



Year 5 History Knowledge Organiser

What was the Kingdom of Benin?



Modern
Nigeria
(Africa)

Subject Specific Skills

- Recognise and use a range of primary and secondary sources to find out about the past
- Identify key features, aspects and events of the time studied; describe the key features of the past, including attitudes, beliefs and the everyday lives of men, women and children.

Prior Learning

- Chronological awareness of historical events.
- Understand how some historical events/periods occurred concurrently in different locations.
- Use of evidence to build up a past event.
- understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance

Timeline:

Date	Key Event
AD 400	The Yoruba people start using iron tools which enable them to clear the forest land effectively for the first time. Villages developed and chiefs emerged.
600	The area becomes the Ife Kingdom, one of the earliest kingdoms in the West Africa Rainforest.
900	The Kingdom of Benin begins to develop and boundaries are established around the region called Igodomigodo in what is now Nigeria.
1091	The Edo people were ruled by the Ogiso, which means 'kings of the sky'.
1100	The last Ogiso of Igodomigodo, Owodo, dies and there is nobody to rule.
1180	Eweka becomes the new ruler and changes the name Igodomigodo to Edo. He calls himself Oba.
1300-1700	The 'golden age' of Edo. It has a large, powerful army and skilled craftspeople.
1489	It was only when Portuguese made contact with the Kingdom of Benin that the name 'Benin' began to be used. This name is now widely used to describe the entire civilisation from AD 900.
1700	A period of decline due to civil wars and end of the slave trade in Europe.
1897	Benin City is destroyed by British Troops.

Key Individuals:

Ogiso Igodo 900 – 12 th C	The first king of Benin, under whom the smaller villages joined together to form a kingdom.
Oba Eweke 1180	The first of a new dynasty of kings called Obas, crowned around 1180.
Oba Oguole 1280-1295	The king who had the Benin City Wall built around 1283.
Oba Ewuare 1440-1473	He expanded the kingdom greatly and set up trading links with Portugal in 1514
Oba Ovonramwen 1888-1897	This was the last king of Benin, exiled by British troops after their invasion in 1897.

Key Vocabulary

Animists: People who believe that humans, animals and objects all have souls or spirits.

Brass: A yellowy metal made of a mixture of copper and zinc.

Edo: The name given to the Kingdom of Igodomigodo by **Oba** Eweka. The people also became known as the **Edo** people.

Oba: The title used by Eweka and subsequent rulers. Eweka was from the **Yoruba** people and **Oba** is the **Yoruba** word for 'king'.

Ogiso: The title used by the early rulers of Igodomigodo. It means 'kings of the sky'. It is thought that there were around 31 Ogiso rulers.

Ohen: A priest who performed religious ceremonies.

Yoruba: The name of the people from the holy city of Ife. The histories of the **Edo** and **Yoruba** people are closely linked.

Key Knowledge:

- The people of **Edo's** beliefs were centred around a creator god named Osanobua and his many children.
- Religion was particularly important to the people of the kingdom of Benin. Ceremonies were led by an **ohen** and were intended to make the **Oba** seem powerful and great, as well as to worship the gods.
- The people of **Edo** were animists. Leopards, crocodiles and snakes were among the animals associated with the gods.
- The people of **Edo** believed that the head was the most important part of a person, where the intelligence was found.
- When an important person died, artists would make a head of that person. Heads of gods and goddesses were made from brass. People believed that the person's spirit could be contacted through the brass head.
- Masks were made for use in ritual ceremonies and represented a link to the spiritual world.
- Coral beads have a special significance in traditional **Edo** customs. **Edo** chiefs would wear necklaces of coral beads and the **Oba** would wear necklaces, collars and crowns made from them.