

Who was Marco Polo?

Grade 6, Term 1	Social Science: History	Lesson Topic: Who was Marco Polo?
Lesson 7 of 8	CAPS reference: page 42	Total time: 2 hours

Aims

- Engage higher order thinking through questions
 - Build on prior knowledge
- Introduce concept of explorers, merchants and traders.

Resources

- Worksheet
- 1 sheet of A4 paper per group, pencil crayons/khokis.

Introductory activity

Discussion in groups up to four in number. Each group to draw a mindmap of what they know about explorers (general knowledge)

Questions

20 minutes

- What is an explorer?
- Why do you think people started exploring?
 - Who are some famous explorers you know about?
 - What can you learn about exploring a distant land?

Activity

50 minutes

- Have learners share their answers from the introductory activity with the class.
- Read through the worksheet and if possible, use a larger map to show the journey of Marco Polo.
 - Have learners complete the worksheet

Consolidation

40 minutes

- Mark the worksheet (10 minutes)
- Homework activity: research (30 minutes)

Outcomes

- Develops ability to summarise data from context
- Learners are able to interlink all the lessons thus far
- Learners develop reasoning and group work skills

Terms: (see worksheet)

- Explorer
- Merchant
- Empire
- Emperor

Means of Assessment

Either to be marked in class or by educator.
Marks per section: 43 + 18

Total Marks for entire worksheet: 61 Marks

Image Source: http://www.emersonkent.com/map_archive/marco_polo_travels.htm

"Marco Polo - costume tartare" by Grevenbrock - Scanné de Coureurs des mers, Poivre d'Arvor.. Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons - http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marco_Polo_-_costume_tartare.jpg#mediaviewer/File:Marco_Polo_-_costume_tartare.jpg

Who was Marco Polo?

