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PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

MOPANI WEST DISTRICT

NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE



GRADE 10

HISTORY TOPIC TEST 1

SOURCE-BASED OR ESSAY WRITING

10 FEB 2026

MARKS: 50

TIME: 1 hour 30 minutes

This question paper consists of 5 pages and an addendum of 6 pages.

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INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION

1. This question paper consists of SECTION A and SECTION B based on the prescribed content framework as contained in the CAPS document.

2. SECTION A consists of an ONE source-based question. Source material that is required to answer questions is provided in the ADDENDUM.

3. SECTION B consists of ONE essay question.

QUESTION 1: THE WORLD AROUND 1600: THE SONHGAI EMPIRE

QUESTION 2: THE WORLD AROUND 1600: THE SONHGAI EMPIRE

4. Answer ONLY **ONE (1)** question as follows:

4.1 Answer ONE (1) question from SECTION A (source-based question) or ONE (1) question from SECTION B (essay question).

5. Each question counts 50 marks.

6. When answering questions, candidates should apply their knowledge, skill and insight.

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7. A mere rewriting of the sources as answers will disadvantage candidates.

8. Questions and subsections of questions must be numbered clearly and correctly.

9. Write neatly and legibly.

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SECTION A: SOURCE-BASED QUESTIONS

Answer a Source-Based question. Source material that is required to answer the question will be found in the ADDENDUM.

QUESTION 1: HOW LEARNING AND CULTURE STRUCTURED THE SONGHAI EMPIRE IN THE 15th CENTURIES?

Study sources 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D to answer the questions.

1.1. Study Source 1A

1.1.1. Define the concept *empire* in your own words. (1 x 2) (2)

1.1.2. Mention THREE religions, according to the source, which were practiced among the Songhai people? (3 x 1) (3)

1.1.3. Quote TWO pieces of evidence from the source to prove that the Songhai empire espoused (embraced) tolerance for other religions (2 x 1) (2)

1.1.4. Mention THREE mosques that became of learning centers for all Muslims (3 x 1) (3)

1.1.5. Explain why you think many people were converted into Islam in Sahara than other religion by 1450 CE. (1 x 2) (2)

1.1.6. Using information from the source and your own knowledge, explain why scholars in all fields across Arabia and other part of sub-Saharan African flocked into the Songhai Empire (2 x 2) (4)

1.2. Refer to source 1B.

1.2.1. What important aspects, according to the source, defined Timbuktu under Askia Muhammed between 1493 to1591 (3 x 1) (3)

1.2.2. Quote evidence from the to prove that Timbuktu was a learning center preferred by many students (1 x 1) (1)

1.2.3. According to the source, what compendium (collection) of learning does the manuscripts represents? (3 x 1) (3)

1.2.4. Explain the concept *manuscript* in the context of Timbuktu as a strategic learning center. (1 x 2) (2)

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1.2.5. Using information in the source and your own knowledge, explain why Timbuktu became an important learning center. (2 x 2) (4)

1.3. Study to Source 1C.

1.3.1. Identify TWO materials that were used to build the temple at the city center. (2 x 1) (2)

1.3.2. What does veiling (covering) of faces by women tell you about Songhai culture? (1 x 2) (2)

1.3.3. Mention TWO products that were in short supply and imported from outside Timbuktu in the early 1500s (2 x 1) (2)

1.3.4. Comment on the statement 'They have a custom of almost continuously walking about the city in the evening between 10pm and 1 am' (1 x 2) (2)

1.3.5. Explain the usefulness of the information in this source to a historian researching the Songhai culture. (1 x 2) (2)

1.4. Refer to Source 1D.

1.4.1. What message do we get from this source? (1 x 2) (2)

1.4.2. Explain why you think the cartoonist drew the accurate representative of activities as Timbuktu mosque (1 x 2) (2)

1.5. Study source 1B and 1C. How does information in Source 1B is supported by evidence in Source 1C regarding the Songhai culture in the 15th century (1 x 2) (2)

1.5 Using relevant sources and your own knowledge write a paragraph of about SIX lines (60 words) explaining how learning and culture structured the Songhai Empire in the 15th centuries (6)

Total [50]

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SECTION B: ESSAY QUESTIONS

Answer ONE question from this Section.

