



The UNC Carolina Asia Center and Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies Outreach Programs

Along the Silk Road: A Journey of Global Exchange

Overview: In this lesson, students will learn about the Silk Road and compare it with global exchanges that are occurring today. Students will begin with an introduction to the meaning of a global exchange. Students will then watch a TedEd Talk about the Silk Road, followed by a discussion about the ancient trading routes and the importance of global travelers like Ibn Battuta. After watching the video, students will simulate travel along the Silk Road by visiting stations that represent key cities. At each “city,” students will map the route and analyze artifacts that range from photographs to non-fiction accounts. To conclude the activity, students will discuss the importance of the cultural exchange that occurred along the Silk Road and how global exchange continues to occur in their communities today.

Grades	6 th ; World History
NCSCOS Essential Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.H.2.2 Compare historical and contemporary events and issues to understand continuity and change. • 6.H.2.3 Explain how innovation and/or technology transformed civilizations, societies and regions over time (e.g., agricultural technology, weaponry, transportation and communication). • 6.G.1.2 Explain the factors that influenced the movement of people, goods and ideas and the effects of that movement on societies and regions over time (e.g., scarcity of resources, conquests, desire for wealth, disease and trade). • 6.G.2.1 Use maps, charts, graphs, geographic data and available technology tools to draw conclusions about the emergence, expansion and decline of civilizations, societies and regions. • 6.E.1 Understand how the physical environment and human interaction affected the economic activities of various civilizations, societies and regions. • 6.E.1.1 Explain how conflict, compromise and negotiation over the availability of resources (i.e. natural, human and capital) impacted the economic development of various civilizations, societies and regions (e.g., competition for scarce resources, unequal distribution of wealth and the emergence of powerful trading networks). • 6.E.1.2 Explain how quality of life is impacted by economic choices of civilizations, societies and regions. • 6.C.1.1 Analyze how cultural expressions reflected the values of civilizations, societies and regions (e.g., oral traditions, art, dance, music, literature, and architecture). • WH.H.1. 2 Use Historical Comprehension to: 1. Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage 2. Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations 3. Analyze data in historical maps 4. Analyze visual, literary and musical sources

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WH.H.1. 4 Use Historical Research to: 1. Formulate historical questions 2. Obtain historical data from a variety of sources 3. Support interpretations with historical evidence 4. Construct analytical essays using historical evidence to support arguments. • WH.H.2.5 Analyze the development and growth of major Eastern and Western religions (e.g., Including but not limited to Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Shintoism, etc.). • WH.H.2.6 Analyze the interaction between the Islamic world and Europe and Asia in terms of increased trade, enhanced technology innovation, and an impact on scientific thought and the arts. • WH.H.2.7 Analyze the relationship between trade routes and the development and decline of major empires (e.g. Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Greece, Rome, China, Mughal, Mongol, Mesoamerica, Inca, etc.). • WH.H.2.9 Evaluate the achievements of ancient civilizations in terms of their enduring cultural impact. • WH.H.4.4 Analyze the effects of increased global trade on the interactions between nations in Europe, Southwest Asia, the Americas and Africa (e.g., exploration, mercantilism, inflation, rise of capitalism, etc.).
Learning Outcomes	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate key cities along the Silk Road trading routes. • Analyze artifacts from the Silk Road such as ceramics and drawings. • Identify the influence of technological innovation and various empires during the time of the Silk Road trading routes. • Understand artistic expressions of different communities, as well as movement of goods, people and religious ideas. • Identify the lasting impact of the Silk Road civilizations today in the modern world.
Materials/Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projector • TedEd Talk: : http://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-silk-road-history-s-first-world-wide-web-shannon-harris-castelo#watch • Blank Map for students and teacher Map Key • “Along the Silk Road: A Journey of Global Exchange” worksheet • City station artifacts and descriptions • Marco Polo: http://www.history.com/topics/exploration/marco-polo • Ibn Battuta: http://orias.berkeley.edu/resources-teachers/travels-ibn-battuta
Time Required For Lesson	120 minutes (teachers may choose to divide this lesson into multiple class periods)

Opening Activity/Ted Talk

1. Begin lesson with a daily question: Is there anything you shop for in the United States that is made in another country? Name one way we are interconnected with another country in trade. What is a global exchange?
2. Ask students to answer the daily question by writing the answer in their journals or on a piece of paper, then discuss out loud as a class.
3. Emphasize that global exchange occurs in multiple ways, usually due to technological advances. Give the example of skypeing with a classroom in China or buying clothing items from Indonesia. We can fly to Egypt from the airport or use oil from Saudi Arabia to fuel our cars. Ask students to name people, goods and ideas throughout history that have moved from one place to another. Can they think of how this happened with a religion?
4. Transition: Point out to students (using their examples) that global exchange has been happening for hundreds of years. Test students' prior knowledge by asking if anyone knows what the Silk Road is.
 - *Optional for AP students: Discuss a few of the empires along the Silk Road that you might have already studied (Mongols, Mughal, Ottoman, Ming, etc).*
5. Tell students that they will watch a 5-minute video about one of the first global exchanges.
6. Watch the entire TedEd Talk. Ask students if they have any questions about what they watched.
7. To ensure comprehension, ask students to summarize the main points of the video: What was the Silk Road? Emphasize that it was not just one road, but a network of roads and expanded trade that occurred in the region over time. Other questions you can ask include:
 - Where did the Silk Road begin? Where did it end?
 - How did nomads contribute to the growing networks of trading routes?
 - How did the quality of life change in China changed as goods were traded?
 - How did conflict, compromise and negotiation over the availability of resources impact the economic development of civilizations (i.e. creation of powerful trading networks, transmission of weapons technology, etc.)?
 - Why do people trade goods and services?

Emphasize: Eastern and Western routes gradually combined to span across Eurasia. People trade goods and services because it helps advance their own civilization. There were many famous travelers along this road that helped map the route.

Ibn Battuta Activity

1. There was a famous Muslim in the 14th century who traveled the Silk Road. He is now known all around the world as the traveler who explored Asia, Africa, and Europe. Ask the class if anyone knows what his name was.
2. Describe Ibn Battuta. Explain that Ibn Battuta was a Moroccan Muslim explorer who started his travels around 1325. He embarked on his travels in order to go on *Hajj*, or pilgrimage to Mecca. He visited the equivalent of 44 modern countries and covered about 75,000 miles. During his adventures, he was attacked by bandits, nearly beheaded by a tyrant ruler, had a few marriages, almost drowned in a sinking ship, and more. He observed differences in customs, religions, and urban and nomadic life. The ruler of Morocco asked Ibn Battuta to dictate the story of his travels to a writer. Ibn Battuta dictated his story to a scribe, who wrote the account in a classical narrative style, published as *The Rihla* (Journey).

- *Optional: The Office of Resources for International Affairs and Area Studies at UC Berkeley has created a website/timeline of Ibn Battuta's journey: <http://ibnbattuta.berkeley.edu/index.html>. Ask students to read through this Virtual Tour and answer comprehension questions such as those below.*
 - What was Ibn Battuta's reason for embarking on his travels?
 - What did he hope to accomplish? Did he accomplish it?
 - What are three things that he learned during his journey?
 - Where did he travel? Why?
 - Who did he meet along the journey?
 - Were there any challenges on the journey?
 - What are three facts that stand out to you about Ibn Battuta's travels?
3. Transition: Tell students that they are going to travel the Silk Road by visiting stations that represent cities along the Silk Road like Ibn Battuta did. They will be acting as travelers who are examining the global exchange of goods. Students will map the Silk Road while answering questions.

Mapping the Silk Road Activity

Preparation: Print out the station materials for each city. Each station has a few artifacts, and each artifact has a description with corresponding questions.

1. Pass out the blank maps and divide students into 7 or so groups (3-4 people per group). Assign each group one city to begin with. The cities students will travel to are:

• Samarkand	• Bursa
• Khotan	• Aleppo
• Dunhuang	• Isfahan
• Quanzhou	• Mosul
• Nara	• Jeddah and Mecca (combined into one station)
2. Go over terms appropriate for your grade level. Ask students what would it look like if a society was expanding on a map? What would it look like if a civilization was in decline?
3. Have each student group go to their first city station. Explain that this first station is their first stop along the Silk Road. First, they will find the city and note it on their map. Then, they will then look at the objects and pictures at the station and answer the corresponding questions on their worksheets for each city. Ask students to connect the various cities with lines to illustrate the trading routes. Port cities can be connected by maritime routes.
4. Give students 8 minutes for each station; 2 minutes for transition time. Have students rotate cities in a clockwise fashion.
5. After the students have completed all of the stations, discuss as a class:
 - How did the movement of goods, people, and ideas impact each city, specifically in terms of innovation, technology, religion and culture? What were the factors that influenced this movement?
 - How did it impact the entire Silk Road region?
 - How did the cultural expressions of each artifact reflect the values of each city and corresponding civilization?
 - How did Buddhism and other major religions develop during this time period? How did trade affect this?

