

Rationale: The purpose of this lesson is to have students understand the importance of trade to the spread of ideas and culture. Students will examine the ancient Silk Road and its importance to the spread of ideas, culture and goods in the past. Students will compare the Silk Road to the Belt and Road Initiative of the 21st century and identify the benefits trade routes bring to civilizations. A key takeaway from this lesson will be that trade has always shaped the lives of people around the world and will continue to do so in the future.

Skills and Content Objectives:

CA History Social Science Content Standards:

7.3 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the civilizations of China in the Middle Ages.

7.3.3 Analyze the influences of Confucianism and changes in Confucian thought during the Sung and Mongol periods.

Common Core Language Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2: Determine the central ideas or information of primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7: Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.D: Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

Content Objective: Students will be able to explain the importance of the Silk Road to China in the Middle Ages and predict what some of the effects of the modern Belt and Road Initiative will be.

Language Objective: Students will be able to define the Silk Road and compare the historical Silk Road to the modern Belt and Road Initiative.

Lesson Activities:

Day 1:

Prior Knowledge: Ask students, “Where are many products made nowadays?” and have a discussion about trade in the 21st century.

Context: Students will watch a BrainPop video about the Silk Road and then write a 5 sentence paragraph summarizing what they learned. Have some students share what they wrote in their summaries.

Guided Reading: Read textbook description of the Silk Road in the Middle Ages under the control of the Mongol Empire. Have students volunteer to read. Have students answer questions about the Silk Road.

Reflect: Have students write about what sort of things (ideas, goods, diseases, people, languages, religions, etc.) can spread along trade routes.

Day 2:

Warm Up: Ask students to write 2-3 sentences about what they already know about China in the 21st Century (i.e. most goods are made in China, it is a Communist country, it has the world's largest population, etc.) Have a discussion about prior knowledge of contemporary China.

Context: Have students watch a PBS Newshour video on the Belt and Road Initiative and write 5 things they learned from the video. Have students share some things they found interesting with the rest of the class.

Compare and contrast: Have students complete a Venn diagram graphic organizer in which they list the similarities and differences between the Silk Road of the Mongol Empire and the modern Belt and Road Initiative.

Reflect: Have students draw a conclusion about how the Belt and Road Initiative will promote trade in the 21st century.

Day 3:

Warm Up: Ask students to list some of the benefits of trade routes to societies and civilizations. Have a discussion in which students share what they wrote.

Predict: Show students some maps from the East Asia Institute Website of the ancient Silk Road along with the proposed rail, road and sea routes of the Belt and Road Initiative. Have students identify what countries were and will be connected by these trade routes. Have students write a 5 sentence prediction about what the long term effects of the Belt and Road Initiative will be.

Assessment- Letter Home from the Silk Road: Have students write an imaginary letter home in which they are traveling along a modern rail, road or waterway that is part of the Belt and Road Initiative. Have them use the terms **Silk Road, trade, exchange, culture, and ideas** in their letter. Have students speculate about the interactions they would have on their journey and how the experience would shape their view of the world. Have students share what they wrote in their letters in groups.

Assessment: Students will write an imaginary letter home in which they are traveling along a modern rail, road or waterway that is part of the Belt and Road Initiative. They will use the terms **Silk Road, trade, exchange, culture, and ideas** in their letter. The assessment is designed to have students reflect on how trade routes foster cross cultural exchange in a creative way.