



Kenya Today

TERMS & NAMES
 multiparty system
 Swahili
harambee

MAIN IDEA

Kenya is a beautiful land that has rich natural resources.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

In the future, Kenya may become the engine for economic growth in Eastern Africa.

DATELINE

KENYA, 1999—The rhinoceros is an endangered species—at risk of becoming extinct. More than 90 percent of the world's rhinoceros have been killed for their horns. In Southwest Asia rhino horns are made into dagger handles. In parts of Asia powdered rhino horn is considered a powerful medicine.

A war on poaching—killing animals illegally—has meant fewer rhinoceros deaths in the 1990s. Many African countries want to make sure that rhinos and other endangered species will survive. Six of these countries, including Kenya, have formed a police force to stop poaching across their borders.

Human-Environment Interaction • Hunting was outlawed in Kenya in 1977. Today, people go on safaris only to observe animals, not to hunt them. ▲

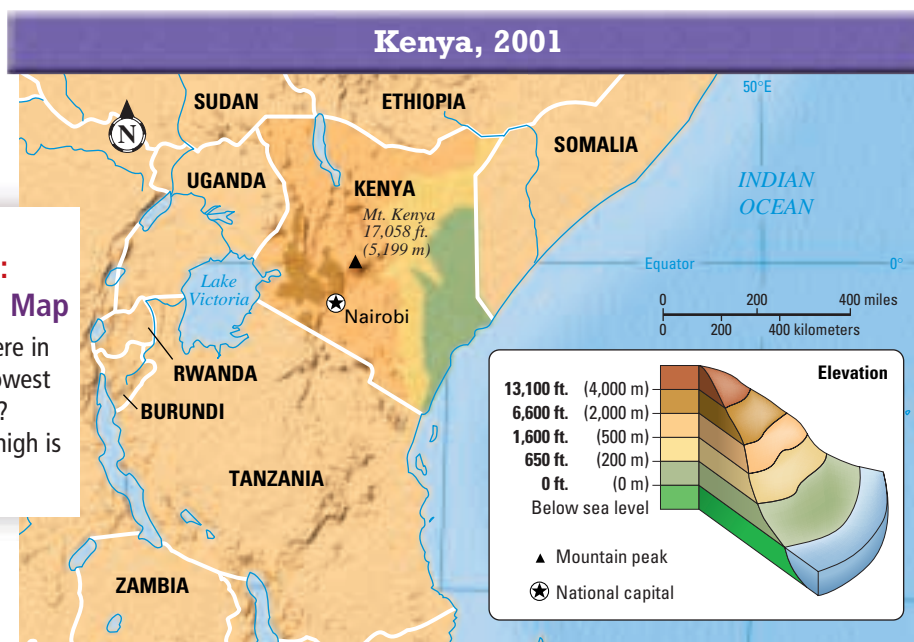
Geography of Kenya

Kenya, on Africa's east coast, lies directly on the Equator. Its national park system is home to many threatened species, including rhinoceros, elephants, and cheetahs. Most of Kenya's human population lives in the highlands in the southwest, where there is rich soil and plenty of rain. Nairobi, the capital and largest city, and Mount Kenya are found here. Kenya's coast has tropical beaches and rain forests. The remaining three-quarters of Kenya are covered by a plain that is too dry for farming. Kenyans who live here are herders.



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting a Map

1. **Region** • Where in Kenya is the lowest land elevation?
2. **Place** • How high is Mt. Kenya?



Culture • The Masai people migrated to Kenya a few thousand years ago. Masai warriors carried leather shields such as this one to help defend themselves and their animals from attack. ▼

Early History of Kenya

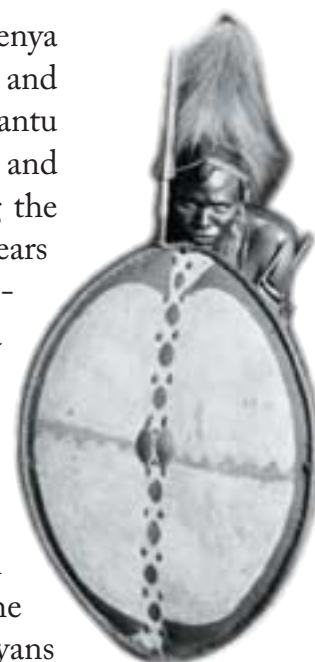
The ancestors of modern Kenyans began arriving in Kenya approximately 3,000 years ago. They were farmers, herders, and hunters from other parts of Africa. Some were part of the Bantu migration. Others came from the northeast. Greek, Roman, and Arabian traders and sailors often visited Kenya's coast along the Indian Ocean. Arabs set up trading posts there about 1,200 years ago. Portuguese sailors arrived in the early 1500s and took control of these trading posts. In the late 1800s, Kenya became a British colony. It gained independence in 1963.