- What was the contribution of travelers, like Ibn Battuta to their communities? Ask what other travelers that they learned along the Silk Road were noteworthy and why. For example, what role did Marco Polo play when he went to these cities? What was he doing in the readings you read?

Emphasize: Cultural exchange led to a change in artistic expression in places like *Samarkand*. Samarkand was an example of a cultural exchange between Chinese, Turks and the Samarkand royalty. The Silk Road impacted the world by advancing civilizations and causing an age of exploration that led to the exploration of the Americas. People and countries around the world exchange goods to enhance their own civilization by sharing ideas, including religious beliefs. Travelers like Marco Polo caused increased curiosity in settlements within other cultures and cultural items. Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan traveler, visited places along the Middle East, China and India. He was ordered to write down his travels by the ruler of Morocco.

Connecting global trade to North Carolina

1. Ask your students the following:

- Today, how have the achievements of the Silk Road ancient civilizations affected our modern world in terms of enduring cultural impact?
- What are some examples of global exchange today? What are the effects of increased global trade on the interactions between nations? For example, think of the rise of capitalism.
- Compare and contrast the continuation and change in trading in Constantinople and present-day Istanbul.

Emphasize: The spread of religion has dominated lifestyles in many of these modern-day countries (i.e. Buddhism in Japan). The tradition of advanced technology can still be seen today in both Asian and Middle Eastern countries (i.e. Aswan Dam in Egypt; India as the third most attractive investment destinations for technology transactions in the world). The cultural remains of the Silk Road have been a priority to preserve (i.e. architecture in Iran) as has been the trading routes (i.e. [China's new Silk Road initiative](#)).

2. Close the lesson by restating that global exchange is really important. The impacts of trade routes that started in ancient civilizations can still be felt all around us today.

Homework Assignment

1. Students will research their own historical city along the Silk Road that was not covered in the mapping activity. Ask students to:
 - Map where this historical city is on a map (either the one they used in class or other).
 - Present one artifact that they “found” there during their travels and write 2-3 sentences on how it relates to the cultural exchange.
 - Research a modern city close to their historical city and write 2-3 sentences about it including its name, country, what countries it trades goods with or what materials it produces, and a fun fact.
2. Give students examples of cities along the Silk Road to research such as: Xi’an, Pishan, Miran, Almaty, Kashgar, Bukhara, Yazd, Muscat, Zanzibar, Ephesus, Damascus, etc.

Assessment

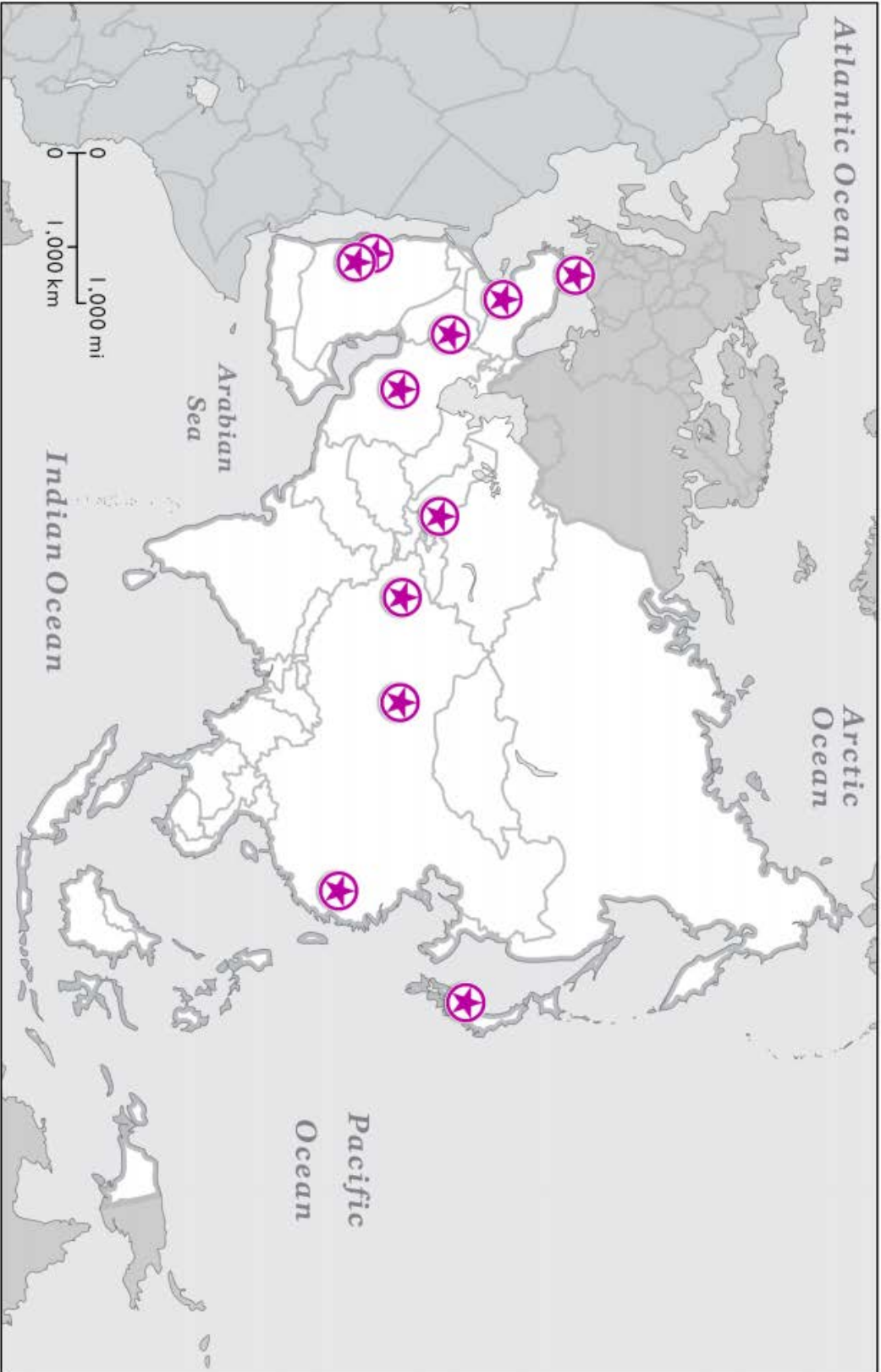
Informal: Observations of students in groups; are they on task?

Formal: Completed “Along the Silk Road: A Journey of Global Exchange” worksheet

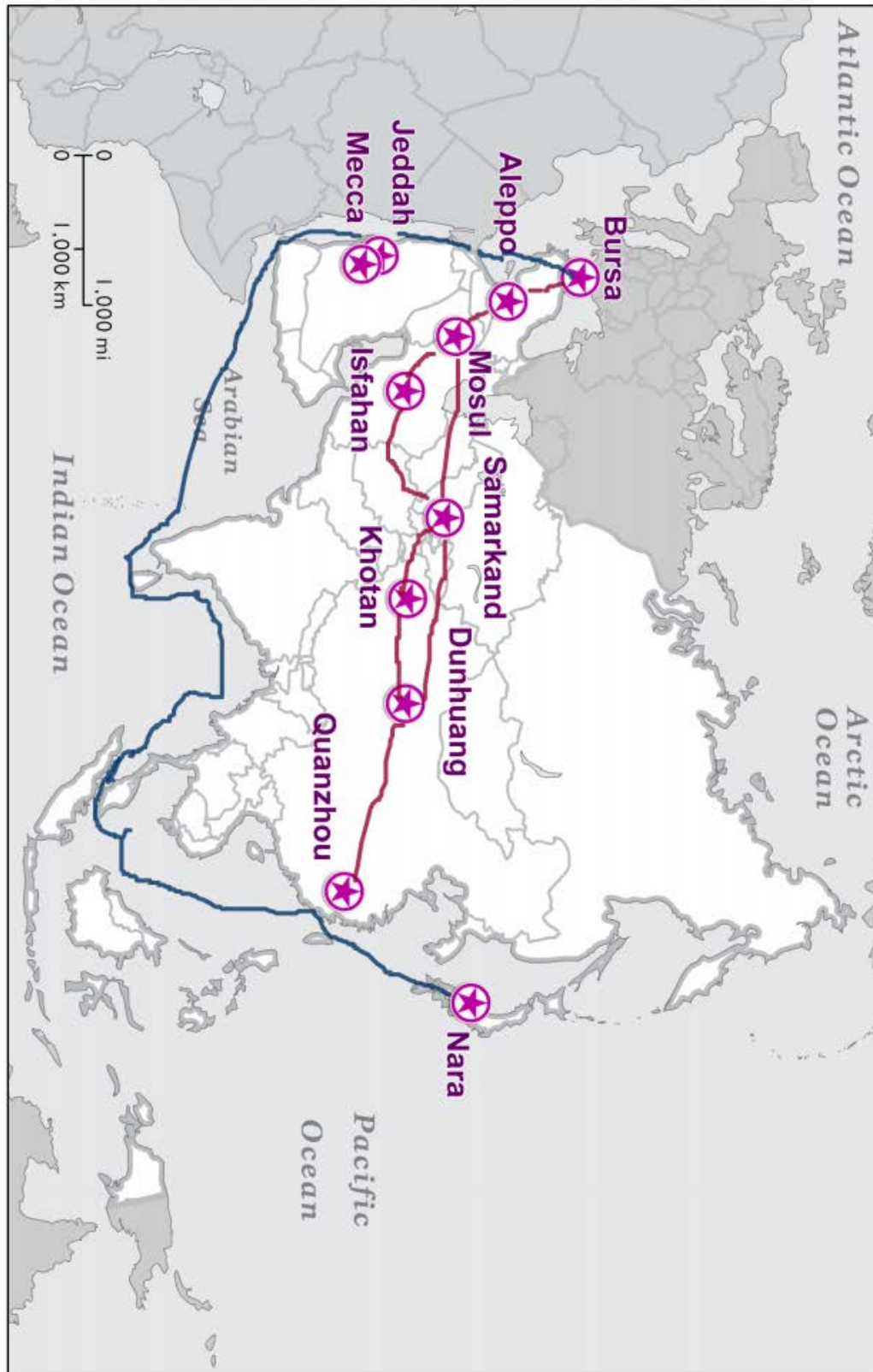
Name:

