Teaching Timbuktu: Training for the *Legacy of Timbuktu* Exhibit

Section 1: Reading and Responding to Questions about Timbuktu

Reading of the selections from *Basil Davidson’s A History of West Africa: 1000-1800*, and completion of these questions – 1 CEU

**Instructions for completion:** Choose six (6) of the following questions and write a 250-word response, using information from Basil Davidson’s book and from the other resources you may have consulted. You may write your paragraphs directly in this document under the questions that you choose. Email your responses to b_anderson@unc.edu; when I receive your email, I will send a reply, letting you know that I have opened your email. Be sure to put your name and your school affiliation here! If email is a problem, you can send your materials to me “snail-mail.” If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the information below. I hope you find this a challenging and stimulating exercise! Barbara Anderson

**Your Name:**
**School and School System:**
**Grade(s) and Subject(s) You Teach:**

1. Basil Davidson discusses how we know what we know about the early history of West Africa. What sources does he mention? What can they tell us about the empire of Ghana? What do they leave untold?

2. One of the titles of the king of Ghana was *Kaya maghan*, or “Lord of the Gold.” How did the king use the gold and the gold trade to extend Ghana’s power?

3. As Ghana grew, its system of government became more complex. Describe how the system of government protected trade while increasing Ghana’s power over neighboring states.

4. Why was the gold of Ghana important to Europe? How did the demand for gold in Europe strengthen West African kingdoms?


6. Sundiata Keita, who founded the Mali empire, became much more than a historical figure for West African culture. Reread the passage describing his battle against Sumanguru (page 48). How would you describe the Sundiata we see in this passage?
7. During his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324, Mansa Musa distributed large gifts of gold as he traveled through North Africa and Southwest Asia. On his return, he brought Islamic scholars back to Mali. How did the gifts of gold and the choice of the scholars increase the glory of Mali in the Islamic world?

8. What did you learn through your reading that surprised you most about the West African kingdoms?

9. Which aspect of the history of the West African kingdoms are you most interested in exploring in greater depth?

10. Which aspect of the history of the West African kingdoms are you most likely to include in your teaching? Which do you think would be of most interest/use to your students?

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