QUESTION 2: THE WORLD AROUND 1600: THE SONHGAI EMPIRE

Critically discuss how Sonni Ali transformed the Songhai into a formidable empire in the 15th centuries.

TOTAL: 50



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ADDENDUM

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QUESTION 1: HOW LEARNING AND CULTURE WERE STRUCTURED IN THE SONGHAI EMPIRE IN THE 14th CENTURIES?

SOURCE 1A

The source below explains how traditional and cultural religions shaped the Songhai empire.

The Songhai Empire was the strongest Muslim state in Sub-Saharan Africa during its time from the 14th through the 16th century. In 1010 CE, Muslims from the Middle East and Northern Africa began to move into their region of the continent, and the Songhai became early converts to the religion, especially among the ruling class. Before the upper echelons of the empire began to convert to Islam, traditional and ethnic-based religions were practiced among the Songhai.

These religions were based in ancestor worship with additional canon associated with different creation gods and lesser deities with associative properties like war, fertility, and metalworking. However, the lower classes among the Songhai would remain loyal to their traditional and cultural religions, with the ruling class espousing (embraced) tolerance for other religions. For example, practitioners of magic called Sohanti were found in the empire during its entire history and never made the conversion to Islam.

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Timbuktu was established sometime around 1100 CE, during the time of the Mali Empire. Its ideal location in the Sahara made it the perfect trading post for gold and salt, but over time it became known for its cultural ties to the Islam faith. The oldest mosques in West Africa are found in Timbuktu. Djinguereber, Sankore, and Sidi Yahya became centers of learning for all Muslims. Most of the scholars of Timbuktu were Muslims from Mecca and Egypt, and by 1450 CE numbered more than 25,000.

In 1468 CE, Timbuktu was added to the Songhai Empire by Sonni Ali, and it continued as a center of the Islamic faith in Africa. When Muhammad Askia became ruler in 1493 CE, he used the scholars at Timbuktu as his moral and legal counselors, and due to his extreme patronage, the trade city saw its greatest point of intellectual and economic power where merchants from North Africa would gather to buy and sell salt, gold, slaves, and knowledge.

Songhai, African Empire, 15-16th Century | South African History Online (sahistory.org.za)- Accessed on 12 February 2023

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SOURCE 1B

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ADDENDUM

This source below shows how the capital city of Songhai, Timbuktu, became learning center under Askia Mohommed.

Under the reign of Askia Muhammed (1493-1591), Timbuktu became an important centre for Islamic learning, engineering, medicine, and architectures. With the campuses of Sankore Madressah (comparable to an Islamic University) attended by some 25,000 students, Timbuktu became an intellectual and religious centre and served as a distribution platform for scholars and books. Books were not only written in Timbuktu, but they were also imported and copied there. There was indeed a local book-copying industry in the town.

Hundreds and thousands of manuscripts were written over the course of the centuries. Written in ornate (beautiful) calligraphy, the manuscripts represent a compendium (collection) of learning on everything from law, sciences and medicine to history and politics. It is reported that Timbuktu made more profit from the trade in books than from any other line of business.

https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/grade-7-term-1-kingdom-mali-and-city-timbuktu-14th-century-
12 February 2023

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SOURCE 1C

The source below is a description of Timbuktu, Songhai capital city, by Leo Africanus's, as written around 1492.

The houses of Timbuktu are huts made of clay-covered wattles with thatched roofs. In the center of the city is a temple built of stone and mortar, and in addition there is a large palace, constructed by the same architect, where the king lives. The shops of the artisans, the merchants, and especially weavers of cotton cloth are very numerous. Fabrics are also imported from Europe to Timbuktu, borne by Berber merchants.

