The Ethiopian Empire was a kingdom that spanned a geographical area in the current state of Ethiopia. It began with the establishment of the Solomonic dynasty from approximately 1270 until 1974, when the ruling Solomonic dynasty was overthrown in a coup d’etat by the Derg. The only African country to never be conquered or occupied, it was one of the founding members of the United Nations in 1945. Points of interest:

The Ghana Empire (c. 700 until c. 1240), known as Awkar (Ghana or Ga’na being the title of its ruler) had complex societies based on trans-Saharan trade with salt and gold since ancient time, but the introduction of the camel to the western Sahara in the 3rd century A.D. opened the way to great changes in the area that became the Ghana Empire. By the time of the Muslim conquest of North Africa in the 7th century the camel had created a trade network running from Morocco to the Niger river. The Ghana Empire grew rich from this increased trans-Saharan trade in gold and salt, allowing for larger urban centers to develop. In the 11th century the Cordoban scholar Abuof traveled

**Although the ancient Greeks used “Libya” as the continental place name, they tended to restrict the term “Libyan” to North Africans of Berber background. They called peoples living further to the south “Ethiopians” (or Aethiopians), just as they called the lands below the Sahara “Ethiopia,” including the upper Nile Valley south of Aswan. As the only people of this region familiar to the Greeks were the Nubians of what is now northern and central Sudan, “Ethiopia” often functioned as a synonym for the Nubian kingdom of Kush (or Mercë). The country now called Ethiopia vaguely fit under the same name.**
to the region and gave a detailed description of the kingdom, claiming that Ghana could “put 200,000 men into the field, more than 40,000 of them archers” and noted they had cavalry forces as well.

**Kemet (Egypt)**

Villages began to appear in Kemet (Egypt) around 7,000 years ago, with some of civilization's earliest written inscriptions dating back 5,200 years. Many names were used for Egypt in ancient times, a common one was Kemet, which means the “black land.” There has been discussion among experts on whether the name came from the dark sediment left behind when the Nile river floods, or if it was because of the dark people that inhabited the region.

In 1974, the U.N. Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) held a symposium in Cairo, Egypt, with 20 of the most prominent Egyptologists in the world attending. The question came up as to what “race” did the Egyptians belong to, and the committee asked all participants to submit working papers on the question. Of the twenty Egyptologists, there were two black scientists: Dr. Theophile Obenga, a linguist, and the late Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop. Dr. Obenga's paper showed that the native languages had nothing in common with Asiatic, European, and Mediterranean languages, and in fact shared “root words” with Kemetic, Nubian, and Ethiopian languages, so that when they spoke to one another they understood one another. Dr. Diop had access to tissue samples from an ancient mummy, and he was able to conclude that the levels of “Melanin” found in the samples were just not found in [Asian and Caucasian] race groups. The UNESCO committee waited three days for a challenge to come, but one never materialized so they dismissed the papers from the other eighteen participants and declared that these ancient African people were from the black family group (from *African Origins To Civilization, Myth of Reality* by C. A. Diop).

**The Songhai Empire** was a state that dominated the western Sahel in the 15th and 16th century. At its peak, it was one of the largest states in African history. The empire was home to Timbuktu, home of the famed university of the same name. Under the rule of Sonni Ali, the Songhai surpassed the Malian Empire in area, wealth, and power, absorbing vast areas of the Mali Empire and reached its greatest extent.

**Great Zimbabwe 11th Century – 15th Century**

The Great Empire led by the Shona nation, was known for arts, sculpture, and amazing engineering. The Shona traded with Arab and Ethiopia hundreds of years before Europe made their way to the continent and the so-called Middle East.

**The University of Timbuktu**

In the 12th Century, the University of Timbuktu, located in what we now call Mali, was the epicenter of learning in the world. The university, made up of 3 mosques, centered on teaching the Koran, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, chemistry, physics, philosophy, geography, history, and art. Over 25,000 students attended this grand institution. Students traveled across the globe to learn from professors of this African university.

