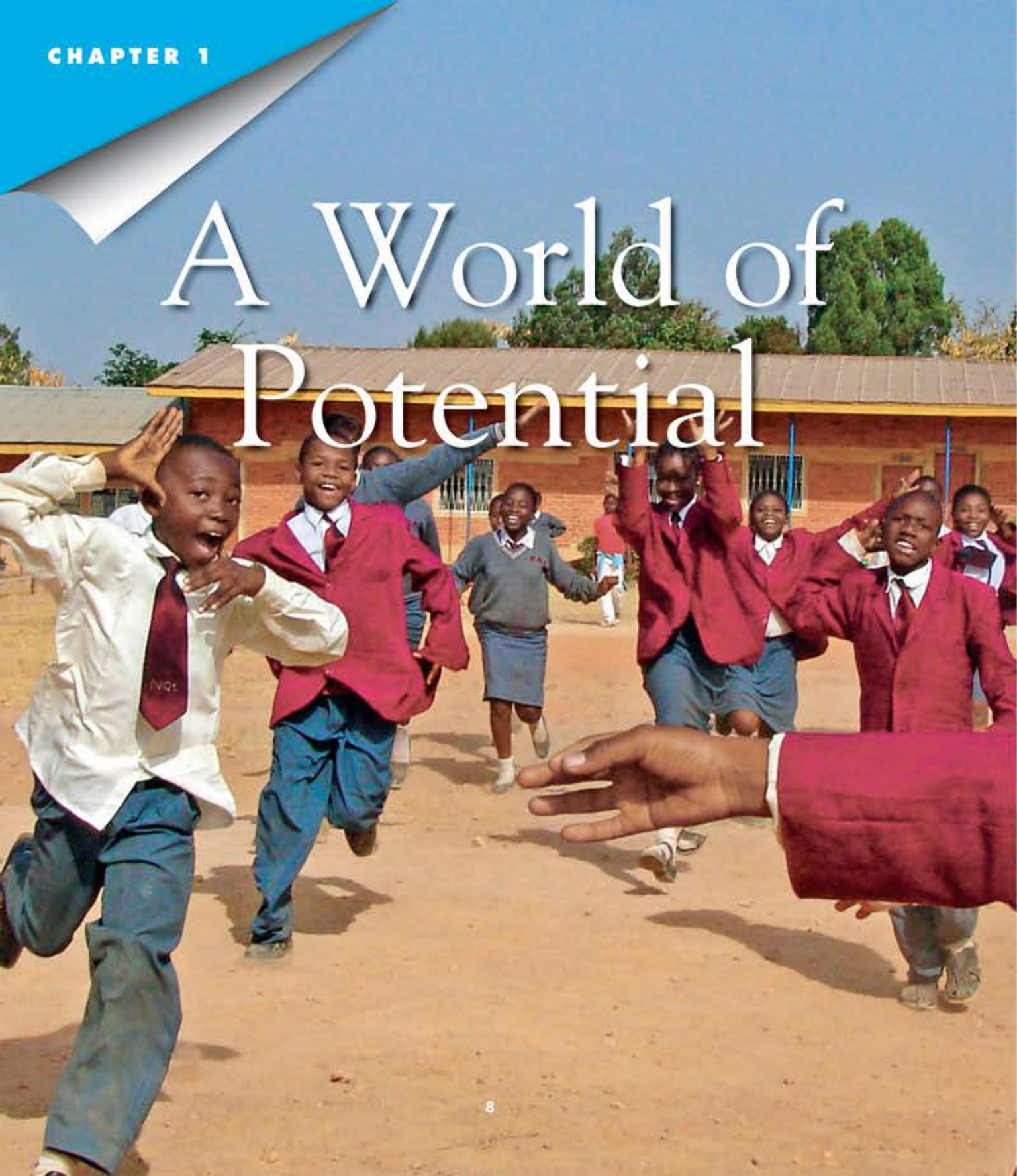


# A World of Potential

**N**

IGERIA IS A LAND OF INCREDIBLE DIVERSITY. Located on the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, it is home to volcanic mountains, dry plains, lush rain forests, and the rich Niger River delta. With the largest population of any African country, Nigeria is home to a wide variety of people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

These many different groups have achieved much throughout history. More than two thousand years ago, people of the Nok culture created lifelike heads out of clay. Later, the Igbo, Yoruba, and Benin peoples created sophisticated metal sculptures. Hundreds of years ago, the Hausa people built walled cities on important trade routes. Today, Nigeria has the largest economy in Africa.

As a nation, Nigeria has faced many challenges. Its diverse people are bound by political borders, yet they are separated

*Opposite: Schoolchildren in Jos, in central Nigeria. More than 40 percent of Nigerians are less than fifteen years old.*



and the 1800s, the Atlantic slave trade ripped millions of people from their homes and families.

Strife has continued through the centuries. Today, the young Republic of Nigeria faces sometimes violent conflict among its people. The land holds vast resources, particularly oil, but the country struggles to find a way to keep all the wealth from those resources from falling into the hands of a small number of people. The country has a population of young, determined people who want to see a better world for their children and help their nation rise from its difficult past and heal its current wounds.

