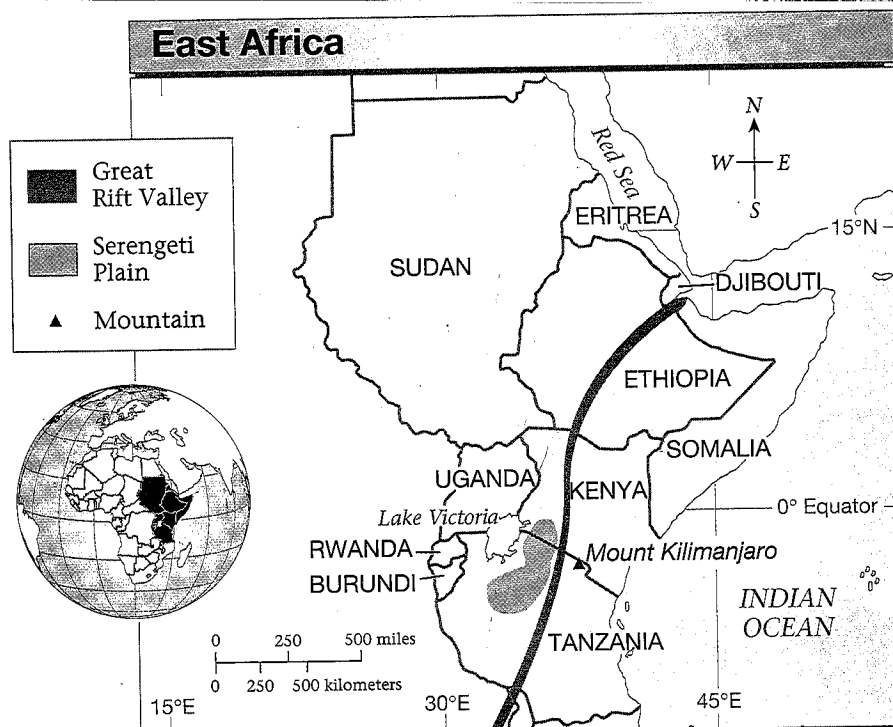


The Region of East Africa

Djibouti is a small country on the horn of Africa. This part of Africa sticks out into the Indian Ocean. Three other countries are located on the horn: Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia. Until recently, Eritrea was a province of Ethiopia. Only in 1993 did it win its independence. West of the horn lies the country of Sudan. Except for Ethiopia, all the countries on the horn border the Red Sea. Five countries south of the horn of Africa are part of East Africa, too. They are Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi.



Map Study

Map Study

1. Uganda, Kenya, Somalia
2. About 500 miles

1. **LOCATION** Which countries are on the equator?
2. **REGION** About how many miles wide is Kenya at its widest point?

East Africa's climate is very dry in the north but is less dry farther south. East Africa has gentle, rolling hills and steep mountains, some of which are volcanoes. The region also has flat, grassy plains, most of which are at high elevations. The equator runs through the middle of Kenya. Considering the latitude, this region should be hot. However, much of Kenya is at a high elevation and, therefore, cool.

East Africa has four famous landforms. One is the Great Rift Valley, which is a huge crack in the Earth's surface. Another is Lake Victoria—the world's third-largest lake. East of Lake Victoria is the Serengeti Plain—a flat grassland that is home to lions, giraffes, and many other wild animals. The fourth famous landmark is Mount Kilimanjaro. This snow-capped mountain is not part of a range but stands alone, rising nearly 20,000 feet above the plains.

War and Famine in the Northeast

The problem of hunger is widespread in Africa. The continent simply does not grow enough food for all of its people. Many children and adults suffer from malnutrition because their diet does not give them enough nutrients. Malnutrition can lead to many health problems, such as hair loss, abdominal swelling, and liver disease. The problem goes beyond malnutrition in some areas where there is **famine**, and people are starving to death. Some of the world's worst famines are taking place in northeastern Africa. In the 1980s, more than one million people there died of hunger. Famine remains severe in the region.

Why is there famine in Africa? One cause is population growth. In most of the continent, the food supply is growing—but the population is growing three or four times faster. In some places, the food supply is actually shrinking.

You Decide

What is the best way for other countries to help those starving in Africa?

Northeastern Africa is one such place where the food supply is shrinking. This area has all the problems of the Sahel. The desert is spreading and droughts are killing crops. However, northeastern Africa has another problem contributing to the famine—war.

Eritrea is independent now, but it struggled for independence for more than 20 years. Rebels in Ethiopia fought to overthrow their Communist government. The Communists in Ethiopia have fallen. However, Ethiopia remains unstable.

Ethiopia has also been fighting off and on with its neighbor Somalia. The two countries disagree about their border. In Somalia, where the central government fell apart in the early 1990s, various clans rule areas and are now at war with one another. In 1992, the United Nations sent soldiers to Somalia. This force included about 30,000 troops from the United States. They were trying to keep peace.

Remember

Refugees flee their homes because of war, political danger, famine, or economic hardship.

