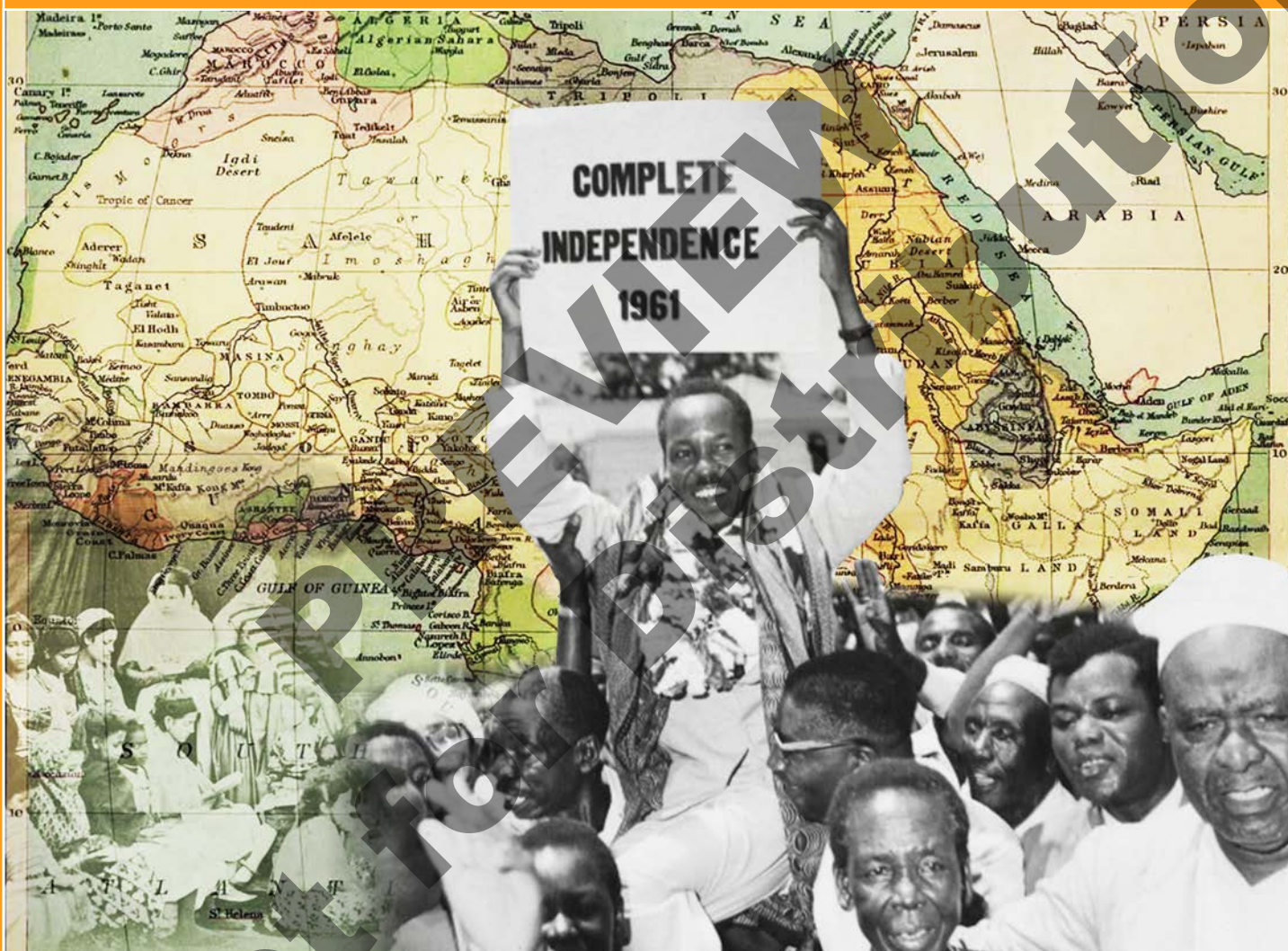


# Colonization and Independence in Africa

## Student Text



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## Acknowledgments

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*Colonization and Independence in Africa* was developed by the Choices Program with the assistance of scholars at Brown University and other experts in the field. We wish to thank the following for their invaluable input to the written portion of this curriculum:

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Thank you to Sarah Massey for her work developing and writing this curriculum unit.

