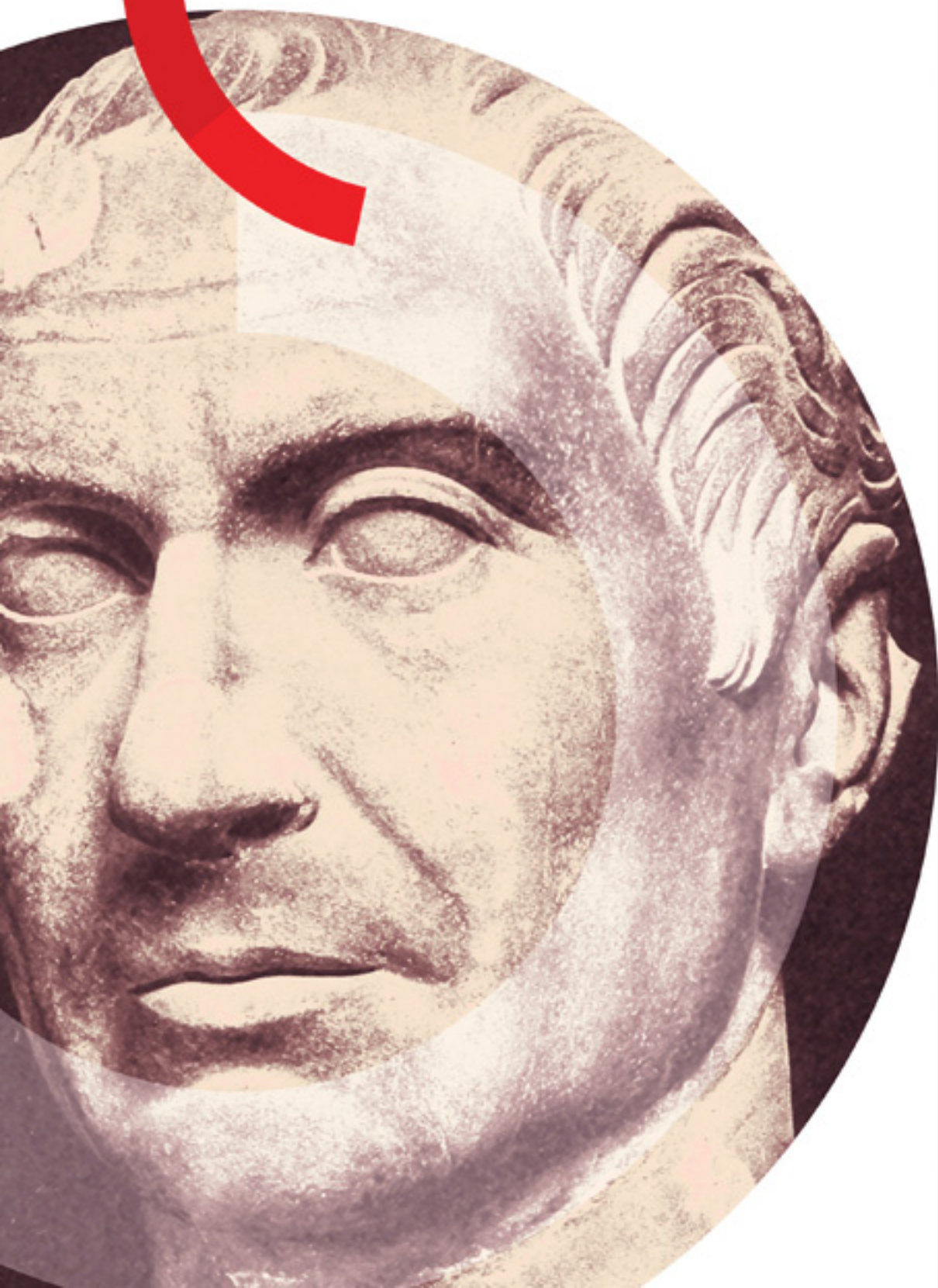


# Classical Age

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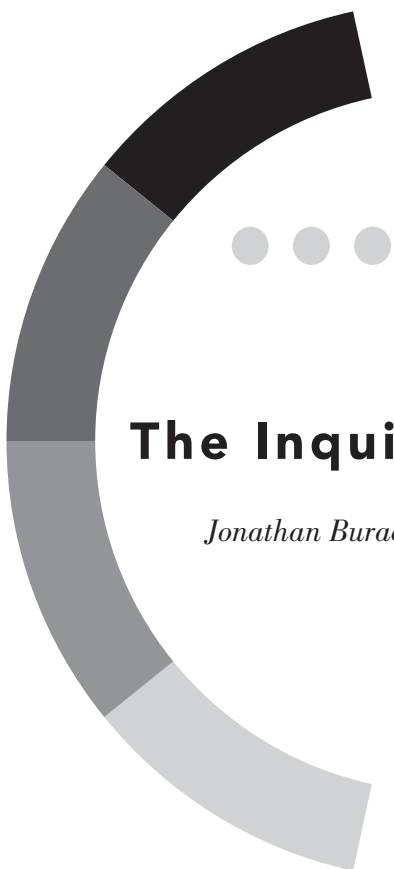
**The Inquiry Arc** in World History



*Jonathan Burack*

**MindSparks**

# Classical Age



## **The Inquiry Arc** in World History

*Jonathan Burack*

**MindSparks®**

CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

HS1111 v1.0



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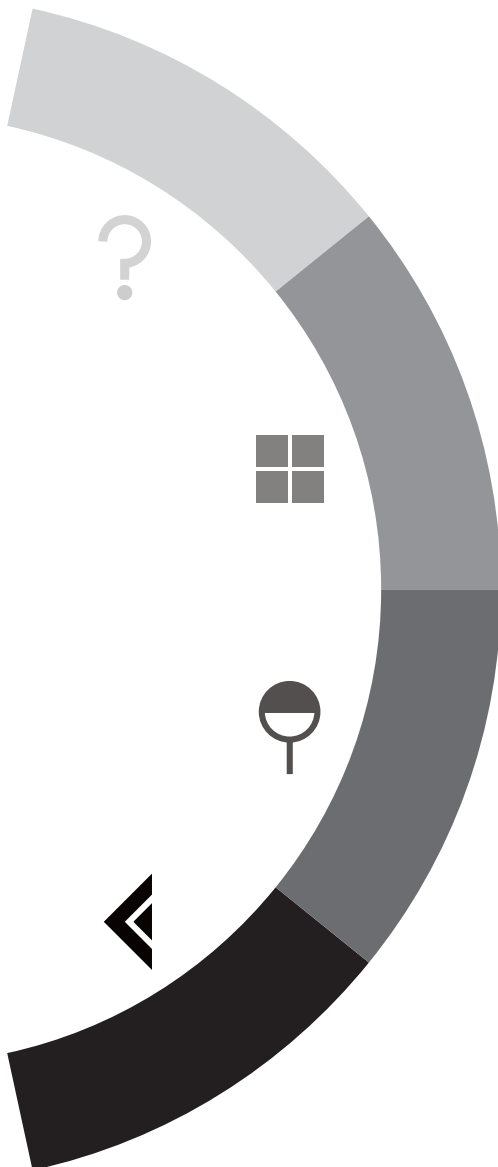
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### C3 Framework

This book is based primarily on the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards. This C3 Framework is an effective tool offering guidance and support for rigorous student learning. The assignments encourage students to be active participants in learning and to explore the parts of history that they find most compelling. Central to the C3 Framework and our use of it is its Inquiry Arc—a set of four interrelated dimensions of informed inquiry in social studies. The lessons in this book are based on all four dimensions of the C3 Inquiry Arc. While the C3 Framework analyzes each of the four dimensions separately, they are not entirely separable in practice—they each interact in dynamic ways. As a result, the lessons combine some or all of the dimensions in various ways.



### Four Dimensions of the Inquiry Arc

#### 1 Developing compelling and supporting questions and planning inquiries

Questions shape social studies inquiries, giving them broader meaning and motivating students to master content and engage actively in the learning process.

#### 2 Applying disciplinary concepts and tools

These are the concepts and central ideas needed to address the compelling and supporting questions students pose. The C3 Framework stresses four subject fields: history, civics, economics, and geography. Each lesson addresses all of these disciplines.

#### 3 Evaluating sources and using evidence

The purpose of using primary and secondary sources as evidence is to support claims and counterclaims. By assessing the validity and usefulness of sources, including those that conflict with one another, students are able to construct evidence-based explanations and arguments.

#### 4 Communicating conclusions and taking informed action

While this may take the form of individual essays and other writing assignments, these lessons stress other kinds of individual and collaborative forms of communication, including debates, policy analyses, video productions, diary entries, and interviews. Meaningful forms of individual or collaborative civic action are also incorporated into each lessons.

## **How to Use This Book**

This book offers you the chance to implement the entire C3 Inquiry Arc in brief, carefully structured lessons on important topics in world history. Each lesson is driven by a central compelling question, and disciplinary supporting questions are provided. Each lesson asks students to apply understandings from all of the C3 disciplines—history, civics, economics, and geography—and each lesson includes individual and group tasks in an integrated way.

Each lesson also includes an introductory essay, detailed teaching instructions, a set of primary sources, and the handouts needed to implement the lesson's assignments. Rubrics for student evaluation and sources for further study are also provided. The teaching instructions suggest a time frame for completion of each lesson, but the assessments can easily be adapted to fit into any lesson plan.

Each lesson also is aligned with several C3 Framework standards and Common Core State Standards. The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Literacy emphasize the reading and information texts, making these lessons ideal for integration into English Language Arts instruction.



**C3 Disciplines**



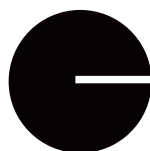
**History**



**Civics**



**Economics**



**Geography**



# Democracy in Ancient Athens

*How Democratic Was It?*





## Overview

### Introduction

For about two centuries, a fully democratic system flourished in Athens in ancient Greece. The most important political body in it was the Assembly. It met in a public space out in the open. Citizens learned to speak their minds and take pride in their freedom and independence. Many top leaders were chosen by lot. Usually, those who held these leadership positions served only for a year. Each local grouping or district (called a *deme*) contributed fifty members for the 500-member Council that prepared topics and laws for the Assembly to debate and decide. Sizable juries of hundreds of citizens each judged cases before the courts. Athens gave ordinary citizens several kinds of public authority. The system was not without its critics—both at the time and ever since. Then, most of them said Athens was too democratic. Today, many say it was not democratic enough. How democratic was it? This lesson will focus on that compelling question. Students will work with ten sources. These sources form the core content for a set of tasks that will help them answer the lesson’s compelling question.

### Objectives

Students will work individually and in small groups to respond in a meaningful way to a compelling question about democracy in Athens. They will apply discipline-specific background knowledge, use scaffolding, and engage in instructional activities to interpret primary and secondary sources before presenting their ideas to the class.

### C3 Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- ◆ **D1.4.6-8.** Explain how the relationship between supporting questions and compelling questions is mutually reinforcing.
- ◆ **D1.5.6-8.** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources.
- ◆ **D2.His.5.6-8.** Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time.
- ◆ **D2.His.11.6-8.** Use other historical sources to infer a plausible maker, date, place of origin, and intended audience for historical sources where this information is not easily identified.
- ◆ **D2.His.12.6-8.** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to identify further areas of inquiry and additional sources.
- ◆ **D2.His.16.6-8.** Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.
- ◆ **D2.Civ.8.6-8.** Analyze ideas and principles contained in the founding documents of the United States, and explain how they influence the social and political system.
- ◆ **D2.Eco.7.6-8.** Analyze the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in a market economy.
- ◆ **D2.Geo.5.6-8.** Analyze the combinations of cultural and environmental characteristics that make places both similar to and different from other places.
- ◆ **D2.Geo.6.6-8.** Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.
- ◆ **D3.1.6-8.** Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.
- ◆ **D3.2.6-8.** Evaluate the credibility of a source by determining its relevance and intended use.

- ◆ **D3.3.6-8.** Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources to support claims, noting evidentiary limitations.
- ◆ **D3.4.6-8.** Develop claims and counterclaims while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.
- ◆ **D4.1.6-8.** Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments.
- ◆ **D4.3.6-8.** Present adaptations of arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., internet, social media, and digital documentary).
- ◆ **D4.6.6-8.** Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

### Common Core Anchor Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1.** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2.** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6.** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9.** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7.** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1.** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.



## Teaching Instructions

**Compelling Question**

How democratic was ancient Athens?

**Preparation**

Provide all students with a copy of the Introductory Essay. Assign this reading as homework. In addition, assign all relevant parts of your course textbook or other basic reading material. Remind students to keep the compelling question for the lesson in mind as they read.



Asking Questions about Democracy in Ancient Athens  
*This part of the task stresses Dimensions 1 and 2 of the C3 Framework*

**Day One**

1. Briefly discuss the Introductory Essay in class and address any initial questions students may have.
2. Distribute the How to Analyze a Primary Source handout. Review each suggestion with the class, and remind students to refer to the handout as they read the primary sources in this lesson.
3. Divide the class into four small groups. Each group will focus its work on one of the four basic disciplines identified in Dimension 2 of the C3 Framework—history, civics, geography, or economics. As they work, the groups should keep in mind the lesson’s overall compelling question. However, for Day One and Day Two, each group will work mainly with a second compelling question—one related specifically to its assigned discipline.
4. Provide each group with one copy of its discipline-specific Assignment Sheet. Give each student a copy of all the primary and secondary sources for this lesson. Each group may share a source packet, if necessary.
5. Have students complete the Day One section of their Assignment Sheets. The objective for Day One is for groups to read three sources, and then formulate one supporting question about each of those sources. The supporting questions should be recorded in the spaces provided on the Assignment Sheet.



Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Evaluating Sources and Evidence  
*This part of the task stresses Dimensions 2 and 3 of the C3 Framework*

**Day Two**

6. Students will return to their previously assigned groups and formulate a claim addressing their group’s compelling question. After reading the remaining seven sources, they will select one that supports their claim.

7. Using the evidence gathered from primary and secondary sources, each group will then prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation about democracy in Athens from the group's disciplinary perspective. The presentation can be in the form of an oral report, a debate among group members, a PowerPoint, or a related type of presentation. Allow time for students to prepare by discussing and debating topics among themselves.

### **Day Three**

8. Each group will deliver its presentation. Allow time for class discussion following each presentation, and for a final effort to answer the central compelling question for the lesson.

#### **Communicating Results and Taking Action**

*This part of the task stresses Dimension 4 of the C3 Framework*

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Students will complete a final project that expresses an understanding of the topic and responds clearly to the lesson's central compelling question. The project may be completed in groups, but students should be evaluated individually.

Distribute the Communicating Results and Taking Action handout, and decide whether you will assign the projects or allow students to form groups and choose tasks on their own. Set a reasonable deadline. Students should review the Democracy in Ancient Athens Rubric so they can understand how their performance will be evaluated. The projects are summarized below.

#### **Communicating Results**

- ◆ Divide students into small groups. Ask each group to use library resources and the internet to learn more about the specific buildings and other sites at the Agora, the Pnyx, and the Acropolis in ancient Athens. Diagrams and maps of these are not hard to find. Each group will create a map including the parts of each of these places that seem most important to the democracy of ancient Athens. Have each group prepare a five-minute presentation of its map. After all the presentations are completed, ask the class to vote on the map that best explains the key elements of Athenian democracy.
- ◆ Ask one small group of students to prepare a role-playing debate among Pericles, Plato, and the "Old Oligarch." As a starting point in planning this debate, the group should discuss Primary Sources 1.4, 1.5, and 1.8. Encourage them to read more on each of these three Athenians. Have them role-play their debate in front of the class. Assign other students the task of writing newspaper reports on the debate summarizing it in detail for other Athenian citizens. Each of these newspaper reports should use portions of the three sources mentioned here.
- ◆ Ask students to read and discuss Aristotle's comments on slavery in Primary Source 1.9. Based on this source, ask each student to write two detailed letters. The first letter should be to Aristotle expressing the student's own views on what Aristotle says in Primary Source 1.9. It should include specific references to ideas in at least two other sources for this lesson. Then have the student write a letter from Aristotle responding to the first letter as the student imagines Aristotle himself would have done.

*Taking Action*

- ◆ As a class, attend a session of your town, village, or city's elected council or other governing body. Ask students to take careful notes on what is discussed. They should also try to assess how much like or unlike Athenian democracy the meeting seems to be. As a follow-up, ask students to summarize their views in letters to the editor of a local newspaper or other nearby news source.
- ◆ Based on the work in the previous assignment, use social media to share the letters and any responses to them received from the newspaper or its readers.



## Introductory Essay

# *Democracy in Ancient Athens*



*Nineteenth-century painting depicting Pericles delivering his famous funeral oration in front of the Assembly*

Many early civilizations grew up on broad, fertile lands along major rivers. Ancient Greece was different. It has no single, large river uniting the lands around it. Mountains divide it into many separate regions. Its geography forced the Greeks to look to the sea. They had to trade with the islands of the Aegean Sea and many cities and states along the coasts of the Mediterranean. Because of its geography, Greece's many small regions remained separate city-states. These city-states went through many political changes over time. In some, a form of democracy developed. Our ideas today about democracy began to emerge in ancient Greece. The most important democracy was the city-state of Athens. In time, Athens became a powerful, sea-oriented empire ruled by elected officials and an assembly of citizens.

Athens was not always a democracy. Moreover, its democracy only lasted for about two centuries—the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. For a long time, a small group of pow-

erful aristocratic families ruled it. The Greeks called such a ruling group an *oligarchy*. Only these wealthy aristocrats could afford horses and military equipment. They led Athens in the many wars it fought. For that reason, many Athenians believed that oligarchy was the most natural form of government.

However, as Athens grew in population, new problems developed. Land was always in short supply in Attica, the small territory that Athens controlled. As population grew, land was divided into smaller and smaller plots. Many farmers went into debt trying to earn a living from these small plots. Many sold themselves as slaves to pay off their debts. Meanwhile, wealthier Athenians bought up these lands. Resentment of the small ruling oligarchy of wealthy aristocrats grew.



*Greeks learned to fight in tightly organized formations of foot soldiers, shown here on the Chigi vase.*

At the same time, Athens began to make important changes in the conduct of warfare. The Greek city-states were often at war with one another. At first, warfare was mainly carried on by those rich enough to own horses. But over time, Greeks learned to fight in tightly organized formations of foot soldiers. These soldiers were called *hoplites*. Less wealthy men could afford the sword, shield, and helmet needed for such fighting. Compact hoplite formations had to be skilled and highly motivated. Meanwhile, even poor and landless men could join Greek naval forces as rowers in Greece's famous triremes. The growing importance of such soldiers and sailors helped them win greater power as citizens. Ordinary Athenians came to be seen as important to the survival of the city-state. Even many wealthy Athenians agreed. It made sense to give these ordinary citizens more of a say in their government.



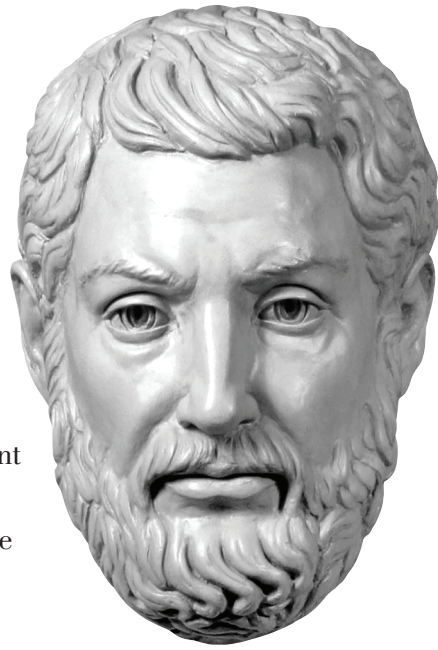
The most important reformer of Athens was himself a member of a powerful aristocratic clan. His name was Cleisthenes. His reforms in 508 BCE reduced the power of the aristocrats and gave a much greater role to ordinary citizens. He rearranged small districts, called *demes*, to weaken the control of powerful families over the people of each locality. And he gave all free male citizens a major say in choosing officials, passing laws, and debating issues.

As this democratic system developed, the most important body was the Assembly. It met in a public space out in the open. Citizens learned to speak their minds and take pride in their freedom and independence. Many top leadership positions were filled by lot. Usually, those who held those jobs served only for a year. This prevented any man from becoming too powerful over time.

Each deme contributed fifty members to the Council who prepared topics and laws for the Assembly to debate and decide. Sizable juries of hundreds of citizens judged cases before the courts. Athens gave ordinary citizens several kinds of public authority.

But these rights did not extend to everyone. Women, for example, could not vote or hold office. In fact, they took very little part in public life. Foreigners in Greek city-states usually had no political rights. Slavery was also a part of life in ancient Greece, as it was in every early civilization. Prisoners of war from all over the Mediterranean were enslaved and put to work in households, mines, and shops. These slaves enjoyed none of the rights of male Athenian citizens.

These are the flaws that people in our own times criticize most. However, few questioned these things at the time. In almost all societies then, women and slaves had few or no political rights. At the time, critics of Athenian democracy said it gave political rights to too many citizens, not too few. The objections of these critics are included in this lesson's primary sources, along with others who defended Athenian democracy. These sources should help you discuss and debate the lesson's central question—How democratic was Athenian democracy?



*Modern bust of Cleisthenes*



## History Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

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### *Democracy in Ancient Athens*

Your group's task is to explore history issues related to the democratic system of ancient Athens. A disciplinary compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary and secondary sources. Follow the steps to complete the task.

#### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Some Athenians were critical of their democracy. What were they most critical of, and why did these aspects of the system bother them the most?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 1.5, 1.8, and 1.9.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Today, people look back at ancient Athens and note its failure to include large groups of people in its democratic system. Slaves, women, and foreign residents were all excluded from the political process in Athens. In the centuries since, most societies have outlawed slavery. Almost no one defends it as an institution. Most societies have given women equal rights in political life. So it is natural for people now to notice how lacking Athenian democracy was in those ways.

However, is this the fair way to judge Athenian democracy? It depends on whether you are judging ancient Athenians against modern society or other ancient societies. After all, no society really gave women full rights back then. Few gave them any rights at all. Many societies had slavery. Almost no one spoke out against it on moral grounds. Instead, critics at the time said Athens gave political rights to too many citizens, not too few. In Athens, large masses of citizens could speak, vote, and directly decide matters. Critics of Athenian democracy at the time worried about the excitable passion of large crowds. They felt the masses were easily swayed by speakers appealing to strong emotions. They also worried about the lack of expertise of most magistrates who could only serve for one year.



Does it make sense to judge Athens from our point of view today? Or should we judge it from the point of view of its supporters and its critics in its own day?

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 1.5

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Primary Source 1.8

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Primary Source 1.9

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## **Day Two**

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Some Athenians were critical of their democracy. What were they most critical of, and why did these aspects of the system bother them the most?

State your group's claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven primary sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



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GROUP MEMBERS:

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## *Democracy in Ancient Athens*

Your group's task is to explore the civics issues related to the democratic system of ancient Athens. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

In what ways does Athenian democracy seem most like and most unlike our own constitutional system?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 1.4, 1.6, and 1.10.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Democratic Athens was ruled by elected magistrates, large citizen-juries, and an Assembly of citizens. That Assembly met at the Pnyx, a hill out in the open. It met forty times a year or more. As many as six thousand citizens may at times have attended. They listened to proposals, heard speeches, and voted on matters put before them. A Council of 500 citizens prepared the Assembly's agenda. Each member of that Council was selected by lot to serve one year only. Most elected magistrates also served for just one year. Juries were selected by lot as well, with hundreds of citizens on each jury. In these ways, Athens is an extreme example of *direct democracy*. That is, it was a system in which people directly decided matters; they did not rely on elected representatives to do this.

In a direct democracy, a majority of citizens make all decisions. This raises the question of what happens to the minority of citizens who may disagree. Are there any protections for them or for their rights, or can the majority do whatever it wants to them? This concern for the minority's rights was central to those who framed the U.S. Constitution. It is a key reason they were not in favor of a pure, direct democracy.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 1.4

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Primary Source 1.6

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Primary Source 1.10

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## Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

In what ways does Athenian democracy seem most like and most unlike  
our own constitutional system?

State your group's claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



## Economics Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

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### *Democracy in Ancient Athens*

Your group's task is to explore the economics issues related to the democratic system of ancient Athens. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

#### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Do economic conditions in ancient Athens help explain why the Athenians adopted a democratic system of government? Why or why not?

3. Read and discuss Secondary Sources 1.1 and 1.2, and Primary Source 1.9.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Most citizens of Athens and its surrounding lands in Attica made their living by farming. Grains such as wheat and barley were used to make bread, the main food in the Greek diet. Grapes were used to make wine. Yet Greece's rocky lands made farming difficult. Unlike ancient Egypt or Mesopotamia, ancient Greece did not have enough fertile land to support large numbers of people. From the start, trading and seafaring skills were key to this society's wealth and power. The Greeks traded pottery, wine, woolen cloth, tools, weapons, and other goods for timber, metals, and other resources.

The population of Attica was never more than about 400,000. Many economic tasks were undertaken by slaves. These were often captives of war. Resident aliens from outside of Attica also had no citizen rights. Like the slaves, they were not strongly loyal to Athens. Yet Athens often had to mobilize all its manpower to fight wars. It was surrounded by other, often hostile Greek city-states and powerful kingdoms outside of Greece.

The emphasis on trade in Athens meant it needed many sailors to man its merchant and war vessels. To survive, it had to depend on highly motivated citizens to work together to support what was always a small city-state in a dangerous world.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Secondary Source 1.1

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Secondary Source 1.2

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Primary Source 1.9

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## **Day Two**

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Do economic conditions in ancient Athens help explain why the Athenians adopted a democratic system of government? Why or why not?

State your group's claim here:

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- 
7. From the remaining seven sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

- 
- 
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- 
- 
- 
8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



## Geography Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

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### *Democracy in Ancient Athens*

Your group's task is to explore geography issues related to the democratic system of ancient Athens. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

#### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

How does the geography of ancient Athens and its surroundings help explain why a democratic system developed in that city-state?

3. Read and discuss Secondary Sources 1.1 and 1.2, and Primary Source 1.3.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

The first great civilizations grew up in fertile valleys along rivers. Egypt emerged on the Nile. Early Mesopotamian cultures arose along the Tigris and Euphrates. The Indus civilization grew up along the river of that name. Ancient China appeared along the Huang He. These rivers provided the well-watered, fertile soil that such civilizations needed. Greece was different. Mountains divide mainland Greece into many separate regions. Its rocky hills and narrow valleys mainly lead to the coast. Greeks were forced to turn to trade with the islands of the Aegean Sea and to other cultures farther away.

At first, Attica had enough fertile land to support its people. Wealthy aristocrats owned large estates, but there was still land enough for many small farmers. However, as Attica's population grew, more and more poor farmers crowded onto smaller plots on the scarce land available. Resentment of the rich led to social conflict and political upheavals. One solution was to set up colonies elsewhere in the Aegean Sea, other parts

of the Mediterranean region, and far up into the Black Sea. This growing trading empire helped Athens keep people at home employed and well off. Democracy may have provided another safety valve. That is, it helped to keep a restless and growing population satisfied with the way their city-state was treating them.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Secondary Source 1.1

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Secondary Source 1.2

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Primary Source 1.3

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## Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

How does the geography of ancient Athens and its surroundings help explain why a democratic system developed in that city-state?

State your group's claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven primary sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group’s discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group’s presentation.

## How to Analyze a Primary Source

For this lesson, you will be studying several primary source documents. This handout offers suggestions for how best to read and analyze historical primary sources. Studying such sources is challenging. They were created in a different time and place. Their language and use of certain key terms often differ from ours. They assume things we might not accept. They arise out of historical circumstances and settings that differ greatly from those of our own times. To use such sources as evidence, you need to apply some special historical thinking skills and habits. Here are some guidelines to help you do this.

◆ *Question the source.*

No primary source was written with you and your interests in mind, so you need to be clear about what you are looking for when you examine a source. You need to stay in charge of the investigation. Act like a detective, and ask questions. Above all, keep your own most important compelling questions in mind as you read and think about a source.

◆ *Consider the source's origins.*

This is often simply called “sourcing.” It means asking who created the source, when and where the source was created, and why. If you know the source’s purpose, you will be more likely to see how it is shaped by its creator’s point of view. Among other things, sourcing can also help you decide how reliable or typical a source might be.

◆ *Contextualize the source.*

“Context” here means the broader historical setting for the source. Sources are always a part of a larger historical context. You need to consider how this context helps clarify the meaning of the source. You also need to decide which context is most important. Sources might be understood best in connection with a local context or a recent event. Alternatively, they might be understood better within a national or international context, or as part of a long-term trend in society at large. Your guiding questions should help you decide which context is most important.

◆ *Corroborate the source.*

This means you must think about your source in relation to other sources. Does the source agree with or support those other sources, or does it seem to be at odds with the other sources? Might there be additional sources, which have not been provided to you, that could support or conflict with your source?

◆ *Above all, read the source carefully.*

Look at language closely. Pay attention to images, emotional language, metaphors, and other literary devices. Think about what is implied, not merely what is stated or claimed in so many words. Think about what is left out as well as what is included. Make inferences based on your close reading. This will help you get more out of your source than even the source’s creator might have seen in it.



## SECONDARY SOURCE ▶

## I.I

## Athens and Its Empire

When historians speak of ancient Athens as a city-state, they usually mean Athens itself and all of Attica. Attica is the triangular peninsula shown on this map jutting into the Aegean Sea. The free male inhabitants of Attica made up the citizens of the city-state of Athens. At the height of its power in the fifth century BCE, Athens also controlled a large empire of colonies scattered all around the Aegean. For a time, the wealth of these colonies helped to make Athens the richest and most powerful city-state of ancient Greece.



Original Document Source: Once in a Blue Moon, Map of the Delian League ("Athenian Empire") in 431 BCE, 2009, CC BY-SA 2.5 via Wikimedia Commons.



## SECONDARY SOURCE ▶

## 1.2

## The Greek Landscape

Many early civilizations grew up in fertile valleys along large rivers. Ancient Greece was different. Mountains divide mainland Greece into many separate regions. Its rocky hills and narrow valleys all seem to lead to the coast. To trade, Greeks were forced to look outward to the sea. This photo shows the ruins of an ancient Greek village in Attica called Rhamnous. It is located on the coast, looking across to the island of Euboea.



Original Document Source: Nefasdicere, *View of the Site of Rhamnous*, 2007, CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons.



PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

I.3

## Hoplites and Triremes

The Greek city-states were often at war with one another. At first, warfare was carried on mainly by wealthy nobles rich enough to own horses. But over time, Greeks learned to fight in organized formations of foot soldiers called *hoplites*. The vase here shows a hoplite formation of men with javelins and spears. Moderately wealthy men could afford the sword, shield, and helmet needed for such fighting. Even the poor could join Greek naval forces as rowers in Greece's famous triremes.



Original Document Sources: Detail from the Chigi-vase, 7th century BCE, public domain via Wikimedia Commons.



From 431 to 404 BCE, Athens and its allies fought Sparta and its allies in the Peloponnesian War. After the first year of the war, the Athenians held a customary funeral for all those killed. The great Athenian politician and general Pericles spoke at the ceremony. His funeral oration is perhaps the most famous statement of Athenian democratic and patriotic ideas. The Greek historian Thucydides lived during this conflict and wrote a history about it. He reproduced Pericles's funeral oration based on what he knew about Pericles and the speech, not on an exact record of it.

### Original Document

Our constitution does not copy the laws of neighboring states; we are rather a pattern to others than imitators ourselves. Its administration favors the many instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy. If we look to the laws, they afford equal justice to all in their private differences; if no social standing, advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity, class considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way, if a man is able to serve the state, he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition. The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. There, far from exercising a jealous surveillance over each other, we do not feel called upon to be angry with our neighbor for doing what he likes, or even to indulge in those injurious looks which cannot fail to be offensive, although they inflict no positive penalty. But all this ease in our private relations does not make us lawless as citizens. Against this fear is our chief safeguard, teaching us to obey the magistrates and the laws, particularly such as regard the protection of the injured, whether they are actually on the statute book, or belong to that code which, although unwritten, yet cannot be broken without acknowledged disgrace. . . .

We cultivate refinement without extravagance and knowledge without effeminacy; wealth we employ more for use than for show, and place the real disgrace of poverty not in owning to the fact but in declining the struggle against it. Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters; for, unlike any other nation, regarding him who takes no part in these duties not as unambitious but as useless, we Athenians . . . instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all.

CONTINUED

### Adapted Version

Our constitution does not copy anyone else's. Others copy ours. Athens' constitution favors the many instead of the few. That is why it is called a democracy. Our laws grant equal justice to all in their private differences. If a man has no social standing or status, he can still advance in public life based on his reputation and his merit. Nor does poverty bar him. If he can serve the state, he is not hindered. The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. There, we do not interfere with each other. We do not get angry at anyone for doing what he likes, nor do we even look down on him at all. But all this tolerance for private behavior does not make us lawless as citizens. We do use fear to ensure this. That is, we are taught to obey the magistrates and the laws. This is especially so with laws to protect the injured or wronged. It is so when these laws are actually on the statute book, and it is so when they are part of an unwritten code that we cannot break without disgrace.

We are culturally refined but not extravagant or frivolous. We use our wealth, but do not show it off. We see no disgrace in admitting to being poor, but we do see a disgrace in refusing to struggle against it. Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to. And even if our ordinary citizens must deal mainly with their own business concerns, they are still fair judges of public matters. Unlike other nations, we view a man who takes no part in civic activity not merely as unambitious but as useless. We Athenians do not look on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action. Instead, we think it is necessary before taking any wise action at all.



Plato was an Athenian citizen who grew up during the Peloponnesian War and the troubled times that followed. He was probably a student of the philosopher Socrates. Socrates was seen as a severe critic of Athenian society. In 399, he was tried and executed for having "corrupted the youth of Athens." This unjust execution may have affected Plato's own attitudes toward Athenian democracy.

### Original Document

In such a state of society the master fears and flatters his scholars, and the scholars despise their masters and tutors; young and old are all alike; and the young man is on a level with the old, and is ready to compete with him in word or deed; and old men condescend to the young and are full of pleasantry and gaiety; they are loth to be thought morose and authoritative, and therefore they adopt the manners of the young. . . . And above all, I said, and as the result of all, see how sensitive the citizens become; they chafe impatiently at the least touch of authority and at length, as you know, they cease to care even for the laws, written or unwritten; they will have no one over them. . . . The excess of liberty, whether in States or individuals, seems only to pass into excess of slavery. . . . And so tyranny naturally arises out of democracy, and the most aggravated form of tyranny and slavery out of the most extreme form of liberty?

### Adapted Version

In a democracy, the master fears and flatters his scholars, and the scholars despise their masters and tutors. Young and old are treated as alike. The young man is on the same level as the old man. He feels he has a right to compete with him in word or deed. The old men lower themselves by treating the young with nothing but pleasantry and gaiety. They do not want to be seen as morose and authoritative, so they adopt the manners of the young. Above all, see how sensitive the citizens become. They resent impatiently the least touch of authority. At length, as you know, they cease to care even for the laws, written or unwritten. They will have no one in authority over them. The excess of liberty, whether in states or individuals, seems only to pass into the excess of slavery. And so tyranny naturally arises out of democracy. And the most extreme form of tyranny and slavery arises out of the most extreme form of liberty.

All male citizens could vote in the Assembly. However, the Council controlled what topics would be discussed. In a crisis, the tasks of Council and Assembly had to be performed smoothly and rapidly. This passage is from the famous Greek leader and orator Demosthenes. In 339 BCE, Macedonia had conquered the nearby city of Elatia. This directly threatened Athens. Demosthenes describes what happened when news of this threat came to Athens.

### Original Document

Evening had already fallen when a messenger arrived bringing to the presiding councillors the news that Elatea had been taken. They were sitting at supper, but they instantly rose from table, cleared the booths in the marketplace of their occupants, and unfolded the hurdles, while others summoned the commanders and ordered the attendance of the trumpeter. The commotion spread through the whole city. At daybreak on the morrow the presidents summoned the Council to the Council House, and the citizens flocked to the place of assembly. Before the Council could introduce the business and prepare the agenda, the whole body of citizens had taken their places on the hill.

The Council arrived, the presiding Councilors formally reported the intelligence they had received, and the courier was introduced.

### Adapted Version

The messenger arrived at evening to tell the Councilors that Elateia had been taken. They were at supper. Yet they instantly went out to close the booths in the marketplace and set up hurdles to shut it down. Others summoned the commanders and the trumpeter. The commotion spread through the whole city. At daybreak on the next day, the presiding Councilors summoned the entire Council to the Council House. The citizens flocked to the place of assembly. Before the Council could introduce the business and prepare the agenda, the whole body of citizens had taken their places on the hill.

The Council arrived. The presiding Councilors formally reported what they had learned. The messenger was then introduced.



## SECONDARY SOURCE ►

I.7

## Where the Assembly Met

The meetings of the Athenian Assembly were open to all male citizens. At times, as many as 6,000 or more would gather for its regular meetings. The Assembly met in the Pnyx, an open space below the Acropolis. The Pnyx is shown in the foreground in this somewhat idealized painting of what the Acropolis might have looked like.



Original Document Source: Leo von Klenze, *The Acropolis at Athens*, 1846, oil on canvas, 40½ × 58.1" (102.8 × 147.7 cm), Neue Pinakothek, Munich, Germany, <https://www.pinakothek.de/kunst/leo-von-klenze/ideale-ansicht-der-akropolis-und-des-areopag-athen>.



A writer usually referred to as "the Old Oligarch" was a critic of Athenian democracy. This is a passage from a treatise he wrote in the late fifth or early fourth centuries BCE. In the past, the Old Oligarch was wrongly identified as Xenophon by Professor Fred Fling in the book from which this passage is taken.

### Original Document

As for the constitution of the Athenians, their choice of this type of constitution I do not approve, for in choosing thus they choose that thieves should fare better than the elite. This then is why I do not approve. First of all, then, I shall say that at Athens the poor and the commons seem justly to have the advantage over the well-born and the wealthy; for it is the poor which mans the fleet and has brought the state her power, and the steersmen and the boatswains and the shipmasters and the lookout-men and the shipwrights—these have brought the state her power much rather than the hoplites and the best-born and the elite. This being so, it seems right that all should have a share in offices filled by lot or by election, and that any citizen who wishes should be allowed to speak. Then, in those offices which bring security to the whole people if they are in the hands of good citizens, but, if not, ruin, the poor desires to have no share. They do not think that they ought to have a share through the lot in the supreme commands or in the cavalry commands, for the poor realize that they reap greater benefit by not having these offices in their own hands, but by allowing men of standing to hold them. All those offices, however, whose end is pay and family benefits the poor do seek to hold. . . .

In every land the elite are opposed to democracy. Among the elite there is very little license and injustice, very great discrimination as to what is worthy, while among the poor there is very great ignorance, disorderliness, and thievery; for poverty tends to lead them to what is disgraceful as does lack of education and the ignorance which befall some men as a result of poverty.

### Adapted Version

I do not approve of the constitution the Athenians have chosen. For in choosing it, they choose that thieves should do better than the elite, or the best of society. First of all, I say that the poor and the commoners of Athens do seem to deserve their advantage over the well-born and the wealthy. For it is the poor that man the fleet and bring the state her power. The steersmen and the boatswains and the shipmasters and the lookout-men and the shipwrights have all brought the state her power. They have done so more than the hoplites and the best-born and the

CONTINUED

elite. This being so, it seems right that all should share in offices filled by lot or by election, and that any citizen who wishes to speak should be allowed to. However, the poor do not want offices that bring security to everyone as long as they are in the hands of good citizens. They don't want to share through the lottery in the supreme commands or in the cavalry commands. For the poor realize that they are much better off if they do not have those offices in their own hands. They realize they are better off by allowing men of standing to hold them. However, the poor do seek all those offices that provide pay and family benefits.

In every land, the elite is opposed to democracy. Among the elite there is very little loose behavior and injustice. There is great care to define and promote what is worthy. Among the poor, on the other hand, there is ignorance, disorderliness, and thievery. For poverty tends to lead people to what is disgraceful, just as does lack of education and the ignorance which befall some men as a result of poverty.



PRIMARY SOURCE ►

I.9

## Slavery: Aristotle's Viewpoint

Democracy in Athens was for its free male citizens. It was not for foreigners living in Athens. Nor was it for the large number of slaves there. Slavery was an accepted form of dependent labor in ancient Greece as in almost all other major ancient civilizations. Few even spoke much about it at all. One who did write about it briefly was the philosopher Aristotle.

**Original Document**

Hence we see what is the nature and office of a slave; he who is by nature not his own but another's man, is by nature a slave; and he may be said to be another's man who, being a human being, is also a possession. And a possession may be defined as an instrument of action, separable from the possessor. But is there any one thus intended by nature to be a slave, and for whom such a condition is expedient and right, or rather is not all slavery a violation of nature? There is no difficulty in answering this question, on grounds both of reason and of fact. For that some should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule. . . . Again, the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled; this principle, of necessity, extends to all mankind. . . . It is clear, then, that some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right. There is a slave or slavery by law as well as by nature. The law of which I speak is a sort of convention—the law by which whatever is taken in war is supposed to belong to the victors. But this right many jurists impeach, as they would an orator who brought forward an unconstitutional measure: they detest the notion that, because one man has the power of doing violence and is superior in brute strength, another shall be his slave and subject. Even among philosophers there is a difference of opinion.

Original Document Source: Aristotle, *The Politics of Aristotle*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1855), 4–9.

Late in the fourth century BCE, King Philip II of Macedon threatened Athens. Macedon was a growing power located just north of Greece. Philip defeated Athens and several other Greek states in the battle of Chaeronea (338 BCE). He promised not to harm Athenian democracy. However, many Athenians feared that some among them might seek Philip's aid and put an end to their democracy. In 336 BCE, therefore, the Athenians passed this law to prevent anyone from imposing a tyranny on them.

### Original Document

Be it resolved by the Nomothetai [lawgivers]: If anyone rise up against the People with a view to tyranny or join in establishing the tyranny or overthrow the People of the Athenians or the democracy in Athens, whoever kills him who does any of these things shall be blameless. It shall not be permitted for anyone of the councilors of the Council of the Areopagus—if the Demos [the People] or the democracy in Athens has been overthrown—to go up into the Areopagus or sit in the Council or deliberate about anything. If anyone, the Demos or the democracy in Athens having been overthrown, of the councilors of the Areopagus does go up into the Areopagus or sits in the Council or deliberates about anything, both he and his progeny shall be deprived of civil rights and his substance shall be confiscated and one tenth given to the Goddess. The secretary of the Council shall inscribe this law on two steles of stone and set one of them by the entrance into the Areopagus . . . and the other in the Assembly. For the inscribing of the steles the treasurer of the People shall give 20 drachmas from the moneys expendable by the People according to decrees.

