

# Mansa Musa becomes Emperor

KS3 History

Lesson 1 of an enquiry of 4 lessons.

Miss Cusworth



# Mansa Musa

Mansa Musa was an emperor. He ruled over a big **empire**. He controlled a lot of land and people from different groups. It is often said that he was the richest man that ever lived.

Mansa Musa ruled an empire in West Africa called the Mali empire.

He ruled in the medieval era between about 1312-1337.



# Mansa Musa describes how he became emperor

Arab historian Al-Umari went to Cairo, in Egypt, not long after Mansa Musa had visited there.

Al-Umari wrote down things people told him Mansa Musa had said or done. This included a story about how Mansa Musa said he became the emperor.

This **source** written by Al-Umari reveals several things about medieval Mali.



## Source written by historian Al-Umari

"The emperor before me thought it was possible to reach the end of the Atlantic ocean. So he **equipped** 200 ships filled with men and the same number equipped with gold, water, and supplies, enough to last them for years.

They departed and a long time passed before anyone came back. Then one ship returned and we asked the captain what news they brought. "The captain said, 'Yes, oh emperor, we travelled for a long time until there appeared in the open sea a river with a powerful current. The other ships went on ahead, but when they reached that place, they did not return and no more was seen of them. As for me, I went about at once and did not enter the river.'"

The emperor got ready 2,000 ships, 1,000 for himself and the men he took with him, and 1,000 for water and provisions. He left me to **deputise** for him and sailed on the Atlantic Ocean with his men. That was the last we saw of him and all those who were with him.

"And so, I became emperor in my own right."



# Questions

1. Which part of Africa was the empire of Mali in?
2. What era did Mansa Musa rule in: ancient, medieval or modern?
3. What natural resource did Mali have that made it wealthy?
4. Why did the previous emperor set sail across the Atlantic ?
5. How did Mansa Musa say he became emperor?



# Extension activity

## What does how Mansa Musa became emperor reveal about medieval Mali?

Use the sentence starters below to write a paragraph answering this question.

Sentence starters	Key words
Mansa Musa became emperor when...	ambitious
The source by Al-Umari says that...	wealthy
This section of the source could reveal that medieval Mali was...	legitimacy
	Atlantic Ocean



# Glossary

**Reveal** - show or undercover

**Empire** - a group of several different kingdoms ruled over by one leader

**Emperor**- the ruler of an empire

**Medieval** - time period, roughly between the 5th and 15th centuries

**Source** - something that survives from the past which historians use

**Equipped**- ready with the things that are needed

