

Name: _____ Date: _____

Silk Road Webquest – 4th – 7th Grade

Objective: The students will be able to . . .

- Analyze how the Silk Road enabled different civilizations to interact and trade
- Identify early civilizations and the impact they had on world history
- Research a topic utilizing a variety of resources
- Write a well-organized summary with proper citations
- Prepare an oral presentation

INDIANA STATE STANDARDS:

7.1.10 Analyze worldwide voyages of exploration and discovery by considering multiple perspectives of various people in the past by demonstrating their differing motives, beliefs, interests, hopes, and fears. **Example:** The voyages of the Ming dynasty, and Ibn Battuta

Approximate length: 2 days (or longer)

Materials needed:

Computers with internet access

Useful resources:

- <https://asiasociety.org/trade-along-silk-roads>

About the Lesson:

The Silk Road was an ancient network of trade routes that expanded from Constantinople to Xian. It road existed for nearly two thousand years and outlived many of the great ancient empires that used it for trade. By completing a web quest, students become part of a caravan that is traveling along the Silk Road during the reign of a mighty empire.

Each Caravan member will have a job and will contribute their specialized knowledge to the group. They will write a small article for their group that contains important information that their fellow caravan travelers should know. Then each group will create a class presentation.

Teachers might choose to adapt the task. For example, instead of a presentation, students can:

- Dress-up and present their information to class as a character
- Create a 15-minute drama
- Combine to articles to create a "Traveler's Manual" for those wishing to travel the Silk Road

Procedures:

1. Begin this web quest with a class warm-up. Ask students: "What are some of the greatest empires in human history?" Write the names of the empires on the board. Next, see if students can arrange the empires in a timeline (this could be tricky). An extension of this activity could be to let students work in groups to create a timeline, and then check the accuracy by using their cellphones to research the dates of each

Name: _____ Date: _____

empire they listed (you know how much students enjoy using their phones). This list will serve as a starting point for the Webquest task. You may want to ask students to write the correct timeline in their notebooks, or snap a picture with their phone.

2. Propose to students the following scenario:

You currently live during the time of a great empire or dynasty in Central Eurasia. Although you consider yourself a homebody (who doesn't mind spending Friday night in a yurt with your family), you have just accepted a job as a member of a caravan that is about to travel the Silk Road. You need to research what things you'll need for your journey as well as what you'll be trading. In addition, you need to know what perils could befall you as you make your way! Will you be traveling through rough terrain? Are there any conflicts that your party should be aware of (you don't exactly want to walk into the middle of a battle). You need to plan your trip and prepare for any obstacles by researching important people, places, issues, and events that occurred during the time of your empire.

3. **ASSIGN JOB ROLES.** Arrange students into groups. There are five jobs, but more can be added based on teacher discretion. Each group will compose a caravan from one of the following empires. The teacher can assign each group an empire, or let students choose:

Macedonian Empire
Song/Sung dynasty
Abbasid Empire
Mongol Empire
Achaemenid Empire
Mughal Empire
Timurid Empire

Next, assign each member of the one of the following jobs. The jobs and description of each role are the following :

TRADER: You will research the items that your group will be trading. For example, will you be bringing silks from China or Lapis Lazuli from Afghanistan? Find out what was commonly traded during your empire.

SCHOLAR: What ideas were important during your Empire's reign? Is your Empire known for any new inventions? What were some popular ideas during your Empire's reign? For example, are there any important philosophers in your empire, or mathematicians?

WARRIOR/POLITICAL SCIENTIST: Is your Empire currently at war with another Empire? If not, was your Empire at war in the past? What kinds of weapons does your Empire use? Who is the leader of your Empire? What is your Empire's system of government?

SCIENTIST: Are there any great scientific breakthroughs that have occurred during your Empire's reign? Also, you are in charge of predicting the weather, climate, and terrain that

Name: _____ Date: _____

your caravan will face. Will you be traveling through any mountains or deserts? Are there any diseases your fellow travelers should be aware of? What should they pack to wear?

ARTIST: What kind of artwork is popular during your Empire? What kind of musical instruments are musicians playing? What materials are the artisans of your Empire using to create artwork and instruments? Don't limit yourself to only drawings and paintings

4. **RESEARCH.** Get to work! Students will conduct research in either their library or on the internet. Hand-outs with guided questions for each job are provided in **Job Roles Section**. When students have completed their research, they are to write a summary of their findings. Teachers may want to specify the parameters of the writing (for example: MLA style, include one or two pictures, etc.)
5. **EDITING.** Students meet to share drafts of their summaries. Each person shares his or her draft with the group, and their fellow students will help edit. Teachers may want to give students a writing checklist. Once the groups have edited all of the papers, students are expected to write a second draft. Next, students will meet again and pass their second draft to one of the students in their group (This can be done by having students sit or stand in a circle and pass their drafts to the left). Instruct students to review the second draft carefully and, once completed, give to the original author so that he or she may write a final summary.
6. **PRESENTATION.** Once final drafts have been completed, students will meet to create an oral presentation about their journey. They are to give a start date for their journey, and each group member is expected to talk about what they discovered during their research. Each presentation must:
 - Include visuals, whether students create a Powerpoint presentation or choose to dress like a character
 - Each presentation must address important questions that were answered by each job role.
7. **EVALUATION.** A rubric has been provided to help teachers grade the presentation, or teachers may create their own rubrics.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Job Roles