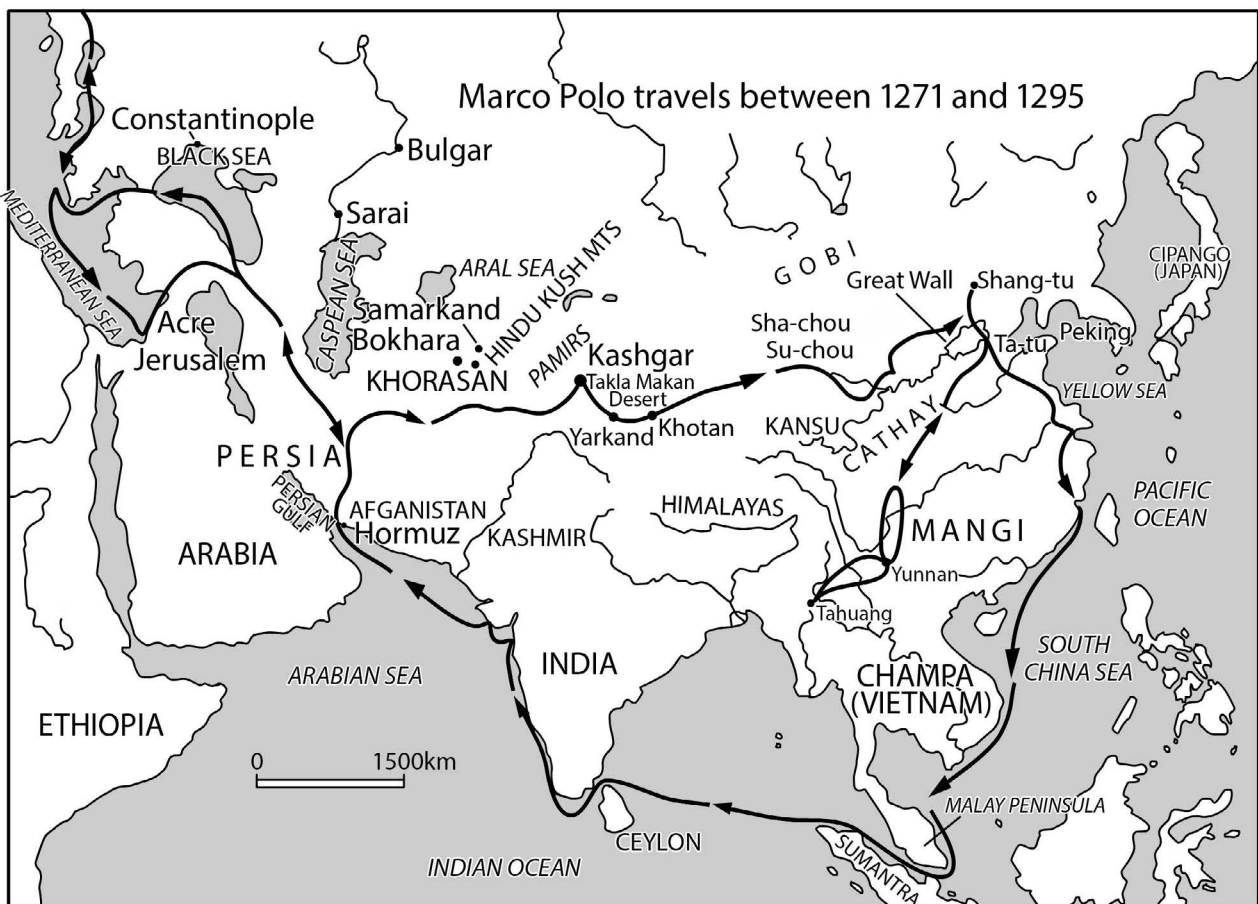
Name: _____

Who was Marco Polo?

Marco Polo is considered one of the most well-travelled men of the 13th century. Although there is some debate as to whether he was truthful in all his writings about his vast travels through Europe, Asia and Africa, there is little doubt that he spent over 20 years away from his motherland, Italy.

Marco Polo, born in 1254, came from a wealthy family of merchant travellers and grew up with his mother while his father, Niccolo and uncle, Maffeo were out trading and travelling the world.

When Polo was about 15-years old, his mother died and his father and uncle returned, briefly, to Italy after many years abroad. On their next voyage, the Polo brothers took Marco Polo with them and together they embarked on what would be a very eventful journey spanning a few decades.



From Venice, the Polos travelled through Armenia, Persia and Afghanistan to China. They made their way through the kingdom of Georgia and along the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf.

Who was Marco Polo?

The Polos even attempted to cross deserts. Some crossings, like that of the Gobi desert, were successful, others not. In those cases, alternative routes were used.

While on their travels, they discovered asbestos production in Karakhoja, the customs of the Mongols, such as polygamy, alcohol production and funeral rites, as well as the use of paper money and coal, which were novelties to the Italians.

The Mongols also had a far superior postal system as Marco discovered:

There were three types of postage, top priority, first class and second class. First class was a messenger on horseback travelling 40 kilometres at a time, in relay with all routes monitored by inspectors and all transitions logged.

Second class was a messenger on foot travelling five kilometres at a time, in relay, and by doing this, they could reduce a ten day journey to a one day journey. These messengers had a belt covered in bells to announce their coming to the next messenger in the relay and to prevent any delays.

For top priority post, the most important messages of the Mongol empire went by a messenger on horseback kitted out with a horn and a special tablet with the sign of the emperor. When the messenger was close to the next relay point, he would sound his horn and when he arrived, he would get onto a fresh horse saddled and ready to take him on the next leg of the journey. Using this method, a messenger could travel up to 480 kilometres in one day.

As the three Polos travelled through Asia, they encountered Kublai Khan, the emperor of the Mongol empire. Khan was so impressed with these merchants that he invited them to join his court. For 17 years, they worked for Kublai Khan and Marco Polo, in particular, travelled to areas never seen by any Europeans before him: Burma, India, China and Tibet.

