:· the role of Oranmiyan.· the religious connection with Ile-Ife.3. Evaluate the nature of Oba Ewuare’s power in terms of combining magic and military might. | **See PowerPoint entitled ‘L1\_Who were the rulers of the sky’**Discussion of Kwame Nkrumah quote: ‘We should write our history as the history of our society in its fullness.’ How is the teaching of African histories not currently ‘in its fullness’?Introduction to enquiry question. Why African ‘histories’ and not ‘history’? What are common myths/misconceptions about African histories? ‘History of Africa is history of the slave trade’, etc.Reference four of Toby Green’s ‘myths of African history’:1. Africa has historically been cut off from the world
2. Africa had no place in shaping the modern world
3. African history can only be written through European documents
4. African history doesn’t change or develop (Hegel)

Maps of Asante and Benin kingdoms from Gus Casely-Hayford’s *Lost Kingdoms*. Students plot four key turning point dates on both graphs that will guide the enquiry. Students complete cloze task on the creation story of the Kingdom of Benin and answer questions.Students use information sheet to complete a biography of Oba Ewuare, the first warrior king of Benin.Analysis of Bini proverb: ‘The instructions of the Oba can never be overruled’/‘Enobakhare Orode’ and the significance of this as a common name in Nigeria.  | *A Fistful of Shells: West Africa from the rise of the slave trade to the age of revolution* by Toby Green (2019, Penguin): Introduction‘Between the Ogiso and Oba dynasties: an interpretation of interregnum in the Benin Kingdom’ by Dmitri M. Bondarenko and Peter M. Roese (2004) in *History in Africa*, *31*, pp. 103–115‘A reconsideration of the Ife–Benin Relationship’ by Alan Ryder (1965) in *The Journal of African History*, *6*, no. 1, pp. 25-23*Benin and the Europeans, 1485–1897* by Alan Ryder (1969, Longman)Letter from King Manuel of Portugal insisting that the Obas ‘embrace Christianity’ – from *The African Middle Ages, 1400–1800* by Roland Oliver (2010, Cambridge University Press), p. 96*The Political and Sociocultural Factors in the West* *African Slave Trade (1450–1897)* by Hakeem Harunah (2001, Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization) |
| 2. What was life like in Great Benin? | 1. Describe the grandeur of Great Benin/ Edo, capital of the kingdom .2. Explain how the power of the Obas was emphasised by the wealth of Benin.3. Evaluate the important role of the mother of the Oba. | **See PowerPoint entitled ‘L2\_What was life like in Great Benin’**Source inference from engraving of ancient Benin City from 1688 by D. O. Dapper, available from Wikimedia Commons. Students to label: 1) the house of the queens; 2) the royal courtyard, containing several palaces showing their spires; 3) the king (Oba) in the centre, mounted on a horse; 4) his mounted nobles in procession on the right; and 5) the musicians leading the procession, also holding the royal tigers.*Challenge: What are the issues with the accuracy of an engraving such as this?*Source analysis table to analyse six sources on Great Benin: 1. Source 1: Description of Great Benin by Lourenco Pinto, a Portuguese ship captain, in 1691
2. Source 2: Archaeological evidence of the walls of Great Benin from scientist Fred Pearce
3. Source 3: Description by the British Captain John Adams regarding presents to the Oba
4. Source 4: Dutch trader Dirck Ruiters, who visited Benin City in 1602
5. Source 5: Description of the Oba’s palace in Benin City by Olfert Dapper
6. Source 6 (*challenge*): Description of the role of the Uzama in the history book *Benin Under British Administration: the impact of colonial rule on an African kingdom, 1897-1938* by Philip Igbafe (1979, Humanities Press)

*The Lost Kingdoms of Africa*: 5:50–7:40 (<https://youtu.be/WN90tod26H0>)Written task: What can sources tell us about life in Benin City and the power of the Oba?How important was the mother of the Oba? Comprehension task on Queen Idia and the role of the Iyoba. Imagine that you are a traveller to Benin City in the seventeenth century. Write a diary entry explaining what you have seen. | *A Fistful of Shells: West Africa from the rise of the slave trade to the age of revolution* by Toby Green (2019, Penguin): Chapter 4*The Lost Kingdoms of Africa: West Africa* (<https://youtu.be/WN90tod26H0>)  |
