



Human Geography

Re-Mapping Africa

Name:

Section:

Score: ____/5

Directions: Using the ethnicity, language, and resources maps along with maps from the atlases redraw the political boundaries of Africa (see Assignment section for more details on expectations).

Background: In 1884-1885, leaders of powerful European countries met in Berlin, Germany to discuss their plans for Africa. A major result of the conference was that the map of Africa was redrawn into “spheres of influence,” territory essentially controlled by the different European powers willing to set up colonies. The colonies were created to advance three basic goals, often called “God, gold, and glory:”

- Promote Christianity
- Provide resources that helped European economies
- Make the European countries look more powerful by controlling more land.

In their hurry to advance their goals, European leaders overlooked a few major details. The newly drawn borders often contained multiple ethnic groups, multiple language groups, resource-poor soil, and inhospitable climates. To make matters worse, often Europeans either ignored ethnic troubles or favored one ethnic group over another.

After World War II, European countries could no longer afford to try to manage colonies in Africa. Beginning in the 1960s, the colonies began to gain independence. Independence, however, has not led to prosperity for most African countries. Ethnic strife continues. Lack of resources prevent successful economies and contribute to poverty. In short, the Europeans’ geographic ignorance of the 1800s has caused great problems for today’s Africans.

Assignment: This assignment asks you to complete two tasks.

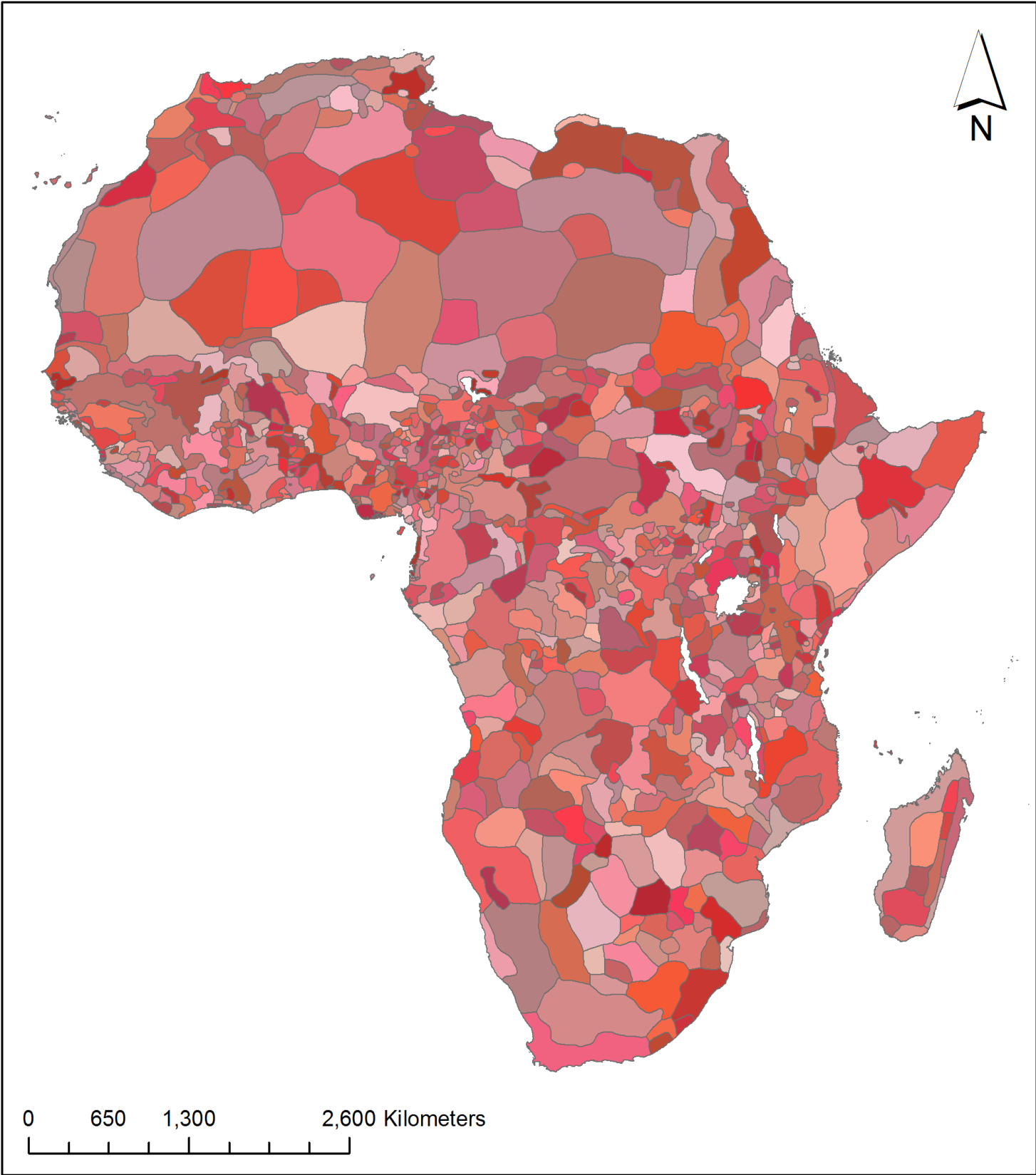
First, redraw Africa’s political (country) boundaries, using better geographic knowledge than that of the Europeans.