Along the Silk Road: A Journey of Global Exchange Map

Date:



Teacher Map Key



Name:

Date:

Along the Silk Road: A Journey of Global Exchange

Instructions: You will travel the Silk Road by visiting stations that represent different cities on the trading routes. First, find the city on your map. Then, look at the objects and pictures at each station and answer the questions below. Draw lines representing trading routes to connect the cities.

BURSA

Silk: Orthodox Church (Bursa)		
What product did Bursa produce?	Where was this tapestry exported to, and why?	
Sailing ship Dish (Bursa)		
How did the Silk Road impact the production of arts along the trading routes?	How is this dish an example of cultural exchange?	
Leg Armor (Bursa)		
How do you think well-used trading routes changed war and the way that armies traveled?	What was the impact of frequent wars on trade in Bursa?	Why do you think that these Empires were in conflict with one another?

ALEPPO

Bazar (Aleppo)		
What is a bazar?	Why is Aleppo's bazar prominent? How did it contribute to cultural exchange along the Silk Roads?	What products are sold at the bazar?

Citadel (Aleppo)	
Describe the significance of the location of Aleppo's citadel.	How has Aleppo's citadel contributed to the economic development of the city?
Cap (Aleppo)	
What is one of the industries that was popular in Aleppo?	Who would have worn a hat like this one?
Enameled Bottle (Aleppo)	
Where was this bottle created, and where was it found?	How did Muslim traders contribute to trade between China and the Middle East?

MECCA & JEDDAH

Drawing of Jeddah (Mecca and Jeddah)	
List two factors that made Jeddah an important city along the Silk Roads.	How did Jeddah's proximity to Mecca impact trade in the city?
Description of Holy Cities (Mecca and Jeddah)	
What is the Ka'aba?	How did the Silk Road influence the spread of Islam?
Zamzam Water Flasks (Mecca and Jeddah)	
Where did Islam originate?	What does the difference in the style of these two flasks represent?

MOSUL

Tray of Yemeni Sultan (Mosul)		
Can you think of another dish or tray that you have seen along your Silk Road journey that connects multiple cities?	How is this tray an example of cultural exchange characteristic of the Silk Road?	
Coin (Mosul)		
Describe the two sides of the coin – what do you see on both sides?	Do you think that encountering different currencies posed a challenge for people trading along the Silk Road? Why or why not?	
The Blacas Ewer (Mosul)		
What products was Mosul famous for producing?	What was the effect on rising and declining empires and dynasties on various cities along the Silk Roads?	
al-Muqaddasi Description (Mosul)		
What was the purpose of al-Muqaddasi’s travels?	What does the fact that people of many different professions lived in Mosul tell you about its society?	al-Muqaddasi states that Mosul is “thriving.” What aspects of Mosul lead him to make this conclusion?

ISFAHAN

The Czartoryski Carpet (Isfahan)	
Who bought Persian rugs?	Why does this rug have a faded look?

Caravanserai (Isfahan)		
Why did Isfahan become an important stop on the Silk Road?	Name three kinds of infrastructure mentioned that help facilitate trade.	How are caravanserais a symbol of the Silk Road?
Dish (Isfahan)		
What kinds of communities lived in Isfahan during the time of the Silk Roads?	What was the effect of the movement of people, ideas, and arts in Isfahan?	

SAMARKAND

Painting (Samarkand)	
What is the significance of foreign delegates coming to see King Varkhuman in Samarkand?	What items were exchanged and from where?
Afrasiab citadel (Samarkand)	
Who killed Clitus?	Who is Alexander the Great? How did he transform society?
Camel (Samarkand)	
How do different innovations in this paragraph transform the way a merchant can trade and travel along the Silk Road?	What would a modern day trader bring with him on a journey? What would he pack his "camel" or vehicle to bring goods in?

KHOTAN

Marco Polo (Khotan)		
How did Marco Polo describe Khotan?	Who controlled the territory of Khotan?	What religion were the people of Khotan?
Painting (Khotan)		
What was the influence of Khotanese jade?	What is one cultural expression of Khotanese Jade seen in this picture?	
Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish (Khotan)		
Where did Buddhism originate?	How did the movement of Buddhism impact Khotan?	Name one way that Buddhism spread.
Coins (Khotan)		
What is the significance of having a coin with both Middle Eastern and Asian influences?	How is this cultural expression of Khotan also an expression of the Silk Road?	
Terracotta Monkey (Khotan)		
How did the concept of monkeys come to Khotan?	What is the effect of the movement of people, ideas, and goods from India on Khotan over time? Give two examples.	

DUNHUANG

Letters by Sogdian Wife (Dunhuang)	
Certain civilizations came into power due to the rich treasures of trading along the Silk Road. Can you name one of them from this passage? What city could they have come from?	These letters to her mother and husband never made it to them, but instead were found in a mislaid post bag outside Dunhuang in 1907. What is global communication like today?
The Itinerant Storyteller (Dunhuang)	
How is the town of Dunhuang important to the Silk Road in terms of location?	What ideas, people, or goods does the painting represent being spread along the Silk Road?
Hunter on Horseback with Dog/ Hunter with Saluqi (Dunhuang)	
What was the neighboring steppe people's influence on the Chinese imperial family?	How did the innovation of horses and dogs transform Chinese civilizations?
Bowl with Vine Relief (Dunhuang)	
How did grapes come to Central Asia?	What is the significance of the glaze earthenware from China that shows grapes?

QUANZHOU

Ancient Map of Maritime Silk Road (Quanzhou)	
Name one or two things this ancient map tells us about the Silk Road.	Why was Quanzhou important to the Silk Road?

Statues in Quanzhou (Quanzhou)	
Which two famous travelers came to Quanzhou? Where were they from?	What impact did Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta have on Quanzhou, as well as their own societies?
Document 1- Marco Polo "Zayton" (Quanzhou)	
What does this historical passage mean?	What does this historical passage indicate about trade in Quanzhou?
Document 2- Ibn Battuta "Zayton" (Quanzhou)	
Where does the confiscated merchandise go? Where does Ibn Battuta hint it goes in other countries?	Why is China the "safest and best county for the traveler"?
Document 3- Ibn Battuta "Zayton" (Quanzhou)	
What does this historical passage indicate about how Quanzhou treats its diverse population?	What is the tone of this historical passage towards those from China?
Religious Sites in Quanzhou (Quanzhou)	
With the continuous flow of travelers, how did the silk road influence Quanzhou?	What is the achievement of Quanzhou on modern-day china in terms of their enduring cultural sites?