### Adapted Version

The lawgivers have decided this: Anyone who tries to overthrow the Athenian people and impose a tyranny can be killed. Whoever kills him shall be blameless. If the people or the democracy is overthrown, no councilor of the Council of the Areopagus may go into the Areopagus. None may sit in the Council or deliberate about anything. If anyone does this after the democracy has been overthrown, both he and his family shall lose their civil rights. Their property shall be taken from them and one tenth given to the religious institutions. The secretary of the Council shall inscribe this law on two stone slabs. One is to be set by the entrance into the Areopagus. The other shall be set in the Assembly. The treasurer shall give 20 drachmas of the people's money to pay for the inscribing of these steles.



## Communicating Results and Taking Action

### Communicating Results

- ◆ Working in a group, use library resources and the internet to learn more about the specific buildings and other sites at the Agora, the Pnyx, and the Acropolis in ancient Athens. Diagrams and maps of these are not hard to find. Your group should create a map including the parts of each of these places that seem most important to the democracy of ancient Athens. Prepare a five-minute presentation of your group's map.
- ◆ In a small group, prepare a role-playing debate among Pericles, Plato, and the "Old Oligarch." As a starting point in planning this debate, discuss Primary Sources 1.4, 1.5, and 1.8. Read more on each of these three Athenians. Role-play your debate in front of the class. Other students will write newspaper reports on the debate summarizing it in detail for other Athenian citizens. Each of these newspaper reports should use portions of the three primary sources mentioned here.
- ◆ Read and discuss Aristotle's comments on slavery in Primary Source 1.9. Based on this source, write two detailed letters. The first letter should be to Aristotle expressing your own views about what Aristotle says in Primary Source 1.9. It should include specific references to ideas in at least two other sources for this lesson. Then write a letter from Aristotle responding to the first letter as you imagine Aristotle himself would have done.

### Taking Action

- ◆ As a class, attend a session of your town, village, or city's elected council or other governing body. Take careful notes on what was discussed. Also try to assess how much like or unlike Athenian democracy the meeting seemed to be. Summarize your views in letters to the editor of a local newspaper or other nearby news source.
- ◆ Based on the work in the previous assignment, use social media to share your letters and any responses to them received from the newspaper or its readers.

## Democracy in Ancient Athens Rubric

Criteria	Unacceptable	Developing	Proficient	Excellent
<b>Focus</b>	Tries to respond to task instructions but lacks clear focus on a central idea or thesis	Addresses the task instructions adequately but focus on a central idea or thesis is uneven	Responds to the task instructions appropriately and convincingly; has a consistent focus on a central idea or thesis	Responds to all task instructions convincingly; has a clear and strong focus on a well-developed central idea or thesis
<b>Research</b>	Refers to some sources but fails to connect these in a way that is relevant to the task instructions	Refers to relevant sources well but does not always connect these clearly to the task instructions	Refers to relevant sources accurately and usually connects these to the task instructions and a central idea	Refers to relevant sources accurately and in great detail and connects these clearly to the task instructions and a central idea
<b>Development/Use of Evidence</b>	Uses some details and evidence from sources but does not make clear the relevance to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources generally but not always in support of a clear focus relevant to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources in a way that effectively supports a focus relevant to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources along with clear explanations demonstrating deep understanding of the task purpose or instructions
<b>Content</b>	Refers to disciplinary content without clearly understanding it or while using it in an irrelevant or inaccurate manner	Refers to disciplinary content with some understanding but not always with a clear idea of its relation to the overall task	Accurately uses disciplinary content and demonstrates a clear idea of its relation to the overall task	Uses disciplinary content effectively and explains thoroughly and in depth its relation to the overall task
<b>Conventions</b>	Demonstrates only limited control of standard English conventions, with many errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates some command of standard English conventions, with limited errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates adequate command of standard English conventions, with few errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates a well-developed command of standard English conventions, with few errors and a use of language appropriate to the audience and the purpose of the task

## Primary and Secondary Source Bibliography

- I.1: Once in a Blue Moon. *Map of the Delian League ("Athenian Empire") in 431 BCE*. 2009. CC BY-SA 2.5 via Wikimedia Commons.
- I.2: Nefasdicere. *View of the Site of Rhamnous*. 2007. CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons.
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Model of a Greek trireme. Deutsches Museum, Munich, Germany.
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## Sources for Further Study

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# The Roman Republic

*Why Did It Fail?*



## Overview

### Introduction

Ancient Roman civilization lasted a thousand years. However, what may be its most admired achievement—its republican political system—ended in failure halfway through that long history. The Roman Republic inspired America’s own founders more than any other constitutional system. It lasted for 500 years. Yet it failed dramatically in a long century of growing disorder. The Roman Republic was replaced in 27 BCE by the Roman Empire. From then on, one man governed Rome: the emperor. The emperors ruled Rome for about as long as the Republic had. Why did the Roman Republic fail? This lesson will focus on that compelling question. In this lesson, students will work with ten sources. These sources form the core content for a set of tasks that will help them answer the lesson’s compelling question.

### Objectives

Students will work individually and in small groups to respond in a meaningful way to a compelling question about the Roman Republic. They will apply discipline-specific background knowledge, use scaffolding, and engage in instructional activities to interpret primary and secondary sources before presenting their ideas to the class.

### C3 Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- ◆ **D1.4.6-8.** Explain how the relationship between supporting questions and compelling questions is mutually reinforcing.
- ◆ **D1.5.6-8.** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.5.6-8.** Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.11.6-8.** Use other historical sources to infer a plausible maker, date, place of origin, and intended audience for historical sources where this information is not easily identified.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.12.6-8.** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to identify further areas of inquiry and additional sources.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.16.6-8.** Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.
- ◆ **D2.CIV.8.6-8.** Analyze ideas and principles contained in the founding documents of the United States, and explain how they influence the social and political system.
- ◆ **D2.ECO.7.6-8.** Analyze the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in a market economy.
- ◆ **D2.GEO.5.6-8.** Analyze the combinations of cultural and environmental characteristics that make places both similar to and different from other places.
- ◆ **D2.GEO.6.6-8.** Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.
- ◆ **D3.1.6-8.** Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

- ◆ **D3.2.6-8.** Evaluate the credibility of a source by determining its relevance and intended use.
- ◆ **D3.3.6-8.** Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources to support claims, noting evidentiary limitations.
- ◆ **D3.4.6-8.** Develop claims and counterclaims while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.
- ◆ **D4.1.6-8.** Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments.
- ◆ **D4.3.6-8.** Present adaptations of arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., internet, social media, and digital documentary).
- ◆ **D4.6.6-8.** Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

### Common Core Anchor Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1.** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2.** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6.** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9.** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7.** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1.** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

## Teaching Instructions

**Compelling Question**

Why did the Roman Republic fail?

**Preparation**

Provide all students with a copy of the Introductory Essay. Assign this reading as homework. In addition, assign all relevant parts of your course textbook or other basic reading material. Remind students to keep the compelling question for the lesson in mind as they read.



## Asking Questions about the Roman Republic

*This part of the task stresses Dimensions 1 and 2 of the C3 Framework*

**Day One**

1. Briefly discuss the Introductory Essay in class and address any initial questions students may have.
2. Distribute the How to Analyze a Primary Source handout. Review each suggestion with the class, and remind students to refer to the handout as they read the primary sources in this lesson.
3. Divide the class into four small groups. Each group will focus its work on one of the four basic disciplines identified in Dimension 2 of the C3 Framework—history, civics, geography, or economics. As they work, the groups should keep in mind the lesson’s overall compelling question. However, for Day One and Day Two, each group will work mainly with a second compelling question—one related specifically to its assigned discipline.
4. Provide each group with one copy of its discipline-specific Assignment Sheet. Give each student a copy of all the primary and secondary sources for this lesson. Each group may share a primary and secondary source packet, if necessary.
5. Have students complete the Day One section of their Assignment Sheets. The objective for Day One is for groups to read three sources, and then formulate one supporting question about each of those sources. The supporting questions should be recorded in the spaces provided on the Assignment Sheet.



## Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Evaluating Sources and Evidence

*This part of the task stresses Dimensions 2 and 3 of the C3 Framework*

**Day Two**

6. Students will return to their previously assigned groups and formulate a claim addressing their group’s compelling question. After reading the remaining seven sources, they will select one that supports their claim.

7. Using the evidence gathered from the sources, each group will then prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation about the Roman Republic from the group's disciplinary perspective. The presentation can be in the form of an oral report, a debate among group members, a PowerPoint, or a related type of presentation. Allow time for students to prepare by discussing and debating topics among themselves.

### **Day Three**

8. Each group will deliver its presentation. Allow time for class discussion following each presentation, and for a final effort to answer the central compelling question for the lesson.



#### **Communicating Results and Taking Action**

*This part of the task stresses Dimension 4 of the C3 Framework*

Students will complete a final project that expresses an understanding of the topic and responds clearly to the lesson's central compelling question. The project may be completed in groups, but students should be evaluated individually.

Distribute the Communicating Results and Taking Action handout, and decide whether you will assign the projects or allow students to form groups and choose tasks on their own. Set a reasonable deadline. Students should review the Roman Republic Rubric so they can understand how their performance will be evaluated. The projects are summarized below.

#### **Communicating Results**

- ◆ Divide students into small groups. Ask each group to read and discuss Primary Sources 2.5 and 2.6. These sources deal with the reforms proposed by the tribune Tiberius Gracchus. Give the groups time to do some further background reading on Tiberius and his brother Gaius and the reforms they proposed. Each group should prepare a brief report explaining who Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus were and what problems they worried about. Each group should answer this question: Could Tiberius's reforms have saved the Roman Republic? After the presentations, have the entire class discuss this question.
- ◆ Ask students to read Cicero's questions (Primary Source 2.10). These questions reflect Cicero's concerns about the dictatorship he feared Julius Caesar was going to impose on Rome. Have each student write a letter back to Cicero about his fears. The letter should propose one or two key changes in the Roman Republic's government that might make the system work better and prevent a dictatorship. Tell students to use the diagram (Secondary Source 2.2) as a guide for identifying features of the government and proposing reforms.
- ◆ Ask a small group of students to prepare a brief presentation on the division of powers and the idea of "checks and balances" in the U.S. Constitution. They should be given guidance in doing some additional reading on these concepts. After this presentation, have all students study Primary Source 2.1 and Secondary Source 2.2. Ask each student to identify one feature of the Roman Republic's government that does what the U.S. system of checks and balances does. Then have them choose one feature that does not work as well as the checks and balances of the U.S. Constitution. Share the ideas students come up with in an all-class discussion.

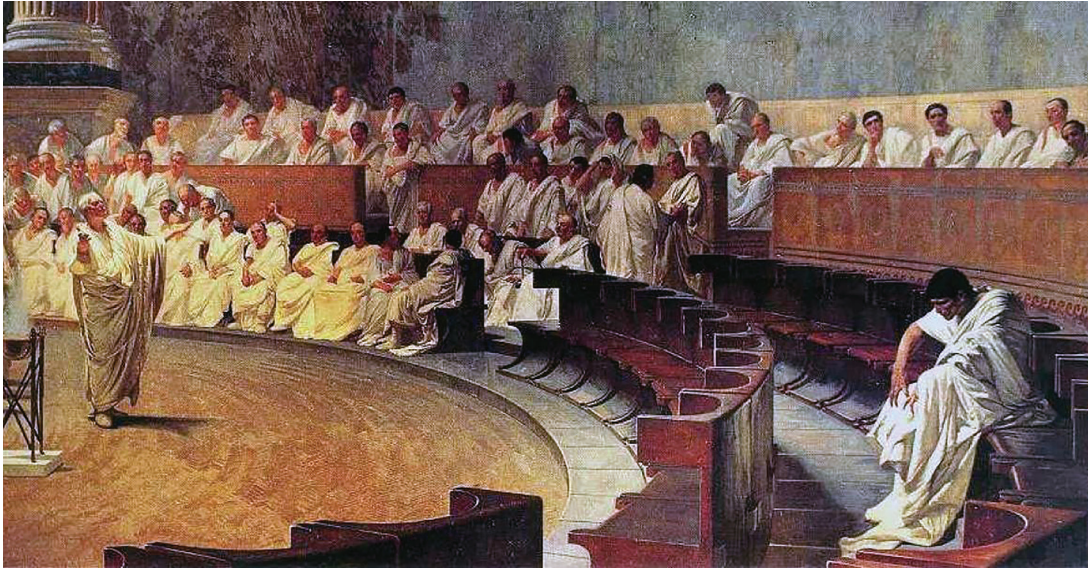
*Taking Action*

- ◆ What can Americans today learn from studying the fate of the Roman Republic during its final century? Divide students into small groups and ask each group to discuss this question. Ask them to agree to a list of three things they believe Americans should know about this history. As a class, discuss the lists. Have someone make a video recording of this discussion. Invite parents and other members of the community to screen the video and discuss it.
- ◆ Use social media to share brief reports on the community meeting described in the previous assignment. Ask those contacted in this way to comment and offer their own thoughts on this topic.



## Introductory Essay

# *The Roman Republic*



*Modern depiction of the Roman Senate*

Ancient Roman civilization's practical achievements amaze us—its roads, bridges, aqueducts, public baths, temples, forums. In the realm of ideas, its greatest legacy to the modern world—Roman law—was also a practical one. Other aspects of its civilization are not admired—its slavery, its militarism, its huge gap between rich and poor, and its barbaric gladiator contests.

Perhaps the most admired achievement is one that ended in failure halfway through Rome's long one-thousand-year history. That achievement was its republican political system. The Roman Republic inspired America's own founders. It lasted for five hundred years. Yet it failed dramatically in a long century of growing disorder. The Roman Republic was replaced in 27 BCE by the Roman Empire. From then on, one man governed Rome: the emperor. The emperors ruled Rome for about as long as the Republic had.

At first, kings ruled the small city-state of Rome. But in 509 BCE, a republic was founded. A republic is a government in which citizens have a say in choosing the leaders who will rule them. The most powerful body in the Roman Republic was the Senate. It vigorously debated issues. It made many key decisions. It supervised top elected officials, called *magistrates*. At first, it was made up entirely of patricians—men from older noble families. In time, the Senate became an assembly of former magistrates, patricians, and other wealthy Romans. Only men of wealth were members. The Senate guarded its traditions, powers, and aura of dignity with great care.

The senators were wealthy. But huge assemblies of other citizens got to choose the top magistrates. Even in the assemblies, however, voting rules gave greater say to wealthier citizens. Still, most citizens had some say. Roman law also gave ordinary citizens some protection against unrestrained authority.

Rome's history was one of nearly constant warfare and expansion. Its need for soldiers was a major factor in bringing its republican government into being. In its early centuries, Rome depended mainly on thousands of soldiers drafted from among its small property-owning farmers. It was thought that property owners would be motivated to defend their country. Their loyalty was strengthened by giving them a say in choosing their leaders. This is why the most important citizen assembly was the *Comitia Centuriata* (the Century Assembly). It was an assembly of soldiers organized into groups called *centuries*.

For its first 250 years, Rome fought wars only in Italy. It was easy to release soldiers after a year so they could return to their farms. However, all that began to change starting with the Punic Wars with Carthage (264–146 BCE). Rome began to extend its conquests to overseas territories. By the second century BCE it was fighting regularly in both the western and eastern ends of the Mediterranean Sea. Large armies fought for years far from home. It was hard for soldiers and their families to keep up their farms. Often they had to go deep into debt or sell their farms to wealthy landowners.

Roman wars and conquests led to the capture of huge numbers of slaves. The rich came to rely more and more on these slaves to work on their huge farms. This made it hard for ordinary farmers to compete. Many gave up their land and crowded into the cities, Rome especially. Disorder began to spread. Slave revolts erupted. Wealthy senators gained loyal “clients” among Rome's teeming poor masses. Mob actions and political assassinations by these clients grew more common. Respect for the Senate and the Republic declined.

Meanwhile, generals began to recruit volunteers from among the poor and landless. They promised such soldiers booty in conquests abroad and land after their service was over. They assembled armies more loyal to them than to the Republic in general. At times, people looked to these military leaders to restore order. In the 80s BCE, the armies of Marius and Sulla battled in Rome itself to win power. In 46 BCE, Julius Caesar was made dictator. A group of senators killed him in 44 BCE. Yet the Senate could not solve Rome's huge problems. In 31 BCE, Caesar's grand-nephew Octavian and his troops finally defeated all his rivals and took control. Taking the title *Augustus*, he became Rome's first emperor. The Republic was over. Under Augustus, a calmer time began for Rome. The Senate continued to meet, but all political control was now in the hands of the emperors.

This is a broad outline of what happened to the Roman Republic. The primary and secondary sources in this lesson are meant to help you better understand this last century or so in the history of republican government in Rome.



Julius Caesar

Image Sources: Cesare Maccari, *Cicero Denounces Catiline*, 1889, fresco, Palazzo Madama, Rome.  
Bust of Julius Caesar, public domain via Wikimedia Commons.



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GROUP MEMBERS:

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## *The Roman Republic*

Your group's task is to explore the history of the Roman Republic. A disciplinary compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary and secondary sources. Follow the steps to complete the task.

### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

“Changes in Rome’s armies were the biggest factor weakening and destroying the Roman Republic during the first century BCE.” Explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 2.5 and 2.9, and Secondary Source 2.3.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Traditionally, the armies of the Roman Republic were made up of landowning citizens. A man had to have enough wealth to equip himself. Besides, owners of small farms had a stake in defending Roman society. They could be counted on to fight hard. Usually, campaigns were fought in Italy one year at a time. A soldier could count on returning to his farm in time to keep it running. In the second century BCE, that began to change. Long campaigns overseas became common. Men often lost their farms to debt or decay. Rural poverty spread. Soon, it was hard to recruit enough landowning soldiers to fight Rome’s expanding overseas wars.

This explains the reforms associated with Gaius Marius. Actually, he probably did not introduce all of these changes alone. In any case, he established them firmly for the armies he led, starting in Numidia in North Africa in 107 BCE. Instead of recruiting landowners, he let landless poor sign up. They did so for pay and for the promise of fabulous riches (booty)

seized during their campaigns. After the fighting, Marius worked hard to win grants of land for them. As a result, their strongest loyalties were to their commander. In time, other generals built up their own armies in this way. As disorder spread, one general's legions often fought another's. Loyalty to the Roman Republic took second place. Each army championed its leader's military and political ambitions above all else.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each source and record those questions here.

Secondary Source 2.3

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Primary Source 2.5

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Primary Source 2.9

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## **Day Two**

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

“Changes in Rome's armies were the biggest factor weakening and destroying the Roman Republic during the first century BCE.” Explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.

State your group's claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



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GROUP MEMBERS:

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## *The Roman Republic*

Your group's task is to explore the civics issues related to the Roman Republic. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Are the checks and balances in the Roman Republic's constitution like those in our U.S. Constitution? Why or why not?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 2.1, and 2.9, and Secondary Source 2.2.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

One of this nation's founders, James Madison, wrote, "The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands . . . may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny." To prevent such a tyranny, the U.S. Constitution created many ways for each of these three branches of government to "check" one another. Did the Roman Republic also create such a system of checks and balances?

Some say both systems' checks and balances are similar. Two Assemblies gave the people of Rome a chance to pass laws and issue decrees. These were the Century Assembly of soldiers and the Plebeian Council, an assembly of commoners. An "executive branch" of magistrates existed. It was made up especially of the two Consuls chosen each year by the Century Assembly and Tribunes chosen by the Plebeian Council. The Roman Senate also issued decrees and guided the Consuls. It acted as a judicial branch as well. Critics of this comparison to the United States say the powers of each branch in the Roman Republic overlapped too much



with those of the other branches. This was especially dangerous in a time of deepening social conflict. Then it was hard to keep each branch from disrupting the others. Then the “checks” did not work smoothly at all.

- 5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group’s compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 2.1

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Secondary Source 2.2

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Primary Source 2.9

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Day Two

- 6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group’s own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Are the checks and balances in the Roman Republic’s constitution like those in our U.S. Constitution? Why or why not?

State your group's claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



## Economics Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

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### *The Roman Republic*

Your group's task is to explore the economics issues related to the Roman Republic. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

#### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

How were the troubles of men in Italy who owned small farms a key factor in bringing down the Roman Republic?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 2.5, 2.7, and 2.8.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

When people think of ancient Rome, many first think of its massive architectural wonders. Rome was a city of magnificent temples and public buildings of stone and cement. Its aqueducts carried water to the cities across miles of countryside. Its bridges and roads connected Rome to all parts of its growing empire. The economy also turned out the Roman legions' armor, iron weapons, and other implements of war. Yet the Roman economy was not that complex. It was still a simple agricultural society. Feeding its citizens and its armies was always its main concern. Most activity went into growing grain, olives, and grapes. Other basic goods were made in small-scale industrial workshops.

As Rome expanded throughout the Mediterranean, trade became more important. Its conquests also turned Rome into a full-scale slave society. Small farmers suffered as large estates (*latifundia*) run by gangs of slaves competed against them. The landless poor filled the cities, Rome especially. To prevent disorder, grain was doled out to the poor. This added

to the emphasis on basic agricultural production. Despite the grain dole, the urban poor became a source of disorder in Rome. Elaborate, often violent entertainment gave them an outlet for their frustrations. Competing politicians easily bribed mobs of poor “clients” to do their bidding. The urban poor added greatly to the growing disorder of the Roman Republic.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group’s compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 2.5

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Primary Source 2.7

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Primary Source 2.8

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## Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group’s own compelling question. Here is that question again:

How were the troubles of men in Italy who owned small farms a key factor in bringing down the Roman Republic?

State your group’s claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group’s discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group’s presentation.



