Abstract:

This unit illustrates how mobility in the form of both voluntary and involuntary migration has shaped African cultures from ancient times to the present. Beginning with the migrations of our human ancestors within and out of Africa, movement has enabled Africans to survive and adapt. Whether in response to drought and desertification, to the forced migration of the Atlantic slave trade, or to the labor demands of the European colonial and modern world economies, mobility (rather than stagnation and isolation) has been a central theme in the history of Africa and its diaspora. Developed for high school students, this unit also emphasizes the complementary theme of Africans’ and African-Americans’ adaptation to new environments, new challenges, and new opportunities throughout their history.