**Big Ideas:**

This week's history focuses on the arrival of the first great outside influences to transform sub-Saharan Africa: Christianity and Islam. Christianity arrived in Egypt not long after it began. It spread to Ethiopia by the 4th century CE, when it was still taking hold in the Roman Empire. Islam spread to northern Africa not long after its beginnings in Arabia in the 7th century. Through trade routes, Islam became a major influence across much of Africa by the 11th century. Each of these religions brought different worldviews to Africa and showed how, even though Africa's empires remained comparatively small, they were also part of a cosmopolitan, global economy. For literature this week, we’re reading a memoir about a young boy’s coming of age under French colonialism in western Africa. *The Dark Child* by Camara Laye focuses on the role of rituals in growing up. That leads us to the first freewrite assignment we'll polish, where you'll write about the role of rituals in your own life.

**DAY ONE**

- Read chapters 1-6 in *The Dark Child*
- Watch "The Cross and the Crescent" from *Africa's Great Civilizations* from PBS (optional)
- Do the rituals exploration assignment
- Do Writing Tools #3

**DAY TWO**

- Read chapters 7-12 in *The Dark Child*
- Watch Crash Course World History #16 "Mansa Musa and Islam in Africa" via YouTube
- Watch "Kilwa Kishwana, Tanzania" by Smarthistory via YouTube
- Do the rituals freewrite

**DAY THREE**

- Watch "Cities" from *Africa's Great Civilization* from PBS (optional)
- Watch "Who Built Great Zimbabwe? And Why?" from TED-ed via YouTube
- Do *The Dark Child* reading questions
- Read *Africa* chapter 30 "Cattle and Gold"

**DAY FOUR**

- Edit your freewriting assignment into a polished work
- Do African history questions

**Scheduling Notes:**

There’s less reading this week. While you need to read an entire book, it’s a relatively short novel that’s less intensive with an easier plot to digest than *Things Fall Apart*. The history questions this week will really rely on having a textbook or outside sources, especially if you can't find a way to watch *Africa's Great Civilizations*. If you have extra time, look back at your maps and timeline to make sure you're getting a full picture of Africa’s history. For your writing assignment, give yourself time to polish it, but don’t worry if it’s not perfect. This is an initial try at taking a freewrite to the next level by revising and editing it. Absolutely don’t try to do both the freewrite and the polished assignment in a single day. You need to take a breath in between the two.

**Terms to Know:**

- Mansa Musa
- Ghana
- Mali
- Timbuktu
- Songhai
- Great Zimbabwe
- Kilwa
- Salt Trade
IN YOUR NOTEBOOK

Coming of Age Rituals

This week's memoir, *The Dark Child*, looks at the role of rituals in growing up. The practice of young adult male circumcision is still common in many parts of Africa. However, it's not the only type of coming of age ritual practiced in Africa. Start by watching the short video "Boy to Man" from National Geographic via YouTube about the coming of age rituals for boys and girls among the Fulani in the west African nation of Benin to see a very different ritual as it's practiced today.

Next, do some research about coming of age rituals around the world and answer the questions below.
1. How many coming of age rituals can you find? Can you list at least a dozen along with where they're from?
2. Choose one ritual that you weren't very familiar with and do a little more research about it. Write a detailed paragraph describing the ritual, including basic information such as the purpose of the ritual and how old young people are when they undergo it.

Later in the week, you'll be thinking about the role of rituals in your own life. You can use the thinking you do about the role of rituals across societies to inform your writing. The short writing you did for this assignment could be the beginnings of a definition paper, a type of essay that you'll write later this year.

Writing Tools #3

Read about this week's writing tool. It's one of the most important tools you can incorporate into your writing. Passive verbs weaken writing, while active verbs strengthen it. This tool is so important that we'll revisit it later this year!

First, practice changing these sentences to become more active. Some of them will be easy, but others may be trickier. Is there anything you need in order to change them? Feel free to add more information if you need to.
1. The bacon is cooked for breakfast.
2. Reading is my favorite thing to do.
3. The murder was committed by a notorious criminal.
4. The doctor seemed like she was going to take care of the final tests before she left.
5. Mistakes were made.

Next, try writing your own five sentences using both an active and a passive voice. Do the active sentences sound stronger? When might you use passive voice in a sentence?