NARA

Temple in Horyu-ji Area (Nara)		
What was one idea that spread to Japan?	Where do you think this idea came from?	
Sculpture of Dainichi Nyorai at the Todajii Temple (Nara)		
Who is Variochana? What is he worshipped for?	How did the introduction of Variochana demonstrate the cultural exchange of the Silk Road?	
Exterior of Great Buddha Hall (Nara)		
How is the Silk Road's influence present in Toadaji Temple in Nara, Japan?	Name one type of Chinese architecture that is used in Japanese architecture.	
Article/Picture of Piece of Wood (Nara)		
What new connection between Nara and the Silk Road did Japan discover?	How did they discover this connection?	Why do you suppose it was significant for a Persian officer was living in Nara?

City Stations Artifacts Index

Bursa



Silk Tapestry



Dish



Leg Armor

Aleppo



Bazaar



Citadel



Cap



Bottle

Mecca and Jeddah



Drawing of Jeddah



Futuh al-Haramayn



Flasks

Mosul



Tray



Coin



Ewer

...metropolis of this region. It is a ... highly renowned, and ... and is inhabited by many persons ... in the Tradition, or a cele ... and thither go the caravans ... very fine baths, magnificent ... best divisions for knowledge of t ... al-Muqaddasi, translated by Basil

al-Muqaddasi

Isfahan



Carpet



Caravanserai



Dish

Samarkand



Painting



Citadel



Camel

Khotan



Sutra

When Marco Polo visited Khotan years 1271 and 1275, the people of the Venetian's previously quotation of the territories further east. He passed through before reaching, leaves no doubt that it was in his time a regular caravan territory subject to the Great Emperor. While the neighbour

Description



Painting of Princess



Coins



Monkey

Dunhuang



Letters



Storyteller



Hunters



Bowl

Quanzhou



Map of Sea Routes



Marco Polo & Ibn Battuta

Document 2 - Ibn Battuta, "Zay and have mosques for their Friday respect... [When a ship arrives]... manifest of all the merchandise in customs officials sit to inspect with from them the junk and whatever country, whether infidel or Muslim can travel all alone across the land."

Descriptions



Religious Sites

Nara



Temple



Sculpture



Buddha Hall

... on a piece of wood ... revealed previous ... that named a Pe ... official worked at ... searcher at the Nara ... athematics, Watanabe ... ggested there were exc ... Persia was known to h ... reigners were treated e

Article

BURSA

Silk: Orthodox Church



Silk: Christ Blessing on Golden Ground for the Orthodox Church, 1550-1600

Source: The Cleveland Museum of Art, silk, gilt-metal tread; lampas weave, Overall: 36.7 x 33.7 cm (14 7/16 x 13 1/4 in). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Wade

As the capital of the Ottoman Empire in the 14th century, Bursa was an extremely important city in the Ottoman silk trade. Islam was the official religion of the Ottoman Empire. Bursa produced silk and also imported raw silk from Iran and China. In addition to producing silk products for Ottoman palaces, silk products from Bursa were also manufactured and exported to European cities. Ottoman manufacturers wove luxury silks with Christian images for large markets in the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and the state of Muscovy (Moscow), which did not have silk industries. Silk garments and tapestries were used by the Eastern Orthodox Church to signify its power and wealth. This tapestry depicts Christ in a scene titled, “Jesus Christ Victorious,” illustrating the demand for Christian motifs in textiles.

- 1) What product did Bursa produce?
- 2) Where was this tapestry exported to, and why?

BURSA

Sailing ship Dish



Dish with Sailing-ship Design

Source: From the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1966. Dish ca. 1600 attributed to Turkey in the Iznik region. Stonepaste; polychrome painted under a transparent glaze

This dish was made in the 17th century near Bursa in the city of Iznik, which is known for its production of ceramics. The dish depicts a ship, signifying the centrality of trade to life in Bursa. These border designs were derived from Chinese wave motifs, and became a pattern of alternating leaves and spirals. Different styles of art were shared by travelers along the Silk Road. These Chinese wave motifs were incorporated into Iznik pottery, and became common on ceramics from this region.

- 1) How did the Silk Road impact the production of arts along the trading routes?
- 2) How is this dish an example of cultural exchange?

BURSA

Leg Armor



Leg Armor

Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, mid-15th century, Steel, iron, silver, gold, leather, Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935

Traders, pilgrims, and warriors traveled along the Silk Roads. The rivalry between the Ottoman Empire and the Safavid dynasty in Persia in the 16th century led to disruptions of Bursa's prosperous trade. Frequent wars forced silk producers to look for different trade routes through the Anatolia region. Armies wore protective armor, such as this leg guard, to protect themselves during the wars.

- 1) How do you think well-used trading routes changed war and the way that armies traveled?
- 2) What was the impact of frequent wars on trade in Bursa?
- 3) Why do you think that these Empires were in conflict with one another?

ALEPPO

Bazar



Aleppo Bazar today

Source: MuslimHeritage.com

Aleppo has stood at the crossroads of trade routes across Syria for centuries. Its markets were on the first great trade routes, becoming part of an economic engine that made new products available to more and more people. The Aleppo Bazar is over 1,000 stalls and is one of the world's largest covered bazars. It is the city's core economic and social hub. Each section of the Aleppo's Bazar is named for the products that are sold there such as the Cooper Souq or Wool Souq. Chinese silk and porcelain, Central Asian cotton, spices from India, Italian crystal and glassworks, metal products from Persia and Iraq, fragrances from Zanzibar and the Far East as well as local products such as soap or fabrics were imported to Aleppo's Bazar. Goods were transported from Aleppo's grand bazar to bazars in other regions by caravans.

- 1) What is a bazar?
- 2) Why is Aleppo's bazar prominent? How did it contribute to cultural exchange along the Silk Roads?
- 3) What products are sold at the bazar?

ALEPPO Citadel



The Aleppo Citadel, Syria
Source: MuslimHeritage.com

Aleppo's ancient city is home to some amazing monuments that bear witness to the social, cultural and economic exchanges that flourished in the city during the Golden Age of the Silk Roads from the 12th till the early 15th century. Overseeing the city of Aleppo from the top of the hill is the prominent citadel which is an important landmark. As Aleppo was such an important city for trade, the Citadel was crucial in protecting it from other conquerors. The Citadel of Aleppo was built on Greek, Roman, and Byzantine ruins, reminding us of the strategic importance of Aleppo for Arab rulers in the Golden Age of the Silk Roads. The Citadel successfully withstood attacks by Crusading armies, and passed into the control of the Ayyubid dynasty in the early 12th century, initiating a period of vibrant economic development. During this time, the citadel was rebuilt, the traditional souks and bazaars expanded, and the defensive walls and gates were fortified. Aleppo has been one of the world's oldest continually inhabited urban cities.

- 1) Describe the significance of the location of Aleppo's citadel.
- 2) How has Aleppo's citadel contributed to the economic development of the city?

ALEPPO

Cap



Cap

Source: The Textile Museum, Cap, Syria, Damascus or Aleppo, around 1800. Silk, metallic-wrapped thread, 178.78 cm (height), 12.7 cm (diameter). Private Collection.

Aleppo served as a major crossroads for trade and commerce. The floral pattern on this cap, mostly tulips, is typical of Ottoman Empire design. The cap's flowers are framed in deep reds, rich browns. Floral patterns were first associated with Ottoman rulers, but then expanded to the villages throughout the Ottoman Empire, as well as beyond the borders of the Empire. Various local artistic centers produced court-inspired luxury goods with floral patterns. We can tell that a woman of means might have worn the cap because the silvery threads were costly. In 1800, when the tapestry cap was made, Aleppo was a major textile center, dotted with workshops where silk was woven and crafted.

- 1) What is one of the industries that was popular in Aleppo?
- 2) Who would have worn a hat like this one?

ALEPPO

Enameled Bottle



Enameled Bottle

Source: Royal Ontario Museum, The George Crofts Collection

This bottle was probably made in Syria around 1260 A.D. but was found in China. The bottle was likely brought to China by Muslim merchants who were selling their wares along the Silk Routes. It was discovered in a mosque in Shanxi province. Muslim traders founded colonies across China to export silk and other goods to the Middle East. The Arabic inscription on the bottle reads: "Glory to our Master, the Sultan, the King, the Ruler, the Warrior." From the end of the 12th century until the fifteenth century, glass was painted with decorations similar to the decorations found on ceramic and metal jugs. Artists painted crushed colored glass (like the gold and blue pigments on this bottle) on glass objects and then fired them. The earliest wares of this type were probably made in Syria, and Egypt became a major producer by the fourteenth century.

- 1) Where was this bottle created, and where was it found?
- 2) How did Muslim traders contribute to trade between China and the Middle East?