## Geography Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

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### *The Roman Republic*

Your group's task is to explore geography issues related to the Roman Republic. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary and secondary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

#### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Expanding to all parts of the Mediterranean made Rome a powerful empire. How did it also add greatly to the problems the Republic faced in the first century BCE?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 2.7 and 2.9, and Secondary Source 2.4.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Rome began as a small city-state on the western side of Italy. For its first three centuries, it slowly took control of the entire peninsula. During the Punic Wars against Carthage of North Africa (264–146 BCE), the Romans built a fleet and became a sea power. They began to gain control of large areas outside of Italy, such as the island of Sicily and parts of Spain and North Africa. After that, Rome began conquering many parts of both the western and eastern Mediterranean.

Italy is in the center of the Mediterranean Sea. It reaches part of the way to its southern shore. Hence, the Romans were well placed to extend their control throughout the Mediterranean. As they did, trade grew rapidly in importance. Slaves from the conquered regions were set to work on the estates of wealthy Romans. Landless poor filled the cities, Rome especially. Conquests of Greece, Macedonia, parts of Asia Minor, and the Seleucid Empire followed. These gave Rome control over some of



the wealthiest and most culturally advanced societies. Soon their luxury goods, silk from China or spices from India, gave the rich much more lavish lifestyles. This only added to tensions between rich and poor.

Rome's great Mediterranean conquests strengthened it. Yet they also helped to disrupt the harmony of its social life in many ways.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each source and record those questions here.

Secondary Source 2.4

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Primary Source 2.7

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Primary Source 2.9

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## Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Expanding to all parts of the Mediterranean made Rome a powerful empire. How did it also add greatly to the problems the Republic faced in the first century BCE?

State your group's claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.

## How to Analyze a Primary Source

For this lesson, you will be studying several primary source documents. This handout offers suggestions for how best to read and analyze historical primary sources. Studying such sources is challenging. They were created in a different time and place. Their language and use of certain key terms often differ from ours. They assume things we might not accept. They arise out of historical circumstances and settings that differ greatly from those of our own times. To use such sources as evidence, you need to apply some special historical thinking skills and habits. Here are some guidelines to help you do this.

### ◆ *Question the source.*

No primary source was written with you and your interests in mind, so you need to be clear about what you are looking for when you examine a source. You need to stay in charge of the investigation. Act like a detective, and ask questions. Above all, keep your own most important compelling questions in mind as you read and think about a source.

### ◆ *Consider the source's origins.*

This is often simply called “sourcing.” It means asking who created the source, when and where the source was created, and why. If you know the source’s purpose, you will be more likely to see how it is shaped by its creator’s point of view. Among other things, sourcing can also help you decide how reliable or typical a source might be.

### ◆ *Contextualize the source.*

“Context” here means the broader historical setting for the source. Sources are always a part of a larger historical context. You need to consider how this context helps clarify the meaning of the source. You also need to decide which context is most important. Sources might be understood best in connection with a local context or a recent event. Alternatively, they might be understood better within a national or international context, or as part of a long-term trend in society at large. Your guiding questions should help you decide which context is most important.

### ◆ *Corroborate the source.*

This means you must think about your source in relation to other sources. Does the source agree with or support those other sources, or does it seem to be at odds with the other sources? Might there be additional sources, which have not been provided to you, that could support or conflict with your source?

### ◆ *Above all, read the source carefully.*

Look at language closely. Pay attention to images, emotional language, metaphors, and other literary devices. Think about what is implied, not merely what is stated or claimed in so many words. Think about what is left out as well as what is included. Make inferences based on your close reading. This will help you get more out of your source than even the source’s creator might have seen in it.

## Polybius on Rome's Balanced Constitution

Many Greek and Roman writers thought there were three basic forms of government: rule by one man, rule by a small group of men, and rule by the majority. They also believed each had a pure form that in time would become corrupted. Rule by a king would turn into rule by a cruel tyrant. Rule by a group of wise men would degenerate into rule by a few powerful and corrupt insiders—an *oligarchy*. Rule by a majority would turn into lawless mob rule and then end in tyranny. Polybius was a Greek historian who lived in Rome in the second century BCE. He believed Rome's constitution balanced and checked all three forms in a way that kept them from degenerating.

Original Document

As for the Roman constitution, it had three elements, each of them possessing sovereign powers: and their respective share of power in the whole state had been regulated with such a scrupulous regard to equality and equilibrium that no one could say for certain, not even a native, whether the constitution as a whole were an aristocracy or democracy or despotism. And no wonder: for if we confine our observation to the power of the Consuls we should be inclined to regard it as despotic; if on that of the Senate, as aristocratic; and if finally one looks at the power possessed by the people it would seem a clear case of democracy. . . .

The Consuls, before leading out the legions, remain in Rome and are supreme masters of the administration. All other magistrates, except the Tribunes, are under them and take their orders. They introduce foreign ambassadors to the Senate; bring matters requiring deliberation before it; and see to the execution of its decrees. If, again, there are any matters of state which require the authorization of the people, it is their business to see to them, to summon the popular meetings, to bring the proposals before them and to carry out the decrees of majority. In the preparations for war, also, and, in a word, in the entire administration of a campaign, they have all but absolute power. . . .

The Senate has first of all the control of the treasury, and regulates the receipts and disbursements alike. For the Quaestors can not issue any public money for the various departments of the state without a decree of the Senate, except for the service of the Consuls. The Senate controls also what is by far the largest and most important expenditure, that, namely, which is made by the censors every lustrum (five years) for the repair or construction of public buildings; this money can not be obtained by the censors except by the grant of the Senate. Similarly all crimes committed in Italy requiring a public investigation, such as treason, conspiracy, poisoning, or willful murder, are in the hands of the Senate. . . .

There is, however, a part left the people, and it is a most important one. For the

CONTINUED



people is the sole fountain of honor and of punishment; and it is by these two things and these alone that dynasties and constitutions, and, in a word, human society are held together. . . . The people then are the only court to decide matters of life and death; and even in cases where the penalty is money, if the sum to be assessed is sufficiently serious, and especially when the accused have held the higher magistracies. . . .

Again, it is the people who bestow offices on the deserving, which are the most honorable rewards of virtue. It has also the absolute power of passing and repealing laws; and most important of all, it is the people who deliberate on the question of peace or war. And when provisional terms are made for alliance, suspension of hostilities, or treaties, it is the people who ratify them or the reverse.

### Adapted Version

The Roman constitution has three parts, each with supreme powers. Each part has been carefully balanced with the other two. So well balanced are they that that no one can be sure whether the entire constitution is an aristocracy, a democracy or a despotism. And it is no wonder. If we look only at the Consuls, we would see it as despotic. If we look at the Senate, it seems to be aristocratic. Finally, if we look at the power possessed by the people, it appears to be a democracy.

The Consuls are in charge of the government—that is, until they lead their army legions out to fight Rome's enemies. Except for the Tribunes, all other magistrates take their orders from the Consuls. They introduce foreign ambassadors to the Senate. They bring up the matters it must discuss. They make sure its decrees are put into practice. If any public matter requires a decision by the people, the Consuls must summon the popular meetings where those decision are made. They then must carry out the decrees of majority. In preparing for and fighting a war, they basically have absolute power.

The Senate controls the treasury and the raising and spending of all public money. The Quaestors cannot spend anything without the Senate's okay. That is, except for the services of the Consuls. The Senate controls the largest and most important expenditure. It is made every five years to the censors for the repair or construction of public buildings. Similarly, the Senate deals with all crimes committed in Italy requiring a public investigation. This includes crimes such as treason, conspiracy, poisoning, or willful murder.

CONTINUED

An important role is left for the people. They alone confer both honor and punishment. These are what hold dynasties, constitutions, and human society together. The people are the only court to decide matters of life and death. Also they decide cases where a large fine is the punishment—especially on those who have held higher public office.

Again, it is the people who bestow offices on those most virtuous, honorable, and deserving. The people also pass or repeal laws. Most importantly, the people decide questions of peace or war. And when proposals are made for treaties, alliances, or to end hostilities, the people decide whether to ratify them or not.

Original Document Source: Polybius, *The Histories*, 2 vols., translated from the text of F. Hultsch by Evelyn S. Schuckburgh, New York, 1889, as reproduced in "The Roman Constitution," *European History Studies* (Chicago: Ainsworth & Company, 1898), 1:77–92. <https://books.google.com/books?id=IDcLAQAAMAAJ>.

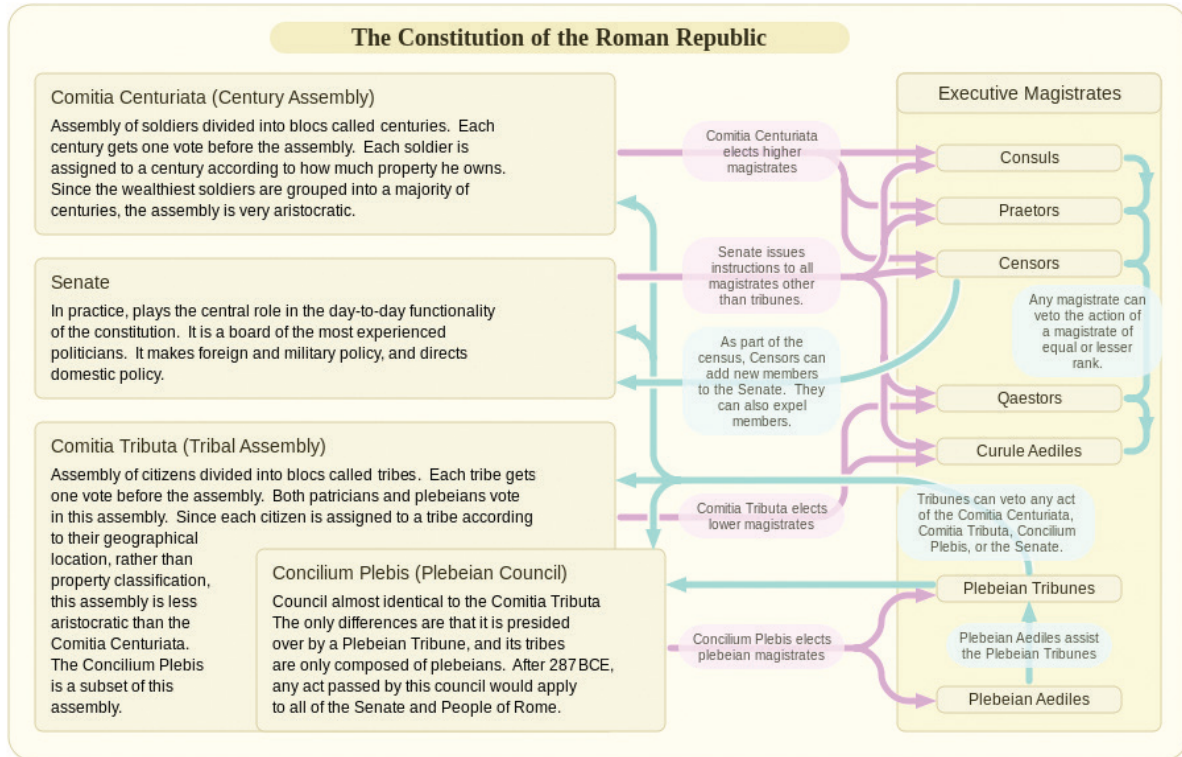


## SECONDARY SOURCE ▶

## 2.2

## The Roman Republic's Government

The Roman Republic's governmental system developed and changed slowly over time. This diagram explains how it was supposed to work as of about the third century BCE. The diagram is useful, but the system did not always run as smoothly as this chart suggests. Beginning in the late second century BCE, it increasingly failed to work as it was supposed to.



Original Document Source: Anihl based on a work by User:RomanHistorian, *The Constitutional Structure of the Roman Republic*, CC BY-SA 2.5 via Wikimedia Commons.



## SECONDARY SOURCE ▶

## 2.3

## Rome: A Military Republic

Roman soldiers made up the most powerful armies of the ancient world. This photo is of a modern-day reenactor with the typical gear, mail armor, and weaponry of a soldier of the Roman Republic. During the last centuries of the Republic, groups of Romans and Italian allies formed most armies. The ways of arranging these forces for battle took many forms. Over time, property requirements for service in Roman legions were lowered and then discarded. The poorest citizens were increasingly conscripted or allowed to volunteer. This shift was part of the changes disrupting the Roman Republic in its last century.



Original Document Source: Greatbeagle, *Lorica Hamata*, 2007, photograph, CC BY 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons.



## SECONDARY SOURCE ▶

2.4

## Hannibal and the Second Punic War

The invasion of Italy by Carthaginian general Hannibal was a major turning point in Rome's history. Hannibal fought for years up and down the peninsula from 218 to 201. The Romans finally defeated him. However, the fighting caused widespread destruction in cities and towns. It uprooted tens of thousands of farmers. Wealthy Roman landowners took over land and added to their growing estates. This map shows the route of Hannibal's forces throughout the long war.



Original Document Source: Abalg and Pinpin, *Map in English of Hannibal's Route of Invasion*, 2008, CC BY-SA 1.0 via Wikimedia Commons.

## Tiberius Gracchus on the Impoverished Roman Soldier

As tribune in 133 BCE, Tiberius Gracchus tried to enact land reforms to help the poor, especially soldiers returning from Rome's wars. Many were gone on long campaigns. It was hard for families to keep their small farms going under such conditions. Many went bankrupt, making it easy for wealthy landowners to buy these lands and create huge estates. The landless poor then flooded into Rome and other cities to face a life of great hardship. This passage is from a speech as reported by Plutarch, a historian who lived about two centuries after Tiberius Gracchus.

### Original Document

The wild beasts that roam over Italy . . . have every one of them a cave or lair to lurk in; but the men who fight and die for Italy enjoy the common air and light, indeed, but nothing else; houseless and homeless they wander about with their wives and children. And it is with lying lips that their imperators exhort the soldiers in their battles to defend sepulchres and shrines from the enemy; for not a man of them has an hereditary altar, not one of all these many Romans an ancestral tomb, but they fight and die to support others in wealth and luxury, and though they are styled masters of the world, they have not a single clod of earth that is their own.

### Adapted Version

All the wild beasts roaming over Italy have a cave or lair to lurk in. Yet men who fight and die for Italy enjoy the common air and light, but nothing else. They are houseless and homeless. They wander about with their wives and children. And it is with lying lips that their rulers urge the soldiers in their battles to defend our tombs and shrines from the enemy. For not a man of these soldiers has a hereditary altar. Not one of all these many Romans has an ancestral tomb. Yet they still fight and die to support others in wealth and luxury. And though they are praised as masters of the world, they have not a single clod of earth that is their own.



Tiberius's proposed land reforms involved public lands seized in Rome's many wars in Italy and abroad. The wealthy had purchased much of this land. Tiberius said many of them took much more land than was legal. He was willing to pay them for it anyway. His plan was to take it and distribute it in small amounts to the poor to farm. He also sought other reforms aimed at weakening the power of the Senate. The passage mentions the "equestrian order"—a class of men who were wealthy but not of noble birth. This passage describes these developments.

### Original Document

And it is thought that a law dealing with injustice and rapacity so great was never drawn up in milder and gentler terms. For men who ought to have been punished for their disobedience and to have surrendered with payment of a fine the land which they were illegally enjoying, these men it merely ordered to abandon their unjust acquisitions upon being paid the value, and to admit into ownership of them such citizens as needed assistance. But although the rectification of the wrong was so considerate, the people were satisfied to let bygones be bygones if they could be secure from such wrong in the future; the men of wealth and substance, however, were led by their greed to hate the law, and by their wrath and contentiousness to hate the law-giver, and tried to dissuade the people by alleging that Tiberius was introducing a re-distribution of land for the confusion of the body politic, and was stirring up a general revolution. . . .

And now his friends, observing the threats and the hostile combination against him, thought that he ought to be made tribune again for the following year. Once more, therefore, Tiberius sought to win the favour of the multitude by fresh laws, reducing the time of military service, granting appeal to the people from the verdicts of the judges, adding to the judges, who at that time were composed of senators only, an equal number from the equestrian order, and in every way at length trying to maim the power of the senate from motives of anger and contentiousness rather than from calculations of justice and the public good.

### Adapted Version

Tiberius's law dealt with great injustice and greed. Yet no such law was ever milder or gentler. It dealt with men who should have been punished for their disobedience in holding and benefiting from land they held illegally. They should have given up that land and paid a fine. Instead, they only had to give up the land after being paid its value. They also had to turn ownership of the lands over to such citizens as needed assistance. The righting of this wrong was very easy on these wealthy owners. Nevertheless, the people were glad to let bygones be

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bygones. All they wanted was to be secure from such wrong in the future. The men of wealth and substance, however, were led by their greed to hate the law. They also hated Tiberius, the law-giver. They tried to win people over by claiming that Tiberius only wanted to redistribute land in order to cause conflict and confusion. They said he was stirring up a general revolution.

Seeing this bitterness, Tiberius's friends thought that he ought to be made tribune again for the following year. And so again, Tiberius sought to win the favor of the multitude by fresh laws. These laws reduced the time of military service. They allowed the people to appeal the verdicts of the judges. Those judges were all senators, so Tiberius added an equal number from the equestrian order. He tried in every way to weaken the power of the Senate. He did this from motives of anger and combativeness rather than from calculations of justice and the public good.



## Spartacus Leads a Slave Uprising

During the third and second centuries BCE, Rome enslaved thousands of captives of war. Other slaves were purchased abroad. Starting in 135 BCE, the first of three huge slave revolts broke out. These were the so-called Servile Wars. The most famous was the uprising led by Spartacus. He was from Thrace, to the north of Greece. He had been sold as a gladiator. In 73 BCE, he led a small group of slaves in a revolt that soon spread and in time involved 70,000 slaves. It was finally put down with extreme brutality. Some 6,000 slaves not returned to their owners were crucified.

### Original Document

The insurrection of the gladiators and their devastation of Italy, which is generally called the war of Spartacus, had its origin as follows. A certain Lentulus Batiatus had a school of gladiators at Capua, most of whom were Gauls and Thracians. Through no misconduct of theirs, but owing to the injustice of their owner, they were kept in close confinement and reserved for gladiatorial combats. Two hundred of these planned to make their escape, and when information was laid against them, those who got wind of it and succeeded in getting away, seventy-eight in number, seized cleavers and spits from some kitchen and sallied out. On the road they fell in with waggons conveying gladiators' weapons to another city; these they plundered and armed themselves. Then they took up a strong position and elected three leaders. The first of these was Spartacus, a Thracian of Nomadic stock, possessed not only of great courage and strength, but also in sagacity and culture superior to his fortune, and more Hellenic than Thracian. . . .

To begin with, the gladiators repulsed the soldiers who came against them from Capua, and getting hold of many arms of real warfare, they gladly took these in exchange for their own, casting away their gladiatorial weapons as dishonourable and barbarous. . . .

Publius Varinus, the praetor, was sent out against them, whose lieutenant, a certain Furius, with two thousand soldiers, they first engaged and routed; then Spartacus narrowly watched the movements of Cossinius, who had been sent out with a large force to advise and assist Varinus in the command, and came near seizing him as he was bathing near Salinae. Cossinius barely escaped with much difficulty, and Spartacus at once seized his baggage, pressed hard upon him in pursuit, and took his camp with great slaughter. Cossinius also fell. By defeating the praetor himself in many battles . . . Spartacus was soon great and formidable; but he took a proper view of the situation, and since he could not expect to overcome the Roman power, began to lead his army toward the Alps, thinking it

CONTINUED

necessary for them to cross the mountains and go to their respective homes, some to Thrace, and some to Gaul. But his men were now strong in numbers and full of confidence, and would not listen to him, but went ravaging over Italy.

### Adapted Version

The war of Spartacus was an uprising of gladiators. It devastated Italy. It began as follows. A certain Lentulus Batiatus had a school of gladiators at Capua. Most of them were Gauls and Thracians. They were unfairly and harshly kept in close confinement to be used in gladiatorial combats. Two hundred of these planned to make their escape. They were found out. But they learned of this, and seventy-eight of them seized cleavers and spits from some kitchen and ran away. On the road they came across wagons conveying gladiators' weapons to another city. These they seized and armed themselves. Then they elected three leaders. The first of these was Spartacus, a Thracian of Nomadic stock. He not only had great courage and strength, but he was also wise and cultured beyond what one might expect. And he was more Hellenic [Greek] than Thracian.

To begin with, the gladiators fought off soldiers from Capua. They gladly seized many arms useful in real warfare. They then threw away their gladiatorial weapons as dishonorable and barbarous. Publius Varinus, the praetor, was sent out against them. They first defeated his lieutenant Furius and two thousand soldiers. Spartacus watched the movements of Cossinius, who had been sent out with a large force to advise and assist Varinus. He almost seized him as he was bathing near Salinae. Cossinius barely escaped with much difficulty. Spartacus seized his supplies, pursued him, and took his camp with great slaughter. Cossinius also fell. By defeating the praetor himself in many battles, Spartacus was soon great and formidable. However he knew he could not hope to overcome the Roman power. Hence he began to lead his army toward the Alps. He believed it was necessary for them to cross the mountains and go to their respective homes, some to Thrace, and some to Gaul. But his men were now strong in numbers and full of confidence. They would not listen to him, but went ravaging over Italy.



As Rome filled up with the landless poor, disorder and mob violence became common. Rome's rulers sought to ease tensions by providing the poor with low-cost or free grain. Providing crowd-pleasing entertainment may also have been used to distract people from their troubles. These entertainments included battles by gladiators and other violent spectacles. This passage is about Tiberius's brother, Gaius, who also became tribune and sought reforms to benefit the poor. Like his brother, he met a violent end due to his political activities.

### Original Document

The people were going to enjoy an exhibition of gladiators in the forum, and most of the magistrates had constructed seats for the show round about, and were offering them for hire. Gaius ordered them to take down these seats, in order that the poor might be able to enjoy the spectacle from those places without paying hire. But since no one paid any attention to his command, he waited till the night before the spectacle, and then, taking all the workmen whom he had under his orders in public contracts, he pulled down the seats, and when day came he had the place all clear for the people. For this proceeding the populace thought him a man, but his colleagues were annoyed and thought him reckless and violent. It was believed also that this conduct cost him his election to the tribunate for the third time, since, although he got a majority of the votes, his colleagues were unjust and fraudulent in their proclamation and returns.

