

# Summary: Colonialism in Africa

## Africa and the Europeans

Slavery existed in Africa long before Europeans arrived. Rulers in Mali and Songhai had thousands of slaves. Villages raided one another to take captives and sell them. Often, a slave could work to earn his or her freedom. But in the 1400s, Europeans introduced a form of slavery that devastated African life and society.

European traders raided African towns and captured people. Some Africans captured in wars were sold to European traders by other Africans. From 1520 to 1860, about 10 to 12 million Africans were forced into slavery. They were sent to faraway European colonies in North and South America. Many more people were captured, but they died of disease or starvation before arriving. In addition to the Africans captured and sold, many were killed in raids. About two-thirds of those taken were men between the ages of 18 and 30. This left fewer people to lead the families and villages. African cities and towns did not have enough workers. Family structures were destroyed.

## European Colonialism

When Europeans ended the slave trade, they did not lose interest in Africa. Africa could supply Europe with raw materials and new markets for European goods. Scientists and explorers were interested in African wildlife and natural resources. European missionaries wanted to convert Africans to Christianity. Many missionaries taught European ways of thinking. These often conflicted with, and destroyed, African traditions.

In the nineteenth century, European nations began to compete for control of Africa. To avoid wars over territory, European and U.S. leaders met and discussed how to divide Africa. No Africans were consulted. Over the next 20 years, many countries established colonies in Africa. By 1912, only Ethiopia and Liberia remained independent. This colonization often increased tensions and led to violence among African ethnic groups.



### Before You Read

Find and underline the vocabulary word.

**missionary** *noun*, a person who goes to another country to do religious and social work



### After You Read

**REVIEW** How was the European form of slavery different from the slavery that had already existed in Africa? Circle the sentence that tells what happened to Africans who were forced into European slavery.

**REVIEW** Why did Europeans stay interested in Africa after the end of slave trade? Draw a box around the sentences that tell why Europeans did not lose interest in Africa after they ended the slave trade.