All this fighting has caused millions of people to flee their homes and become refugees. They cannot produce food. In the middle of a war, herders cannot care for their herds. Armed gangs take whatever food is grown. The United States and other developed countries have sent food to many African countries. However, little of this food reaches the war-torn areas. This is because soldiers either keep it for themselves or destroy the food so that their enemies cannot have it.

✓ **Check Your Understanding**

Write your answers in complete sentences.

1. Great Rift Valley, Lake Victoria, Serengeti Plain, Mount Kilimanjaro
2. There is not enough food grown for the number of people.
3. People are refugees and cannot make food. Armed gangs grab what food there is. Soldiers steal food sent to help.

1. What are the four major landforms in East Africa?
2. Why is hunger widespread in Africa?
3. How does war increase hunger?

Swahili: A Language of Trade

Most Kenyan people speak many languages. For example, those who live in Nairobi might speak English, French, and Portuguese in addition to their native language. Those who live in a rural village might speak a few of the local languages. For example, the Luo people speak J Luo. A Luo farmer also might speak the languages of the Kikuyu and Luhya. This helps the farmer to communicate with neighboring villages.

There is one language that almost all Kenyans speak. It is called Swahili, which belongs to the Niger-Congo language group. The word *Swahili* is an Arabic word. It means "of the coast."

Before the 1500s, Arabic traders sailed regularly to East Africa. There they landed on the coast of Kenya and traded with Africans. Swahili, a blend of Arabic and Bantu, probably grew out of these communications.

Later, Portuguese traders started sailing to East Africa. They, too, traded with Africans along the coast, and many Portuguese words crept into Swahili. Even today, Swahili shows Portuguese influence. It contains words from Persian and Malay because Kenyans traded with what is today Iran and Malaysia.

Swahili is widely spoken in Africa. In some rural schools in East Africa, it is the only written language taught. In Tanzania, it is the official language.

As in ancient times, Swahili is an important language of business. Tourists and business travelers in Africa often learn some Swahili. It is the single most useful language for getting around in Africa.

Marriage Customs

When it comes to marriage, many East Africans—as do other Africans—follow the traditional customs of their ethnic groups. For example, boys and girls do not, as a rule, go out on dates. Marriage joins two families, not just two individuals. For a marriage to work, the families have to get along. The couple getting married may have little or no relationship before their wedding.

Many African cultures and religions practice polygamy, which means that men are permitted to have two or more wives. In sub-Saharan Africa, polygamy goes back long before Islam. Polygamy has begun to fade out in the cities, but it remains common among rural Africans.



Economics Fact

Bridewealth is not related to religion. Kenya has followers of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and animism who all accept the custom of bridewealth.

Almost all African cultures have a custom called bridewealth. This is a payment that a man makes to the bride's family. Once wealth has changed hands, no one is likely to back out of the marriage agreement. Among some groups, bridewealth serves as a marriage certificate. Traditionally, a man pays bridewealth in gold, grain, sheep, goats, or other valuable goods. Cattle are the most common form of bridewealth for the Masai men of Kenya. City dwellers may pay in cash instead of goods.

Colonialism in East Africa

Arab traders came to East Africa for ivory, spices, and other goods. They also came to enslave people. They took thousands of Africans to the Arabian Peninsula each year. Some ended up as far away as India and China.

In the 1800s, the British halted the Arab slave trade. By then, however, the British themselves were busy colonizing the region. So were other Europeans. Germans, for example, settled the area now known as Tanzania.

The British set up the colony of Kenya. They began by building a railroad from the Indian Ocean to Lake Victoria. They brought 30,000 workers from India to lay the tracks. One place along the tracks was a center for trade between the Masai and the Kikuyu. This station became the city of Nairobi.

The train brought travelers across the Kenyan plains. Many of them were from the British middle class. In Kenya, they could become upper class by taking land from the Africans and building large tea and coffee plantations. The Africans also lost many basic rights to the British. For example, the British would not allow them to travel freely. The government ordered the Africans to pay taxes. Most Africans, however, could not pay these taxes in money, because in their culture there was no such thing as money. So the government forced the Africans to work for the British, and the Africans became little more than enslaved peoples in their own land.

Around 1951, a group of Africans in Kenya started a guerrilla army. They called themselves the Mau Mau. Most of the Mau Mau fighters were Kikuyu. For seven years, they waged war against British rule. In the first six years of warfare, 11,000 Mau Mau were killed. The group drew the rest of the world's attention to Kenya's problem. In the seventh year of warfare, the British at last agreed to share power. In 1963, Kenya became independent.