### Adapted Version

The people were going to enjoy an exhibition of gladiators in the forum. Most of the magistrates had constructed seats for the show round about and were selling the right to sit in them. Gaius ordered them to take down these seats so the poor could enjoy the spectacle from those places without paying for them. His command was ignored. So he waited till the night before the spectacle. Then taking all the men he had working for him, he pulled down the seats. When day came, he had the place all clear for the people. For doing this, the populace thought him a real man. But his colleagues were annoyed and thought him reckless and violent. It was believed also that this conduct cost him his election to the Tribunate for the third time. He did get a majority of the votes, but his colleagues were unjust and fraudulent in announcing the voting returns.

Original Document Source: Plutarch, "The Life of Gaius Gracchus," *The Parallel Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1921), 10:225.

Marius and Sulla were two Roman leaders who played key roles in the growing disorder in the Roman Republic. Each served as a consul and led troops in major wars. In 88 BCE, each sought the right to fight Mithridates, king of Pontus, in the region south of the Black Sea. Sulla was given command, but then another consul took it from him and gave it to Marius. In the struggles over this, both men marched their armies into Rome at different times and slaughtered hundreds if not thousands of their political enemies. This passage from the second century CE Roman historian Appian is about that chaotic time.

### Original Document

[Marius] was forthwith chosen commander of the war against Mithridates in place of Sulla.

When Sulla heard of this he resolved to decide the question by war, and called the army together to a conference. They were eager for the war against Mithridates because it promised much plunder, and they feared that Marius would enlist other soldiers instead of themselves. Sulla spoke of the indignity put upon him by Sulpicius and Marius, and while he did not openly allude to anything else (for he did not dare as yet to mention this sort of war), he urged them to be ready to obey his orders. They understood what he meant, and as they feared lest they should miss the campaign they uttered boldly what Sulla had in mind, and told him to be of good courage, and to lead them to Rome. Sulla was overjoyed and led six legions thither forthwith; but all his superior officers, except one quaestor, left him and fled to the city, because they would not submit to the idea of leading an army against their country. Envoys met him on the road and asked him why he was marching with armed forces against his country. "To deliver her from tyrants," he replied. . . .

Sulla took possession of the Esquiline gate and of the adjoining wall with one legion of soldiers, and Pompeius occupied the Colline gate with another. A third advanced to the Wooden bridge, and a fourth remained on guard in front of the walls. With the remainder Sulla entered the city, in appearance and in fact an enemy. Those in the neighbouring houses tried to keep him off by hurling missiles from the roofs until he threatened to burn the houses; then they desisted. Marius and Sulpicius went, with some forces they had hastily armed, to meet the invaders near the Esquiline forum, and here a battle took place between the contending parties, the first regularly fought in Rome with bugle and standards in full military fashion, no longer like a mere faction fight. To such extremity of evil had the recklessness of party strife progressed among them.

CONTINUED



### Adapted Version

Marius was chosen commander of the war against Mithridates in place of Sulla. When Sulla heard of this, he called his army together to a conference. They were eager for the war against Mithridates because it promised much plunder. They feared that Marius would enlist other soldiers instead of themselves. Sulla spoke of how Sulpicius and Marius had insulted him. He did not yet dare to explain openly what he planned. But he urged them to be ready to obey his orders. They understood what he meant. They did not want to miss this chance, so they themselves uttered boldly what Sulla had in mind. They told him to be of good courage and lead them to Rome. Sulla was overjoyed and led six legions there immediately. However, all his superior officers, except one quaestor, left him and fled to the city. They would not agree to lead an army against their own country. Envoys met him on the road and asked him why he was marching with armed forces against Rome. “To deliver her from tyrants,” he replied.

Sulla took possession of the Esquiline gate and of the adjoining wall with one legion of soldiers. Pompeius occupied the Colline gate with another. A third advanced to the Wooden Bridge, and a fourth remained on guard in front of the walls. With the remainder Sulla entered the city. He appeared to be an enemy, and he was an enemy. Those in the neighboring houses tried to fight him off by hurling missiles from the roofs. When he threatened to burn the houses, they stopped. Marius and Sulpicius took some hastily armed forces to meet the invaders near the Esquiline forum. Here a battle took place between the contending parties. It was the first regularly fought in Rome with bugle and standards in full military fashion. This was no mere faction fight. To such extreme evil had the recklessness of party strife progressed among them.

The famous orator and writer Cicero (106–43 BCE) was a leading Roman politician during the time of Julius Caesar's rise to power. Cicero was a defender of the Senate's authority and hoped to see it restored. In 49 BCE, Caesar crossed the Rubicon and marched on Rome. Cicero feared that this meant a new dictatorship would be imposed on the Roman Republic. This letter to his close friend Titus Pomponius Atticus expresses his emotions at this key turning point.

### Original Document

... [T]he topics usually filling familiar letters, written with an easy mind, are excluded by the critical nature of these times; while those connected with the crisis we have already worn threadbare. Nevertheless, not to surrender myself wholly to sorrowful reflexions, I have selected certain theses, so to speak, which have at once a general bearing on a citizen's duty, and a particular relation to the present crisis:

Ought one to remain in one's country when under a tyrant? If one's country is under a tyrant ought one to labour at all hazards for the abolition of the tyranny, even at the risk of the total destruction of the city? Or ought we to be on our guard against the man attempting the abolition, lest he should rise too high himself?

Ought one to assist one's country when under a tyrant by seizing opportunities and by argument rather than by war?

Is it acting like a good citizen to quit one's country when under a tyrant for any other land, and there to remain quiet, or ought one to face any and every danger for liberty's sake?

Ought one to wage war upon and besiege one's native town, if it is under a tyrant?

Even if one does not approve an abolition of a tyranny by war, ought one still to enroll oneself in the ranks of the loyalists?

Ought one in politics to share the dangers of one's benefactors and friends, even though one does not think their general policy to be wise?

CONTINUED



### Adapted Version

The critical times make it impossible to write about the usual topics of letters to friends. Those are written with an easy mind. However, those connected with the crisis we have already worn threadbare. Nevertheless, not to be too sorrowful about it all, I have selected certain broader issues or questions to address. These have to do with a citizen's duty, and are presented in relation to the present crisis:

Should one stay in the country when it is under a tyrant? If it is under a tyrant should one work to end the tyranny even if that risks total destruction? Or should we guard against any man who tries this, lest he should rise too high himself?

Should one assist one's country when under a tyrant through arguments rather than through a resort to war?

Is it acting like a good citizen to abandon one's country when under a tyrant, go to another country, and remain quiet? Or should one face any and every danger for liberty's sake?

Should one wage war upon and besiege one's native town, if it is under a tyrant?

Even if one does not approve of starting a war against a tyrant, should one still join the ranks of the loyalists?

Should one in politics share the dangers of one's benefactors and friends, even though one thinks their general policy unwise?

## Communicating Results and Taking Action

### Communicating Results

- ◆ In a small group, read and discuss Primary Sources 2.5 and 2.6. These sources deal with the reforms proposed by the Tribune Tiberius Gracchus. Do some further background reading on Tiberius and his brother Gaius and the reforms they proposed. Your group should prepare a brief report explaining who Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus were and what problems they worried about. Your report should answer this question: Could Tiberius's reforms have saved the Roman Republic?
- ◆ Read Cicero's questions (Primary Source 2.10). These questions reflect Cicero's concerns about the dictatorship he feared Julius Caesar was going to impose on Rome. Write a letter back to Cicero about his fears. Your letter should propose one or two key changes in the Roman Republic's government that might make the system work better and prevent a dictatorship. Use the diagram (Secondary Source 2.2) as a guide for identifying features of the government and proposing reforms.
- ◆ Your teacher will ask a small group of students to prepare a brief presentation on the division of powers and the idea of "checks and balances" in the U.S. Constitution. After this presentation, study Primary Source 2.1 and Secondary Source 2.2. Identify one feature of the Roman Republic's government that does what the U.S. system of checks and balances does. Then choose one feature that does not work as well as the checks and balances of the U.S. Constitution. Be prepared to share your ideas in a class discussion.

### Taking Action

- ◆ What can Americans today learn from studying the fate of the Roman Republic during its final century? Discuss this question in a small group. Agree to a list of three things your group believes Americans should know about this history. As a class, you will discuss the lists. Someone will record this discussion. Parents and other members of the community will watch and discuss the recording.
- ◆ Use social media to share brief reports on the community meeting described in the previous assignment. Ask those contacted in this way to comment and offer their own thoughts on this topic.

## The Roman Republic Rubric

Criteria	Unacceptable	Developing	Proficient	Excellent
<b>Focus</b>	Tries to respond to task instructions but lacks clear focus on a central idea or thesis	Addresses the task instructions adequately but focus on a central idea or thesis is uneven	Responds to the task instructions appropriately and convincingly; has a consistent focus on a central idea or thesis	Responds to all task instructions convincingly; has a clear and strong focus on a well-developed central idea or thesis
<b>Research</b>	Refers to some sources but fails to connect these in a way that is relevant to the task instructions	Refers to relevant sources well but does not always connect these clearly to the task instructions	Refers to relevant sources accurately and usually connects these to the task instructions and a central idea	Refers to relevant sources accurately and in great detail and connects these clearly to the task instructions and a central idea
<b>Development/ Use of Evidence</b>	Uses some details and evidence from sources but does not make clear the relevance to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources generally but not always in support of a clear focus relevant to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources in a way that effectively supports a focus relevant to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources along with clear explanations demonstrating understanding of the task purpose or instructions
<b>Content</b>	Refers to disciplinary content without clearly understanding it or while using it in an irrelevant or inaccurate manner	Refers to disciplinary content with some understanding but not always with a clear idea of its relation to the overall task	Accurately uses disciplinary content and demonstrates a clear idea of its relation to the overall task	Uses disciplinary content effectively and explains thoroughly and in depth its relation to the overall task
<b>Conventions</b>	Demonstrates only limited control of standard English conventions, with many errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates some command of standard English conventions, with limited errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates adequate command of standard English conventions, with few errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates a well-developed command of standard English conventions, with few errors and a use of language appropriate to the audience and the purpose of the task

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- 2.2: FoolsWar and Anihl based on a work by User:RomanHistorian. *The Constitutional Structure of the Roman Republic*. CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons.
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# Ashoka of Ancient India

*A Heartless Warrior or a Sorrowful Buddhist King?*



## Overview

### Introduction

Ashoka, the third ruler of India's powerful Mauryan Empire, ruled over nearly all of what is now India from 268 to 232 BCE. A few years after coming to power, he conquered a kingdom called Kalinga. It was apparently a very bloody war. At some point soon after, he embraced Buddhism. He then promoted tolerance and peacefulness through a series of edicts inscribed on rocks and stone pillars found across India. The edicts were in a script that fell out of use a few centuries later. For many centuries, no one knew what they meant. No one even knew they were all from one ruler. They were only translated and understood once again in the early 1800s. Today, scholars still argue about their true intent. Specifically, they ask, was Ashoka really a benevolent Buddhist reformer or an ambitious and still determined empire builder? This lesson will focus on that compelling question. Students will work with ten sources. Most of them are Ashoka's own words from his edicts. These sources form the core content for tasks that will help students answer the lesson's compelling question.

### Objectives

Students will work individually and in small groups to respond in a meaningful way to a compelling question about Ashoka. They will apply discipline-specific background knowledge, use scaffolding, and engage in instructional activities to interpret primary and secondary sources before presenting their ideas to the class.

### C3 Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- ◆ **D1.4.6-8.** Explain how the relationship between supporting questions and compelling questions is mutually reinforcing.
- ◆ **D1.5.6-8.** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources.
- ◆ **D2.His.5.6-8.** Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time.
- ◆ **D2.His.11.6-8.** Use other historical sources to infer a plausible maker, date, place of origin, and intended audience for historical sources where this information is not easily identified.
- ◆ **D2.His.12.6-8.** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to identify further areas of inquiry and additional sources.
- ◆ **D2.His.16.6-8.** Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.
- ◆ **D2.Civ.8.6-8.** Analyze ideas and principles contained in the founding documents of the United States, and explain how they influence the social and political system.
- ◆ **D2.Eco.7.6-8.** Analyze the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in a market economy.
- ◆ **D2.Geo.5.6-8.** Analyze the combinations of cultural and environmental characteristics that make places both similar to and different from other places.
- ◆ **D2.Geo.6.6-8.** Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.
- ◆ **D3.1.6-8.** Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.
- ◆ **D3.2.6-8.** Evaluate the credibility of a source by determining its relevance and intended use.



- ◆ **D3.3.6-8.** Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources to support claims, noting evidentiary limitations.
- ◆ **D3.4.6-8.** Develop claims and counterclaims while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.
- ◆ **D4.1.6-8.** Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments.
- ◆ **D4.3.6-8.** Present adaptations of arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., internet, social media, and digital documentary).
- ◆ **D4.6.6-8.** Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

### Common Core Anchor Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1.** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2.** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6.** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9.** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7.** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1.** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

## Teaching Instructions

### Compelling Question

Was Ashoka a heartless warrior or a sorrowful Buddhist king?

### Preparation

Provide all students with a copy of the Introductory Essay. Assign this reading as homework. In addition, assign all relevant parts of your course textbook or other basic reading material. Remind students to keep the compelling question for the lesson in mind as they read.



#### Asking Questions about Ashoka

*This part of the task stresses Dimensions 1 and 2 of the C3 Framework*

### Day One

1. Briefly discuss the Introductory Essay in class and address any initial questions students may have.
2. Distribute the How to Analyze a Primary Source handout. Review each suggestion with the class, and remind students to refer to the handout as they read the primary and secondary sources in this lesson.
3. Divide the class into four small groups. Each group will focus its work on one of the four basic disciplines identified in Dimension 2 of the C3 Framework—history, civics, geography, or economics. As they work, the groups should keep in mind the lesson’s overall compelling question. However, for Day One and Day Two, each group will work mainly with a second compelling question—one related specifically to its assigned discipline.
4. Provide each group with one copy of its discipline-specific Assignment Sheet. Give each student a copy of all the primary and secondary sources for this lesson. Each group may share a source packet, if necessary.
5. Have students complete the Day One section of their Assignment Sheets. The objective for Day One is for groups to read three sources, and then formulate one supporting question about each of those sources. The supporting questions should be recorded in the spaces provided on the Assignment Sheet.



#### Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Evaluating Sources and Evidence

*This part of the task stresses Dimensions 2 and 3 of the C3 Framework*

### Day Two

6. Students will return to their previously assigned groups and formulate a claim addressing their group’s compelling question. After reading the remaining seven sources, they will select one that supports their claim.

7. Using the evidence gathered from primary and secondary sources, each group will then prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation about Ashoka from the group's disciplinary perspective. The presentation can be in the form of an oral report, a debate among group members, a PowerPoint, or a related type of presentation. Allow time for students to prepare by discussing and debating topics among themselves.

### **Day Three**

8. Each group will deliver its presentation. Allow time for class discussion following each presentation, and for a final effort to answer the central compelling question for the lesson.



#### **Communicating Results and Taking Action**

*This part of the task stresses Dimension 4 of the C3 Framework*

Students will complete a final project that expresses an understanding of the topic and responds clearly to the lesson's central compelling question. The project may be completed in groups, but students should be evaluated individually.

Distribute the Communicating Results and Taking Action handout, and decide whether you will assign the projects or allow students to form groups and choose tasks on their own. Set a reasonable deadline. Students should review the Ashoka Rubric so they can understand how their performance will be evaluated. The projects are summarized below.

#### **Communicating Results**

- ◆ Ask the History Group for this lesson to report on its views about Ashoka's concept of *Dhamma* and that concept's connection with Buddhist teachings. Then ask each student to use Primary Sources 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7 in a brief essay answering this question: "Did Ashoka wish to convert all India to Buddhist beliefs?"
- ◆ Ask students to pretend they lived in Kalinga during the war that Ashoka fought there in the eighth year of his rule. They should then imagine that someone from another part of India has sent them the 13th Major Rock Edict (Primary Source 3.9). As a resident in Kalinga, they will already have read the 2nd Separate Edict (Primary Source 3.10). Students will then write letters back describing what they remember of the Kalinga war and explaining their reactions now that they have read both edicts mentioned here.
- ◆ Ask students to pretend they are advisers to Ashoka. It is toward the end of his reign, after most of his edicts have been displayed. Using Primary Sources 3.2 and 3.3, and Secondary Source 3.1, have each student write to Ashoka to ask him to clarify why he placed the various kinds of edicts where they are located. Ask him for suggestions as to where any new ones ought to go. Then have students pretend to be Ashoka and write a letter responding to the first one.

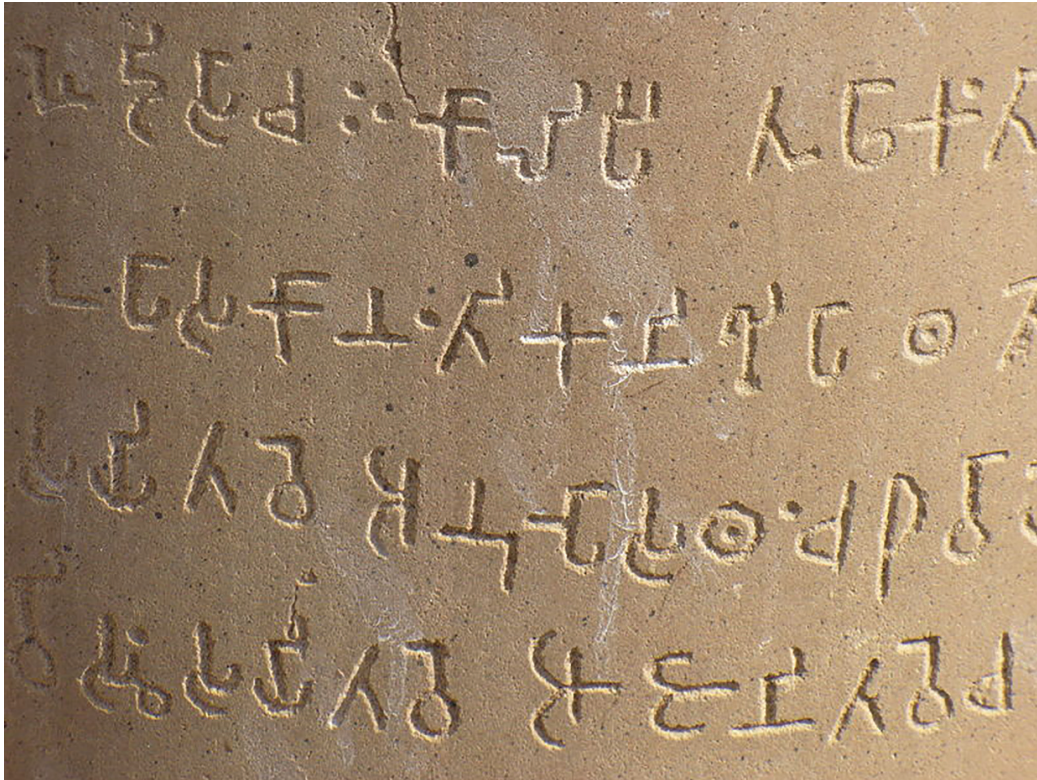
### *Taking Action*

- ◆ India won its independence from Great Britain in 1947. One of the leaders of the drive for independence was Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru then became India's first prime minister. He had the Ashoka Chakra placed on the new Indian flag. The Ashoka Chakra (or the *dharmachakra*) is a 24-spoked wheel often found on Ashoka's rock edicts. Separate students into small groups. Ask each group to learn more about India's flag and the varying views people in India have about it and about Ashoka. Give each group time to do this research online. Then have groups report on what they learn and what this shows about India's attitudes today toward Ashoka and his teachings.
- ◆ Based on the work in the previous assignment, use social media to share the results of these small group reports. Ask those contacted in this way to comment on India and Ashoka. Make some effort to respond to their questions and comments.



## Introductory Essay

# *Ashoka's Messages to His People*



*Ashoka was unusual because of the messages he had inscribed on rocks and pillars throughout his vast realm.*

Ancient Egyptian pharaohs often built huge statues or monuments to themselves. Some left inscriptions celebrating their rule carved on buildings, statues, or pillars. Other powerful rulers in Mesopotamia did the same. These usually depict brave and powerful rulers who ruthlessly conquered all who resisted them. The aim is to impress and instill fear in subjects and enemies alike.