The cover graphic includes these images: “Map of Africa in 1885,” Scottish Geographical Society, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=78086994>; “Tanzanians Celebrate Independence, 1961,” The National Archives, United Kingdom. CO 1069-166-21; “French school for Girls in Algiers, circa 1856,” Felix Jacques Antoine Moulin, Archives nationale d’outre-mer, 8Fi427/28.

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## Introduction: Colonialism and the Telling of History

Between November 15, 1884 and February 26, 1885, representatives from fourteen countries came together in Berlin, Germany to divide the continent of Africa among European powers. Although European countries had already claimed parts of the continent, the Berlin Conference paved the way for the colonization of Africa.

The colonial system Europeans imposed denied Africans the ability to decide their own political and economic affairs. European powers exploited Africa's natural and human resources for their own economic benefit, while arguing that they brought morality and economic development to Africans. At the Berlin Conference, European leaders argued that the "civilization" of Africa depended on their involvement in the continent.

***“All the Powers exercising sovereign rights or influence in the aforesaid territories bind themselves to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of the conditions of their moral and material well-being...”***

—General Act of the Berlin Conference, Article 6, February 26, 1885

At the time and in later years, European powers claimed that there were benefits to colonialism and glossed over the violent, racist, and destructive aspects of colonial rule. Many Europeans saw Africa as an uncivilized place without history. But Africa was made up of vibrant and evolving societies, with diverse values, languages, and economies. Many African states had long histories of relations with foreign countries prior to the Berlin Conference.

Africans resisted European colonialism throughout the colonial period. While African experiences and voices were silenced in European accounts of colonial history, these African voices give a much fuller picture of colonialism.

***“History will one day have its say, but it will not be the history that is taught in Brussels, Paris, Washington or in the United Nations.... Africa will write her own history, and to the north and south of the Sahara, it will be a glorious and dignified history...”***

—Patrice Lumumba, first prime minister of independent Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1961

In the coming days, you will explore the history of colonialism and independence in Africa. In particular, you will consider the perspectives of Africans and the ways in which they responded to European colonialism.

The history that you will read is a general one. Africa is a vast continent—more than three times the size of the United States—with more than fifty countries and hundreds of ethnic groups and societies. African experiences of colonialism were diverse. Nevertheless, there are common themes that help us better understand the continent's colonial history and legacies.

In Part I, you will explore Africa in the nineteenth century, and consider the changes colonialism imposed on African governments, economies, and societies. In Part II, you will consider African resistance to colonialism. You will examine the colonial experiences of Africans in four cases: Ghana, Algeria, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. (These are the names they go by after independence.) In Part III, you will explore how African countries won their independence in the mid-twentieth century. You will also consider the effects of colonialism and African independence on the continent and the world.

# Colonization and Independence in Africa

## Teacher Resource Book



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## Photo Analysis: Look Again

### Objectives:

**Students will:** Analyze a photographic source.

Consider the benefits and limitations of using photographs for understanding history.

Review the role of missionaries in the colonization and documentation of African societies.

### Required Reading:

Before beginning the lesson, students should have read Part II of the student text and completed “Study Guide—Part II” (TRB 19-20) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part II” (TRB-21).

### Handouts:

“Photo Analysis: Pastor Koranteng” (TRB 25-26)

“Look Again: Akua Oye” (TRB-27)

### Resources:

You will find a PowerPoint of the image online at <[www.choices.edu/colonizationmaterials](http://www.choices.edu/colonizationmaterials)>.

An in-depth video analysis of the postcard featured in this lesson by historian and archivist Paul Jenkins can be found at <<http://vimeo.com/33251261>>. The video should be viewed by students only after they have completed the whole activity.

### In the Classroom:

**1. The Role of Missionaries**—Tell students that they will be analyzing a photograph on a postcard produced by a Christian mission working in the Gold Coast. These postcards were sometimes used by missionaries to communicate with relatives and friends back home, but they were mostly sent for publicity and to gain financial support for their work abroad. Mission postcards were often sent to churches and Christian homes in Europe and the United States.

**2. Examining a Missionary Postcard**—Divide the class into small groups of three to four and distribute the first handout, “Photo Analysis: Pastor Koranteng.” Review the instructions with students and have them answer the questions. (Students may need a hint about the European practice of reversing the month and day in the date on the photo.) After ten minutes, have students share their observations.