| **Week 2: The fall of the Kingdom of Benin** | 3. How far did the Kingdom of Benin resist transatlantic Slavery? | 1. Consider the significance of diverse trades in Oba Esigie’s decision to ban export of male slaves.2. Evaluate the reasons why slave trading re-emerged in Benin in the late eighteenth century.3. Evaluate how the differing attitudes to the trade in Dahomey and Benin led to differing relations with Europeans, e.g. the expansion of the trade at Whydah/Ouidah and the installation of 13-year-old King Haffon by European slave traders, followed by Dahomeyan King Agaja’s burning of slave trade warehouses and plea to the English to send any ships but slave ships. | Source analysis of the Benin Ivory in the British museum, which features the Portuguese at the top: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Af1910-0513-1> Key Q: What brought the Portuguese to Benin? Link back to the previous lesson.*Lost Kingdoms of Africa* 16:40: Oba Esigie’s relations with the Portuguese. Questions to go alongside clip. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=QW\_kaUuUg8Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QW_kaUuUg8Y)Source analysis of ‘Gold and slaves on the gold coast’ by Walter Rodney (1969) *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, *10*, pp. 13–28.Key Q: Why did Benin send captives to Asante but not directly to Europeans? Students are given nine statements to put on an extent line to answer the question ‘How far did Benin resist transatlantic slavery?’, including evidence that male slaves were banned but also evidence that female slaves were not and that as Benin declined, slaving returned. ‘Speak like a historian’ debate task: ‘Benin never truly resisted transatlantic slavery.’ How far do you agree? | *African Kingdoms* by Toby Green ([www.ocr.org.uk/Images/208299-african-kingdoms-ebook-.pdf](http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/208299-african-kingdoms-ebook-.pdf)): Chapter 3‘The struggle against the transatlantic slave trade: the role of the state’ by Joseph Inikori (2003) in S. Diouf (ed) *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies*, Ohio University Press, pp. 170–189 ‘The slave coast of West Africa’ by Robin Law (1993) in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, *56*, no. 1, pp. 196–198 (including map of slave captive routes inland on p. 186)‘A study of the Portuguese–Benin trade relations: Ughoton as a Benin port (1485–1506)’ by Michael Ediagbonya (2015) in *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, *2*, no. 2, pp. 206–221. |
| 4. How did the rulers of the Sky end up in the British Museum? | 1. Describe the events leading to the fall of Benin City in 1897 and the seizure of the Benin Bronzes, including the invention of the rubber tyre in 1888.2. Assess the debate over the origin of the Benin Bronzes and what it tells us about European views of Africa.3. Evaluate the ethical implications posed by the current location of the Benin Bronzes. | **See PowerPoint entitled ‘L4, 8, 9\_How do** **Benin and Asante link to the British Museum’** ***These activities and those in Lessons 8 and 9 are all incorporated into the PowerPoint above.*** Source analysis of photo of Oba Ovonramwen during deportation to Calabar versus photo of British Army in front of seized loot from Benin City. What has happened here? <https://therabbitisin.com/fact-about-benin-massacre-and-expenditure-of-1897-f93f63d8691c> Source inference on plaque depicting warrior and attendants on page 11 here: [www.britishmuseum.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/Benin\_art\_Nov2015.pdf](https://www.britishmuseum.