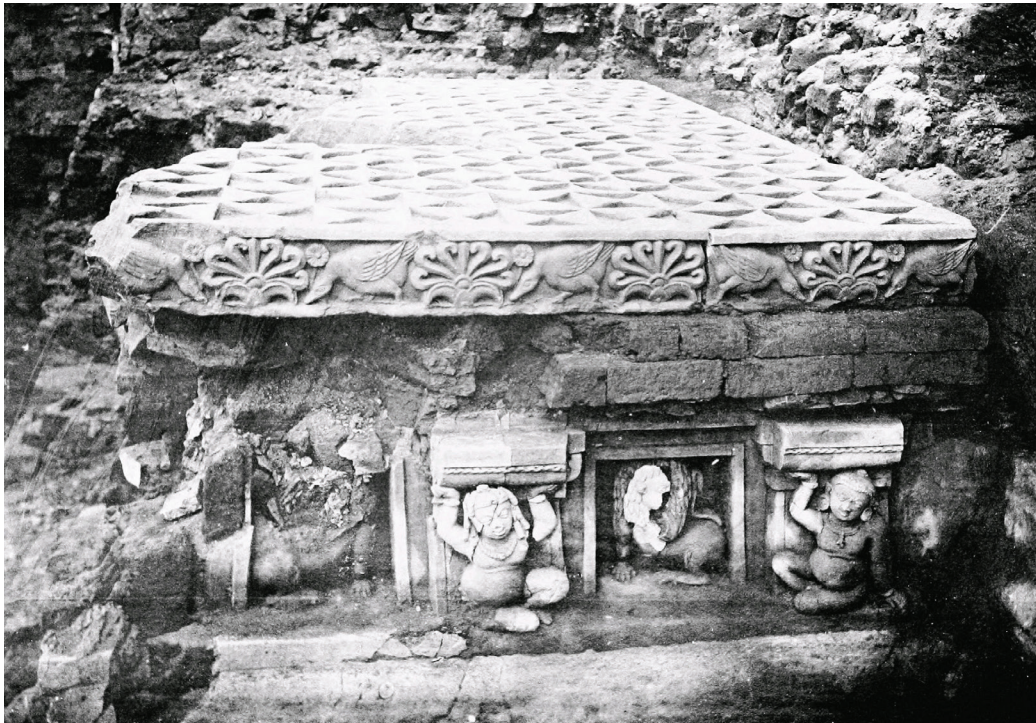
There was one exception to this rule—Ashoka. Ashoka was the third ruler of the powerful Mauryan Empire that survived in India from 322 to 187 BCE. Ashoka ruled over nearly all of what is now India from 268 to 232 BCE.

We know Ashoka was unusual because of the messages he had inscribed on rocks and pillars throughout his vast realm. These edicts were often placed along roads likely to be well traveled. They were clearly meant for a larger public to see. In these edicts Ashoka referred

to himself as “Beloved-of-the-gods, the king Piyadassi.” (*Piyadassi* means “he who regards all with kindness.”) The inscriptions do not celebrate Ashoka’s conquests or his awesome power. Instead they are a call to his people to show obedience to fathers and mothers, to practice tolerance and respect for the elderly, and to show kindness to the poor, to slaves, and to servants.

The main religion in India at the time was Hinduism. Sometime during his reign, Ashoka appears to have converted to Buddhism. Buddhism was still a young system of beliefs at that time. Buddhists shared many Hindu ideas and beliefs, but they differed in placing greater emphasis on a process by which each individual on his own could reach a full spiritual awakening. As a result, Buddhists saw less need for a priesthood like the Hindu priests, the Brahmins. This created some tensions between the two groups. Other sects such as Jainism were also spreading at the time in India.

Was Ashoka hoping to convert his entire empire to Buddhism? Both Buddhists and Hindus used the term *Dhamma*, or *Dharma*, for the more enlightened way they hoped to teach people. Ashoka also used this term in almost all of his rock and pillar edicts. However, he rarely used it in any strictly Buddhist manner. Ashoka did call for nonviolence and for a greater respect for all life, including animal life. Many of his appeals do seem to reflect a strong Buddhist pacifism. For him, however, *Dhamma* usually meant a call for kindness and tolerance among all religious sects and social groups.



*Ashoka had this diamond throne built at the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhi Gaya, at the location where the Buddha reached enlightenment.*

Image Sources: Diamond throne at Mahabodhi, 1892, photograph, public domain.  
Inscription in Brahmi on the pillar of Sarnath, 2009, photograph, public domain.

For the first years of his rule, Ashoka seems to have acted forcefully to expand his empire and put down revolts against it. He was especially concerned about his southern and northwestern borders. The last war he fought was in conquering Kalinga on the southeastern coast. Supposedly, the loss of life in that contest was terrible. We know this mainly because Ashoka himself described it in detail in his 13th Major Rock Edict. He described it to express his deep remorse for it and his determination to follow the ways of peace from then on.

It seems that he did just that for the rest of his long rule. Buddhist accounts of his reign stress the violence of his early rule and explain his turn away from it as due to his conversion at that point to Buddhist teachings. However, these chronicles often exaggerate; they have a clear desire to depict Ashoka's change of heart as a result of his adherence to Buddhism. Not all historians are convinced the story is as simple as these chronicles or Ashoka's accounts make it seem.

After all, Ashoka did not restore Kalinga's independence. Nor does he seem to have done much to help the 150,000 people he says the war displaced. His edicts sound a very warm and peaceful note. Yet some see in them also an implied threat if people do not accept his benevolent rule. After his final conquests, Ashoka found himself with a huge empire to rule. It was also a highly diverse mixture of geographic regions and cultural and religious groups. A broad social ethic of tolerance might well be just what Ashoka needed. What better, less costly way to hold this empire together? So was he a dedicated Buddhist reformer? Was he a shrewd imperial ruler? Or was he both? These are not easy questions to answer. Apart from the edicts themselves, no written accounts by or about Ashoka from the time when he lived have survived. As a result, the primary sources in this lesson are mainly Ashoka's own words. These sources should help you discuss and debate the questions raised here.





## History Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

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### *Ashoka*

Your group's task is to explore history issues related to Ashoka. A disciplinary compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow the steps to complete the task.

#### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Was Ashoka's concept of *Dhamma* a way to convert his people to Buddhism, or did he have other goals in mind? Explain your answer.

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 3.4, 3.5, and 3.7.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Buddhism began in northern India and Nepal. Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, grew up in luxury there in the sixth century BCE. According to Buddhist tradition, he was shocked by the suffering he saw everywhere. He gave up his comforts and went on a spiritual journey to try to learn how to achieve enlightenment. In time, he discovered what he called a Middle Way. It was a "middle way" between selfish pleasure-seeking and extreme self-denial. At its heart were the Four Noble Truths: (1) Human suffering is unavoidable, (2) Suffering is caused by a craving for impermanent things, (3) Suffering ends when the individual stops all craving and attachment to things, and (4) The way to do this is to follow a Noble Eightfold Path of practices. In time, an elaborate set of Buddhist rituals and institutions such as monasteries developed.

Buddhism's overall focus was on the individual. It sought the individual's liberation from craving. Buddhists shared many Hindu ideas, such as the belief in reincarnation. However, Buddhists did not share Hindu notions



of society divided into castes, with Brahmin priests as the highest and most important of these castes.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 3.4

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Primary Source 3.5

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Primary Source 3.7

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## Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Was Ashoka's concept of *Dhamma* a way to convert his people to Buddhism, or did he have other goals in mind? Explain your answer.

State your group's claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



## GROUP MEMBERS:

## Ashoka

Your group's task is to explore the civics issues related to Ashoka. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary and secondary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Did Ashoka feel true remorse over Kalinga, or was his change of heart just another way to strengthen his authoritarian hold over his empire? Explain your answer.

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 3.9 and 3.10, and Secondary Source 3.1.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

In his eighth year as ruler, Ashoka conquered Kalinga. Kalinga was a kingdom on the eastern coast of India. According to Ashoka's own account, this bloody war caused one hundred thousand deaths. After it, almost all of India was under Ashoka's control. Peace and commercial prosperity prevailed for Ashoka's remaining 28 years in power.

In his 13th Rock Edict, Ashoka expresses remorse for what happened to Kalinga. That edict was inscribed on rocks in many places throughout Ashoka's kingdom. However, it was not displayed near Kalinga itself. Some historians say that was out of respect for those who had suffered there so tragically. They say, Ashoka placed two other edicts near Kalinga instead. These urged Mauryan officials to treat the people of Kalinga with respect and kindness.

Other historians take a less positive view of all this. First, they point out that the 13th Rock Edict did not reject violence entirely. They say the

edict may actually have been a way to boast to others around the empire by showing how destructive Ashoka's forces had been. The edicts placed near Kalinga sought to calm and reassure a defeated group. However, some see an implied threat in them. For example, as in Ashoka's statement that the people of the area "should understand that the king will forgive them as far as they can be forgiven."

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each source and record those questions here.

Secondary Source 3.1

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Primary Source 3.9

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Primary Source 3.10

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## Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Did Ashoka feel true remorse over Kalinga, or was his change of heart just another way to strengthen his authoritarian hold over his empire? Explain your answer.



State your group's claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven primary sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



## Economics Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

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### *Ashoka*

Your group's task is to explore the economics issues related to Ashoka. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

#### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Could Ashoka's edicts and philosophy have been meant to help the Mauryan Empire's economy? Why or why not?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 3.4, 3.8, and 3.10.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

By the fifth century BCE, the fertile plain along the Ganges River was growing in wealth. Population was rising. Land was being cleared for agriculture. Trade along the river was uniting the region. This became the heartland of the Mauryan Empire. As wealth increased, governments could tax more and more of it. This helped them support powerful armies with horses, chariots, and elephants.

As the empire expanded to the south, its leaders wanted those less-developed areas to add to its wealth. Some of Ashoka's edicts suggest this was also a goal of his. He speaks of improving highways to make them easier for merchants and others to use. Moreover, his conversion to Buddhism could have an economic aspect. Buddhists did not fully support the Hindu caste system. That system divided society into four broad *varnas*, or groups. Those groups were *Brahmins* (priests), *Kshatriyas* (warriors, rulers), *Vaishyas* (farmers, herders, merchants), and *Sudras* (laborers, servants). For Buddhists, however, all individuals of any

caste could end the cycle of death and rebirth (*samsara*) and achieve enlightenment (*nirvana*). In Ashoka's empire, the growing merchant class, *Vaishyas*, may have found Buddhist teachings especially to their liking. These teachings encouraged all segments of society to do their best regardless of caste background or family status.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 3.4

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Primary Source 3.8

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Primary Source 3.10

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## Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Could Ashoka's edicts and philosophy have been meant to help the Mauryan Empire's economy? Why or why not?

State your group's claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.





## Geography Group

### GROUP MEMBERS:

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## *Ashoka*

Your group's task is to explore geography issues related to Ashoka. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Does the geographical location of Ashoka's edicts show that his major concern was to unify his vast empire? Explain your answer.

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 3.7 and 3.8, and Secondary Source 3.1.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

The Mauryan Empire ruled in India from 322 to 187 BCE. It arose out of the state of Magadha at the eastern end of the Ganges River. Its heartland was the fertile plain through which the Ganges River runs. During Ashoka's rule, the empire controlled parts of what are today Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan in the northwest. It extended along the Himalayas to what is today Assam in northeastern India. It came to include most of the rest of India except for some remote rugged forest and mountainous areas in the far south.

The Mauryan Empire was still young when Ashoka came to power. The great challenge facing Mauryan rulers was to unify a vast region of diverse religious, economic, and cultural groups. The northwest was a region open to intruders from the complex societies of Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean region. The Greeks led by Alexander the Great conquered lands in this northwest region around this time. To the south, forest peoples were less of a threat, but they were still hard to control in the rugged terrain

they occupied. Holding these lands together and unifying them was a huge challenge. In fact, Ashoka's efforts were not successful for long. The Mauryan Empire only lasted about another fifty years after his death.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each source and record those questions here.

Secondary Source 3.1

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Primary Source 3.7

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Primary Source 3.8

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### Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Does the geographical location of Ashoka's edicts show that his major concern was to unify his vast empire? Explain your answer.

State your group's claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven primary sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.

## How to Analyze a Primary Source

For this lesson, you will be studying several primary source documents. This handout offers suggestions for how best to read and analyze historical primary sources. Studying such sources is challenging. They were created in a different time and place. Their language and use of certain key terms often differ from those of ours. They assume things we might not accept. They arise out of historical circumstances and settings that differ greatly from our own times. To use such sources as evidence, you need to apply some special historical thinking skills and habits. Here are some guidelines to help you do this.

### ◆ *Question the source.*

No primary source was written with you and your interests in mind, so you need to be clear about what you are looking for when you examine a source. You need to stay in charge of the investigation. Act like a detective, and ask questions. Above all, keep your own most important compelling questions in mind as you read and think about a source.

### ◆ *Consider the source's origins.*

This is often simply called “sourcing.” It means asking who created the source, when and where the source was created, and why. If you know the source’s purpose, you will be more likely to see how it is shaped by its creator’s point of view. Among other things, sourcing can also help you decide how reliable or typical a source might be.

### ◆ *Contextualize the source.*

“Context” here means the broader historical setting for the source. Sources are always a part of a larger historical context. You need to consider how this context helps clarify the meaning of the source. You also need to decide which context is most important. Sources might be understood best in connection with a local context or a recent event. Alternatively, they might be understood better within a national or international context, or as part of a long-term trend in society at large. Your guiding questions should help you decide which context is most important.

### ◆ *Corroborate the source.*

This means you must think about your source in relation to other sources. Does the source agree with or support those other sources, or does it seem to be at odds with the other sources? Might there be additional sources, which have not been provided to you, that could support or conflict with your source?

### ◆ *Above all, read the source carefully.*

Look at language closely. Pay attention to images, emotional language, metaphors, and other literary devices. Think about what is implied, not merely what is stated or claimed in so many words. Think about what is left out as well as what is included. Make inferences based on your close reading. This will help you get more out of your source than even the source’s creator might have seen in it.

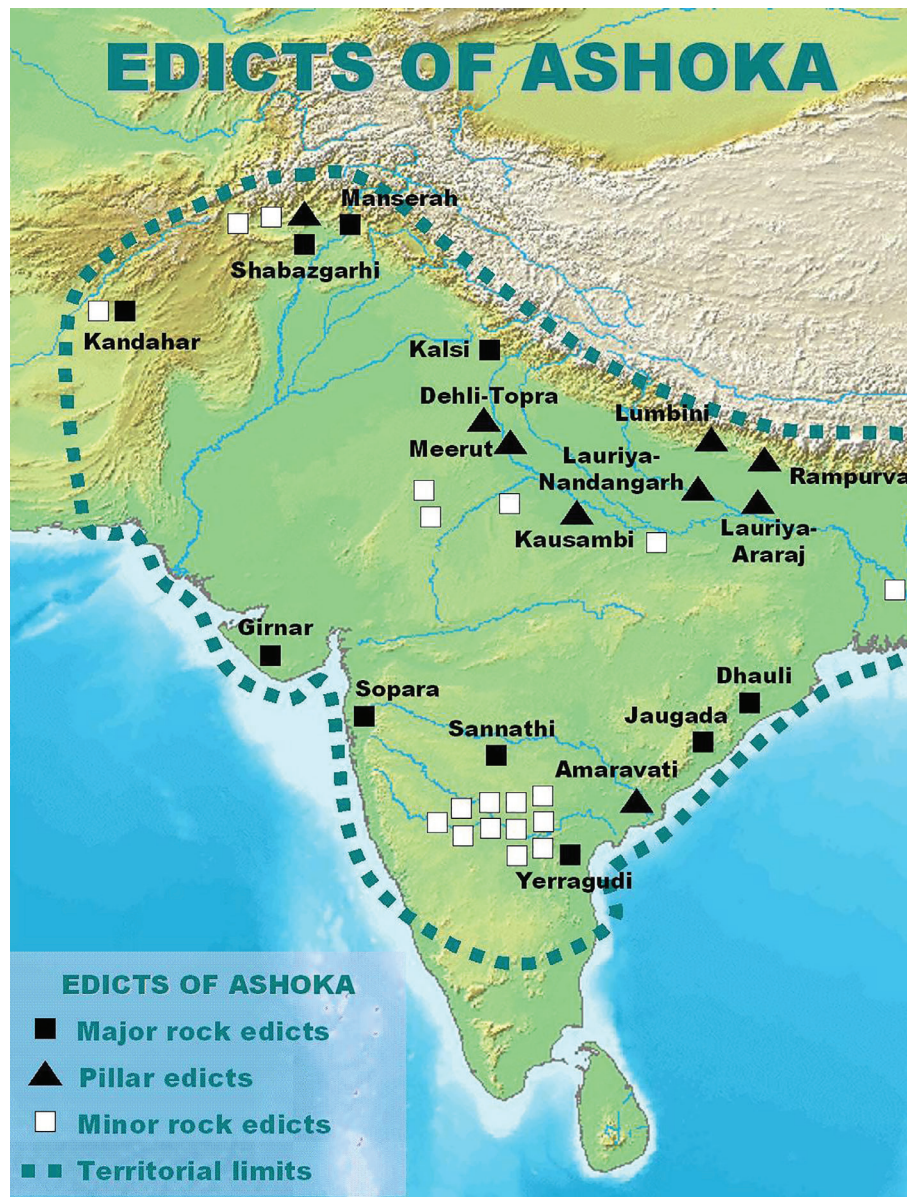


SECONDARY SOURCE ▶

3.1

## Ashoka's Rock Edicts and Pillars

This map shows where many of the major rock edicts and pillars of Ashoka are located. It makes clear that many of the locations are in areas along the edges of the vast Mauryan Empire. This could indicate a desire to communicate with people not yet fully a part of Mauryan society and culture. The one exception to this pattern has to do with the pillars. These are located in the heart of Mauryan society along the Ganges River. They are also near many of the sites connected with the life of Buddha.

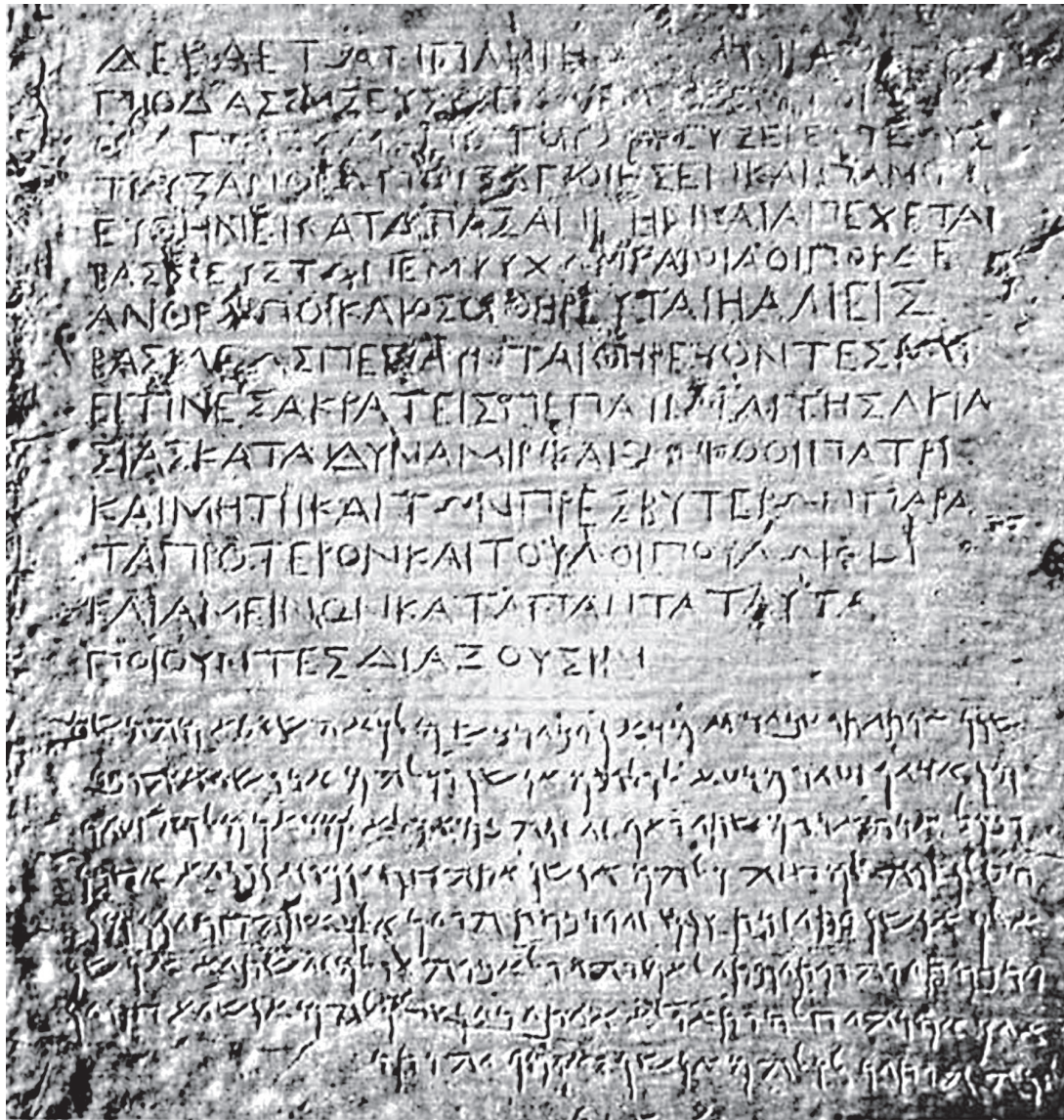


Original Document Source: PHGCOM, *Edicts of Ashoka*, 2007, CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons.



## The Bilingual Kandahar Rock Edict

Most of Ashoka's rock edicts were written in the Prakrit language using either a Brahmi or Kharosthi script. Educated Indians at the time would have been able to read these scripts. In the northwest, where Alexander the Great had conquered, Greek was in use, along with Aramaic. As a result, some edicts there are in those languages. This photo is of the bilingual rock edict of Kandahar with its inscription in both Greek and Aramaic.



Original Document Source: Bilingual (Greek and Aramaic) inscriptions by King Ashoka at Kandahar, photograph, public domain via [wikimedia Commons](#).



PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

3.3

## Ashoka's Pillar in Vaishali

Late in his reign, Ashoka had his edicts inscribed on polished stone pillars in the Gangetic plain. Many were near the Mauryan Empire's capital city of Pataliputra. Others marked spots central in the life of the Buddha. This is the Ashoka pillar at Vaishali, Bihar, India. According to Buddhist teachings, Buddha delivered his last sermon at Vaishali before his death.