Now distribute the second handout, “Look Again: Akua Oye,” and have students read the new information about the photograph and answer the questions in their groups. You might also choose to review this new information together with the whole class.

**3. Reconsidering the Past**—How did the information provided on the second handout change students’ understanding of the photograph? Why do students think Rudolf Fisch’s caption emphasized the pastor instead of Akua Oye? With this new information, what other questions about the photograph, the photographer, or the family do students have?

Have some students share their alternative captions for the photo.

**4. Becoming a More Thorough Historian**—Ask students to consider the difference between their answers to the questions on the first worksheet, “Photo Analysis: Pastor Koranteng,” and the second worksheet “Look Again: Akua Oye.” What contributed to their initial understanding of the source? How does this relate to the purpose of the photographer Rudolf Fisch? Did Fisch influence their interpretation? Why did their perspective change? What are the benefits and limitations of using materials produced by missionaries as a resource for learning about colonization in Africa?

How might the lessons students learned from examining this photograph apply to examining other visual sources?



**5. Extra Challenge:** Brainstorm a list of guidelines and standard questions for examining photographic sources. Here is a list of possible questions:

- Who and what is in the photograph?
- What is happening in the photo?
- Is there any reason to believe or suggest that the photograph has been altered?
- Would looking at other sources help to explain what is shown?
- Who took it and why?
- Were the people in the photo posing for the photographer or were they unaware that the picture was taken?
- Is there a caption or title?
- Is the photo a selective or misleading view of an event?
- What ideas or biases do we have that might affect how we interpret the photo?

There are thousands of missionary postcards available online at the International Mission Photography Archive, <<http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15799coll123>>. Have students use their new list of standard questions for photographic sources to analyze any of these images. You may want to remind them that not all sources contain dramatic discoveries or hidden meanings.

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## Photo Analysis: Pastor Koranteng

*Instructions:* Examine the photograph and answer the questions that follow. The photograph's caption was written by the photographer, Rudolf Fisch, a Swiss Protestant missionary in the Gold Coast. Remember that historians often use photographs to gain an impression about an event or era. Nevertheless, it is important to be careful about drawing conclusions from photographs. One cannot be certain that a photograph is an accurate or complete reflection of reality.



Basel Mission Archives / Basel Mission Holdings. Ref. No. D-30.11.018. Rudolf Fisch.

*"The African Pastor Koranteng and His Family."* Photo by Rudolf Fisch.

1. Who and what do you see? (Provide at least five details about the photograph.)

2. When and where was this photograph taken?

3. a. Who took the photograph?

b. What do we know about the photographer?

4. What does the caption tell you about the photograph?

5. Does the photograph have a point of view? Explain.

6. What do you think the purpose of the photograph is?

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## Look Again: Akua Oye

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*Instructions:* You have already recorded your impressions about the photo based on your initial observations. In this part of the activity, you will reconsider your impressions based on new information about the photo. The information comes from Paul Jenkins, a historian who studied this photo and the role of missionaries in colonial Africa.

### New Information

- Missionaries referred to the pastor's wife as Mrs. Amelia Koranteng. This was the name they had given her. But she was known to members of her own community as *ohemmaa*, or "queen mother." She was the most important female in the Akwapin Kingdom (a region of present-day Ghana). Her name was Akua Oye.
- As "queen mother," Akua Oye did not hold the highest political title in the Akwapin Kingdom. This role was reserved for the king, but his right to rule the kingdom had to be authorized by the "queen mother." The "queen mother" was not married to the king, but she chose the king from many candidates, including her nephews, her own children, and other male relatives.
- The location of Akua Oye in the center of the photo and the grouping of the female children around her, and not around Pastor Koranteng, suggests her central importance in her family and community.
- Except for Pastor Koranteng, the photograph only features female relatives of Akua Oye. This is probably not a coincidence because the Akwapin Kingdom was a matrilineal society (all heirs are traced through the mother and maternal ancestors).
- Akua Oye is sitting in the center of the photograph, wearing African clothing. Meanwhile, the pastor, the children, and the young woman are wearing European-style clothing and are standing or sitting to her side. In other missionary photographs of African pastors and their families, usually all members of the family are dressed in European-style clothing.

### Questions

1. List three discoveries from the new information above that you find the most interesting or important.
2. Why do you think Rudolf Fisch's caption did not contain information about Akua Oye?
3. Write an alternative, and more accurate, caption for the photograph.