The women of the city maintain the custom of veiling (cover) their faces, except for the slaves who sell all the foodstuffs. The inhabitants are very rich, especially the strangers who have settled in the country; so much so that the current king has given two of his daughters in marriage to two brothers, both businessmen, on account of their wealth. There are many wells containing sweet water in Timbuktu. Grain and animals are abundant, so that the consumption of milk and butter is considerable. But salt is in very short supply because it is carried here from Tegaza, some 500 miles from Timbuktu. I happened to be in this city at a time when a load of salt sold for eighty ducats. The king has a rich treasure of coins and gold ingots.

..The people of Timbuktu are of the peaceful nature. They have a custom of almost continuously walking about the city in the evening between 10pm and 1 am, playing musical Instruments and dancing.

https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/grade-7-term-1-kingdom-mali-and-city-timbuktu-14th-century Accessed on 12 February 2023

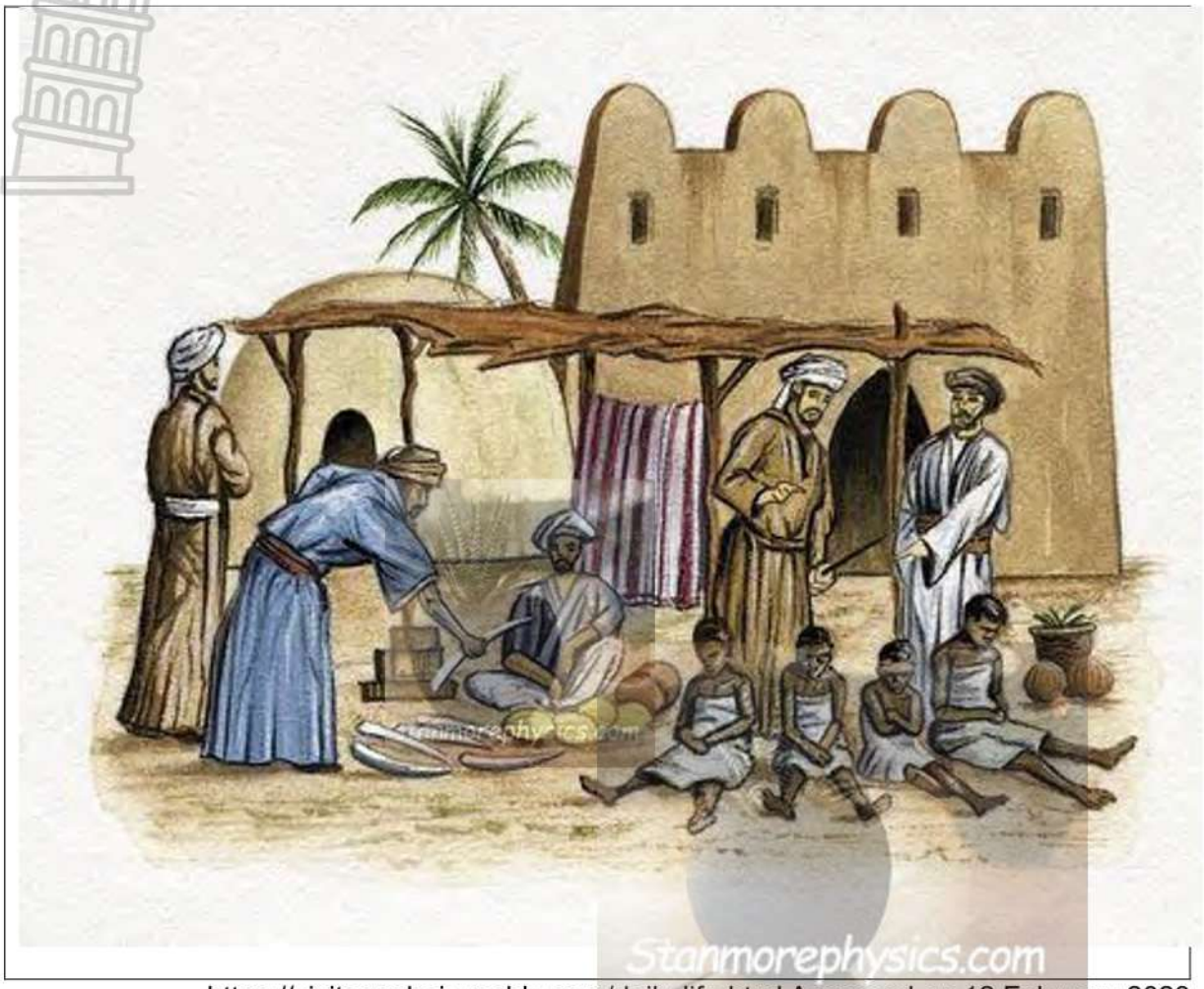
SOURCE 1D

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ADDENDUM

The painting below describes the building of mosques as center of worship, schooling, trading, and a place to experience the Songhai culture.



https://visitsonghai.weebly.com/daily-life.html Accessed on 12 February 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ADDENDUM

Visual sources and other historical evidence were taken from the following:
https://visitsonghai.weebly.com/daily-life.html
https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/grade-7-term-1-kingdom-mali-and-city-timbuktu-14th-century
https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/grade-7-term-1-kingdom-mali-and-city-timbuktu-14th-century-
Songhai, African Empire, 15-16th Century | South African History Online (sahistory.org.za)



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Marking Guideline

1. SOURCE-BASED QUESTIONS

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1.1 The following cognitive levels were used to develop source-based questions:

Cognitive Levels	Historical skills	Weighting of questions
LEVEL 1	• **Extract evidence from sources** • **Selection and organisation of relevant information from sources** • **Define historical concepts/terms**	**40%**
