

Societies and Empires of Africa**Lesson 2**

Migration: Case Study: Bantu-Speaking Peoples

Key Terms and People

migration a permanent move from one area to another

push-pull factors reasons attracting or driving people to move

Bantu-speaking peoples people who speak one of a group of languages related to Bantu

Before You Read

In the last lesson, you read about how African people developed diverse societies.

In this lesson, you will read about the causes and effects of migration in Africa among Bantu-speaking peoples.

As You Read

Use a chart to answer questions about specific events related to Bantu migration.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

What are the main reasons for migration?

Throughout human history, many peoples have felt the urge to move from their homes to a new land. This movement is called **migration**. There are many reasons that people make such a move. But they can be grouped into three main causes. They are environmental change, economic pressure, political and religious persecution.

Reasons people move into or out of an area are called **push-pull factors**. People may be attracted or pulled into an area because they see economic advantages. Or they may move because they want freedom. Sometimes people

are pushed out of an area because the environment changes, and it is impossible to live there. Other times people may leave to find security or peace that cannot be found in their area. These are examples of push factors.

In studying times before written history, researchers look for clues to migrations. One clue they use is language. People take their language with them when they move to a new place. When historians find two languages from two distant areas that have words that are somewhat similar, they can conclude that those two languages may have both come from the same language. However, some time later the original speakers of the language moved apart. Then the two

Lesson 2, *continued*

languages changed independently. This kind of clue has given historians a way of understanding the early history of Africa.

1. Name three key reasons for migration.

CASE STUDY: BANTU-SPEAKING PEOPLES, MASSIVE MIGRATIONS

Who were the Bantu-speaking peoples?

Many languages spoken in Africa today developed from the same parent language called Proto-Bantu. The speakers of all these different languages are called the **Bantu-speaking peoples**. The people who spoke Bantu first lived in a part of modern Nigeria. In the first few centuries AD, they began to move south and east. Over time, they spread throughout Africa south of the Sahara Desert, reaching the southern tip around 500 years ago. They brought their language and their culture with them.

One of the reasons people moved had to do with their style of farming. They would clear an area and use it until the soil no longer could produce good crops. The people then needed to move to a new area to clear new ground.

Another reason they moved was that their farming was so successful. Farming helped them produce more food than could be found hunting and gathering. With more to eat, groups became larger and the land more crowded. They could not move north, where the Sahara Desert made a barrier. So they had to move farther and farther south.

As they reached new areas, the Bantu peoples met other peoples. Sometimes these meetings were violent. The Bantus, who knew how to make iron, had better weapons than those they met, who only had stone tools. Some of the peoples that they met are still found in Africa. But they live in small areas with very harsh environments. The Bantus took the better land.

2. Why did the Bantu peoples keep moving to new areas?

Lesson 2, *continued*

As you read this case study about the Bantu migrations, take notes to answer the questions below.

Bantu-speaking peoples adapted their skills to new environments they encountered in their migrations southward.	
1. a. How did they change their farming in the rain forests?	2. a. How did they change their techniques for herding in the savannas?
b. Why was the change necessary?	b. Why did they make this change?
3. Some of their adaptations caused them to continue their migrations to new places. Why?	

The migrations of the Bantu-speaking peoples helped to shape the cultures of the African continent.	
4. a. Why did the Bantu-speaking peoples move southward, rather than to the north?	5. a. How did the Bantu speakers relate to the people they did not drive out?
b. What happened to the non-Bantu-speaking hunter-gatherer societies as the newcomers spread south?	b. What were some results of their intermingling?
6. How did the Bantu speakers help unify the various peoples of Africa?	