Oral Tradition of Africa

The Africans did not share their lessons of the past by writing the information down in books...Nope! They had griots, Western African story tellers to pass along the lessons of the past. The preserved cultural traditions, memories, and stories of the past. They memorized stories and would recite or perform them in front of the village. Sometimes the stories were sung or performed to music. Traditionally, griots were a part of important families.

1. Listen to some of the oral traditions. When listening, be sure you pay attention to what human qualities are given to animals or objects.
2. The purpose of the stories was to explain the origins of a tradition, origins of nature, or even a value to the village. Try to pick up the purpose of this story.
3. Once you’re done listening, read the lessons of other African stories.
   - The Lioness and the Ostrich
   - Searching for Gold
   - How the Ant Taught the Berbers to Live and Farm
   - Challenge! Global Mosaic p. 132-133 The Gentleman of the Jungle

Assignment:
- You have listened to and/or read the legends of Western African villages.
- There were morals or lessons to each story. Identify the morals or lessons to at least two of the stories.
- Explain why the Griot was such an important part of the African Villages.