MECCA & JEDDAH

Drawing of Jeddah



Portuguese attempt a raid on Jeddah, 1517

Source: Saudi Aramco World, GASPARE CORREA / LISBON GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

Jeddah operated as a port city both to facilitate trade throughout the Silk Road and as a gateway for Muslims to travel to Mecca. Its location made the city a perfect trading port for cargo ships traveling the Red Sea. The city is also one of the closest ports to Mecca and Medina, the two holiest sites in Islam. Jeddah's economy depended on the pilgrimage to Mecca and the mercantile activity that came with it. As a result of incoming trade and travelers, Jeddah became a hub of multiculturalism and shared ideas. Travelers on pilgrimage brought new cultures and goods with them. As such, the port grew into a trading post for rice and spices, cottons and silks, perfumes and precious metals. This image is the earliest known depiction of Jeddah's port, and actually illustrates an unsuccessful raid by the Portuguese in 1517.

- 1) List two factors that made Jeddah an important city along the Silk Roads.
- 2) How did Jeddah's proximity to Mecca impact trade in the city?

MECCA & JEDDAH

Description of Holy Cities



Futuh al-Haramayn (Description of the Holy Cities)

Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Muhi al-Din Lari, 16th Century, Ink, opaque watercolor, gold on paper. 9 7/16 x 6 1/2 in. (24 x 16.5 cm). A Patti Cadby Birch Gift 2009

The Futuh al-Haramayn is a guidebook that depicts the ritual of the Hajj, or pilgrimage, that all Muslims who are able must complete once in their lives. This image shows the holy sites in Mecca and Medina that Muslims visit. The Futuh al-Haramayn was copied many times and spread along the Silk Road. In the late 16th century, most of these were produced in Mecca, however, this is the first copy thought to be made in Bukhara, present-day Uzbekistan. All copies of the Futuh al-Haramayn include a painting of the Ka'aba, the monument at Mecca to which all Muslims pray, shown here as the black-shrouded rectangular structure. The Futuh al-Haramayn exemplifies how the Silk Road was used not only as a way to transport goods, but as a way to spread ideas of Islam, and also to connect Muslims in different regions.

- 1) What is the Ka'aba?
- 2) How did the Silk Road influence the spread of Islam?

MECCA & JEDDAH

Zamzam Water Flasks



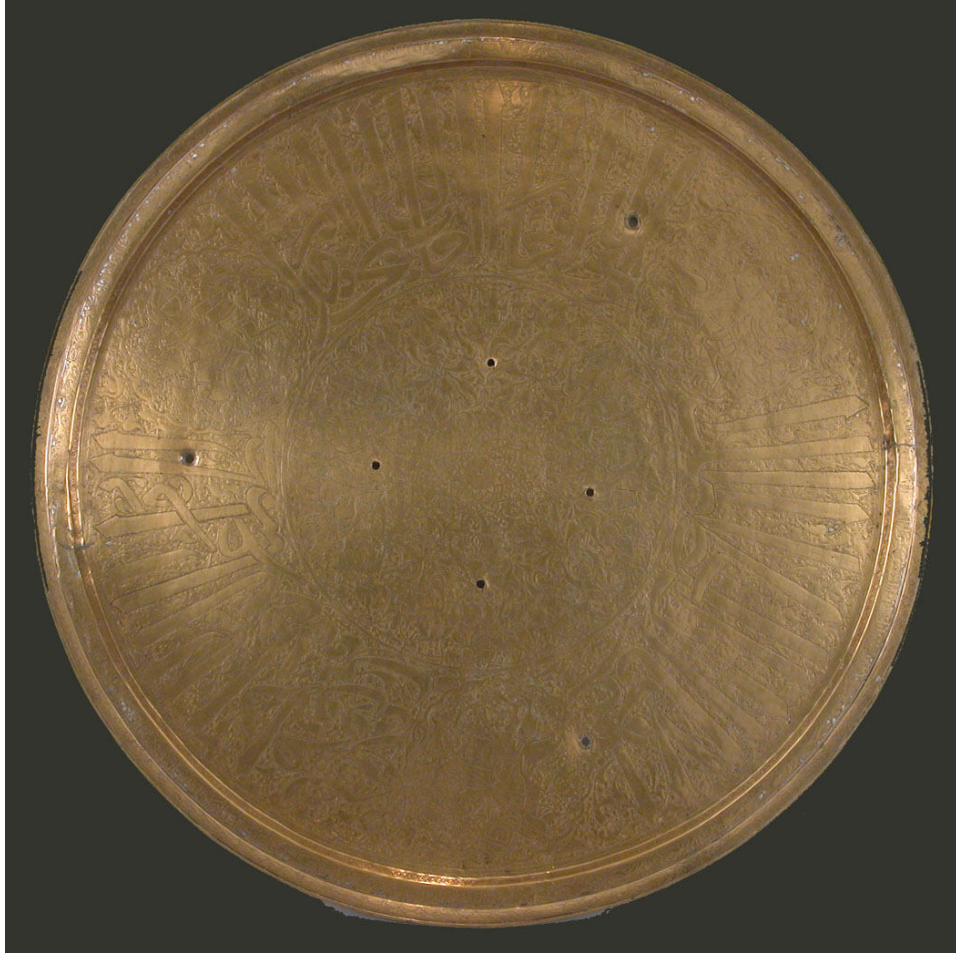
Zamzam Water Flasks
Source: The British Museum

Mecca has always been important to Islam as the birthplace of both the Prophet Muhammed and the religion itself. Muslims travel from all over the world to make the pilgrimage, or Hajj, at least once in their lives. These flasks were used to bottle water from the holy city, called Zamzam water, to bring back to their homeland. The flask on the left shows a leather Ottoman-style flask and the right image shows a flask made with traditional Chinese Porcelain. These two flasks show that travelers came from afar to make their pilgrimage.

- 1) Where did Islam originate?
- 2) What does the difference in the style of these two flasks represent?

MOSUL

Tray of Yemeni Sultan



Tray of Yemeni Sultan al-Mu'ayyad ibn Yusuf

Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Made in Egypt, Cairo, Edward C. Moore Collection, Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 1891

This brass tray dates back to 1296-1321. The tray illustrates the styles of metalworking popular in Mosul, but it was manufactured in Cairo. The calligraphy on the tray documents that it was made for a Sultan of Yemen. All of the different locations (Cairo, Egypt; Mosul, Iraq; and Yemen) symbolized by this one tray illustrate how the Silk Road connected different cities and cultures.

- 1) Can you think of another dish or tray that you have seen along your Silk Road journey that connects multiple cities?
- 2) How is this tray an example of cultural exchange characteristic of the Silk Road?

MOSUL

Coin



Coin

Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Made in Iraq, Mosul, Copper, Bequest of Joseph H. Durkee, 1898

This coin is dated 1223 and was made in Mosul, Iraq. The inscription on the coin is the name of the Arab ruler of Mosul at the time, Nasir-ad-Din Mahmud. Once a flourishing industrial and commercial city, Mosul, northern Iraq's major center for trade, industry and communications, was once a thriving city on the Silk trading routes. As a major economic hub, this kind of currency was likely used frequently in trading and selling goods from all over the region.

- 1) Describe the two sides of the coin – what do you see on both sides?
- 2) Do you think that encountering different currencies posed a challenge for people trading along the Silk Road? Why or why not?

MOSUL

The Blacas Ewer



The Blacas Ewer (629 AD)

Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum, London

Mosul was a major economic hub along the Silk Road. While it was famous for crude oil and textile production, one of its greatest outputs was the fine metalwork and painting. This is the Blacas Ewer, made for the local ruler of Mosul, Iraq in 1232. A ewer is a large jug with a wide mouth. This ewer depicts scenes of sports, battles, and courtly entertainment. These images are a celebration of aristocratic life in Iraq under the Seljuq Turks. As different dynasties and empires rose and declined over time, cities came under the rule of different groups and different cultures.

- 1) What products was Mosul famous for producing?
- 2) What was the effect on rising and declining empires and dynasties on various cities along the Silk Roads?

MOSUL

al-Muqaddasi Description

al-Muqaddasi was a 10th-century Muslim geographer born in Jerusalem in 946 AD. He was well-educated, and after having made the Pilgrimage to Mecca at age 20, he devoted himself to the study of geography. He went on a long journey that lasted over 20 years through the Islamic world, from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. In 985, he began to write his book, “Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions,” which describes all the places and regions that he visited.

al-Muqaddasi, described Mosul as:

“the metropolis of this region. It is a splendid city, beautifully built; the climate is pleasant, the water healthy. Highly renowned, and of great antiquity, it is possessed of excellent markets and inns, and is inhabited by many personages of account, and learned men; nor does it lack a high authority in the Traditions, or a celebrated doctor of the law. From here come provisions for Baghdad, and thither go the caravans of al-Rihab. It has, besides, parks, specialities, excellent fruits, very fine baths, magnificent houses, and good meats: all in all the town is thriving.”