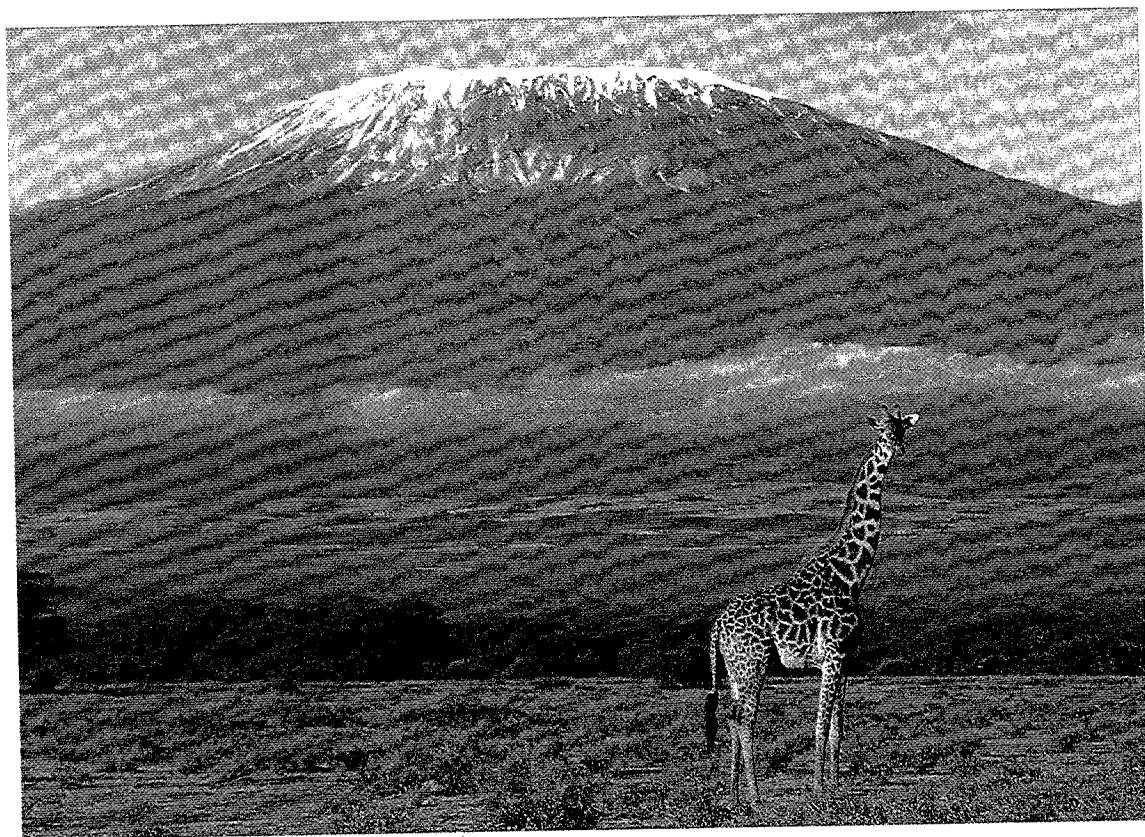
In colonial times, the British brought workers from India and Pakistan to Africa. Many of them stayed to set up stores or small farms. To their descendants, Africa is home. Many black Africans still think of the people of Asian descent as outsiders. Some want to prevent immigrants from owning land or taking jobs. In the country of Uganda, the prejudice against the Asian population led to violence. Asian peoples were driven out of that country in the 1970s.

HISTORY FACT

The cost of the railroad from the Indian Ocean to Lake Victoria was enormous. To help make the railroad pay for itself, the British encouraged British farmers, who would use the railroad, to settle in East Africa.

East Africa's Game Reserves

A lion sleeps under a flame tree on the Serengeti Plain. Nearby, two more lions pace back and forth. Half-hidden in the tall grass are a pack of hyenas, picking at an antelope that the lions killed earlier. Suddenly, a truck pulls up. A game keeper pulls out her field glasses and looks around. Counting young lion cubs is part of her work in this East African **game reserve**. A game reserve is an area set aside for wild animals. Game reserves are meant to protect wildlife, and hunting within their boundaries is limited or forbidden.



The Serengeti Plain game reserve is home to giraffes and many other animals.

East Africa's reserves are needed because Africa has so many **endangered species** of wild animals. One endangered species is the mountain gorilla of Rwanda, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rhinoceroses, zebras, giraffes, and cheetahs are some of the many other species that roam freely on the game reserves. Wildlife is one of Africa's most valuable resources. Some of the wild animals that live in Africa do not live anywhere else on the Earth. Tourists travel from all over the world to see them.

People and wildlife do not always share the land easily. Wild animals trample farmers' fields and kill cattle. Elephant herds tear down trees and harm other native plants. Lions, elephants, and other large animals can pose a danger to people. Some people, in turn, can pose a danger to those animals. People who live on or near game reserves sometimes kill animals for money. This illegal killing is called poaching.

The governments of East Africa try to balance the needs of people with those of wildlife. Tanzania, for example, limits tourism. Yet Africa's population is growing. As the population grows, people may press to use more land. Preserving wildlife may then become more difficult.

✓ **Check Your Understanding**

Write your answers in complete sentences.

1. Why do scientists study the Great Rift Valley?
2. Why did many Kikuyu end up in the cities?
3. How did Swahili get its start?
4. What is the purpose of bridewealth?
5. How did the British make a living in Kenya?

1. They study it because the rift exposes many fossils and clues to study.
2. They lost most of their land.
3. Arab traders met Africans; Swahili, a combination of Bantu and Arabic, grew out of trade and a need to talk.
4. Bridewealth seals a marriage.
5. They traded and built plantations.