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/Benin_art_Nov2015.pdf)George the Poet on Benin Bronzes: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IlUMUGUorw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IlUMUGUorw)Comprehension on description of the fall of Benin in *Benin under British Administration* by Philip A. IgbafeComparison between the Benin Bronzes and Les Demoiselles D’Avignon by Pablo PicassoWatch David Olusoga on the Benin Bronzes in *Civilisations*: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rp8flCwvoAU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rp8flCwvoAU)‘Story Source Scholarship’ tasks on the colonisation of Great Benin.What is the significance of the Benin Bronzes? Analysis in terms of three ‘I’s: influence, insight and interrupting the psyche. Debate: Where should they be? Arguments for/against return to Nigeria.  | ‘The origins of the Benin Bronzes’ by M. D. W. Jeffreys (1951) in *African Studies*, *10*, pp. 87–92*Benin Under British Administration: the impact of colonial rule on an African kingdom, 1897-1938* by Philip Igbafe (1979, Humanities Press)‘Spoils of war’ by Jonathan Jones (2003) in *The Guardian*: [www.theguardian.com/culture/2003/sep/11/2](http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2003/sep/11/2)  |
| **Week 3: The rise of the Asante Kingdom** | 5. Who were the Asante? | 1. Describe the creation story of the Asante and the summoning of the Golden Stool by Okomfo Anokye.2. Explain how the Asante emerged ‘because of war’.3. Evaluate the methods by which Osei Tutu consolidated his power, e.g. banning pre-Asante histories and encouraging Asante mythology. | **See PowerPoint entitled ‘L5\_Who were the Asante’** Source analysis of the statue of Okomfo Anokye in Kumasi: <https://kwekudee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot.com/2012/08/statue-of-okomfo-anokyie-at-kumasi.html>Cloze activity on the emergence of the Akan people. Recap: Where was the Asante Kingdom? Importance of it being inland and discussion about the ongoing existence of the Fante and Denkyira.Guided reading task of Gus Casely-Hayford’s *The Lost Kingdoms of Africa*, pp. 261–262.Match up the ways in which Osei Tutu consolidated his power and evaluate which method would be most effective, including banning pre-Asante histories, promoting mythology and expansion. Students to analyse why these are effective.*The Lost Kingdoms of Africa*: Osei Tutu’s consolidation of power, 23:20–30:06: <https://youtu.be/5RKNMLn3zcA>1. What did the Golden Stools become symbols of?
2. What was the most powerful state and why was it so powerful?
3. What did its neighbours send to keep the peace?
4. Who was born in Anyinam in the 1640s?
5. Why do you think that Osei Tutu is portrayed as a baby in his mother’s arms?
6. What does the chief say about the importance of history to the Asante people?
7. What does Gus Casely-Hayford say was modified by the Asante to suit the present?
8. What is Okomfo Anokye doing in the statue in the centre of Kumasi?

Writing task: Explain how Osei Tutu became the first Asantehene. | *The Lost Kingdoms of Africa* by Gus Casely-Hayford, (2012, Bantam Press): pp. 241–285Gus Casely-Hayford documentary: https://youtu.be/5RKNMLn3zcA*Forests of Gold: essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante* by Ivor Wilks (1996, Ohio University Press) |
| 6. What was the power of gold in Asante? | 1. Describe how gold influenced politics and culture in the Asante Kingdom.2. Explain how forms of slavery in Africa before transatlantic slavery differed significantly from what came later. 3. Challenge the claim that ‘Africans sold Africans’. | **See PowerPoint entitled ‘L6, 7\_What was the influence of guns and gold in Asante’** ***This PowerPoint includes activities for this lesson and the one below on the slave trade in Asante.***Source inference on Asante gold in the British Museum – bracelet with 50 golden keys on it. Complete source analysis on the six sources below and included in the PowerPoint:* Source 1: Thomas Bowdich description
* Source 2: Golden weight in the shape of a cartridge belt
* Source 3: Kente cloth
* Source 4: Extract from *A Fistful of Shells* by Toby Green
* Source 5: Extract from *Centralized African States in the Transatlantic Slave Trade: the example of 18th century Asante and Dahomey* by Jutta Wimmler
* Source 6: Extract from *Forests of Gold* by Ivor Wilks

Role of Gold in Asante, 45:30–47:27: <https://youtu.be/5RKNMLn3zcA> Watch: *The Lost Kingdoms of Africa* – *Asante* with historian Gus Casely-Hayford, 43:49–49:00, and answer the questions below:1. Why were civil servants sent from Kumasi?