Polo was so loved by Khan, that he became a governor of a city in China, a tax inspector and later served on the Privy Council. The Privy Council was an advisory board to the king. It was an honour to serve on this board.



"Marco Polo - costume tartare" by Grevembroek

Who was Marco Polo?

Complete the table by drawing the different types of messengers used by the Mongol Emperor and describing the transport and distance:

Type of Messenger:	Type of Messenger:	Type of Messenger:
Messenger:	Messenger:	Messenger:
Transport:	Transport:	Transport:
Distance covered in a day:	Distance covered in relay:	Distance covered in relay:

Some of the places that Marco Polo travelled to have since then changed their names. Look up the list below in your atlas or in your dictionary.

Write down their new names if applicable.

- Armenia _____
- Persia _____
- Afghanistan _____
- Champa _____
- China _____
- Burma _____
- India _____
- Tibet _____
- Karakhoja _____
- Constantinople _____
- Ceylon _____
- Cathay _____

Who was Marco Polo?

Fill in the missing words using phrases and words from the word bank:

The _____ (nationality) Polos travelled from _____ (City, Country) throughout Europe and _____ (Continent). In _____ (Continent), they met the Emperor, _____ (Name and Surname).

He was leader of the _____ (place), and the Polos were very interested in the different _____ (things they do).

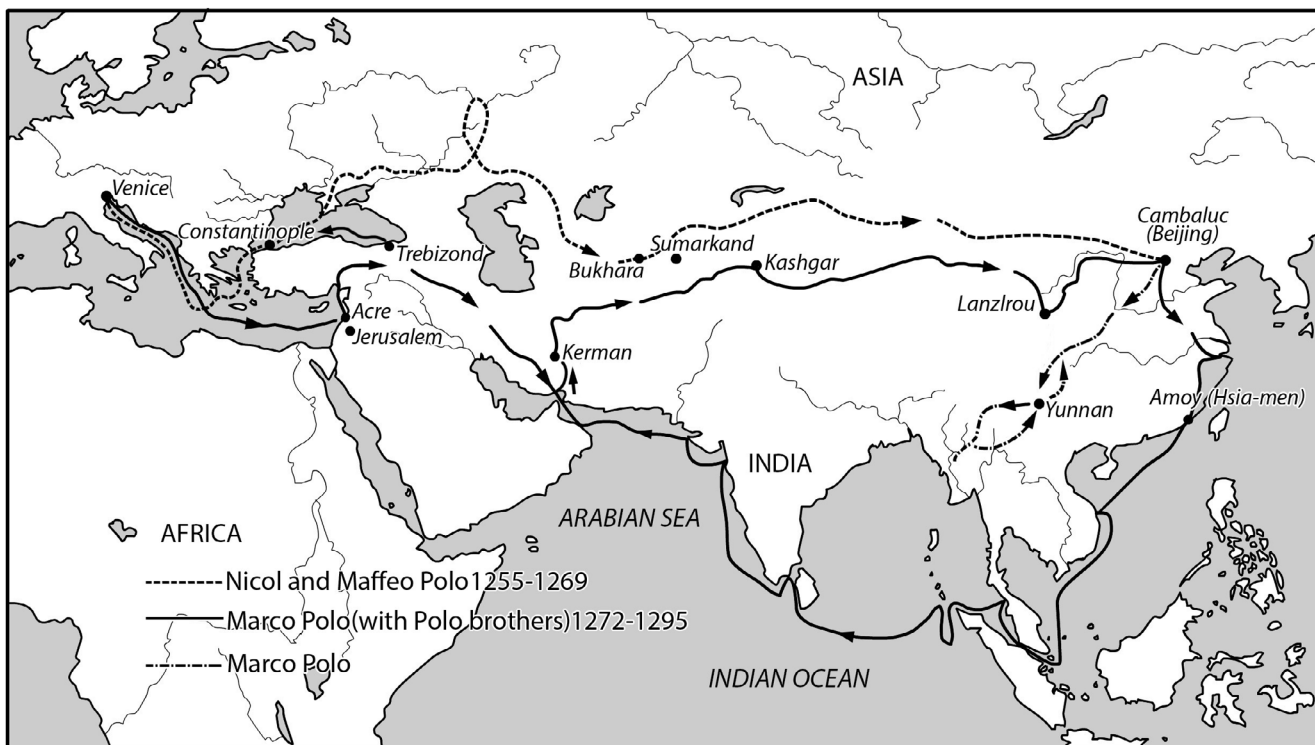
Some of the things they saw in this culture was the use of _____ and _____.