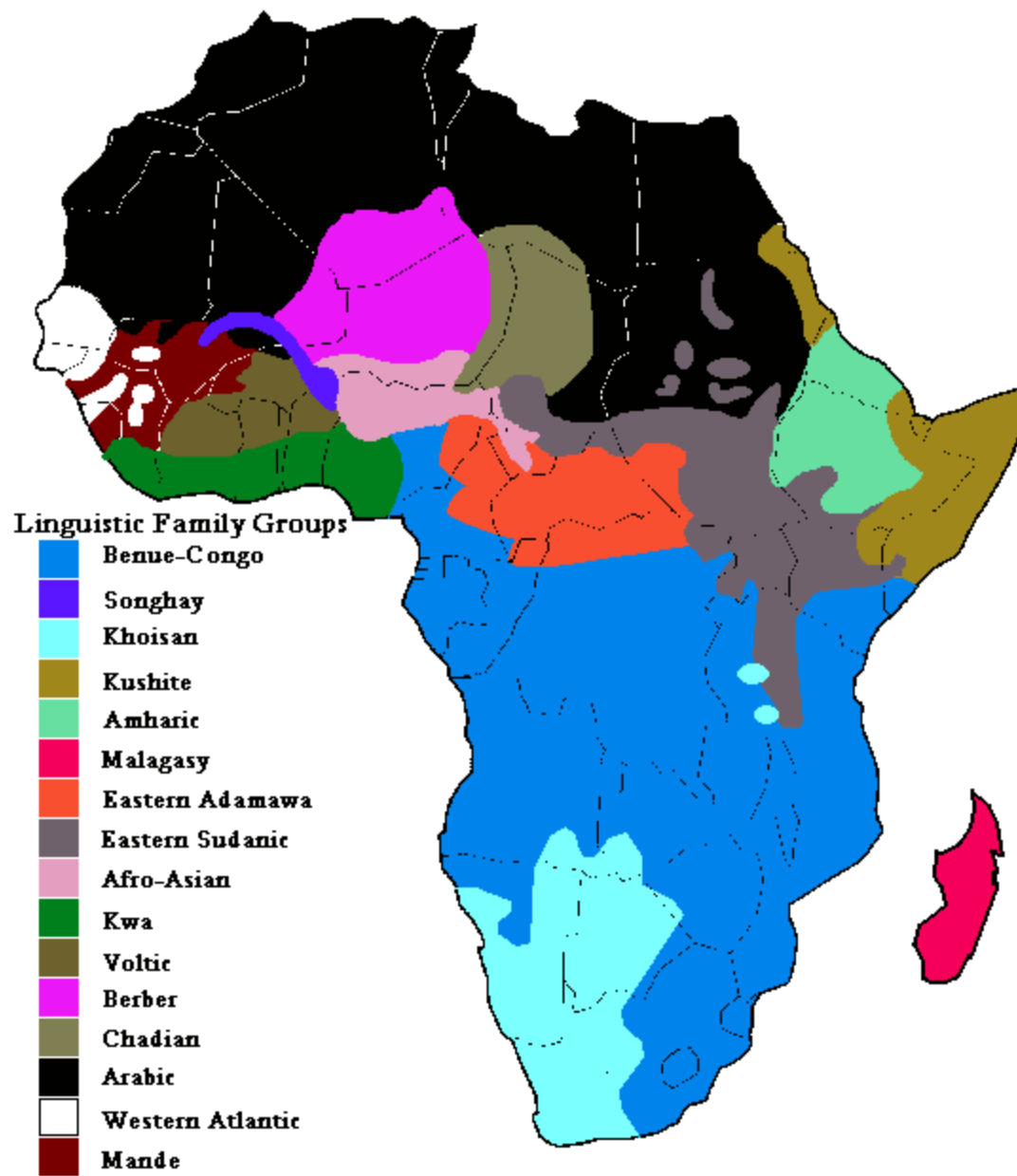
- Use maps that show language groups, ethnic groups, population density, climate, resources, and landforms.
- Create 10-15 new countries. You do not need to name these new countries, but they must be placed on a blank map of the continent.
- Carefully consider the consequences of your new countries. They should provide more people with economic opportunity, cause less ethnic conflict, and be easy to govern.

Second, in 2-3 sentences for each country, explain how the new boundaries achieve the goal of improving daily life for the Africans who live there. Explain what problems you are trying to avoid by redrawing these boundaries.



Murdock Map of African Ethnic Groups





- Cocoa
- △ Coffee
- Corn
- Cotton
- ✕ Dates
- ★ Fruit
- Rice
- Oil Palm
- ☉ Peanut
- ⊕ Rubber
- ☆ Sisal
- ◆ Tobacco
- ▲ Vineyards
- ◇ Wheat

- Commercial plantation agriculture
- Intensive subsistence agriculture with some livestock raising
- Irrigated agriculture
- Livestock raising
- Nomadic herding
- Oases: date cultivation
- Primarily forest; some rudimentary agriculture
- Mediterranean agriculture
- Non-agricultural

- Agriculture
- Climatic Zones
- Geology
- Languages
- Population Density
- Natural Vegetation
- Precipitation
- Temperature

