*The Scramble for Africa***:**

**the Berlin Conference** (1884)

The exploration of Africa by Europeans started with the Portuguese sailing along Africa's coast in 1450.  The success the Portuguese had on these voyages encouraged other European naval powers to explore Africa. By the mid-nineteenth century, Europeans had established colonies all along the African coast and competed for control.

The exploitation of the slave trade had dominated European-African relations from the 1500s to the early 1800s. The formation of colonies was prevented for a long time due to Africa's geography and disease climate, but because of its size, surface features, climate, resources, and strategic importance, it became a prime candidate for conquest by ambitious European empires. This meant that the Europeans needed to establish rules for dealing with one another if they were to avoid constant bloodshed and competition for African resources.  The Berlin Conference established those ground rules.

In 1884-1885, the Berlin Conference was held in Berlin under the leadership of German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck.  Representatives from every European country attended and no African representatives were invited. Although controlling the slave trade and promoting humanitarian idealism were promoted as the focus of the conference, the conference only passed empty resolutions about the ending of slave trade and providing for the welfare of Africa.  In truth, the result of the Conference was a method of dividing the continent of Africa between the European powers.

Through the Berlin Act, the European powers justified dividing a continent among themselves without considering the desires of the indigenous peoples.  The Berlin Conference is one of the clearest examples of the assumptions and preconceptions of this era, and its effects on Africa can still be seen today.  The arbitrary boundaries the Europeans imposed often divided an ethnic group and also brought enemies under the same government causing strife that still exists today.

**According to the rules of the conference:**

1. You must have enough military power to hold whatever possession you claim. Therefore, the more powerful, wealthier countries have an advantage.
2. You can base your claim on the locations where your citizens have been trading. If your country has been trading on the coast or on a river, that country can extend its claim as far as it would like into the interior of the continent.

**TASK**

Each of you will be representing one of the European nations at the Berlin Conference. Acting as your country’s representative, please decide to which countries your country will lay claim.

* Please fill in the map, labeling who will possess which country. Shade in (using striped, check, and dots) each of the five countries’ colonies.
* Please fill in the graphic organizer, using the maps provided and possibly a modern Africa map from the textbook.