Finally, you have a freewrite that you'll polish into a more presentable short paper this week. When you go to revise it, read through it and make sure you've used active verbs whenever possible.
Rituals Freewrite

For this freewrite, spend a few minutes thinking about a ritual that you've been a part of or witnessed in your life. Then do a freewrite about it. When you do a freewrite, there are no right or wrong answers. Just keep your pencil moving or your fingers typing. Describe as many details as you can about your experience. If you get stuck, try thinking about a sense that you haven't described yet, such as smells, sights, or tastes that you have experienced.

Note that this freewrite will later get polished into a paper. If you don't like the one you did, that's okay! You can do another one. However, give yourself time in between the freewrite and going back to polish it. Don't get hung up on finding the perfect topic either. It's just one paper. Unexpected topics can make great papers.

Rituals Paper

For this assignment, you'll take the freewrite you did earlier in the week and polish it to become a short, presentable paper. This paper is intended to be short. It should be between 1-2 pages typed, double spaced, 12 pt. font.

You can always change a million different things in your writing, but for a revision, it's best to try and stay focused and choose just a few things to improve. For this revision, we suggest following the steps below. Remember that editing the paper for issues like spelling and punctuation should always come last. Figuring out when to focus on organizing a paper like this can be tricky. If you decide to organize at the beginning or near the end, that's fine. The following is a suggestion. However, each element we suggest is important. Don't skip out on revising. It's often the most important part of the writing process.

1. Start by making sure the description of the ritual you wrote about has enough detail. Spend a little time fleshing out your description. Be sure to include things like why you were there and what the ritual meant to you.
2. Focus on your verbs. Remember that your writing tool this week is about using active voice in your writing. Follow the instructions from the writing tools assignment by revising your writing to be more active.
3. Is there a final thing you'd like to revise in your writing? Read your paper aloud. Look for flow of words and any other issue you've chosen to improve.
4. Time to focus on organization. In a descriptive personal narrative like this one, especially one that's meant to be a vignette, there aren't firm rules about exactly what paragraphs you need to have. However, your paper should have a sense of introduction. It should have an ending. It should not be one long paragraph of text. Where are the natural breaks in the description? Are things in the right order or do you need to rearrange them?
5. Finally, check your paper for spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Do you have something that you often get wrong, such as confusing “then” and “than” or forgetting to capitalize place names? Whatever it is, be sure to do a double check for it. Knowing what your weakness is with writing mechanics makes it easier for you to fix in revision.
THE DARK CHILD QUESTIONS

These questions cover the entire novel. You should read these questions before reading. Keep them in front of you as you read if you need to. You can answer them as you read or when you finish.

1. What is the role of superstition in the book? Give three specific examples.

2. What are some of the differences between men's and women's lives and society in the culture of the book?

3. What experiences set Laye apart from the rest of the people of Kouroussa?

4. What "troublesome" choice does Laye have to make at the end of the memoir? Why is it so difficult?
HISTORY QUESTIONS

These questions cover the arrival of Christianity and Islam in Africa and the civilizations that sprung up afterwards. Africa’s Great Civilizations is really useful for these. You need to read the assigned chapter in Africa, "Cattle and Gold." You may also refer to a textbook, encyclopedia, or world history resource of your choosing. There’s a hint of where to look after each question.

1. When and how did Christianity arrive in what is now Ethiopia? What influence did it have on the civilizations there? (See Africa’s Great Civilizations or your history text)

2. When did Islam first arrive in northern Africa? How were conquered peoples treated under this first wave of the spread of Islam? (See Africa’s Great Civilizations or your history text)

3. What important innovation did both Islam and Christianity bring to many peoples in sub-Saharan Africa? (Hint: You’re using that innovation right now do this whole curriculum!) How did it change civilizations? (See Africa’s Great Civilizations or your history text)

4. How did the kingdom of Ghana benefit from the arrival of Islam? (See Africa’s Great Civilizations or your history text)
5. How did the kingdom of Mali become so wealthy? (See Crash Course or your history text)

6. How did Great Zimbabwe become such an impressive city? Who built it? (See "Cattle and Gold"

7. What cities rose to power on Africa's east coast? What did they trade? Who did they trade with? (See your history text)