Original Document Source: Bpilgrim, *Ashoka Pillar at Vaishali, Bihar, India*, 2007, photograph, CC BY-SA 2.5 via Wikimedia Commons.



In this edict, Ashoka defines the concept of *Dhamma*, or *Dharma*. It is a term central to Hinduism, Buddhism, and other Indian religions. In those religions it has many complex meanings. The term was also central to all of Ashoka's edicts. Usually, Ashoka's use of the term is broad and practical. He mainly stresses the need for social cooperation among all classes and castes.

### Original Document

There is no gift comparable to the gift of *Dhamma*, the praise of *Dhamma*, the sharing of *Dhamma*, fellowship in *Dhamma*. And this is—good behaviour towards slaves and servants, obedience to mother and father, generosity towards friends, acquaintances, and relatives and towards *śramanas* [other sects] and brahmans, and abstention from killing living beings. Father, son, brother, master, friend, acquaintance, relative, and neighbour should say, “this is good, this we should do.”

### Adapted Version

There is no gift like the gift of *Dhamma*, the praise of *Dhamma*, the sharing of *Dhamma*, fellowship in *Dhamma*. *Dhamma* is good behavior toward slaves and servants. It is obedience to mother and father. It is generosity toward friends, acquaintances, and relatives and toward *śramaṇas* [other sects] and *brahmans* [Hindu priests]. It is the refusal to kill living beings. Father, son, brother, master, friend, acquaintance, relative, and neighbor should say, “This is good, this we should do.”



## Ashoka Addresses the Buddhist Monks of Bhabra

In some edicts, Ashoka does seem to be a dedicated Buddhist. He stressed the need for a full understanding of Buddhist teachings and a careful attention to Buddhist sermons and other texts. The edicts in which he does this are ones directed specifically at Buddhist communities. For example, his rock edict at Bhabra, where a major Buddhist *sangha* (monastic community) was located in northern India. This passage is from that edict. In it, "Upatissa" is one of Buddha's disciples and "Rāhula" is one of his sons.

**Original Document**

Sirs, whatever was spoken by the Lord Buddha was well spoken. And Sirs, allow me to tell you what I believe contributes to the long survival of the Buddhist *Dhamma*. These sermons on *Dhamma*, Sirs—the Excellence of the Discipline, the Lineage of the Noble One, the Future Fears, the Verses of the Sage, the *Sutra* of Silence, the Questions of Upatissa, and the Admonition spoken by the Lord Buddha to Rahula on the subject of false speech—these sermons on the *Dhamma*, Sirs, I desire that many monks and nuns should hear frequently and meditate upon. . . .

**Adapted Version**

Sirs, whatever was spoken by the Lord Buddha was well spoken. Let me tell you what I believe contributes to the long survival of the Buddhist *Dhamma*. There are certain sermons on *Dhamma* that I want monks and nuns to hear and meditate on often. These sermons are the following: The Excellence of the Discipline; the Lineage of the Noble One; the Future Fears; the Verses of the Sage; the Sutra of Silence; the Questions of Upatissa; and the Admonition spoken by the Lord Buddha to Rāhula on the subject of false speech.

Original Document Source: Ashoka, "Bhabra Inscription," in *Aśoka and the Decline of the Maurays*, trans. Romila Thaper (Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 1997), 261.

Other edicts seem to show Ashoka's desire to spread Buddhist teachings. For example, in some edicts he appears determined to protect all animal life. This passage is a part of the 1st Major Rock Edict. In it, as in many of his edicts, he calls himself *Piyadassi*. This means "he who regards all with kindness."

### Original Document

Formerly in the kitchens of the Beloved of the Gods, the king Piyadassi, many hundreds of thousands of living animals were killed daily for meat. But now, at the time of writing this inscription on *Dhamma*, only three animals are killed, two peacocks and a deer, and the deer not invariably. Even these three animals will not be killed in future.



Above all Ashoka seemed to want to promote a spirit of harmony and cooperation throughout his empire. Did he favor Buddhism over other sects and religions in his effort to achieve this harmony? In some edicts, he may seem to. In most others, he simply stresses the need for greater tolerance among all sects. That is the theme in this passage from his 12th Major Rock Edict.

### Original Document

The Beloved of the Gods, the king Piyadassi, honours all sects and both ascetics and laymen, with gifts and various forms of recognition. But the Beloved of the Gods does not consider gifts or honour to be as important as the advancement of the essential doctrine of all sects. This progress of the essential doctrine takes many forms, but its basis is the control of one's speech, so as not to extoll one's own sect or disparage another's on unsuitable occasions, or at least to do so only mildly on certain occasions. On each occasion one should honor another man's sect, for by doing so one increases the influence of one's own sect and benefits that of the other man; while by doing otherwise one diminishes the influence of one's own sect and harms the other man's. Again, whosoever honours his own sect or disparages that of another man, wholly out of devotion to his own, with a view to showing it in a favourable light, harms his own sect even more seriously. Therefore, concord is to be commanded, so that men may hear one another's principles and obey them.

### Adapted Version

The Beloved of the Gods, the king Piyadassi, honors all sects. He honors both ascetics and laymen with gifts and various forms of recognition. But gifts or honor are not as important as teaching the essential doctrine of all sects. This essential doctrine takes many forms. Yet its basis is to speak carefully so as not to praise one's own sect or criticize another's unsuitably. Or at least to do so only mildly on certain occasions. One should almost always honor another man's sect, for this increases the influence of one's own sect and benefits that of the other man as well. Doing otherwise both diminishes the influence of one's own sect and harms the other man's sect. Again, whoever insults another man's sect in order to show his own in a favorable light, harms his own sect even more seriously. Therefore, concord is demanded so that men may hear one another's principles and obey them.

Original Document Source: Ashoka, "The 12th Major Rock Edict," in *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, trans. Romila Thapar (Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 1997), 255.

Ashoka's reforms also included efforts to improve trade and the economic and social welfare of his people. In the 7th Pillar Edict, Ashoka listed some of these useful works. He also speaks of an entire organization of "officers of *Dhamma*" to help him implement such changes. A *kos* is a measure of distance—about 1.91 miles.

### Original Document

Thus speaks the Beloved of the Gods, the king Piyadassi: On the roads I have had banyan trees planted, which will give shade to beasts and men, I have had mango-groves planted and I have had wells dug and rest houses built at every eight *kos*. And I have had many watering places made everywhere for the use of beasts and men. But this benefit is important, and indeed the world has enjoyed attention in many ways from former kings as well as from me. But I have done these things in order that my people might conform to *Dhamma*.

Thus speaks the Beloved of the Gods, the king Piyadassi: My officers of *Dhamma* are busy in many matters of public benefit, they are busy among members of all sects, both ascetics and householders. I have appointed some to concern themselves with the Buddhist Order, with brahmans and *Ājīvikas* . . . , with the Jains . . . , and with various sects. There are many categories of officers with a variety of duties, but my officers of *Dhamma* are busy with the affairs of these and other sects. . . .

The advancement of *Dhamma* amongst men has been achieved through two means, legislation and persuasion. But of these two, legislation has been less effective, and persuasion more so. I have proclaimed through legislation for instance that certain species of animals are not to be killed, and other such ideas. But men have increased their adherence to *Dhamma* by being persuaded not to injure living beings and not to take life.

### Adapted Version

On the roads I have had banyan trees planted. They will give shade to beasts and men. I have had mango-groves planted. And I have had wells dug and rest houses built at every fifteen miles. I have had many watering places made everywhere for the use of beasts and men. This benefit is important. Indeed the world has enjoyed attention in many ways from former kings as well as from me. But I have done these things for one key reason—so that my people might conform to *Dhamma*.

CONTINUED



Thus speaks the Beloved of the Gods, the king Piyadassi: My officers of *Dhamma* are busy in many matters of public benefit. They work with members of all sects, both ascetics and householders. Some concern themselves with the Buddhist Order. Some with brahmans. Some with Ajivikas or with the Jainas . . . and with various sects. There are many categories of officers with a variety of duties, but my officers of *Dhamma* are busy with the affairs of these and other sects.

The advancement of *Dhamma* has been achieved through two means, legislation and persuasion. But of these two, legislation has been less effective. Persuasion has been more effective. For example, I have announced laws against killing certain species of animals, and other such ideas. But men have followed *Dhamma* by being persuaded not to injure living beings and not to take life.

This may be the most important of all of Ashoka's edicts if the goal is to understand more about him and his objectives. In this edict, he relates his remorse about the destruction he caused in his war against Kalinga. That war seems to have taken place in the eighth year of his rule around 260 BCE. The edict deals with many things. It provides some idea of the way the Mauryan Empire dealt with various societies on its northwestern and southern borders.

### Original Document

When he had been consecrated eight years the Beloved of the Gods, the king Piyadassi, conquered Kalinga. A hundred and fifty thousand people were deported, a hundred thousand were killed and many times that number perished. Afterwards, now that Kalinga was annexed, the Beloved of the Gods very earnestly practiced *Dhamma*, desired *Dhamma*, and taught *Dhamma*. On conquering Kalinga the Beloved of the Gods felt remorse, for, when an independent country is conquered the slaughter, death, and deportation of the people is extremely grievous to the Beloved of the Gods, and weighs heavily on his mind. What is even more deplorable to the Beloved of the Gods, is that those who dwell there, whether brahmanas, *śramaṇas*, or those of other sects, or householders who show obedience to their superiors, obedience to mother and father, obedience to their teachers and behave well and devotedly towards their friends, acquaintances, colleagues, relatives, slaves, and servants—all suffer violence, murder, and separation from their loved ones. Even those who are fortunate to have escaped, and whose love is undiminished, suffer from the misfortunes of their friends, acquaintances, colleagues, and relatives. This participation of all men in suffering, weighs heavily on the mind of the Beloved of the Gods. Except among the Greeks, there is no land where the religious orders of brahmanas and *śramaṇas* are not to be found, and there is no land anywhere where men do not support one sect or another. Today if a hundredth or a thousandth part of those people who were killed or died or were deported when Kalinga was annexed were to suffer similarly, it would weigh heavily on the mind of the Beloved of the Gods.

The Beloved of the Gods believes that one who does wrong should be forgiven as far as it is possible to forgive him. And the Beloved of the Gods conciliates the forest tribes of his empire, but he warns them that he has power even in his remorse, and he asks them to repent, lest they be killed. For the Beloved of the Gods wishes that all beings should be unharmed, self-controlled, calm in mind, and gentle.

CONTINUED



The Beloved of the Gods considers victory by *Dhamma* to be the foremost victory. And moreover the Beloved of the Gods has gained this victory on all his frontiers to a distance of six hundred *yojanas* [i.e., about 1,500 miles], where reigns the Greek king named Antiochus, and beyond the realm of that Antiochus in the lands of the four kings named Ptolemy, Antigonus, Magas, and Alexander; and in the south over the Colas and Pandyas as far as Ceylon. Likewise here in the imperial territories . . . , everywhere the people follow the Beloved of the Gods' instructions in *Dhamma*. Even where the envoys of the Beloved of the Gods have not gone, people hear of his conduct according to *Dhamma*, his precepts and his instruction in *Dhamma*, and they follow *Dhamma* and will continue to follow it.

What is obtained by this is victory everywhere, and everywhere victory is pleasant. This pleasure has been obtained through victory by *Dhamma*—yet it is but a slight pleasure, for the Beloved of the Gods only looks upon that as important in its results which pertains to the next world.

This inscription of *Dhamma* has been engraved so that any sons or great grandsons that I may have should not think of gaining new conquests, and in whatever victories they may gain should be satisfied with patience and light punishment. They should only consider conquest by *Dhamma* to be a true conquest, and delight in *Dhamma* should be their whole delight, for this is of value in both this world and the next.

### Adapted Version

After ruling for eight years, the Beloved of the Gods, the king Piyadassi, conquered Kalinga. A hundred and fifty thousand people were deported. A hundred thousand were killed, and many times that number perished. After Kalinga was annexed, I very earnestly practiced *Dhamma*, desired *Dhamma*, and taught *Dhamma*. On conquering Kalinga, I felt remorse. When an independent country is conquered, the slaughter, death, and deportation are extremely upsetting to me. It weighs heavily on my mind. Even more deplorable is that those who dwell there suffer. They suffer whether they are brahmans, sramanas, or members of other sects. They suffer even if they are householders who show obedience to their superiors, to mother and father, to their teachers. They suffer even if they behave well and devotedly toward their friends, acquaintances, colleagues, relatives, slaves, and servants. All of them suffer violence, murder, and separation from

CONTINUED

their loved ones. This is true even of those lucky enough to have escaped, and whose love is undiminished by war. They suffer from the misfortunes of their friends, acquaintances, colleagues, and relatives. This suffering weighs heavily on my mind. Except among the Greeks, there is no land where the religious orders of brahmanas and sramanas are not to be found. And there is no land anywhere where men do not support one sect or another. Today if even a tiny number of those people killed or deported when Kalinga was annexed were to suffer similarly, it would weigh heavily on my mind.

One who does wrong should be forgiven as far as it is possible to forgive him. And I do deal moderately with the forest tribes of my empire. But I warn them that I have power even in my remorse. I ask them to repent, lest they be killed. For I wish that all beings should be unharmed, self-controlled, calm in mind, and gentle.

The greatest victory is the victory by *Dhamma*. Moreover the Beloved of the Gods has gained this victory on all his frontiers to a distance of 1,500 miles. For example, to the land where the Greek king Antiochus rules. Even beyond there to the lands of the four kings named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas, and Alexander. In the south, over the Colas and Pandyas as far as Ceylon. Likewise in our own imperial territories, everywhere the people follow my instructions in *Dhamma*. Even where my envoys have not gone, people hear of my conduct, precepts, and instruction in *Dhamma*, and they follow *Dhamma* and will continue to follow it.

This results in victory everywhere, and everywhere victory is pleasant. This pleasure has been obtained through victory by *Dhamma*. Yet it is but a slight pleasure, for the Beloved of the Gods only looks upon that as important in its influence on the next world.

This inscription is engraved so that any sons or great grandsons that I may have should not think of gaining new conquests. And in whatever victories they may gain, they should be satisfied with patience and light punishment. They should see the only true conquest as conquest by *Dhamma*. Delight in *Dhamma* should be their whole delight, for this is of value in both this world and the next.



PRIMARY SOURCE ►

3.10

## Message for the Defeated People of Kalinga

The 13th Major Rock Edict appeared in several places around the Mauryan Empire. Oddly, the one place it did not appear was near Kalinga itself. Instead Ashoka had the two Separate Edicts inscribed in locations next to Kalinga. The two edicts are directed at Ashoka's own officials. He urged these officials to work to win the affection of the people of the area. Was this a sign of Ashoka's deep humanitarian feelings, or was it simply an effort to calm and win over a defeated group? Were these two edicts friendly? Did they also imply a threat of some sort? This passage is the main portion of the 2nd Separate Edict.

### Original Document

All men are my children and just as I desire for my children that they should obtain welfare and happiness both in this world and the next, the same do I desire for all men. If the unconquered peoples on my borders ask what is my will, they should be made to understand that this is my will with regard to them—"the king desires that they should have no trouble on his account, should trust in him, and should have in their dealings with him only happiness and no sorrow. They should understand that the king will forgive them as far as they can be forgiven, and that through him they should follow *Dhamma* and gain this world and the next."

For this purpose I instruct you, that having done so I may discharge my debt to them, by making known to you my will, my resolve and my firm promise. By these actions, my work will advance, and they will be reassured and will realize that the king is like a father, and that he feels for them as for himself, for they are like his own children to him. My couriers and special officers will be in contact with you, instructing you and making known to you my will, my resolve, and my firm promise. For you are able to give the frontier people confidence, welfare, and happiness in this world and the next. Doing this you will reach heaven and help me discharge my debt to my people.

### Adapted Version

All men are my children. And just as I want my children to obtain welfare and happiness in both this world and the next, I want the same for all men. If the unconquered peoples on my borders ask what I wish, they should be made to understand that this is what I wish with regard to them: The king desires that they should have no trouble on his account. They should trust him. In dealing with him, they should have only happiness and no sorrow. They should know that the king will forgive them as far as they can be forgiven. They should see that through him they should follow *Dhamma* and gain this world and the next.

CONTINUED

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

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MESSAGE FOR THE DEFEATED PEOPLE OF KALINGA CONTINUED

For this purpose I instruct you, my officials. In making known to you my will and firm promise, I am doing what I owe to these frontier people. By these actions, my work will advance. They will be reassured and will realize that the king is like a father. They will see that he feels for them as for himself, for they are like his own children to him. My couriers and special officers will be in contact with you, instructing you and making known to you my will, my resolve, and my firm promise. For you are able to give the frontier people confidence, welfare, and happiness in this world and the next. Doing this you will reach heaven and help me discharge my debt to my people.

Original Document Source: Ashoka, "2nd Separate Edict," in *Aśoka and the Decline of the Maurays*, trans. Romila Thaper (Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 1997), 258.

## Communicating Results and Taking Action

### Communicating Results

- ◆ The History Group will report on its views about Ashoka's concept of *Dhamma* and that concept's connection with Buddhist teachings. Then use Primary Sources 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7 in a brief essay answering this question: "Did Ashoka wish to convert all India to Buddhist beliefs?"
- ◆ Pretend you lived in Kalinga during the war that Ashoka fought there in the eighth year of his rule. Then imagine that someone from another part of India has sent you the 13th Major Rock Edict (Primary Source 3.9). As a resident in Kalinga, you will already have read the 2nd Separate Edict (Primary Source 3.10). Write a letter describing what you remember of the Kalinga war and explaining your reactions now that you have read both edicts mentioned here.
- ◆ Pretend you are advisers to Ashoka. It is toward the end of his reign, after most of his edicts have been displayed. Using Primary Sources 3.2 and 3.3, and Secondary Source 3.1, write to Ashoka to ask him to clarify why he placed the various kinds of edicts where they are located. Ask him for suggestions as to where any new ones ought to go. Then pretend to be Ashoka and write a letter responding to the first one.

### Taking Action

- ◆ India won its independence from Great Britain in 1947. One of the leaders of the drive for independence was Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru then became India's first prime minister. He had the Ashoka Chakra placed on the new Indian flag. The Ashoka Chakra (or the *dharma-chakra*) is a 24-spoked wheel often found on Ashoka's rock edicts. Working in a small group, learn more about India's flag and the varying views people in India have about it and about Ashoka. Then report on what your group has learned and what this shows about India's attitudes today toward Ashoka and his teachings.
- ◆ Based on the work in the previous assignment, use social media to share the results of these small group reports. Ask those contacted in this way to comment on India and Ashoka. Make some effort to respond to their questions and comments.



## Ashoka of Ancient India Rubric

Criteria	Unacceptable	Developing	Proficient	Excellent
<b>Focus</b>	Tries to respond to task instructions but lacks clear focus on a central idea or thesis	Addresses the task instructions adequately but focus on a central idea or thesis is uneven	Responds to the task instructions appropriately and convincingly; has a consistent focus on a central idea or thesis	Responds to all task instructions convincingly; has a clear and strong focus on a well-developed central idea or thesis
<b>Research</b>	Refers to some sources but fails to connect these in a way that is relevant to the instructions	Refers to relevant sources well but does not always connect these clearly to the task instructions	Refers to relevant sources accurately and usually connects these to the task instructions and a central idea	Refers to relevant sources accurately and in great detail and connects these clearly to the task instructions and a central idea
<b>Development/Use of Evidence</b>	Uses some details and evidence from sources but does not make clear the relevance to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources generally but not always in support of a clear focus relevant to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources in a way that effectively supports a focus relevant to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources along with clear explanations demonstrating deep understanding of the task purpose or instructions
<b>Content</b>	Refers to disciplinary content without clearly understanding it or while using it in an irrelevant or inaccurate manner	Refers to disciplinary content with some understanding but not always with a clear idea of its relation to the overall task	Accurately uses disciplinary content and demonstrates a clear idea of its relation to the overall task	Uses disciplinary content effectively and explains thoroughly and in depth its relation to the overall task
<b>Conventions</b>	Demonstrates only limited control of standard English conventions, with many errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates some command of standard English conventions, with limited errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates adequate command of standard English conventions, with few errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates a well-developed command of standard English conventions, with few errors and a use of language appropriate to the audience and the purpose of the task



## Primary and Secondary Source Bibliography

- 3.1: PHGCOM. *Edicts of Ashoka*. 2007. CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons.
- 3.2: Bilingual (Greek and Aramaic) inscriptions by King Ashoka at Kandahar. Photograph. Public domain.
- 3.3: Bpilgrim. *Ashoka Pillar at Vaishali, Bihar, India*. 2007. Photograph. CC BY-SA 2.5 via Wikimedia Commons.
- 3.4: Thapar, Romila, trans. *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*. Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 1997.
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## Sources for Further Study

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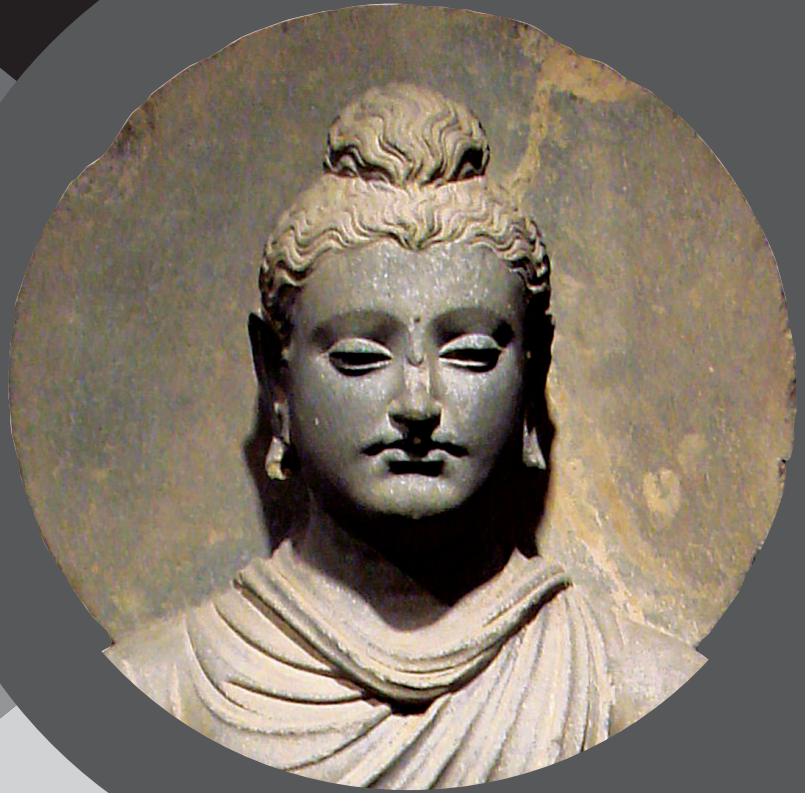
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# The Early Silk Routes

*Did Trade Unite the Ancient World?*





## Overview

### Introduction

The Silk Road was much more than one road, and it was about much more than silk. In this lesson, we use the term *Silk Routes* for this network of overland and sea trading routes that took form well over 2,000 years ago. The routes linked China, Korea, and Japan with Central Asia, India, what is now Iran and Turkey, and ports along the Mediterranean Sea. The Silk Routes are named for one of the trading network's most important commodities. However, merchants along the Silk Routes traded many other items, including blown glass, jade, spices, tea, wool, horses, amber, gold, and silver. In addition, many kinds of religious, scientific, artistic, and other cultural exchanges via the Silk Routes were as important, if not more so. How much mutual understanding did the Silk Routes help bring about? Did the Silk Routes unite the Eurasian lands? This lesson will focus on that compelling question. Students will work with ten sources that form the core content for tasks that will help them answer the lesson's compelling question.

