



Key Knowledge



The Benin Empire was a powerful kingdom in West Africa, lasting from around the 11th century to 1897.

It was ruled by a king called the Oba, who had great political and religious power. The capital city was Benin City, a major centre of trade and culture.

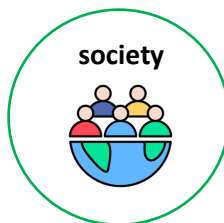
The Benin Empire is famous for its detailed bronze and ivory artworks. Strong earth walls and defences protected the city and showed its wealth and organisation.



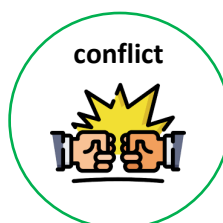
location



beliefs



society



conflict



settlements

Was the fall of Benin about money and power or a misunderstanding between cultures?

Key Vocabulary	Meaning
merchants	people who trade goods
barter	trading by swapping goods instead of using money
bronzes	metal items beautifully crafted, among best in the world
dynasty	rulers of a country passed down from father to son
Oba	all-important ruler who owned all the land and whose palace made up one third of the city
trade	buying and selling goods
ceremony	important religious event
community	people who live in the same area and support each other
fortification	to build walls and ditches to protect property
guilds	a group of skilled workers
spirits	beings that people believe exist but cannot usually be seen

Did you know...

- The Benin Empire, in what is now **Nigeria**, was a highly advanced civilisation. In many ways, it was more developed than **Anglo-Saxon** and **Viking** societies at the same time.
- In **1897**, British forces invaded Benin City, bringing the empire under British control.
- The famous **Benin Bronzes** can now be found in museums around the world. They help historians learn about the empire's history.