**Libraries**

Libraries were not born in Europe; library science was created in Africa. Ramses II was one of the leaders of ancient Kemet (Egypt) who invested in the construction of universities and libraries. The University of Karnak and the University of Thebes were the largest universities in the ancient world. The collection was later moved to Alexandria when Rome invaded the northern portion of Kemet and the Library of Alexandria became the world's largest library, consolidating three library systems from Africa.
**Imhotep**
Imhotep, the father of modern medicine, and a brilliant man of science, was also a priest who studied anatomy, performed heart surgery, was an astronomer, and an engineer of many Kemetic/Egyptian temples, palaces, and schools.

**Mansa Musa**
Before Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, Oprah Winfrey, and the fictional Tony Stark and Bruce Wayne, there was Mansa Musa. Scholars now agree Mansa Musa was and will forever reign as the richest man in human history. According to The Business Insider, the ruler of Mali had wealth we, today, have trouble calculating. His wealth was invested in gold, silver, salt, land acquisition, and yes, technology. The creation of tools for farming and other products made this African man the world’s first trillionaire.

**Queen Nzinga**
Queen Anna Nzinga, also known as Njinga Mbande or Ana de Sousa Nzinga Mbande, was a 17th century queen of the Ndongo and Matamba Kingdoms of the Mbundu people in Angola. The great warrior Queen was the original Dora Milaje. Today, Queen Nzinga is remembered in Angola for her political and diplomatic acumen, as well as her brilliant military tactics. A major street in Luanda is named after her, and a statue of her was placed on a square in Kinaxixi in 2002, dedicated by President Santos, to celebrate the 27th anniversary of independence.

**Sobekneferu**
Sobekneferu was the first known woman reigning as pharaoh for which there is confirmed proof. She was the last ruler of the Twelfth dynasty of Egypt and governed Egypt for almost four years from 1806 to 1802 BC.
**Who is the Black Panther?**

- **The Black Panther** is the royal leader of Wakanda, the richest, most powerful and technologically-advanced nation on earth.

- **The Black Panther, T’Challa** is empowered by the Panther’s spirit. Directed by the ancestors, a modern translation is that the panther is a metaphor of the Holy or Divine spirit of God. T’Challa’s power is not in his suit or the ancient herb that gives him strength, but his connection to the Spirit.

- **Dora Milaje** is the royal guard of Wakanda. Women who devote their lives to protect the nation. They use a special martial art to fight as one unit to defeat enemies. According to Wakanda lore, only women have the stamina, IQ, and spiritual sensitivity to reach the highest level of warrior excellence.

- **Eric Killmonger**, born in Wakanda but raised and influenced by the values of Europe, he is the nemesis of Black Panther, always functioning as an African out of touch with his spirit and his roots.
Compare and Contrast

Directions: Using what you know about Wakanda, compare and contrast the different African empires to the Wakanda depicted in the movie using a Venn Diagram.
**Questions to Consider**

1. T’Challa seeks counsel from women in the film - the Dora Milaje, his mother, his sister, Shuri. Why is this simple addition important to Black images in film?

2. Like Ethiopia, Wakanda has never been colonized. How does the film demonstrate this idea through images and script?

3. Wakanda has vibranium, the most precious resource in the Marvel universe. How is this similar to Africa’s relationship with Europe today?

4. What gives T’Challa his powerful leadership ability?

5. What are the forces that create Eric Killmonger? Do we have Eric Killmongers in our community today?

6. T’Challa is a king, a leader, a mentor, and a reflective spiritual individual. He has a responsibility to lead. Even without his powers, he is still an exceptional leader. Name the qualities a leader needs to serve the people.

7. Shuri, T’Challa’s sister, is a scientist with all the Black Girl Magic. Why is Shuri such a successful scientist? What are the qualities demonstrated in her character, and how does the writer and director demonstrate Shuri’s intellect through images?

8. The Dora Milaje, or the Royal Guard of Wakanda, work together for a common cause. Why is this image so powerful to those witnessing this film? How did you feel when you witnessed the Dora Milaje working together to defeat an enemy of Wakanda?
This has been modified from the original created by Rev. Dr. Otis Moss and Rev. Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright from the Trinity United Church of Christ.