LEVEL 2	• **Interpretation of evidence from sources** • **Explain information gathered from sources** • **Analyse evidence from sources**	**40%**
LEVEL 3	• **Interpret and evaluate evidence from sources** • **Engage with sources to determine its usefulness, reliability, bias and limitations** • **Compare and contrast interpretations and perspectives presented in sources and draw independent conclusions**	**20%**

1.2 The information below indicates how source-based questions are assessed:

• In the marking of source-based questions, credit needs to be given to any other valid and relevant viewpoints, arguments, evidence or examples.

• In the allocation of marks, emphasis should be placed on how the requirements of the question have been addressed.
• In the marking guideline, the requirements of the question (skills that need to be addressed) as well as the level of the question are indicated in italics.
1.3 Assessment procedures for source-based questions
• Use a tick (√) for each correct answer.
• Pay attention to the mark scheme e.g. (2 x 2) which translates to two reasons and is given two marks each (√√√√); (1 x 2) which translates to one reason and is given two marks (√√)
• If a question carries 4 marks then indicate by placing 4 ticks (√√√√).
Paragraph question
Paragraphs are to be assessed globally (holistically). Both the content and structure of the paragraph must be taken into account when awarding a mark. The following steps must be used when assessing a response to a paragraph question:
• Read the paragraph and place a bullet (.) at each point within the text where the candidate has used relevant evidence to address the question.
• Re-read the paragraph to evaluate the extent to which the candidate has been able to use relevant evidence to write a paragraph.
• At the end of the paragraph indicate the ticks (√) that the candidate has been awarded for the paragraph; as well as the level (1,2, or 3) as indicated in the holistic rubric and a brief comment e.g.

_____ . _____ . _____

_____ . _____ . _____

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√√√√

Level 2
Used mostly relevant evidence to write a basic paragraph
• Count all the ticks for the source-based question and then write the mark on the right hand bottom margin e.g. 32/50
• Ensure that the total mark is transferred accurately to the front/back cover of the answer script.