**A police officer directs traffic at a market in Lagos, the largest city in Nigeria. Lagos is a bustling place, the fastest growing city in Africa.**



by geography, culture, and strong beliefs. The varied groups have often been in conflict with one another.

As in many parts of the world, war and conflict occurred inside Nigeria long before outsiders came along. But for the people of West Africa, the arrival of foreigners brought one of the most devastating periods imaginable. Between the 1500s

### Nigeria's Geographic Features

**Area:** 356,669 square miles (923,768 sq km)

**Highest Elevation:** Chappal Waddi, at 7,936 feet (2,419 m) above sea level

**Lowest Elevation:** Sea level along the coast

**Longest River:** Niger River, 730 miles (1,175 km) within Nigeria

**Largest Reservoir:** Kainji Lake, 480 square miles (1,243 sq km)

**Largest Lake:** Lake Chad, 521 square miles (1,350 sq km)

**Average High Temperature:** In Lagos, 90°F (32°C) in January; 82°F (28°C) in July

**Average Low Temperature:** In Lagos, 72°F (22°C) in January; 72°F (22°C) in July

**Average Annual Precipitation:** Varies, from 20 inches (50 cm) in the far north to 120 inches (300 cm) in the southeast



### Nigeria's Waterways

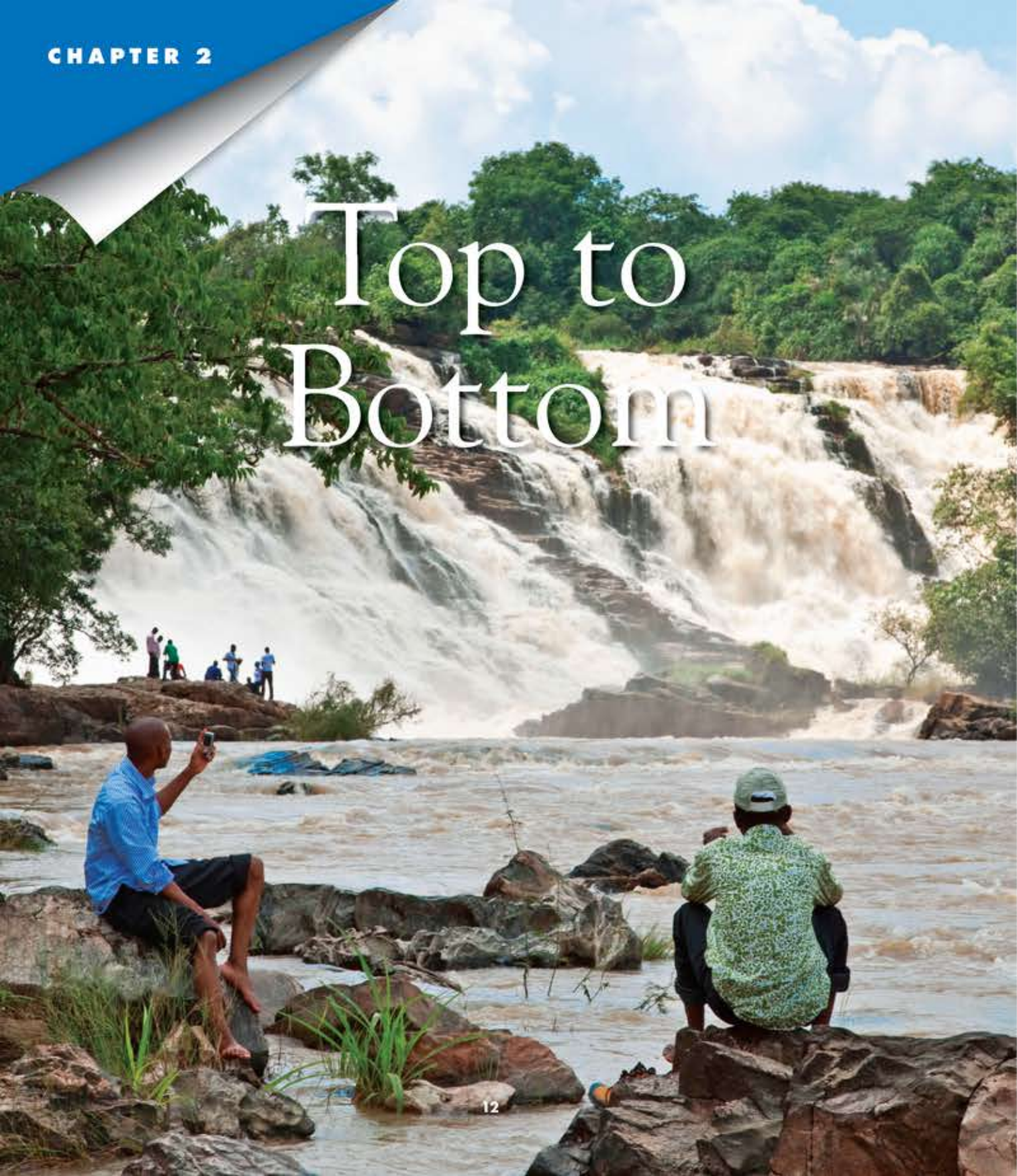
Nigeria gets its name from the Niger River, the third-longest river in Africa, running a total of 2,600 miles (4,200 kilometers). It enters Nigeria in the northwest, and then runs south across the country to sea. It is fed by many tributaries, or smaller rivers. The largest is the Benue, which enters Nigeria from the east. Because the Benue does not have any waterfalls or rapids, it can be used for water transport from the border to the center of the country.

