It is suggested that you spend 15 minutes reading the documents and 45 minutes writing your response.

Note: You may begin writing your response before the reading period is over.

Directions: Question 1 is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis or claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
- Describe a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.
- Support an argument in response to the prompt using either three or six documents.
- Use at least one additional piece of specific historical evidence (beyond that found in the documents) relevant to an argument about the prompt.
- For at least three documents, explain how or why the document’s point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is relevant to an argument.
- Use evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the prompt.
Question:
Evaluate the achievements of the empires of the Sub-Saharan region before their extensive involvement with European trade networks.

**Document 1**

**Source:** Egyptian official on Mansa Musa during his royal visit in Cairo during the fourteenth century.

This man Mansa Musa, spread upon Cairo the flood of his generosity: there was no person, officer of the court, or holder of any office of the Sultanate who did not receive a sum of gold from him.

**Document 2**

**Source:** Description of the city of Timbuktu by Leo Africanus in the early sixteenth century.

Here are many doctors, judges, priests, and other learned men that are well maintained at the king’s costs. Various manuscripts and written books are brought here...and sold for more money than any other merchandise.

**Document 3**

**Source:** Travels to the Kingdom of Mali, by Ibn Battuta (mid-fourteenth century).

Among their good qualities is the small amount of injustice amongst them, for of all people they are the furthest from it. Their sultan does not forgive anyone in any matter to do with justice. Among these qualities, there is also the prevalence of peace in their country, the traveler is not afraid in it nor is he who lives there in fear of the thief or of the robber by violence.

**Document 4**

**Source:** Description of wax process used in making bronze sculpture in Benin by a Hausa artisan, fifteenth century.

In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful. This account will show how the [Benin] figures are made. This work is one to cause wonder. Now this kind of work is done with clay, and wax, and red metal, and solder and lead, and fire... Next it is set aside to cool, then [the outside cover of clay] is broken off. Then you see beautiful figure.
Document 5

Source: a Greek historian, Xenophon, writing in the fourth century B.C.E., about Cyrus the Great.

So it was that Cyrus called a council and spoke as follows: “Gentlemen and friends of mine, you are aware that we have garrisons and commandments in the cities we conquered, stationed there at the time. I left them with orders simply to guard the fortifications and not meddle with anything else. Now I do not wish to remove them from their commands, for they have done their duty nobly, but I propose to send others, satraps, who will govern the inhabitants, receive the tribute, give the garrisons their pay, and discharge all necessary dues.” …

With these words he assigned houses and districts to many of his friends among the lands he had subdued: and to this day their descendants possess the estates, although they reside at court themselves. “Now,” he added, “we must choose for the satraps who are to go abroad persons who will not forget to send us anything of value in their districts, so that we who are at home may share in all the wealth of the world. For if any danger comes, it is we who must ward it off.”

Document 6

Source: Benin bronze head, sixteenth century.
Source: Bronze head for a staff in the shape of a coiled snake, from the Igbo-Ukwu people in Nigeria (9th century).