



Camels and Salt photo

Close Reading:

What do you see? List words that seem important. List details of images.

Observations:

Camels in a line

Blocks that look like stone tied on their sides

Sand

Shadows

No people

Vegetation way in background

Rocks behind camels

Sourcing:

What is your source? This is a color photograph.

When do you think it was produced? Students may say this was produced recently because it is a color photograph. There is nothing in the picture to give it a time period. The ropes look old as does this mode of transportation, but it could still be used in some places in the world.

The photograph was actually taken in 2008, and represents the journey some in Mali still take to transport salt from the mines to Timbuktu (the market).

Contextualizing:

What are clues you know from prior knowledge that help you formulate a guess about the continent from which your source comes?

Camels are found in the desert, so this must be Africa or the Americas or Asia.

Perhaps students might know camels are native to desert areas of Asia or Africa and so would eliminate North or South America.

In class discussion, I want to point out that this is actually in Mali, located in Africa.

Mali is one of the three African trade kingdoms that we will learn about in several weeks when the class gets to the Exploration unit. Students also learn that the Portuguese brought manufactured goods to trade in the African kingdoms for gold, salt, ivory, and slaves. Many students have a hard time wondering why salt was valuable and how it is obtained. This can be an object lesson in its value. According to the report that accompanied this photo, salt is mined by hand from shallow open pits. The slabs weigh an average of 130 pounds. The men traveling with the camels must unload the bars every night and reload them every morning of the 15 day trip through the desert.

Corroborating:

Join with another group and present your findings to each other. Does each group agree with the other's analysis? Why or why not?