

## Module 9: Empires of Africa and the Americas

### Topic 3 Content: European Expansion in Africa

#### Introduction



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#### Portuguese Expansion



Henry the Navigator of Portugal prompted the earliest exploration and trade into Western Africa. When the Portuguese failed to find desired water routes, they instead sailed up and down the coasts of Africa, establishing trading posts and forts. This ultimately hurt the economies of the coastal African trading communities. Eventually, Portuguese raiders attacked not only West African trading cities, but also those in East Africa, seizing their vast international trading empires for themselves. Economic damage was not the only negative impact on these communities. In most cases, Islamic inhabitants were driven out or forced to convert to Christianity. The ensuing slave trades proved the most damaging aspect of this struggle.

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#### Slavery



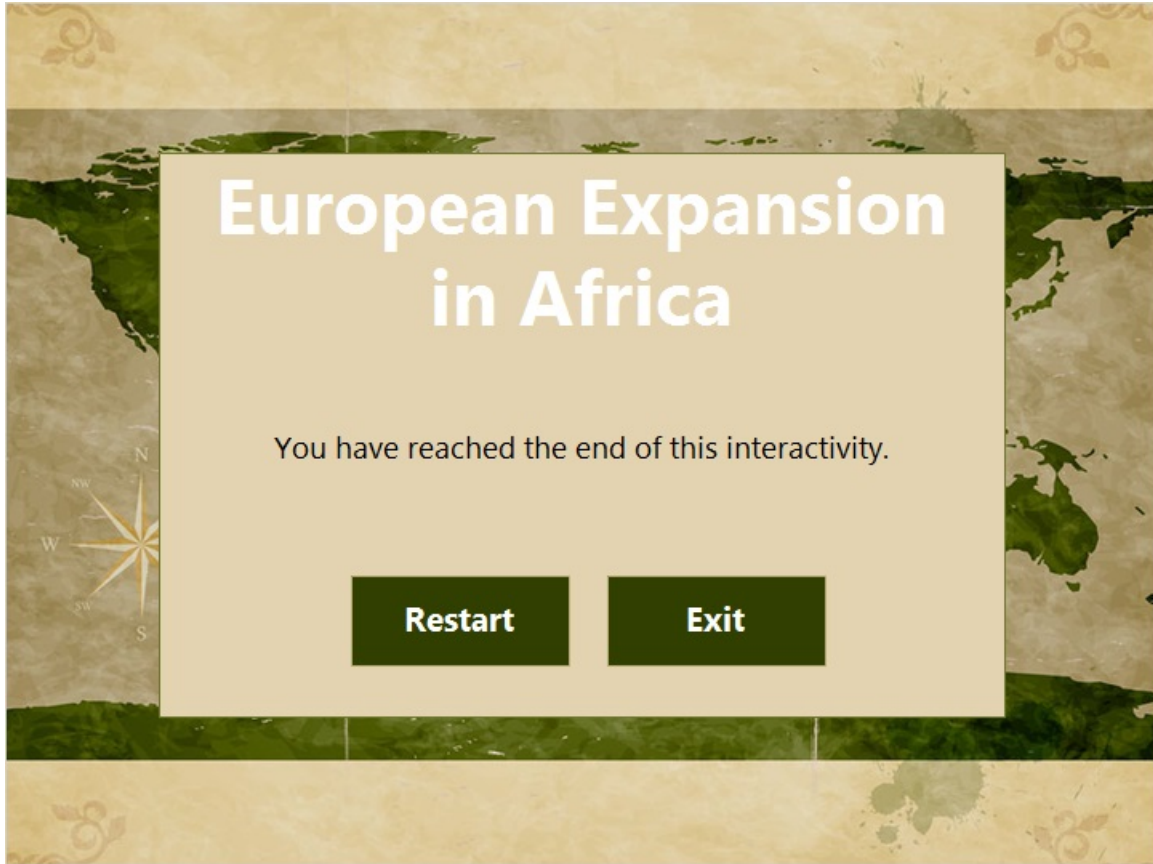
Although slavery existed in nearly every human civilization for thousands of years prior, in the hands of European traders, the practice became its most inhumane. While some Africans resisted, like the Kongo ruler Affonso I, the slave trade proved so profitable that other African rulers helped the Europeans acquire human cargo.

In most of the Ancient and Medieval world, slavery was not connected to ethnicity, as the word *slave* originates from “slavs,” the Russian word for unpaid laborers imported by Romans. In fact, in most places, slaves had rights and could sometimes earn citizenship or freedom. This was not the case, however, in the European slave trade. Mass seizures of people began to damage communities. The situation became even worse when Europeans started to explore the Americas and establish the Trans-Atlantic Trade Route and the Triangular Trade.

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#### Conclusion



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