

Essay and Discussion Questions

Sub-Saharan Africa Higher Education Questions

Help students understand Sub-Saharan Africa through these essay and discussion questions.

Question 1

Compare and contrast external powers' historic involvement in sub-Saharan Africa with the present-day involvement of these powers in the region. To what extent do colonial patterns endure?

- How have external powers historically involved themselves in sub-Saharan Africa?
- What goals did European powers pursue through their involvement in sub-Saharan Africa?
- Why are outside powers showing an interest in sub-Saharan Africa today?

Question 2

To what extent are recent trends in demographics and migration patterns affecting countries in sub-Saharan Africa? How can governments work to counter the negative effects associated with these trends?

- What factors are driving demographic changes in sub-Saharan Africa?
- What challenges do these demographic changes pose?
- Why are levels of emigration so high throughout the region?

Question 3

Compare and contrast the economies of Nigeria and South Africa. Why might the relative strength of the two economies diverge in the future? Which economy is more likely to continue to strengthen?

- How are the economic foundations of Nigeria and South Africa different?
- Why is a diversified economy a sign of economic strength?
- How does corruption influence a country's economy?
- What role can the informal sector play in a struggling economy?

Question 4

How does sub-Saharan Africa wield influence in the world? What does sub-Saharan Africa tell us about broader trends of globalization?

- In what ways is climate change affecting the region?
- How has the rate of cell phone use changed throughout the region? What are cell phones in the region used for?
- What effects did COVID-19 render on the region?
- How do foreign countries and international organizations involve themselves in the region?
- What impact does foreign aid have on the region?
- Why have countries outside of sub-Saharan Africa taken a military interest in the region?

Question 5

To what extent has United States involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa served to benefit countries within the region?

- Why did the United States become more interested in Sub-Saharan Africa as the Cold War intensified?
- What were the effects of the United States' attempt to deliver aid to Somalia in the early 1990s?
- What factors have led certain United States aid programs to find success in the region?

Question 6

In what ways are sub-Saharan African societies unequal? What historical factors have led to the rise of these inequalities? How do these inequalities affect the region?

- What challenges do women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa face?
- Why is economic inequality distributed in the way that it is throughout the region?
- What does the experience of South Africa add to discussions about inequalities in the region?