

THE  
MANDING  
EMPIRE  
REVEALED

Study Guide

# THE MANDING EMPIRE R E V E A L E D

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(countries with Mande speaking cultural groups)

# THE MANDING EMPIRE R E V E A L E D

MANDING JATA has presented thousands of educational concerts / workshops for young audiences at schools throughout Western Canada and internationally. This program premiered in 1995 and features the music and dance culture of the Manding Empire - the largest in African history and centred in the mythical city of Timbuktu. The Mandé speaking descendents of this empire (once as large as modern day Europe) now span a number of countries in French West Africa including Mali, Guinea, Gambia, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Significantly, Manding music and dance repertoire predominates the national cultural troupes of these countries. MANDING JATA transcends colonial borders to profile the cultural legacy of this great civilization.

The presentation is fully interactive with voluntary participation by students and teachers through reciting numerous words, names and places; call and response singing; rhythmic clapping; dancing; instrument playing; etc. Humour is used strategically and a large map of Africa is referred to throughout the program.

DURATION: 45 minutes

AGE SUITABILITY: All

# PROGRAM

“**MOGOMAN WOULÉ**” - a song from **Burkina Faso** sung in **Jula** (a Mandé language used by traders across pre-colonial French West Africa and the former Manding Empire).

## EDUCATIONAL UNIT #1

### **The Language of the Drum:**

- music
- speech mode, with demonstration
- signal mode, with demonstration
- drum poems, with demonstration and participation

## EDUCATIONAL UNIT #2

### **The Language of the Dance:**

- social
- narrative (describing a storyline)
- imagery (representing a bird or animal)
- acrobatic/strength
- exclusive to a special event
- masquerade

“**MAYIMBO**” – masquerade dance with a song in the **Susu** language of **Guinea**.

## EDUCATIONAL UNIT #3

### **Diversity of Geography and Culture:**

- a continent approximately three and a half times larger than Canada
- 52 countries
- a desert about the size of Canada
- approximately 1700 language groups
- multiplicity of instruments
- etc.

“**SAMBA**” – a song from **Burkina Faso** in the **Jula** language and featuring the Bamana bala (regional xylophone).

## EDUCATIONAL UNIT #4      **Timbuktu, a Mystery Unveiled**

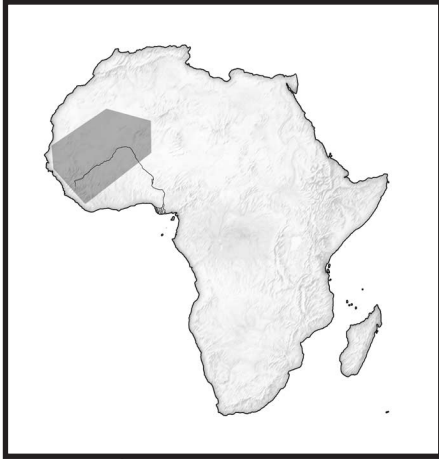
“**KOTOBA**” – a **Manding** dance. Originally done when a boy became a man to demonstrate his strength and vitality, this dance is now popular with many of the National cultural Troupes of the **Manding** region of West Africa.

### QUESTION AND ANSWER      **Optional**

“**JIN-GOLO-BA**” – this song from **Guinea** uses the drum tones and drum rhythm as its source: Jin - middle tone, Golo - high tone, Ba – low tone. The piece also includes full audience participation.

- call and response singing
- rhythmic clapping
- select percussion players
- select dance participants (with experience)