_____ (Name of Emperor) liked the Polo brothers and _____ (name) a lot and gave them positions in his _____ (dominion). _____ (Name) Polo served as a _____, _____ and _____ (job, job and job) representative.

WORD BANK

Marco tax inspector Asia Kubla Khan Coal Mongol Empire
 paper money Italian Marco governor Kublai Khan Privy Council
 Italy Asia Venice alcohol customs

On the map below, colour in the countries that Marco Polo visited:



Who was Marco Polo?



Did you know?

Marco Polo, his father and uncle took a cloth made of asbestos to the of that time pope as a gift.

Homework: Time to do some research:

1. What is asbestos?

- What does it look like?

- What is it used for?

- Is it still used today? Explain your answer.

2. What is coal?

- What does it look like?

- What is it used for?

- Is it still used today? Explain your answer.

3. Why do you think that these items were interesting to the Marco Polo?

Answer sheet

Some of the places that Marco Polo travelled to have since then changed their names. Look up the list below in your atlas or in your dictionary.

Write down their new names if applicable.

- Armenia - **Armenia**
- Persia - **Iran**
- Afghanistan - **Afghanistan**
- Champa - **Vietnam**
- China - **China**
- Burma - **Myanmar**
- India - **India**
- Tibet - **Tibet**
- Karakhoja - **Gaochang**
- Constantinople - **Istanbul**
- Ceylon - **Sri Lanka**
- Cathay - **China**

Complete the table by drawing the different types of messengers used by the Mongol Emperor and describing the transport and distance: (18)

Type of Messenger: Top Priority	Type of Messenger: First Class	Type of Messenger: Second Class
Messenger: Image of messenger on horse with a horn and tablet.	Messenger: Image of messenger on a horse.	Messenger: Messenger on foot with a belt covered in bells.
Transport: horse	Transport: horse	Transport: foot
Distance covered in a day: 480km	Distance covered in relay: 40km	Distance covered in relay: 5km

Fill in the missing words using phrases and words from the word bank:

The **Italian** Polos travelled from **Venice, Italy** throughout Europe and **Asia**. In **Asia**, they met the Emperor, **Kublai Khan**.

He was leader of the **Mongol Empire**, and the Polos were very interested in the different **customs**.

Some of the things they saw in this culture was the use of **alcohol, paper money** and **coal**.

Kublai Khan liked the Polo brothers and **Marco** a lot and gave them positions in his **empire**. **Marco Polo** served as a **tax inspector, governor** and **Privy Council** representative.

Answer sheet

Homework: Time to do some research:

1. What is asbestos? (2)

Asbestos is a type of mineral.

- What does it look like? (2)

Thin fibres in rock.

- What is it used for? (2)

It is used for insulation and fire resistance.

- Is it still used today? Explain your answer. (2)

No, as it causes cancer/ is carcinogenic.

2. What is coal? (2)

Coal is a rock made of fossilised carbon.

- What does it look like? (2)

Black rock

- What is it used for? (2)

You burn coal as an energy source for making electricity and heat.

- Is it still used today? Explain your answer. (2)

Yes, you still get power stations that use coal.

3. Why do you think that these items were interesting to the Marco Polo?

Any appropriate answer.

He had never seen items like this before and was curious about them.