- The best divisions for knowledge of the regions: a translation of *Ahsan al-taqasim fi ma‘rifat al-aqalim*

by Al-Muqaddasi; translated by Basil Anthony Collins ; reviewed by Muhammad Hamid al-Tai, Reading, UK : Centre for Muslim Contribution to Civilization : Garnet Pub., c1994. First Ed.

- 1) What was the purpose of al-Muqaddasi’s travels?
- 2) What does the fact that people of many different professions lived in Mosul tell you about its society?
- 3) al-Muqaddasi states that Mosul is “thriving.” What aspects of Mosul lead him to make this conclusion?

ISFAHAN

The Czartoryski Carpet



The Czartoryski Carpet

Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17th Century, Iran, Rug: H. 191 1/2 in. (486.4 cm) W. 85 5/8 in. (217.5 cm), Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., and Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, by exchange, 1945

The vines, flowers, and leaves designed on this carpet are typical of Persian design. Rugs like these are made of silk and metal-wrapped silk thread. The dull colors are due to the fact that silk does not hold color very well. This explains why the designs have a more faded look. Carpets like this one were popular in local Iranian markets, and also made for sale to Europeans.

- 1) Who bought Persian rugs?
- 2) Why does this rug have a faded look?

ISFAHAN Caravanserai



Abbasi Hotel in 2010



The Abbasi Hotel in 1840, built as a Caravanserai in the 17th century.

Source: Wikipedia, Abbasi Hotel

Isfahan became an important stop on the Silk Road trade route in 1590 when king of the Safavid Empire, Shah Abbas I, named Isfahan the new capital of the Safavid Empire. He rerouted the Silk Road to travel directly through Isfahan, as he saw the economic potential of establishing a trading capital safely within the Empire's borders. During his reign, wealth and labor were used to build bridges, roads and caravanserais in Isfahan to encourage and facilitate trade. A caravanserai was a place to house merchants travelling along the Silk Road. Caravanserais were not only a rest stop, but also a place to exchange goods, and in doing so, exchange languages, cultures and ideas. The Abbasi Caravanserai was renovated in the 1950s and has become a hotel.

- 1) Why did Isfahan become an important stop on the Silk Road?
- 2) Name three kinds of infrastructure mentioned that help facilitate trade.
- 3) How are caravanserais a symbol of the Silk Road?

ISFAHAN

Dish



Dish decorated with a young woman

Source: Musée du Louvre, Musée des Arts décoratifs deposit, Whitney bequest 1931, late 16th century to early 17th century

Once Isfahan became the capital of the Safavid Empire, and thus an important stop on the Silk Road, production and trade expanded greatly. Shah Abbas I brought in foreign traders, increased carpet and textile productions, and settled over 300 Chinese families to expand Chinese pottery production. Within the city, European, Iranian, Chinese, and other regional styles interacted. This plate, made in Isfahan, exemplifies the Chinese technique of pottery, while also using the traditional European framing of the upper half of her body surrounded by depictions of vegetation.

- 1) What kinds of communities lived in Isfahan during the time of the Silk Roads?
- 2) What was the effect of the movement of people, ideas, and arts in Isfahan?

SAMARKAND Painting



A delegation from the Chinese court bringing gifts of silk to the King of Samarkand
Source: The International Dunhuang Project: The Silk Road Online; Detail from the Ambassadors' Painting,

Samarkand was a hub for cultural exchange, and royalty often visited the King. This is a detail from “the Ambassador’s Painting” which shows King Varkhuman and a procession of foreign delegates at Samarkand. Starting from the left, the Chinese are depicted as bringing silk cocoons, hanks and rolls of cloth. To the right, the Turks are depicted with their long plaits, or braids.

- 1) What is the significance of foreign delegates coming to see King Varkhuman in Samarkand?
- 2) What items were exchanged and from where?

SAMARKAND

Adrasiab Citadel



Remains of the Afrasiab citadel where Alexander the Great killed Clitus

Source: The International Dunhuang Project: The Silk Road Online; Photograph by Yury Karev; Courtesy of MAFOUZ

Conqueror and king of Macedonia, Alexander the Great was born on July 20, 356 B.C., in Pella, in the Ancient Greek kingdom of Macedonia. During his leadership, from 336 to 323 B.C., he united the Greek city-states and led the Corinthian League. He also became the king of Persia, Babylon and Asia, and created Macedonian colonies in the region. While considering the conquests of Carthage and Rome, Alexander died of malaria in Babylon (now Iraq), on June 13, 323 B.C.

“Alexander leapt up in a passion to kill Clitus. Clitus was hurried away through the doors and over the wall and ditch of the citadel (where all this happened) by Ptolemy, son of Lagus, but could not control him, and Clitus turned back. He met with Alexander just as Alexander called out ‘Clitus!’ and he cried in return, ‘Here I am, ... !’, and there and then was struck with a pike and died.” (Arrian on Alexander's stay at Marcanda).

-“The Anabasis of Alexander” by Arrian

- 1) Who killed Clitus?
- 2) Who is Alexander the Great? How did he transform society?

SAMARKAND

Camel



Camel loaded for travel

Source: The International Dunhuang Project: The Silk Road Online; Pottery with pigments, Shaanxi Provincial History Museum, 96.36

This model of a camel was found in a tomb during the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE). It demonstrates how camels were loaded up for travel. A saddlecloth, or blanket, was first fitted around the two humps. Then the movable panels of the nomadic traditional tent, which were slatted panels of wood, were hung from either side. Next, large round saddlebags filled with goods were put on top along with rolls of silk and pots. Silk was a common Silk Road currency. In this model, the camel also has a ladle, a pheasant and a rabbit on one side and, on the other, a knife scabbard, sword and sheath for arrows. It is important to note a small monkey perches at the back. You will learn more about the importance of monkey figurines later on your Silk Road Journey.

- 1) How do different innovations in this paragraph transform the way a merchant can trade and travel along the Silk Road?
- 2) What would a modern day trader bring with him on a journey? What would he pack his “camel” or vehicle to bring goods in?

KHOTAN

Marco Polo's Description of Khotan

“When Marco Polo visited Khotan on his way to China, between the years 1271 and 1275, the people of the oasis were flourishing, as the Venetian's previously quoted account shows. His description of the territories further east, Pein, Cherchen, and Lop, which he passed through before crossing 'the Great Desert' to Sha-chou, leaves no doubt that the route from Khotan into Kansu was in his time a regular caravan road. Marco Polo found the people of Khotan 'all worshippers of Mahomet' and the territory subject to the 'Great Kaan' i.e. Kúblái, whom by that time almost the whole of the Middle Kingdom acknowledged as emperor. While the neighbouring Yarkand owed allegiance to Kaidu, the ruler of the Chagatai dominion, Khotan had thus once more renewed its old historical connexion with China.”

Source: Ancient Khotan I by Aurel Stein, p 183

- 1) How did Marco Polo describe Khotan?
- 2) Who controlled the territory of Khotan?
- 3) What religion were the people of Khotan?

KHOTAN

Khotanese Princess



Painting of Khotanese Princess

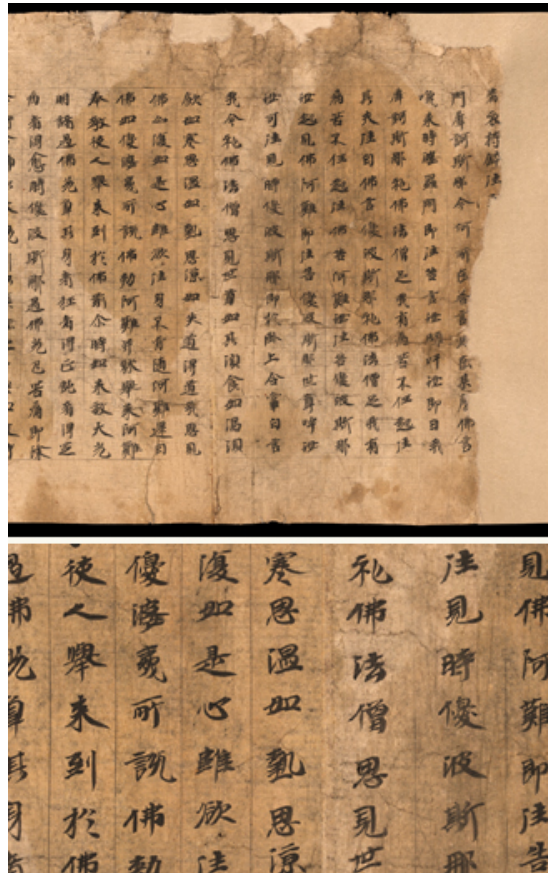
Source: The International Dunhuang Project: The Silk Road Online; Courtesy of the Dunhuang Academy

Khotan was a kingdom found in today's Western China during the first millennium AD. Khotan's history is deeply rooted in Buddhism and trade routes to India and China. The kingdom produced paper, wool, rugs and fine silk. However, it was most famous for its jade. Its jade made Khotan an important trading stop on the southern Silk Road. The Silk Road influenced Khotanese art, manuscripts, terracotta figures, artifacts and coins. This painting was found in a cave in Dunhuang, miles away from Khotan. It is a painting of a Khotanese princess who married the King of Dunhuang, Cao Yuanlu, in the tenth century. She is wearing an elaborate headdress and necklace of Khotanese jade.