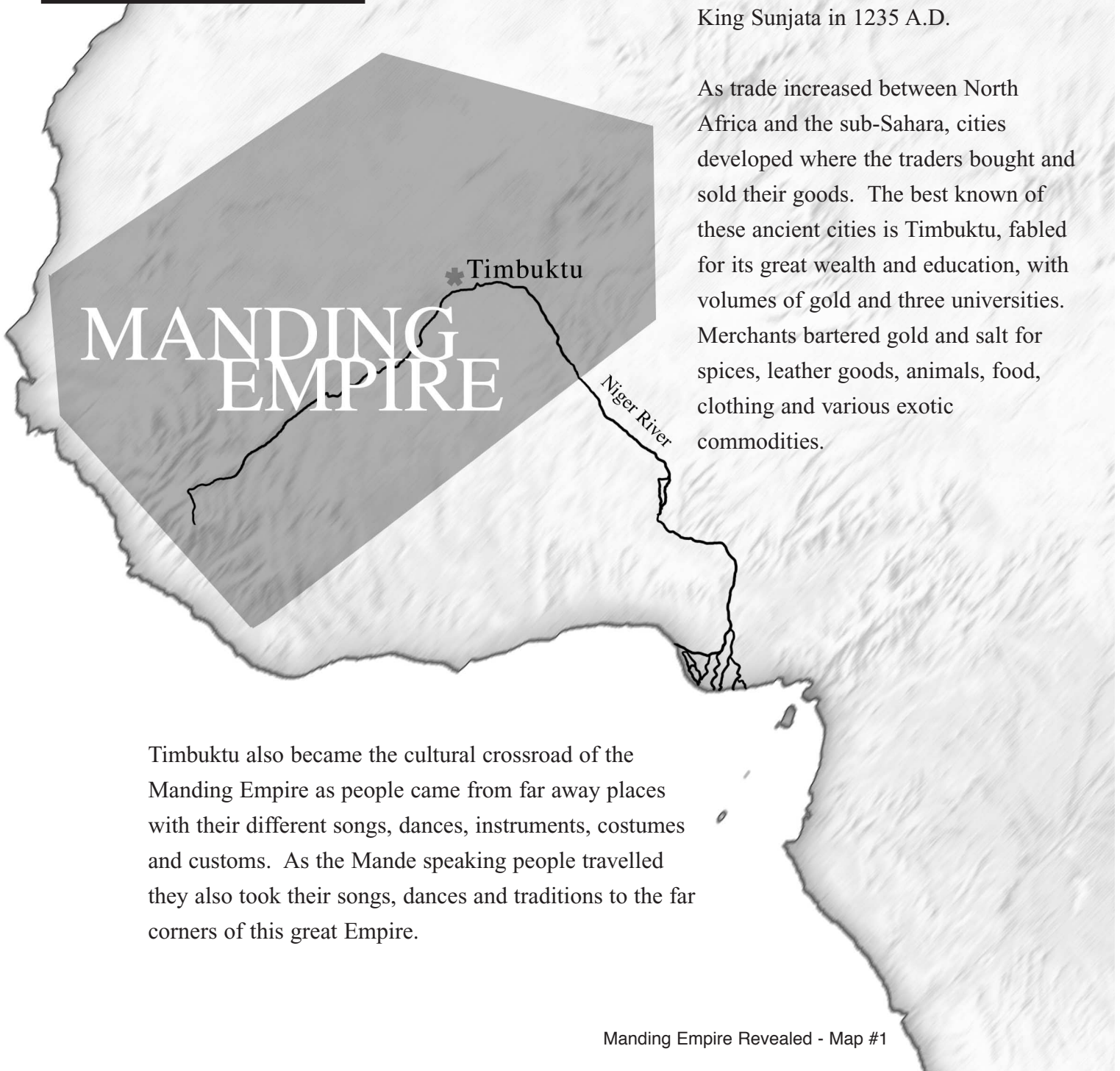
“**MANDIANI**”/FINALÉ – a **Manding** celebration dance from **Mali**, also popular with professional performers.



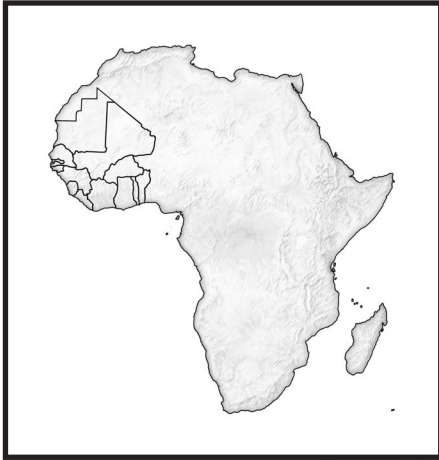
# MANDING EMPIRE

The great Manding or Mali Empire (as large as modern Europe) existed as early as 1000 AD, but began its rise to splendour under the heroic King Sunjata in 1235 A.D.

As trade increased between North Africa and the sub-Saharan, cities developed where the traders bought and sold their goods. The best known of these ancient cities is Timbuktu, fabled for its great wealth and education, with volumes of gold and three universities. Merchants bartered gold and salt for spices, leather goods, animals, food, clothing and various exotic commodities.



Timbuktu also became the cultural crossroad of the Manding Empire as people came from far away places with their different songs, dances, instruments, costumes and customs. As the Mande speaking people travelled they also took their songs, dances and traditions to the far corners of this great Empire.



# WEST AFRICA TODAY

S A H A R A   D E S E R T

The Sahara Desert is as large as all the Provinces, Territories and islands of Canada (the world's second largest country). Africa is about three and a half times larger than Canada and has approximately 1700 language groups (cultural groups).



These are the countries of West Africa today, which once made up the ancient Mali or Manding Empire. Hundreds of languages are spoken across this region, among them are the many Mande speaking cultural groups descended from the Manding Empire - Bambara, Malinke, Mandinka, Jula (a trading language and people group), Maninke, et al.