

ACTIVITY 3REGIONAL FOCUS (THE CENTRAL AFRICA REGION)

TEACHER RESOURCE SHEET

Central Africa includes eight countries (listed below):

Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe.

History:

Approximately 2,000 years ago a new group of people started moving into the region referred to as Bantu-speakers, because they spoke related languages that linguists have classified as belonging to the Bantu (or Niger-Congo) language family. Historians believe that these peoples originated from the region of the present day Cameroon and Nigeria. They (the Bantu) traveled toward the south, into eastern or southern Africa, in successive waves of migration. By the year second century Bantu speaking peoples had reached the present Democratic of Republic of Congo and other parts of the region. Central Africa, unlike other parts of the continent, had very little contact with the Muslim Berber and Arab traders from North Africa or the coastal regions of East Africa before the 19th century. As a consequence, the Bantu-speaking peoples whom migrated to the area were not influenced by Islam as where Bantu-speaking migrants whom had migrated into East Africa during the same era. This relative isolation from the outside world ended in the fifteenth century, specifically in 1483, when the Portuguese landed on the western shores of the Kongo kingdom.

Economy:

Central Africa harbours great economic development potential, owing especially to oil from the Gulf of Guinea, vast metal and mineral deposits, enormous water resources in the Congo-Oubangui-Sangha basin and the Great Lakes and the area has the second largest tropical forest area in the world.

Language:

Most Central African countries will speak french as their official language. Countries like Cameroon have both English and french as their second language. Equatorial Guinea have Spanish whilst Sao Tome and Principe have Portuguese as their official languages.

More on the region: <http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m18/activity2.php>