Ch. 9 DBQ Sample

**Prompt**: Analyze the achievements of the empires of the Sub-Saharan region before their extensive involvement with European trade networks.

### Contextualization

The empires of the Sub-Saharan region in the period before contact with the European trade networks were quite advanced. During this time period, Islam was beginning to exert influence throughout the Middle East, which was where the major trade routes of the world came together. After the fall of the Roman Empire, Europe did not have much power, therefore the sub-Saharan region was primarily influenced by Dar-al-Islam. The achievements of the Sub-Saharan region before their extensive involvement with European trade networks were in advanced metallurgy, an organized religious system and advanced government.

Thesis

Topic Sentence

One advancement in Sub-Sahara was advanced metallurgy. **Document 4** describes how artists in the Benin Empire used resources like clay, wax, metals, and fire to create sculptures. This shows that these artists had advanced metallurgy techniques **because** they were able to create bronze sculptures, which few other societies in sub-Saharan Africa were able to do. This artisan would have described his techniques in order to get recognition for the techniques that he developed in order to try to increase his sales. **Document 6** shows that artisans in this empire were able to create large head sculptures. This illustrates the advances metallurgy because the bronze heads were extremely detailed, even showing the braids in the sculpture’s hair and the patterns on the rings around its neck indicating specialization in metallurgical art. The purpose of this sculpture was to show the ability of the Benin artists in a time when Benin was fighting for control of West Africa and needing to show superiority over other African states. (Doc. 6) Most sub-Saharan African kingdoms had advanced metallurgy, but most used this technology for military purposes. For example, Mali had an advanced military and they used their metal technology to maintain control over West African Trans-Saharan trade routes and to protect Mansa Musa during his pilgrimage.

Outside Evidence

Sourcing 6

Connect 6

Connect 4

Summary 4

Summary 6

Sourcing 4

## Conclusion

Even before the sub-Saharan kingdoms came into contact with Europeans through established trade routes, they were flourishing and creating great cultural advancements. Some of these advancements included having advanced metallurgy techniques, such as religious statues that reflected their devotion to their religion, most commonly Islam. They also had organized and advanced governments that made laws and expanded their influence throughout the known world.