2. ESSAY QUESTIONS

2.1 The essay questions require candidates to:

• Be able to structure their argument in a logical and coherent manner. They need to select, organise and connect the relevant information so that they are able to present a reasonable sequence of facts or an effective argument to answer the question posed. It is essential that an essay has an introduction, a coherent and balanced body of evidence and a conclusion.

2.2 Marking of essay questions

• Markers must be aware that the content of the answer will be guided by the textbooks in use at the particular centre.

• Candidates may have any other relevant introduction and/or conclusion than those included in a specific essay marking guideline for a specific essay.

• When assessing open-ended source-based questions, learners should be credited for any other relevant answers.

2.3 Global assessment of the essay

The essay will be assessed holistically (globally). This approach requires the teacher to score the overall product as a whole, without scoring the component parts separately. This approach encourages the learner to offer an individual opinion by using selected factual evidence to support an argument. The learner will not be required to simply regurgitate 'facts' in order to achieve a high mark. This approach discourages learners from preparing 'model' answers and reproducing them without taking into account the specific requirements of the question. Holistic marking of the essay credits learners' opinions supported by evidence. Holistic assessment, unlike content-based marking, does not penalise language inadequacies as the emphasis is on the following:
• The construction of argument
• The appropriate selection of factual evidence to support such argument
• The learner's interpretation of the question.

2.4 Assessment procedures of the essay

2.4.1 Keep the synopsis in mind when assessing the essay.

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2.4.2 During the reading of the essay ticks need to be awarded for a relevant introduction (indicated by a bullet in the marking guideline/memorandum), each of the main points/aspects

that is properly contextualized (also indicated by bullets in the marking guideline/memorandum) and a relevant conclusion (indicated by a bullet in the marking guideline/memorandum) e.g. in an answer where there are 5 main points there will be 7 ticks

2.4.3 The following additional symbols can also be used:

• Introduction, main aspects and conclusion not properly contextualised

^

• Wrong statement _____

• Irrelevant statement |

|

|



• Repetition R

• Analysis A√

• Interpretation I√

2.5 The matrix

2.5.1 Use of the matrix in the marking of essays

In the marking of essays, the criteria as provided in the matrix should be used. When assessing the essay note both the content and presentation. At the point of intersection of the content and presentation based on the seven competency levels, a mark should be awarded.

(a) The first reading of the essay will be to determine to what extent the main aspects have been covered and to allocate the content level (on the matrix).

C	LEVEL	

(b) The second reading of the essay will relate to the level (on the matrix) of **presentation**.

C	LEVEL 4	
P	LEVEL 3	

(a) Allocate an overall mark with the use of the matrix.

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MARKING MATRIX FOR ESSAY:
TOTAL: 50

C	LEVEL 3	26-27
P	LEVEL 4	

PRESENTATION CONTENT	LEVEL7 Well-planned and structured essay. Good synthesis of information. Developed an original, well-balanced and Independent line of argument with the use of evidence sustained and defended the argument throughout	LEVEL6 Well planned and structured essay. Relevant line of argument Evidence used to defend argument	LEVEL5 Well-planned and structured essay. Developed a clear argument. Conclusion drawn from evidence. Independent Conclusion. Evidence used to support the conclusion	LEVEL4 Planed and constructed an argument Evidence used to support argument. Conclusion reached based on evidence	LEVEL3 Shows some evidence of a planned and constructed Argument. Attempts to sustain a line of argument. Conclusion not clearly supported by evidence	LEVEL2 Attempts to structure an answer. Largely descriptive, or some attempt at developing an argument	LEVEL 1 Little or no attempt to structure an essay
LEVEL7 Question has been fully answered Content selection relevant to line of argument	47-50	43-46					
LEVEL6 Question has been answered .Content selection relevant to the line	43-46	40-42	38-39				

