A 1Africa is the second-largest continent in the world, with major rivers, deserts, and natural resources to use for trade. 2The Sahara Desert and Africa’s high plateau acted as great barriers to the outside world, shielding Africa from conquest in the Middle Ages.

B 3Outside of North Africa, ancient and medieval Africans had no written language, so little is known except through archaeological artifacts, traders, and oral history. 4Many medieval kingdoms rose to power in West, East, and South Africa.

C 5Along the banks of the Niger River, three great West African empires emerged during the Middle Ages: the Ghana Empire, the Almoravid Empire, and the Mali Empire. 6All made their wealth from trading Africa’s natural resources: ivory, gold, and other minerals, including copper and diamonds. 7These empires all had similar social classes. 8The king or chief had the most wealth and rights. 9After the chiefs were nobles, followed by traders, farmers, and finally slaves. 10West African slaves could marry and earn their freedom, and slave families could not be separated.

D 11The Ghana Empire traded with North African Muslims across the Sahara Desert. 12Ghana’s most valuable trading good was gold, but they also traded jewelry, leather goods, ivory, and slaves. 13In return, they received copper, cloth, tools, and salt from North African Muslims. 14Africans used salt to preserve food, enhance the taste of food, and as a dietary supplement to help survive the very hot climate.

E 15The Almoravids conquered Ghana and ruled for about one hundred years. 16They expanded the empire to include many Trans-Saharan trade routes.

F 17Descendants of the Ghana Empire established the Mali Empire south of the Almoravid’s Empire and ruled for over 150 years until they were conquered by the Songhai Empire.

G 18On Africa’s east coast, Swahili trading towns shared many economic and cultural features. 19Swahili settlements were city-states with their own army, laws, and customs. 20The most dominant city-states were Mogadishu, Malindi, Kilwa, and Mombasa.

H 21These Swahili city-states traded with other African regions but also with Arabia and India. 22They traded ivory, iron, salt, copper, and gold for cotton cloth, glass beads, porcelain, and fine chinaware. 23The trading opportunities in East Africa brought many Arabs, Persians, and Indian merchants to the area. 24These traders brought new ideas to Eastern Africa, including the Muslim religion. 25Islam became the predominant monotheistic religion, primarily existing in the cities. 26Polytheism remained the main belief in rural areas.

I 27Southwest of the Swahili city-states, the Kingdom of Zimbabwe emerged in the 11th century. 28People of Zimbabwe believed their ruler was a god and only the king’s wives and court were allowed to see him.

J 29Zimbabweans were not only rich in gold and elephant ivory; they also controlled most land trading routes. 30They traded with the Swahili city-states as well as traders from North Africa, Arabia, India, Southeast Asia, and China.

K 31In the 1480s, the Portuguese conquered many East African cities. 32For centuries afterward, Africa was a continent ruled by stronger European powers.
1. Africa was protected from invaders during the Middle Ages by:
   a. its armies
   b. its geography
   c. soldiers from other nations
   d. peace treaties

Which sentence best supports the answer?

2. Historians don’t know as much as they would like to about Medieval West, East, and South Africa because:
   a. many ancient records were destroyed.
   b. there are so few remaining artifacts.
   c. there was no written language.
   d. those parts of Africa have not been studied.

Which sentence best supports the answer?

3. Mark the statements T for true or F for false:
   a. ____ West African slave families were often forced to live apart.
   Which sentence best supports the answer?

   b. ____ All free people of the West African empires shared the same rights.
   Which sentence best supports the answer?

   c. ____ West African slaves could earn their freedom.
   Which sentence best supports the answer?

   d. ____ Africa’s natural resources proved to be a source of great wealth for West African empires.
   Which sentence best supports the answer?

4. Which of the following was considered especially important if you lived in the warm climate of West Africa?
   a. sandals
   b. metal tools
   c. copper pots
   d. salt

Which sentence best supports the answer?

5. What is the main reason foreigners came to East Africa in the Middle Ages?
   a. to explore
   b. to conquer
   c. to trade
   d. to buy slaves

Which sentence best supports the answer?

6. Islam was introduced to East Africa by:
   a. traders
   b. West African empires
   c. conquering armies
   d. Zimbabweans

Which sentence best supports the answer?

7. Swahili city-states:
   a. were often at war with each other.
   b. had militaries, laws, and practices that were unique to each city-state.
   c. shared a large army.
   d. followed the same laws.

Which sentence best supports the answer?

8. A king of Zimbabwe:
   a. would interact with all social classes.
   b. was considered to be almost a god.
   c. was seen on special occasions by the lower classes.
   d. was seen only by his wives and royal court.

Which sentence best supports the answer?
9. In addition to their natural resources, what contributed to the Kingdom of Zimbabwe’s wealth?
   a. Zimbabwe dominated the overland trade routes.
   b. They produced glass beads and chinaware.
   c. Their army confiscated goods from other nations.
   d. The people were heavily taxed.

Which sentence best supports the answer?  
_____

Written Response Question

10. How did Africa’s natural resources benefit the lives of Africans?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
**Medieval Africa Review: Lessons 66-68 Answers**

1. b, sentence 2
2. c, sentence 3
3. a. F, sentence 10  
   b. F, sentence 8  
   c. T, sentence 10  
   d. T, sentence 6
4. d, sentence 14
5. c, sentence 23
6. a, sentence 24
7. b, sentence 19
8. d, sentence 28
9. a, sentence 29
10. Key points:

    Africans were able to trade their natural resources for goods they could not produce and salt that was needed in the warmer climates.

    Trade brought Africans into contact with foreigners who shared new ideas and a new religion, Islam.