Role: TRADER

Name of Empire: _____

What date is your caravan leaving? Decide the date with your group (example: 1370 A.D.) _____

Questions:

1. What items is your empire known for? List *at least* 5 items.
2. What kinds of raw materials do the merchants in your empire use to make sellable items?
3. What currency does your empire use? If your empire has money, what is it called? What is it made from?
4. How will you transport the items that you will be trading? If you are using animals, what animals and how many?
5. What food will you bring with you?
6. Where will you sleep at night?
7. What kind of clothing will you be wearing? Do you need special clothing for warm or cold climates? (you may want to consult your scientist!)
8. MAP (work with your scientist): One of your special duties is to create a map of your projected journey. Where will you begin? Where will you end? Be ready to explain your map to your group.
9. Other interesting facts?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Role: WARRIOR/POLITICAL SCIENTIST

Name of Empire: _____

What date is your caravan leaving? Decide the date with your group (example: 1370 A.D.) _____

Questions:

1. Who is the king or leader of your Empire?
2. When was your empire established?
3. Is your empire at war with any other empires or peoples? If so, who and when?
4. What kind of government does your empire have?
5. How big is your military? (approximate number of troops, etc.)
6. What kinds of weapons does your military use?
7. Does your military have any special weapons? Does your military have an army and a navy?
8. WEAPONS: One of your duties is to create an illustration of one (or several) of the weapons that were used by your empire's military. Be ready to explain your weapon to your group.
9. Other interesting facts?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Role: SCHOLAR

Name of Empire: _____

What date is your caravan leaving? Decide the date with your group (example: 1370 A.D.) _____

Questions:

1. Is your empire known for any famous philosophers?
2. Are there any famous writers/poets in your empire?
3. List the titles of *at least* 3 books or poems written during your empire's reign.
4. Were any great discoveries made during the reign of your empire?
5. Were any great inventions created during your empire?
6. What language do the people living in your empire speak?
7. What is the religion of your empire? Is there more than one?
8. SCROLL: One of your special duties is to create a scroll that includes a poem or an excerpt from a famous piece of writing. Be prepared to share with your caravan members and the class.
9. Other interesting facts?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Role: SCIENTIST

Name of Empire: _____

What date is your caravan leaving? Decide the date with your group (example: 1370 A.D.) _____

Questions:

1. Is your empire known for any famous scientists? What were their names and what did they do?
2. Were any great scientific discoveries made during your empire? (You may want to consult your scholar so that you don't cross reference)
3. Were there any major epidemics or illnesses during your empire?
4. What did doctors during your empire use for medicine?
5. What kind of terrain will you and your caravan face along your journey? Are there mountains, deserts, or rivers? If so, what are the names?
6. What kind of climate(s) will you encounter along your journey?
7. What kinds of animals will you likely encounter and where? Will your caravan be able to hunt for food?
8. MAP: Help your TRADER create a map of your caravan's journey. Your specific duty is to label the topography on the map.
9. Other interesting facts?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Role: ARTIST

Name of Empire: _____

What date is your caravan leaving? Decide the date with your group (example: 1370 A.D.)

Questions:

1. Is your empire known for any famous philosophers?
2. Are there any famous writers/poets in your empire?
3. List the titles of *at least* 3 books or poems written during your empire's reign.
4. Were any great discoveries made during the reign of your empire?
5. Were any great inventions created during your empire?
6. What language do the people living in your empire speak?
7. What is the religion of your empire? Is there more than one?
8. SCROLL: One of your special duties is to create a scroll that includes a poem or an excerpt from a famous piece of writing. Be prepared to share with your caravan members and the class.
9. Other interesting facts?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Rubric

Criteria				
	4	3	2	1
Group Work	Students offered many ideas and contributed to the group discussion	Student occasionally offered ideas and was overall cooperative	Student participated minimally	Student did not participate or caused disruptions
Quality of Research	Student utilized many resources, both online and bookshelf (6 or more) and cited them properly	Student used several resources, both online and bookshelf (3 – 5) and cited them properly	Student used minimal resources and/or only online and cited them properly	Student used one or two resources, or did not cite reference materials
Summary	The summary is well organized and includes very little mistakes	The summary is organized and contains several mistakes	The summary is not well organized and contains many mistakes	The summary is hard to follow due to organization issues, contains numerous mistakes, or is plagiarized
Oral Presentation	It is obvious that student and group put a lot of time and effort into their presentation	Student presented an informative presentation and information is clearly conveyed to the class	Student put in minimal effort but still presented the majority of the material	It is evident that student did not prepare for the presentation or did not participate

Total Points: _____ / 20