- 1) What was the influence of Khotanese jade?
- 2) What is one cultural expression of Khotanese jade seen in this picture?

KHOTAN

Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish



Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish

Source: *The International Dunhuang Project: The Silk Road Online; Ink on paper; The British Library Or.8210/S.3693*

Buddhism originated in India sometime between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE, from where it spread through much of Asia. The spread of Buddhism across the Silk Road became a common factor that united people. The figure above tells stories of Buddha's life in his previous incarnations. These stories, according to legend, were first told to Chinese monks in Khotan. This dates from about AD 500. The story reflects the transmission of Buddhism from India to centers where it was established, such as Khotan. Buddhism then moved to China, Korea and Japan. This story, or *sutra*, was later translated into Tibetan and then into Mongolian as *A Sea of Narratives*.

- 1) Where did Buddhism originate?
- 2) How did the movement of Buddhism impact Khotan?
- 3) Name one way that Buddhism spread.

KHOTAN

Sino-Kharoṣṭhī Coins



Sino-Kharoṣṭhī coins

*Source: The International Dunhuang Project: The Silk Road Online; Copper, bronze, lead
The British Museum, Stein.*

During the 1st and 2nd centuries, the great kings of Khotan issued a unique series of six coins to be manufactured called the Sino-Kharosthi coins (also known as the “horse coins of Khotan”). They combine Chinese and Kushan (Indian) currencies into coins. One side features a horse and a Kharoṣṭhī inscription (used in Gandhara or modern-day Afghanistan and Pakistan) naming the king of Khotan; the other side features a tribal symbol and a Chinese inscription stating the weight of the coin in grains.

- 1) What is the significance of having a coin with both Middle Eastern and Asian influences?
- 2) How is this cultural expression of Khotan also an expression of the Silk Road?

KHOTAN

Terracotta Monkey



Terracotta monkey from Yotkan, Khotan

Source: The International Dunhuang Project: The Silk Road Online; Terracotta The British Museum, [1907,1111.30 \(Y.0011.k\)](#)

The third to sixth centuries produced hundreds of tiny terracotta figures that have since been found in Yotkan, the ancient capital of the kingdom of Khotan. Terra-cotta or “baked earth” is a type of clay-based ceramic. Scholars puzzled over the function of these Khotanese terra-cottas since their discovery. Animal figurines, particularly monkeys, have been widespread. However, monkeys are not found in Khotan, thus their images must have come from India with the spread of Buddhism. Similar terracotta monkey figurines have been found at archeological sites in north India.

- 1) How did the concept of monkeys come to Khotan?
- 2) What is the effect of the movement of people, ideas, and goods from India on Khotan over time? Give two examples.

DUNHUANG

Letters by Sogdian Wife



Fragment of one of the 4th century letters written by an abandoned Sogdian wife.

Source: Reese, Lyn. Primary Source: Connecting Women to the Silk Road.

“Miwnay with her children dutifully followed her husband Nanaidhat, a merchant trading along the Silk Road, to the city of Dunhuang. Both were Sogdians, a group who emerged as a power at the center of the trade routes at the end of the second century CE. Sogdiana lay between the Amu Darya (Oxus River) and the Pamir Mountains in what today is Uzbekistan. The Sogdians ability to reap profits from trade along the Silk Roads led them to established communities in regions as far east as Chang’an, (today’s Xi’an) and far west as Constantinople.

Unfortunately, after the collapse of the Chinese central government, wars and famine reached Dunhuang. Nanaidhat left the area, traveling off with his caravan, and somehow never returned, leaving Miwnay for three years. Left destitute, well-to-do Miwnay was forced to become a servant of the Chinese while her daughter Shayn ended up guarding their flocks of domestic animals. With no one in the Sogdian community willing to help them, Miwnay wrote letters to her husband and mother, who apparently never answered nor sent money.”
–Connecting Women to the Silk Road

Letter to Nanaidhat (husband): "I obeyed your command and came to Dunhuang and did not observe my mother's bidding nor that of my brothers. Surely the gods were angry with me on the day when I did your bidding! I would rather be a dog's or a pig's wife than yours!"

- 1) Certain civilizations came into power due to the rich treasures of trading among the Silk Road. Can you name one of them from this passage? What city could they have come from?
- 2) These letters to her mother and husband never made it to them, but instead was found in a mislaid post bag outside Dunhuang in 1907. What is global communication like today?

DUNHUANG

The Itinerant Storyteller



The Itinerant Storyteller

Source: The International Dunhuang Project: The Silk Road Online; SRE Cat. No. 15, Late 9th century, Found in Dunhuang, Cave 17, Ink and pigments on paper, The British Museum 1919,0101,0.168 (Ch. 00380)

Dunhuang has a rich history dating back over two thousand years. It was first established as a Chinese military garrison in the 2nd century BC. Dunhuang is in the middle of the split where the Silk Road turns into the northern and the southern branches around the Taklamakan desert. In the 4th century, a monk excavated a meditation cave in a cliff face southeast of the town. By 8th century, a thousand cave temples were excavated. This painting was found in cave 17 in Dunhuang. It has been supposed that this figure represents a traveling storyteller using his scrolls as illustrations for performances. This traveling storyteller would have traveled along the Silk Road performing popular Buddhist tales. Buddhism and folk culture would be spread along the Silk Road by such traveling storytellers.

- 1) How is the town of Dunhuang important to the Silk Road in terms of location?
- 2) What ideas, people, or goods does the painting represent being spread along the Silk Road?

DUNHUANG

Hunter on Horseback with Dog/ Hunter with Saluqi



Hunter on Horseback with Dog

Source: The International Dunhuang Project: The Silk Road Online; cat. Nos. 166 and 167 Shaanxi Provincial History Museum, Xian



Hunter with Saluqi

Source: The International Dunhuang Project: The Silk Road Online; Ink and colors on silk; The British Museum 1919,0101,0.36

Figurines of horses, dogs, and more can be found in Chinese tombs that reinforce the cultural exchange of the Chinese imperial family with the neighboring steppe people. In particular, the Chinese imperial family adopted the cultural practice of hunting with dogs. The hunter figure dates from 706 and was excavated from Princess Yongtai's tomb near Xian. It is made of earthenware with pigments and gilt.

A portable painting was found in Dunhuang that shows a hunter with his saluqi, or hunting dog, and falcon. He is dressed in a *hufu* or "Foreigner's Dress." This is an outfit of the neighboring steppe people. It is designed for horseback riders with a split-sided tunic. Chinese noblemen and women adopted this dress in the T'ang period.

- 1) What was the neighboring steppe people's influence on the Chinese imperial family?
- 2) How did the innovation of horses and dogs transform Chinese civilizations?

DUNHUANG Bowl with Vine Relief



Bowl with Vine Relief

Source: The International Dunhuang Project: The Silk Road Online; Glazed earthenware from Victoria and Albert Museum (Bequest of J.G.Maxwell Brownjohn: China), C.25–1946

Grapes are known to originate in ancient Near East and Egypt. One envoy from Central Asia in the second century BC, Zhang Qian, took some of these grape seeds back home. During the Tang dynasty (618-907 BCE), Central Asia became known for its grapes, wine, and even a local wine-making industry from Gaochang (which China conquered in 640 CE). The image above shows this sixth or seventh-century drinking vessel embodying the fusion of grapes from the Middle East with Chinese culture. It has a lead glaze of copper green inside and iron amber on the outside showing a vine with grapes.

- 1) How did grapes come to Central Asia?
- 2) What is the significance of the glazed earthenware from China that shows grapes?

QUANZHOU

Ancient Map of Maritime Silk Roads



An Ancient Map of the Maritime Silk Roads
Source: UNESCO- Silk Road, Municipality of Quanzhou

Known as Zayton (or Zaitun) by travelers arriving from the Arab world, Quanzhou city was one of the most important Chinese ports along the Silk Road. The connections between Quanzhou and other areas in the world can be seen all the way back to early Chinese Southern Kingdoms of the 6th century AD. This port was one of the four major Chinese ports in the Tang Dynasty and the largest port during the Song dynasty and Yuan dynasty. Travelers would sail to this port and then to ports such as Madras in India to Siraf in Iran. This is an ancient map of the maritime silk roads found in Quanzhou.

