



The Silk Road: An Ancient Internet

Students examine how goods and ideas moved along an ancient trade route between China and Europe.

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Grade Level	6
Duration	1-2 class periods

National Geography Standards

ELEMENT FOUR: HUMAN SYSTEMS

11. The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on earth's surface.

ELEMENT SIX: THE USES OF GEOGRAPHY

17. How to apply geography to interpret the past.

Arizona Geography Strand

Grade 6

Strand 4 Geography Concept 1 The World in Spatial Terms

PO 5 Interpret thematic maps, graphs, charts, and databases depicting various aspects of world regions.

PO 4 Locate physical and human features in the United States and in regions of the world on a map (e.g., continents, significant waterways, mountain ranges, cities, countries).

Concept 2 Places and Regions

PO 3 Describe the interactions of people in different places and regions.

Concept 4 Human Systems

PO 2 Describe the environmental, economic, cultural and political effects of human migrations and cultural diffusion on places and regions.

PO 4 Identify factors (e.g., river/coastal civilizations, trade that influence the location, distribution, and interrelationships of economic activities over time in different regions.

Other Arizona Standards

Grade 6

Strand 2 World History

Concept 3 World in Transition

PO 6. Describe the trade routes that established the exchange of goods (e.g., silk, salt, spices, gold) between eastern and western civilizations during the 15th and 16th centuries.

PO 7. Describe how trade routes led to the exchange of ideas (e.g., religion, scientific advances, literature) between Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East during the 15th and 16th centuries.

Strand 5 Economics

Concept 1 Foundations of Economics

PO 5 Explain how trade promoted economic growth throughout world regions.

ELA Common Core Standards

Reading Standards for 6-8 for Literacy in History/Social Studies

Key Ideas and Details

6-8.RH.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

6-8.RH.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

6-8 Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Text Types and Purposes

6-8.WHST.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information

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into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

- Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

Overview

For nearly 1500 years, a network of trade routes connected Asia with Europe. Over these routes traveled a myriad of goods, ideas, technologies, and cultures, much like on today's Internet. So valuable was the Silk Road that it was fought over by the Chinese, Turks, Mongols, and various nomadic tribes.

Purpose

This lesson will raise student awareness of the level of movement of goods and ideas in the ancient world by examining the Silk Road.

Materials

- book *The Silk Route: 7000 Miles of History* by John S. Major
- transparency of student copy of Silk Road Map
- student copies of Silk Road Map
- Silk Road transparency (routes are shown)
- transparency on which to create a chart of items going to Europe, items going to China, and items going both ways
- Silk Road Data Sheet (for teacher use only)
- Silk Road Assessment and Key
- Writing Prompt

Objectives

The student will be able to:

- make a chart of items, ideas, etc. that were transported along the Silk Road.
- map the main arteries of the Silk Road.
- speculate on how this trade impacted the people of the ancient world.
- write a paragraph describing the Silk Road.

Procedures

1. Read the story, *The Silk Route*, to the students.
2. During the reading, ask students to do two things: connect the cities on their Silk Road maps to trace the route of the Silk Road, and record in chart form items that are traveling along that route. The chart should have three vertical columns. The headings will be: To Europe, To China, Both Places
3. Show students the transparency map of the Silk Road. Have students compare their maps with the transparency map and make corrections on their map.
4. Create a master chart of the trade of goods on a transparency using student input; students can add items to their chart.
5. Share information from the Silk Road Data Sheet. Students may add information to their charts.

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6. Discuss how this trade may have affected the people of the ancient world (Silk Road Data Sheet section in implications will help with this) and have students take notes on the back of their charts.

Assessment

The students will do an assessment on the Silk Road that includes ten multiple-choice questions. Mastery will be considered 8 out of 10 correct.

They will write a paragraph using their chart, map, and notes as a reference. The paragraph will be graded using the traits of ideas, word choice, and organization. Mastery will be considered 4 or higher on the 6 Traits Writing Rubric.

Extensions

Have the students research one of the products that were “exotic” to the Europeans back in the time of the Silk Road.

Have the students create a short play using classmates as travelers, shopkeepers, and others associated with the Silk Road.

Sources

The Silk Route: 7000 Miles of History, John S. Major, Harper-Collins Publishers, 1995 ISBN 0064434680

Silk Road, Grolin Electronic Publishing, Inc., 1993

The Nomad Route: In the Steppes of Genghis Khan. Aramco World, September/October, 1996

XINJIANG, Thomas B. Allen, National Geographic, March, 1996