The Niger, however, is broken up by rapids and waterfalls, which keep it from being a major water route. Instead, the force of its flow is used in many places to generate hydroelectric power. This requires building dams that create artificial lakes, or reservoirs.

Kainji Lake was created on the upper Niger when the Kainji Dam was built. Today, the lake covers up to about 500

In some parts of southern Niger, boating is the easiest way to travel.

# Top to Bottom



**F**ROM DESERTS AND PLAINS TO THE WATERLOGGED Niger Delta and steamy rain forests, Nigeria is a varied land. As a large nation, it has a wide range of land features with varying weather across many regions. These factors affect the people who live there and also how they use the land.

Nigeria is located in West Africa, with its southern border on the Gulf of Guinea, in the Atlantic Ocean. To the west, it borders Benin Republic, and to the north the Republic of Niger. It shares its eastern border with Cameroon, and the northeast corner borders Chad. Nigeria covers an area of 356,669 square miles (923,768 square kilometers), which is roughly twice the size of California.

*Opposite: Gurara Falls in the central part of Nigeria is one of the country's major tourist attractions.*

# Timeline

## NIGERIAN HISTORY

Early humans inhabit what is now Nigeria.	9000 BCE
The Nok people settle on the Jos Plateau.	500 BCE
The Igbo-Ukwu settle the northern Niger Delta.	900 CE
The Oyo settle the western region; the Benin Kingdom rises to power.	1300s
Portuguese traders encounter the Benin people; the European slave trade begins.	1470s
Olaudah Equiano purchases his freedom and publishes his influential work on abolition.	1766
Usman dan Fodio launches a jihad that unites the north as an Islamic state.	1804
Britain abolishes the slave trade.	1807
The Royal Niger Company is formed to oversee trade in the Niger Delta.	1886
Most of modern-day Nigeria is under British control.	1905

## WORLD HISTORY

ca. 2500 BCE	The Egyptians build the pyramids and the Sphinx in Giza.
ca. 563 BCE	The Buddha is born in India.
313 CE	The Roman emperor Constantine legalizes Christianity.
610	The Prophet Muhammad begins preaching a new religion called Islam.
1054	The Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Roman Catholic) Churches break apart.
1095	The Crusades begin.
1215	King John seals the Magna Carta.
1300s	The Renaissance begins in Italy.
1347	The plague sweeps through Europe.
1453	Ottoman Turks capture Constantinople, conquering the Byzantine Empire.
1492	Columbus arrives in North America.
1500s	Reformers break away from the Catholic Church, and Protestantism is born.
1776	The U.S. Declaration of Independence is signed.
1789	The French Revolution begins.
1865	The American Civil War ends.
1879	The first practical lightbulb is invented.

## NIGERIAN HISTORY

Britain declares the region the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria.	1914
Herbert Macaulay establishes the Nigerian National Democratic Party, starting the Pan-Africanism movement.	1923
Macaulay unites dozens of groups into the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons.	1944
Oil is discovered in the Niger Delta.	1956
Nigeria becomes independent.	1960
The country is declared the Federal Republic of Nigeria.	1963
A military coup topples Prime Minister Abubakar Balewa.	1966
The Eastern Region separates from Nigeria, calling itself the Republic of Biafra; a civil war follows.	1967
Biafra loses the civil war and reunifies with Nigeria.	1970
General Murtala Ramat Mohammed overthrows a military regime.	1975
Major General Muhammadu Buhari leads a military coup and takes control of Nigeria.	1983
Presidential elections are voided, the government is overthrown, General Sani Abacha takes control.	1993
Olusegun Obasanjo wins a peaceful election and takes over as civilian president.	1999
President Goodluck Jonathan declares a state of emergency as a result of Boko Haram attacks.	2013
Boko Haram kidnaps 276 girls from a school.	2014

## WORLD HISTORY

1914	World War I begins.
1917	The Bolshevik Revolution brings communism to Russia.
1929	A worldwide economic depression begins.
1939	World War II begins.
1945	World War II ends.
1969	Humans land on the Moon.
1975	The Vietnam War ends.
1989	The Berlin Wall is torn down as communism crumbles in Eastern Europe.
1991	The Soviet Union breaks into separate states.
2001	Terrorists attack the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon near Washington, D.C.
2004	A tsunami in the Indian Ocean destroys coastlines in Africa, India, and Southeast Asia.
2008	The United States elects its first African American president.