2. Whose gun does Gus Casely-Hayford get to hold?
3. What does he say that European firearms were ‘instrumental in’?
4. What was the currency of this part of West Africa?
5. Casely-Hayford says that ‘taxation didn’t only fund the government; it also ensured…’ what?
6. He says that ‘gold was not just money, it was…’ what?
7. What happened in 1807 that affected the Asante Kingdom?
8. Who were the people of Asante increasingly in contact with?
9. What did people start to hoard and bury?

Watch: *The Golden Stool: History of Africa* *with Zeinab Badawi*, 12:45–18:36, and answer the questions below:1. What did the Asante use the rivers to fish for?
2. What does ‘Asante’ mean?
3. What did the Asante kings use gold to buy?
4. What did Okomfo Anokye present Osei Tutu with?
5. What does Chief Nana Boakye Ansah say when Zeinab Badawi asks about the kingdom being militaristic?
6. What is Chief Nana Boakye Ansah wearing on his sandals and who is allowed to wear it?

Complete a link line to explain how gold led to guns, which led to slave trading. | *A Fistful of Shells: West Africa from the rise of the slave trade to the age of revolution* by Toby Green (2019, Penguin): Chapters 3 and 7*Centralized African States in the Transatlantic Slave Trade: the example of 18th century Asante and Dahomey* by Jutta Wimmler (2012, Leykam)*The Lost Kingdoms of Africa* by Gus Casely-Hayford, (2012, Bantam Press): pp. 241–285Gus Casely-Hayford documentary: <https://youtu.be/5RKNMLn3zcA> *Forests of Gold: essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante* by Ivor Wilks (1996, Ohio University Press) |
| **Week 4: The fall of the Asante Kingdom** | 7. How far did the Asante Kingdom collaborate with the slave trade? | 1. Describe the first contact between the Asante and European slave traders.2. Explain the role of middlemen and figures such as John Cabess and John Canoe.3. Evaluate how accurate it is to call the Asante Kingdom a ‘slave-raiding state’. | **See PowerPoint entitled ‘L6, 7\_What was the influence of guns and gold in Asante’** ***This PowerPoint includes activities for this lesson and the one above on the power of gold in Asante.***How did pre-TAST slavery differ from transatlantic slavery? 13:40–15:40: <https://youtu.be/5RKNMLn3zcA> Complete the comprehension task on Did ‘Africans sell Africans’ into transatlantic slavery? *(Slide 17 on PowerPoint)*What does Dr Wilhelmina Donkoh mean by ‘it did not remove the basic humanity of those who had lost their freedom’? How does this differ from what comes later?Guided reading task of pp. 21–22 of *Centralised African States in the Transatlantic Slave Trade* by Jutta Wimmler.Source analysis description of the ‘slave hole’ in Fort Kommenda. Cloze activity to answer: Why and how did the Asante make contact with Europeans?Analyse two interpretations of Asante’s role in TAST:1. They were a ‘slave-raiding state’.