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of argument							
LEVEL5 Question answered to a great extent. Content adequately covered and relevant	38-39	36-37	34-35	30-33	28-29		
LEVEL 4 Question recognisable in answer. Some omissions or irrelevant content selection.			30-33	28-29	26-27		
LEVEL3 Content selection does relate to question, but does not answer it. , or does not always relate to the question. Omission in coverage				26-27	24-25	20-23	
LEVEL 2 Question inadequately addressed. Sparse content					20-23	18-19	14-17

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LEVEL 1* Question inadequately addressed or not at all. Inadequate or irrelevant content.						14-17	0-13

• Question not addressed at all/totally irrelevant content; no attempt to structure the essay = 0

• Question includes basic and generally irrelevant information; no attempt to structure the essay = 1–6

• Question inadequately addressed and vague; little attempt to structure the essay = 7–13



SECTION A: SOURCE-BASED QUESTIONS

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QUESTION 1: HOW LEARNING AND CULTURE STRUCTURED THE SONGHAI EMPIRE IN THE 15th CENTURIES?

Study sources 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D to answer the questions.

1.1.1. [Explanation of a historical concept from Source 1A – L1]

- An extensive group of state or countries over a single monarch, an oligarchy or a sovereign state (1 x 1) (2)

1.1.2. Extraction of evidence from Source 1A – L1]

- Islam,
- traditional
- ethnic-based (3 x 1) (3)

1.1.3. Extraction of evidence from Source 1A – L1]

- The lower classes among the Songhai would remain loyal to their traditional and cultural religions, with the ruling class espousing (embraced) tolerance for other religions.
- Practitioners of magic called Sohanti were found in the empire during its entire history and never made the conversion to Islam. (2 X 1) (2)

1.1.4. Extraction of evidence from Source 1A – L1]

- Djinguereber,
- Sankore,
- Sidi Yahya (3 X 1) (3)

1.1.5. Interpretation of evidence from Source 1A – L2]

- .Most of the scholars of Timbuktu were Muslims from Mecca and Egypt, and by 1450 CE numbered more than 25,000.
- Any other relevant answer (1 X 2) (2)

1.1.6. Interpretation of evidence from Source 1A – L2]

- Merchants from North Africa would gather to buy and sell salt, gold, slaves, and knowledge.
- It was a centre of learning and culture.
- Any other relevant answer (2 x 2) (4)

1.2. Study Source 1B

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1.2.1. [Extraction of evidence from Source 1B – L1]

- Islamic learning,
- Engineering,
- medicine,
- architectures (3 X 1) (3)

1.2.2. Extraction of evidence from Source 1B – L1]

- It was attended by some 25,000 students (1 X 1) (1)

1.2.3. Extraction of evidence from Source 1B – L1]

- law,
- Sciences
- Medicine
- history
- politics. (3 x 1) (3)

1.2.4. *Explanation of a historical concept from Source 1B – L1]*

- A large number of historically significant pieces of wring that have been preserved for centuries in the private household of Timbuktu (1 x 2) (2)

1.2.5. [Extraction of evidence from Source 1B – L1]

- It encompassed hundreds and thousands of manuscripts were written over the course of the centuries
- Timbuktu made more profit from the trade in books than from any other line of business.
- Any other relevant answer (2 x 2) (4)

1.3.

1.3.1. [Extraction of evidence from Source 1C- L1]

- Stone
- mortar (1 x 1) (1)

1.3.2. [Interpretation information from Source 1C- L2]

- Tradition and culture is observed and entrenched
- Any other relevant response (1x2) (2)

1.3.3. [Extraction of evidence from Source 1C- L1]

- Fabrics
- Salt (2 x 1) (2)

1.3.4. [Interpretation information from Source 1C- L2]

- It meant that Timbuktu was peaceful city.
- Any other relevant answer (1 X 2) (2)

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1.3.5. [Evaluate the usefulness of evidence from Source 1C- L3)

- It is a description of Timbuktu, Songhai capital city, by Leo Africanus's, who visited the city around 1492.
- It shows that empire was a centre of learning.