Government of Kenya

Kenya's first prime minister, Jomo Kenyatta, ruled from 1963 until 1978, when he died in office. Vice President Daniel arap Moi then became prime minister. Moi's party was the only political party. By the early 1990s, however, many Kenyans became dissatisfied with this political system. One problem was that Moi gave special favors to people of his own ethnic group, the

Kalenjin. After Kenyans held violent demonstrations in 1991, Moi agreed to allow a **multiparty system**. This meant that other parties could offer ideas for new laws and policies that might be different from Moi's ideas. Despite the change, Moi remained in power. Some people believe that Moi won the 1992 and 1997 elections through fraud.

Culture • Prime Minister Moi takes this baton, a symbol of his authority, to every public function he attends. ▼





Culture • Most Kenyans wear Western clothing, but a few rural groups still dress in their traditional native clothing. ▲

The People of Kenya

Thirty to forty different ethnic groups live in Kenya today. The Kikuyu are the largest group, making up approximately 20 percent of the population. Other large ethnic groups include the Kalenjin, Kamba, Luhya, and Luo. Most groups have their own language. Many people also know Swahili (swah•HEE•lee) and use it to communicate with other groups. **Swahili** is a Bantu

language that includes many Arabic words. Swahili and English are the official languages of Kenya.

Education Education is very important to Kenyans. About 80 percent of Kenya's children go to elementary school. Government-run elementary schools are free, but students must pay tuition to attend high school. Most parts of Kenya have government-run schools. However, Kenyans value education so much that some have built their own schools in places where the government has not started them yet. These schools are called *harambee* schools. *Harambee* means "pulling together" in Swahili.

How Kenyans Earn a Living About 80 percent of Kenyans work in agriculture. The most profitable cash crops are coffee and tea. Farmers also grow bananas, corn, pineapples, and sugar cane. Tourism brings the most money into Kenya's economy.

More than 500,000 tourists visit Kenya each year. Tourists come to visit the national parks to see the antelope, buffalo, elephants, giraffes, lions, and other native animals. Kenya protects these animals as an important natural resource.

Human-Environment Interaction • One of Kenya's most famous tourist attractions are the flamingos of Lake Nakuru. Unfortunately, their population is declining because the lake is polluted. ◀

Reading Social Studies

A. Drawing Conclusions Why do you think Swahili has Arabic influences?

BACKGROUND

The Masai Mara National Reserve in Kenya and the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania include a combined 6,345 square miles.





Nairobi

Nairobi is Kenya's capital. The city's name comes from a Masai word meaning "place of cool waters." With 2 million people, Nairobi is the biggest city in Eastern Africa. It has restaurants, bookstores, museums, and skyscrapers. Many foreign companies have offices in Nairobi. Every year, many Kenyans leave their rural homes to move to Nairobi. Not all of them find life in the city as easy as they had hoped. They are often unable to find work. Also, Nairobi suffers from water shortages and power outages. Despite these problems, many residents enjoy the big-city lifestyle that can be found in Nairobi.

Place • Each month thousands of people move to Nairobi. The majority of newcomers are men. ▲

Reading Social Studies

B. Identifying Problems What are the main problems Kenyans face after they move to Nairobi?

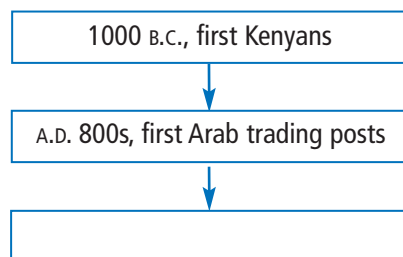
SECTION 4 ASSESSMENT

Terms & Names

1. Identify: (a) multiparty system (b) Swahili (c) *harambee*

Taking Notes

2. Use a time line like this one to document key events in Kenya's history.



Main Ideas

3. (a) Why do most Kenyans live in the highlands?
 (b) Describe Kenya's government under Prime Minister Moi. How did it change in the 1990s?
 (c) How does the educational system of Kenya compare with that of the United States?

Critical Thinking

4. Synthesizing

What problems might be caused by the system of languages in Kenya?

Think About

- the many ethnic groups
- the use of Swahili and English

ACTIVITY -OPTION-

Imagine that you are on vacation in Kenya. Design a **postcard** to send home. Draw and write about some of the things you have seen on your visit.