- 1) Name two things this ancient map tells us about the Silk Road.
- 2) Why was Quanzhou important to the Silk Road?

QUANZHOU

Statues in Quanzhou



Picture of Statues in Quanzhou

Source: UNESCO- Silk Road, Municipality of Quanzhou

In this modern day picture of Quanzhou, one can see how two statues were built to represent the famous explorers Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta who visited this port. They wrote descriptions of the port as one of the biggest harbors in the world, with ships of all sizes and a vibrant market. It is said that Marco Polo set sail with his mission of bringing the Mongol Princess to her betrothed in Persia (Modern Iran) from Quanzhou.

- 1) Which two famous travelers came to Quanzhou? Where were they from?
- 2) What impact did Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta have on Quanzhou, as well as their own societies?

QUANZHOU

Documents about Quanzhou Description & Questions

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Document 1 - Marco Polo, “Zayton”: “The Great Khan derives a very large revenue from the duties paid in this city and port; for you should know that on all the merchandise imported, including precious stones and pearls, he levies a duty of ten percent... But you may well believe from what I have said that the Khan receives a vast revenue from this city. “

- 1) What does this historical passage mean?
- 2) What does this historical passage indicate about trade in Quanzhou?

Document 2 - Ibn Battuta, “Zaytun”: “In every city of China is a quarter where the Muslims live separately and have mosques for their Friday prayers and other assemblies. They are highly regarded and treated with respect... [When a ship arrives]... they [the Chinese officials] order the ship’s master to dictate to them a manifest of all the merchandise in it, whether small or great [in value]. Then everyone disembarks and the customs officials sit to inspect what they have with them. If they come upon any article that has been concealed from them the junk and whatever is in it is forfeit to the treasury. This is a kind of extortion I have seen in no country, whether infidel or Muslim, except China... China is the safest and best country for the traveler. You can travel all alone across the land for nine months without fear, even if you are carrying much wealth.”

- 1) Where does the confiscated merchandise go? Where does Ibn Battuta hint it goes in other countries?
- 2) Why is China the “safest and best county for the traveler”?

Document 3 - Ibn Battuta, “Zaytun”: “When a Muslim merchant arrives in a Chinese town he chooses whether to stay with one of the Muslim merchants designated among those living there, or in the *funduq*. If he prefers to stay with a merchant his money is impounded, the merchant with whom he is to reside takes charge of it, and spends it for him [the foreign merchant] honestly. When he wishes to leave his money is examined and if any of it is missing the merchant with whom he has stayed and to whom it was entrusted makes it good. If he wishes to stay in the *funduq*, his money is entrusted to the master of the *funduq* who is put in charge of it; he buys for the merchant what he wants on his account.... During my stay in China, whenever I saw any Muslims I always felt as though I were meeting my own family and close kinsmen.”

- 1) What does this historical passage indicate about how Quanzhou treats its diverse population?
- 2) What is the tone of this historical passage towards those from China?

QUANZHOU

Religious Sites in Quanzhou



Hinduism Stone Column Relics in the Ancient Menhir Site Dedicated to the Hinduism in Quanzhou

Source: UNESCO- Silk Road, Municipality of Quanzhou



Quanzhou Mosque

Source: UNESCO- Silk Road, Municipality of Quanzhou

People from all across the world came to visit the Quanzhou port. With the continuous flow of diverse travelers, the city developed a peaceful coexistence between the many different ethnic and religious groups in the city. Illustrated is a Hindu temple and the Qingjing Mosque (China's oldest mosque), Quanzhou housed Buddhists, Taoists, Hindus, Nestorians, Manicheans, Jews, Catholics and Muslims. Quanzhou is now known for its old religious sites, such as the Kaiyuan temple (one of the oldest Buddhist temples in China), to the Laojun statue (a tribute to Taoism).

- 1) With the continuous flow of travelers, how did the Silk Road influence Quanzhou?
- 2) What is the achievement of Quanzhou on modern-day China in terms of China's cultural sites?

NARA

Temple in Horyu-ji Area



One of the Temples in the Horyu-ji Area

Source: UNESCO- Silk Road

Heijo-kyo was the ancient capital of Japan in the Nara period, from 710-784 CE. This picture shows one of the temples in the Horyu-ji area. The Buddhist monuments in Nara are the earliest Buddhist monuments in Japan. These temples date from shortly after the introduction on Buddhism to the country, and you can see the influence of Buddhism in the architecture. The Silk Road brought many things to Nara, but arguably one of the most influential ideas was Buddhism and its modern-day impact.

- 1) What was one idea that spread to Japan?
- 2) Where do you think this idea came from?

NARA

Sculpture of Dainichi Nyorai



Sculpture of Dainichi Nyorai at the Todajii Temple in Nara, Japan

Source: ArtSTOR; The John C. and Susan L. Huntington Archive of Buddhist and Related Art, The Ohio State University; UNESCO: Silk Road; Encyclopedia Britannica

This is a sculpture of Buddha in the Daibutsudeum or Great Buddha Hall, at the Todaji Temple in Nara, Japan. This Buddha is a celestial Buddha called Vairochana. Vairochana, “Illuminator” in Sanskrit, is the supreme Buddha regarded by many Mahayana Buddhists of East Asia and of Tibet, Nepal, and Java. In Japan, he is worshiped in the form of Fudo Myo-o who targets evil and takes care of the soul after one dies. It is legend that he transmitted to a supernatural being, Vajrasattva. Vairochana is frequently represented in Japanese sculpture and painting as well as Chinese. The material is made out of stone.

- 1) Who is Variochana? What is he worshipped for?
- 2) How did the introduction of Variochana demonstrate the cultural exchange of the Silk Road?

NARA

Exterior of Great Buddha Hall



Exterior of Great Buddha Hall at Todaji Temple in Nara, Japan; dating to 760 CE

Source: ArtSTOR; The Trustees of Columbia University, Media Center for Art History, Department of Art History and Archaeology; Photographer - Caleb Smith, May 2010; UNESCO: Silk Road

The outside of the Great Buddha Hall at Todaji Temple is an example of the influence of Chinese architecture. During this time period, the Chinese used a bay system where they would have intricate bracketing designed to transfer the weight of the heavy tiled roof down to the massive wooden supporting columns. This mixture of Chinese and Japanese architecture is known for their cloud-shaped brackets that swirl. This construction of Japanese architecture coincided with the integration of Buddhism from China into Japan. The circulation of religion along the Silk Road can be seen through Japanese Buddhist architecture that looks similar to Chinese Buddhist architecture around this time period. Buddhism in Nara attracted many pilgrims and as a result Nara, or Horyu-ji, was maintained and preserved.

- 1) How is the Silk Road's influence present in Toadaji Temple in Nara, Japan?
- 2) Name one type of Chinese architecture that is used in Japanese architecture.

NARA

Newspaper Article from Japan Times

Research uncovers evidence that ancient Japan was ‘more cosmopolitan’ than previously thought

AFP-JIJI

Ancient Japan may have been far more cosmopolitan than previously thought, archaeologists said Wednesday, pointing to fresh evidence of a Persian official working in the former capital of Nara more than 1,000 years ago.

Present-day Iran and Japan were known to have had direct trade links since at least the 7th century, but new testing on a piece of wood — first discovered in the '60s — suggest broader ties, the researchers said. Infrared imaging revealed previously unreadable characters on the wood — a standard writing surface in Japan before paper — that named a Persian official living in the country.

The official worked at an academy where government officials were trained, said Akihiro Watanabe, a researcher at the Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties. The official may have been teaching mathematics, Watanabe added, pointing to ancient Iran's expertise in the subject. "Although earlier studies have suggested there were exchanges with Persia as early as the 7th century, this is the first time a person as far away as Persia was known to have worked in Japan," he said. "And this suggests Nara was a cosmopolitan city where foreigners were treated equally."

Nara was the capital of Japan known as Heijokyo from around 710 to around 784 before it was moved to Kyoto and later to present-day Tokyo. The discovery comes after another team of researchers last month unearthed ancient Roman coins at the ruins of an old castle in Okinawa Prefecture.

It was the first time coins from the once mighty empire have been discovered in Japan, thousands of kilometers from where they were likely minted.

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Piece of Wood

“A piece of wood found in the remains of ancient capital Heijokyo, the present-day Nara, suggests there were broad ties between Japan and Persia.”

Source: NARA NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL PROPERTIES / VIA KYODO



- 1) What new connection between Nara and the Silk Road did Japan discover?
- 2) How did they discover this connection?
- 3) Why do you suppose it was significant for a Persian officer was living in Nara?