Any other relevant response (1x2) (2)

1.4. Refer to Source 1D.

1.4.1. [Interpretation of evidence from Source 1D- L2]

- It that the Songhai mosques were used a center of worship, schooling, trading, and a place to experience the Songhai culture.
- Any other relevant response (1x2) (2)

1.4.2. [Evaluate the usefulness of evidence from Source 1D- L3]

Accurate

- It proves that the Songhai empire was a center of learning and culture.
- Any other relevant response (1x2) (2)

1.5. [Comparison of Sources 1C and 1D to see how they complement each other L3]

- They both show that the houses of Timbuktu are huts made of clay-covered wattles
- Any other relevant answer (2 x 2) (4)

1.6. [Interpretation, analysis and synthesis of evidence from all sources]

- The Songhai Empire was the strongest Muslim state in Sub-Saharan Africa during its time from the 14th through the 16th century. (1A)
- The lower classes among the Songhai would remain loyal to their traditional and cultural religions, (1A)
- The ruling class espousing (embraced) tolerance for other religions (1A)
- The king used the scholars at Timbuktu as his moral and legal counselors (1B)
- Timbuktu became an important centre for Islamic learning, engineering, medicine, and architectures (1B)
- The houses of Timbuktu are huts made of clay-covered wattles with thatched roofs (1C)
- The women of the city maintain the custom of veiling (cover) their faces (1C)
- The people of Timbuktu are of the peaceful nature.

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- The building of mosques as center of worship, schooling, trading, and a place to experience the Songhai culture 1D)
- Any other relevant answer.

Use the following rubric to allocate a mark:

LEVEL 1	• Uses evidence in an elementary manner e.g. **shows no or little understanding of how learning and culture structured Songhai Empire in the 15th centuries** Uses evidence partially to report on topic or cannot report on topic.	**MARKS 0–2**
LEVEL 2	• Evidence is mostly relevant and relates to a great extent to the topic e.g. **shows some understanding of how learning and culture structured Songhai Empire in the 15th centuries** • Uses evidence in a very basic manner.	**MARKS 3–4**
LEVEL 3	• Uses relevant evidence e.g. **demonstrates a thorough of how learning and culture structured Songhai Empire in the 15th centuries** • Uses evidence very effectively in an organised paragraph that shows an understanding of the topic.	**MARKS 5–6**

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(6)

SECTION B: ESSAY QUESTIONS

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QUESTION 2: THE WORLD AROUND 1600: THE SONHGAI EMPIRE

[Plan and construct an argument based on evidence using analytical and interpretative skills.

SYNOPSIS

Candidate will critically discuss how Sonni Ali transformed the Songhai into a formidable empire in the 15th centuries

MAIN ASPECTS

Candidates should include the following aspects in their response:

• Introduction: Candidates should explain their line of argument and how they intend to answer the question.

ELABORATION

MAIN ASPECTS

Some of the points to be included are the following

- Sonni Ali came to power in 1464.
- Conquered various West African territories.
- Seized Timbuktu and Djenne, which were part of the kingdom of Mali.
- Sonni Ali was a brilliant administrator
- Divided Empire into provinces, each with governor and reorganised the army.
- Army had a fleet of boats on the Niger river,1000 soldiers on horseback and 30 000 foot soldiers.
- Tolerated indigenous African religion of the majority of his own people.
- He cleaned out religious leaders in the institutions of learning.
- Under the leadership of emperor Sonni Ali
- The capital was at Gao, a city surrounded by a wall
- The royal court was responsible for the administration and the army
- Trade significantly influenced the course of history in West Africa.
- Travel and trade- camel caravan
- The slave trade was also important for the economic development of West Africa
- Timbuktu as centre of international trade
- Any other relevant answer

[50]

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