2. They tended to sell war captives and not raid for slaves.

Comprehension to answer: Why did the Asante find it difficult to control the Gold Coast? Reference to the conflict between British, Dutch, Fante and Denkyira interests. 34:30–39:30: <https://youtu.be/5RKNMLn3zcA>Extent line to answer: How central was slaving to the economy of Asante? Use eight pieces of evidence for both sides from *Centralized African States in the Transatlantic Slave Trade* by Jutta Wimmler.  | *Centralized African States in the Transatlantic Slave Trade: the example of 18th century Asante and Dahomey* by Jutta Wimmler (2012, Leykam)*The Lost Kingdoms of Africa* by Gus Casely-Hayford, (2012, Bantam Press): pp. 241–285Gus Casely-Hayford documentary: <https://youtu.be/5RKNMLn3zcA> *Forests of Gold: essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante* by Ivor Wilks (1996, Ohio University Press)*Black Ivory: slavery in the British Empire* by James Walvin (1992, Harper Collins): pp. 32–34, 54 |
| 8. Why were the Asante forced to hide the Golden Stool? | 1. Describe the battles between the British and the Asante, 1823–96.2. Explain the significance of Nana Yaa Asantewaa’s resistance to the British in the War of the Golden Stool. | **See PowerPoint entitled ‘L4, 8, 9\_How do** **Benin and Asante link to the British Museum’** ***These activities and those in Lessons 4 and 9 are all incorporated into the PowerPoint above.*** 1. Source analysis on Nana Yaa’s speech: ‘Now I have seen that some of you fear to go forward to fight for our King. If it were in the brave days of Osei Tutu, Okomfo Anokye, and Opoku Ware, leaders would not sit down to see their King taken away without firing a shot. No white man could have dared to speak to a leader of the Ashanti in the way the Governor spoke to you this morning. Is it true that the bravery of the Ashanti is no more? I cannot believe it. It cannot be! I must say this, if you the men of Ashanti will not go forward, then we will. We the women will. I shall call upon my fellow women. We will fight the white men. We will fight till the last of us falls in the battlefields.’ What can we learn about gender roles in Asante? Link to knowledge of the important role of the Asantehemaa.2. Living graph of British intervention into Asante, evaluating independence versus colonialism throughout the nineteenth century: Slides 9, 10 and 11 in PowerPoint.48–55 mins: <https://youtu.be/5RKNMLn3zcA> *Challenge: Compare with Benin; why are African kingdoms losing to the British?*3. Comprehension task on War of the Golden Stool.4. Students to create a narrative account to answer the question ‘Why were the Asante forced to hide the Golden Stool?’  | *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti from the Earliest Times to the Commencement of the Twentieth* by Hugh Charles Clifford and William Walton Claridge (2009, BiblioLife): Chapter 21‘Ashanti Empire/ Asante Kingdom (18th to late 19th century)’ by Maria Quintana (2010), [www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/ashanti-empire-asante-kingdom-18th-late-19th-century](http://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/ashanti-empire-asante-kingdom-18th-late-19th-century)  |
| **Week 5: Assessment****9. What can we learn from the kingdoms of Benin and Asante about African histories?** | 1. Be able to challenge myths about African history with specific evidence. | **See PowerPoint entitled ‘L4, 8, 9\_How do** **Benin and Asante link to the British Museum’** ***These activities and those in Lessons 4 and 8 are all incorporated into the PowerPoint above.*** Starter task on Sankofa bird and Edo-language verb ‘to remember’ being the same as ‘to cast a motif in bronze’. What does this tell us about the ways in which the Asante and Bini approach history?Why has it been difficult for historians to discover the history of the slave trade in these regions?Clip of Dr Trevor Getz, ‘Impact of the slave trade: through a Ghanaian lens’: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-To3HWs9l8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-To3HWs9l8) What is the significance of the **Benin Bronzes** and the **War of the Golden Stool**? Students to categorise six statements on significance using the ‘three ‘I’s of significance’ (Slides 15–18 on PowerPoint).‘Speak like a historian’ task: Students debate the statement ‘The kingdoms of Benin and Asante teach us the same thing about African histories’ (Slide 19).Students to produce a final piece of writing that uses the learning about Asante and Benin to challenge at last three of the myths below:1. Africa has historically been cut off from the world.
2. Africa had no place in shaping the modern world.
3. African history can only be written through European documents.
4. African history doesn’t change or develop (Hegel).

Complete the enquiry tracker included on the final slide to support students. | *A Fistful of Shells: West Africa from the rise of the slave trade to the age of revolution* by Toby Green (2019, Penguin): IntroductionTrevor Getz (World History Project),’ Impact of the slave trade: through a Ghanaian lens’: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-To3HWs9l8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-To3HWs9l8)  |