

Why this epic of Ancient Mali?

Every nation has its founding story. The Sundiata epic tells the story of the founding king of Mali. Mali became one of the wealthiest kingdoms in the world at the time (roughly 1230-1450), exporting gold by the ton to North Africa, Europe and the Middle East. For over 700 years Sundiata's story was passed down orally until professor D.T. Niane recorded it in 1960. The epic, recounted in wonderful language, follows common epic traditions of the young leader who must prove himself worthy, passing through moral, physical and political challenges.

This curriculum guide by Lenna Dower from Milton Academy, Milton Massachusetts offers one way to teach the epic at the advanced middle school or high school level.

There is also a children's version of this epic, which can easily be used in a high school setting as well as with younger children: Sundiata: the lion king, by David Wisniewski

Barbara B. Brown