# The geography of Mapungubwe

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<th>Grade 6, Term 1</th>
<th>Social Science: History</th>
<th>Lesson Topic: The geography of Mapungubwe</th>
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## Aims
- Engage higher order thinking through questions
- Build on prior knowledge
- Create inter-discipline links by incorporating multiple learning subjects

## Resources
- Worksheet

### Introductory activity
- Picture of the landscape and map of Mapungubwe
- Discuss the landscape of Mapungubwe with the learners and ask what they notice

### Questions 15 minutes
- Name all the different geographical elements you can see in the picture of Mapungubwe
- What are the benefits/disadvantages living there? • What do you notice about its location?

### Activity 35 minutes
- Read through the text, explain any terms that are unfamiliar
- Allow for a brief discussion of the content
- Have the learners complete the rest of the worksheet

### Consolidation 10 minutes
- Mark the comprehension questions
- Link this lesson to the previous lesson in terms of the structure of the hierarchy and living arrangements of the wealthy and the poor

## Outcomes
- Develop ability to infer data from context
- Learners have an understanding of how the landscape and geography of Mapungubwe influenced the people of Mapungubwe

## Means of Assessment
Either to be marked in class or by educator

**Total Marks for entire worksheet:** 32 Marks

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http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/mapu/hd_mapu.htm

The Geography of Mapungubwe

The site of Mapungubwe was divided into three areas: Mapungubwe on the hilltop, the Southern Terrace in the valley and Bambanoyanalo (also called K2) which was situated below the Mapungubwe hilltop.

What made Mapungubwe so unique was that it was situated close to the Limpopo River in a climate well-suited for livestock and crops and thus, the community thrived.

The soil was also rich, which allowed for successful growing and harvesting of millet, sorghum and cotton. These crops were consumed and also used to trade for items such as cloth and glass beads. There was also abundant grazing for cattle and sheep.

As Mapungubwe was ideally situated geographically between hills, the community had a safe advantage against ambush and predators. As Mapungubwe was close to the river, it meant that it also provided an easy access route for trading.
What archaeologists discovered:

Through excavation, archaeologists discovered the following:

- The people of Mapungubwe had grain pits that served as long-term storage for crops
- A place similar to a court, where disagreements could be settled and decisions made
- A blacksmith area
- Cattle kraals
- A cemetery for important members of the society
- Homes, kitchens and graves of the commoners. These homes were arranged in accordance with a family’s standing in society. The wealthier or more important a person was, the closer they were situated to the hill, with the king taking position at the top of the hill.

The king’s homestead was surrounded by a stone wall and this indicated his importance and gave him privacy. Being situated at the top of the hill was not only a status symbol for the king, but meant that he was close to the ancestors and therefore had better access to rainmaking abilities.

Answer the following questions:

1. What geographical factors made Mapungubwe ideal for setting up a homestead?

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2. What are the different areas of Mapungubwe called and where were they located?

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3. In the space below, draw a bird’s eye view of what you imagine the king’s homestead looked like. Remember to label your picture.

4. What were the three crops that were grown by the people of Mapungubwe? What were they used for?
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5. Trade was very important for the people of Mapungubwe. What items did they trade for and what factor made it easier for them to trade with foreigners?
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6. What made the area of Mapungubwe safer than other areas that they could have chosen?

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7. Name the different areas in the Mapungubwe homestead and what happened in each area.

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8. What was one of the responsibilities of the king that would be linked to where his home was situated?

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9. What factors make an area suitable for livestock?

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10. What do we call people who rear cattle and plant crops?
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Answer the following questions:

1. What geographical factors made Mapungubwe ideal for setting up a homestead?
   - It was close to the river, it has rich soil for farming and grazing and the hills provided protection.

2. What were the different areas of Mapungubwe called and where were they located?
   - Mapungubwe: On the large hill; Southern Terrace in the valley; Bambanoyanalo just below Mapungubwe.

3. In the space below, draw a bird’s eye view of what you imagine the king’s homestead looked like. Remember to label your picture.

   Drawing should include a stone perimeter; separate living areas; hill

4. What were the three crops that were grown by the people of Mapungubwe? What were they used for?
   - Millet: a grain used for food; Sorghum: used for food such as porridge; Cotton: used for trading and making cloth.

5. Trade was very important for the people of Mapungubwe. What items did they trade for and what factor made it easier for them to trade with foreigners?
   - They traded for glass beads and cloth. Trade was made easier because foreigners could get access via the Limpopo River.

6. What made the area of Mapungubwe safer than other areas that they could have chosen?
   - Mapungubwe had height and hill advantage, so the inhabitants were protected against any possible threats.
7. Name the different areas in the Mapungubwe homestead and what happened in each area? (8)
   Court area where people were able to settle disagreements; grain pits where grain could be stored; a blacksmith area to work with different metals and where tools could be made; cattle kraals where cattle would be kept safe when not out grazing; cemetery where important people would be buried.

8. What was one of the responsibilities of the king that would be linked to where his home was situated? (1)
   The king was responsible for asking the ancestors to bring rain. They believed that his location at the top of the hill made access to the gods better.

9. What factors make an area suitable for livestock? (1)
   Sufficient space for keeping livestock and grazing.

10. What do we call people who rear cattle and plant crops? (1)
    Farmers

Total 32