### Objectives

Students will work individually and in small groups to respond in a meaningful way to a compelling question about the Silk Routes. They will apply discipline-specific background knowledge, use scaffolding, and engage in instructional activities to interpret primary and secondary sources before presenting their ideas to the class.

### C3 Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- ◆ **D1.4.6-8.** Explain how the relationship between supporting questions and compelling questions is mutually reinforcing.
- ◆ **D1.5.6-8.** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources.
- ◆ **D2.His.5.6-8.** Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time.
- ◆ **D2.His.11.6-8.** Use other historical sources to infer a plausible maker, date, place of origin, and intended audience for historical sources where this information is not easily identified.
- ◆ **D2.His.12.6-8.** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to identify further areas of inquiry and additional sources.
- ◆ **D2.His.16.6-8.** Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.
- ◆ **D2.Civ.8.6-8.** Analyze ideas and principles contained in the founding documents of the United States, and explain how they influence the social and political system.
- ◆ **D2.Eco.7.6-8.** Analyze the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in a market economy.
- ◆ **D2.Geo.5.6-8.** Analyze the combinations of cultural and environmental characteristics that make places both similar to and different from other places.
- ◆ **D2.Geo.6.6-8.** Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.
- ◆ **D3.1.6-8.** Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.
- ◆ **D3.2.6-8.** Evaluate the credibility of a source by determining its relevance and intended use.

- ◆ **D3.3.6-8.** Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources to support claims, noting evidentiary limitations.
- ◆ **D3.4.6-8.** Develop claims and counterclaims while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.
- ◆ **D4.1.6-8.** Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments.
- ◆ **D4.3.6-8.** Present adaptations of arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., internet, social media, and digital documentary).
- ◆ **D4.6.6-8.** Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

### Common Core Anchor Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1.** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2.** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6.** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9.** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7.** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1.** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

## Teaching Instructions

**Compelling Question**

Did trade along the early Silk Routes unite the ancient world?

**Preparation**

Provide all students with a copy of the Introductory Essay. Assign this reading as homework. In addition, assign all relevant parts of your course textbook or other basic reading material. Remind students to keep the compelling question for the lesson in mind as they read.



## Asking Questions about the Early Silk Routes

*This part of the task stresses Dimensions 1 and 2 of the C3 Framework*

**Day One**

1. Briefly discuss the Introductory Essay in class and address any initial questions students may have.
2. Distribute the How to Analyze a Primary Source handout. Review each suggestion with the class, and remind students to refer to the handout as they read the primary sources in this lesson.
3. Divide the class into four small groups. Each group will focus its work on one of the four basic disciplines identified in Dimension 2 of the C3 Framework—history, civics, geography, or economics. As they work, the groups should keep in mind the lesson’s overall compelling question. However, for Day One and Day Two, each group will work mainly with a second compelling question—one related specifically to its assigned discipline.
4. Provide each group with one copy of its discipline-specific Assignment Sheet. Give each student a copy of all the primary and secondary sources for this lesson. Each group may share a source packet, if necessary.
5. Have students complete the Day One section of their Assignment Sheets. The objective for Day One is for groups to read three sources, and then formulate one supporting question about each of those sources. The supporting questions should be recorded in the spaces provided on the Assignment Sheet.



## Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Evaluating Sources and Evidence

*This part of the task stresses Dimensions 2 and 3 of the C3 Framework*

**Day Two**

6. Students will return to their previously assigned groups and formulate a claim addressing their group’s compelling question. After reading the remaining seven sources, they will select one that supports their claim.



7. Using the evidence gathered from primary and secondary sources, each group will then prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation about the Silk Routes from the group's disciplinary perspective. The presentation can be in the form of an oral report, a debate among group members, a PowerPoint, or a related type of presentation. Allow time for students to prepare by discussing and debating topics among themselves.

### Day Three

8. Each group will deliver its presentation. Allow time for class discussion following each presentation, and for a final effort to answer the central compelling question for the lesson.



#### Communicating Results and Taking Action

*This part of the task stresses Dimension 4 of the C3 Framework*

Students will complete a final project that expresses an understanding of the topic and responds clearly to the lesson's central compelling question. The project may be completed in groups, but students should be evaluated individually.

Distribute the Communicating Results and Taking Action handout, and decide whether you will assign the projects or allow students to form groups and choose tasks on their own. Set a reasonable deadline. Students should review the Early Silk Routes Rubric so they can understand how their performance will be evaluated. The projects are summarized below.

#### Communicating Results

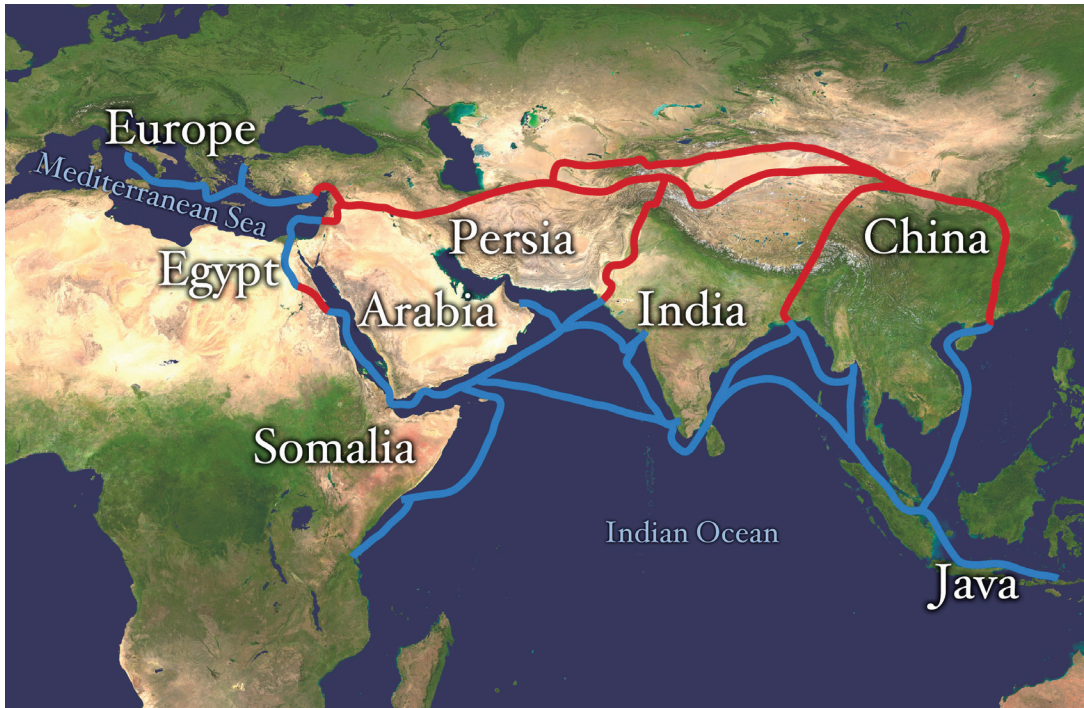
- ◆ Ask students to pretend it is the second century CE and they are traveling from Dunhuang in China to Bucharra in present-day Uzbekistan (see Secondary Source 4.2). Have them write five journal entries describing their activities and the things they noticed most on their journey. The entries should refer to at least three of the sources for this lesson.
- ◆ Ask students to pretend to be advisers to a wealthy merchant back in ancient Greece or Rome. The merchant is planning to assemble a caravan to take the Silk Routes to trade in China. Ask students to read Primary Sources 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8. Using these sources, each student should write to the merchant and offer detailed advice for the upcoming caravan. The letter should reference details in the three sources mentioned here.
- ◆ Divide students into small groups. Each group's task is to find ten to fifteen photos, maps, or works of art related to the early Silk Routes. The group should assemble copies of these photos into a presentation using PowerPoint or some other presentation software. The presentation should also include references to at least three of the sources for this lesson to help explain the various geographical challenges to those traveling these routes hundreds of years ago.

#### Taking Action

- ◆ Have students bring to class examples (or photographs of examples) of trade goods from other countries or U.S. goods often sold as exports to other countries. Use images of these goods to create a presentation using PowerPoint or some other presentation software titled "The Silk Road: Then and Now." Invite other classes, parents, and local groups to a showing of the presentation and a discussion about the global economy we now have. Invite local news media to attend and report on the discussion.

## Introductory Essay

# *Traveling the Silk Routes*



The name *Silk Road* is often used for the topic of this lesson. It was actually much more than one road, and it was about much more than silk. In this lesson, we use the term *Silk Routes*. However, even that is too limited a way to describe what was a vast trading network. This network includes overland routes and sea trading routes as well. It took form well over 2,000 years ago. It linked China, Korea, and Japan with Central Asia, India, what is now Iran and Turkey, and ports along the Mediterranean Sea.

The Silk Routes are named for one of the trading network's most important commodities. China's silk was in high demand for centuries, especially because the Chinese were long able to keep their superior knowledge of silk production secret. Silk was an easily transported, high-priced luxury item. China sold it in huge quantities. However, merchants along the Silk Routes traded many other items including blown glass, jade, spices, tea, wool, horses, amber, gold, and silver.

It is amazing that anything was traded at all along the overland routes. Camel caravans had to cross some of the most difficult territory on earth. Going east from China, they skirted the forbidding Taklamakan Desert. *Taklamakan* is loosely translated as "he who goes in does not

come out.” On either side rose some of the tallest mountains on earth. At the desert’s western edge, passes had to be found through the Pamirs, Hindu Kush, and other mountain ranges into Central Asia. There, yet more desert, grassy steppe lands, and mountains lay ahead. As to the sea routes, these also were incredibly challenging two thousand years ago. Monsoon winds, primitive sailing ships, pirates, and long voyages made such seafaring highly risky.

Both by sea and overland, war, political uncertainty, and banditry added to the dangers. For that reason, the Silk Routes thrived at times when strong kingdoms controlled the regions the routes passed through. This was especially the case regarding China. When China was united under the rule of a single emperor, trade flourished along the Silk Routes.



*China tried to keep knowledge of how to produce silk a secret. However, the secret did get out. In time, it was carried across the Silk Routes to many other societies.*

Three such times were most important. The first of these periods was during the Han Dynasty in China, from 206 BCE to 220 CE. During that period, the Han often fought a nomadic people called the Xiongnu. The Han extended China’s control far to the west into the Tarim Basin, where the Taklamakan Desert is located. During this time, trading links extended all the way to ancient Rome in the Mediterranean. It was during Han times that silk became a highly sought-after luxury good among wealthy Romans. A second time of great activity along the Silk Routes was during the Tang Dynasty, 618 to 907 CE. In those centuries, the trade routes linked China, Central Asia, Persia, the Arab and Muslim lands in the Middle East, and the Byzantine Empire and India. Chinese silks continued to be in great demand. In exchange, the Tang rulers looked west for the high-quality horses of various nomadic societies. The horses of the Fergana Valley were especially prized.



In addition to trade in goods, many kinds of religious, scientific, artistic, and other cultural exchanges were as important, if not more so. During the Tang Dynasty, Buddhist monks, Nestorian Christians, Zoroastrians, and, later, Muslims traveled these roads. Literary works and other kinds of artwork traveled with them. Often cultural traditions fused and combined in numerous ways.

The third period of major activity on the Silk Routes came with the Mongol conquests of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In these centuries, all of China came under Mongol control. It was a time of growing European contacts with China. This lesson, however, will focus more on the first two of these three eras of Silk Route activity.

How much mutual understanding did the Silk Routes help bring about? Aside from sharing cultural products, did the societies of East Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Europe truly come to know each other? That is not an easy question to answer. Few merchants or missionaries ever traveled the entire length of these roads and sea routes. More often, they passed their goods, artwork, and ideas from one merchant caravan to another. It is not clear how much real understanding of others' societies this led to. Did the Silk Routes unite the Eurasian lands? The primary and secondary sources in this lesson are meant to help you discuss, debate, and try to answer this question.



*This statue is of Buddha, India's great spiritual leader. However, the style is that of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture.*

Image Sources: *Extent of Silk Route/Silk Road*, 2010, public domain via Wikimedia Commons.  
Meister nach Chang Hsüan, *Damen bearbeiten neue Seide*, early 12th century,  
Indian ink and color on silk, 37 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.  
Gandhara Buddha, 1st–2nd century CE, Tokyo National Museum.





## History Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

## *The Early Silk Routes*

Your group's task is to explore history issues related to the Silk Routes. A disciplinary compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow the steps to complete the task.

### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Did the trade routes across inner Asia promote greater cultural understanding and harmony among different societies? Explain your answer.

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 4.3, 4.8, and 4.9.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Buddhism is a major example of cultural exchange along the Silk Routes. Tradition has it that the Buddha was born in northern India near Nepal in the sixth century BCE. For two centuries, Buddhist teachings spread through India. By the second century BCE, they had reached the Kushan kingdom to India's northwest in what is now northern Pakistan, northern India, and Afghanistan. For several centuries, Kushan linked the trade routes of Central Asia to China in the east and to Parthia and the Roman Empire to the west. Knowledge of Buddhism spread along these routes both ways. Along with Buddhism, the Greek conquests of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE also influenced Kushan. Greek artistic influences can be seen in Buddhist art of that kingdom.

In time, the Buddhist monasteries arose in many parts of Central Asia. Buddhist monks traveling the Silk Routes greatly influenced China, Korea, and Japan. A few Chinese travelers made their way into India. Did this mean these two societies came to understand one another in any

meaningful way? Some Chinese writers also mention Rome in a vague way. Romans adored the silk garments that came from China. They may have called China *Seres*, though historians are not even sure of that. In other words, how much the Silk Route societies knew about one another is very hard to determine.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, choose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 4.3

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Primary Source 4.8

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Primary Source 4.9

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## Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can back up with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Did the trade routes across inner Asia promote greater cultural understanding and harmony among different societies? Explain your answer.

State your group's claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



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GROUP MEMBERS:

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## *The Early Silk Routes*

Your group's task is to explore the civics issues related to the Silk Routes. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

“Without strong organized states like China during the Han Dynasty the Silk Routes could never have arisen and worked well.” Explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.
3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

The Silk Routes began to be marked out long before the Han Dynasty in China, 206 BCE to 221 CE. Before the Han, many small nomadic clans, tribes, and federations of tribes filled the dry lands west of China. These societies roamed the vast steppe, desert, and mountainous lands of inner Asia. They combined some agriculture with a herding way of life. They followed regular seasonal routes from highland summer pastures to lowland winter camping grounds. As they marked out their trails, they also began to establish key Silk Route sites.

However, to link all these trails and oases into the Silk Routes, a greater unity had to emerge. As Han Dynasty China expanded, it provoked conflict with nomads. Nomadic tribes joined together in a huge federation known as the Xiongnu. For decades, China battled the Xiongnu. As they did, the Han looked for allies farther west. In time, they took control of western lands all the way around the Taklamakan Desert. They learned



about societies even farther west with valuable goods to trade. Han control over the Silk Routes gave caravans the security they needed from constant raiding by bandits. The Han era was the first of several major periods of Silk Route activity.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 4.5

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Primary Source 4.6

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Primary Source 4.7

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## **Day Two**

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can back up with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

“Without strong organized states like China during the Han Dynasty the Silk Routes could never have arisen and worked well.” Explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.

State your group's claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.

**Economics Group**

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GROUP MEMBERS:

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## *The Early Silk Routes*

Your group's task is to explore the economics issues related to the Silk Routes. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

How important were the economic exchanges along the Silk Routes to the many societies that took part in them?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 4.4, 4.6, and 4.8.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Major goods were transported: silk, horses, teas, spices, porcelain, cotton, ivory, gold, and silver. The emphasis was on luxury goods. Wealthy people in ancient societies were usually the only ones with extra purchasing power. Most ordinary people produced their own necessities. Besides, small, highly expensive goods were the easiest and most profitable to transport.

For example, silk was highly prized in Roman society, but mainly by the wealthy. Some Roman critics hated silk. They said it was a frivolous product that men only bought to make their wives look good. Nevertheless, Silk Route trade had an influence greater than just the specific goods traded. In the case of silk, China tried to keep its knowledge of how to produce it secret. However, the secret did get out. In time, it was carried across the Silk Routes to many other societies. Paper was another product that began in China. In time, the knowledge of how to make it also traveled the Silk Routes. Its influence on all societies was enormous. An

irrigation waterwheel invented in Roman Syria traveled east along these routes. Ideas, inventions, and new technology were important aspects of the economic impact of the Silk Routes.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 4.4

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Primary Source 4.6

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Primary Source 4.8

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## Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can back up with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

How important were the economic exchanges along the Silk Routes to the many societies that took part in them?



State your group's claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



## Geography Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

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### *The Early Silk Routes*

Your group's task is to explore geography issues related to the Silk Routes. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

#### Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

What geographical features and other factors explain why it was not easy to keep the Silk Routes open?

3. Read and discuss Primary Source 4.5, and Secondary Sources 4.1 and 4.2.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

The overland Silk Routes stretch more than 4,500 miles from China's coast to the Mediterranean Sea. They cross dry deserts, grassy steppe lands, and rugged mountains. Most of this land is far from any ocean waters. Ocean waters moderate temperatures. Instead, the weather on the Silk Routes is often either very hot or very cold. This also means the climate is very dry. Water is scarce along much of the way. Water is a crucial factor in determining where the routes go and where stopping points are located. Traveling west from China, the routes split at Dunhuang. One goes along the northern edge of the Tarim Basin, where the Taklamakan Desert is located. The other goes south of that desert. These routes hug the mountain ranges to stay close to streams draining snow melt. These mountain rivers fed rich pastures that were key locations for nomadic people. Many of the rivers then disappear into the desert sands.

After the Tarim Basin, several mountain passes lead up and out of some of the highest mountain ranges on earth. To deal with bandits and nomadic

raiders, merchants had to travel in large, well-protected camel caravans. This meant that careful planning was needed to carry out these journeys. Beyond these mountain passes lay even more mountains, steppes, and deserts much of the way to the Mediterranean Sea.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each source and record those questions here.

Secondary Source 4.1

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Secondary Source 4.2

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Primary Source 4.5

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## **Day Two**

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can back up with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

What geographical features and other factors explain why it was not easy to keep the Silk Routes open?

State your group's claim here:

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7. From the remaining seven primary sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

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Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



## How to Analyze a Primary Source

For this lesson, you will be studying several primary source documents. This handout offers suggestions for how best to read and analyze historical primary sources. Studying such sources is challenging. They were created in a different time and place. Their language and use of certain key terms often differ from ours. They assume things we might not accept. They arise out of historical circumstances and settings that differ greatly from our own times. To use such sources as evidence, you need to apply some special historical thinking skills and habits. Here are some guidelines to help you do this.

### ◆ *Question the source.*

No primary source was written with you and your interests in mind, so you need to be clear about what you are looking for when you examine a source. You need to stay in charge of the investigation. Act like a detective, and ask questions. Above all, keep your own most important compelling questions in mind as you read and think about a source.

### ◆ *Consider the source's origins.*

This is often simply called “sourcing.” It means asking who created the source, when and where the source was created, and why. If you know the source’s purpose, you will be more likely to see how it is shaped by its creator’s point of view. Among other things, sourcing can also help you decide how reliable or typical a source might be.

### ◆ *Contextualize the source.*

“Context” here means the broader historical setting for the source. Sources are always a part of a larger historical context. You need to consider how this context helps clarify the meaning of the source. You also need to decide which context is most important. Sources might be understood best in connection with a local context or a recent event. Alternatively, they might be understood better within a national or international context, or as part of a long-term trend in society at large. Your guiding questions should help you decide which context is most important.

### ◆ *Corroborate the source.*

This means you must think about your source in relation to other sources. Does the source agree with or support those other sources, or does it seem to be at odds with the other sources? Might there be additional sources, which have not been provided to you, that could support or conflict with your source?

### ◆ *Above all, read the source carefully.*

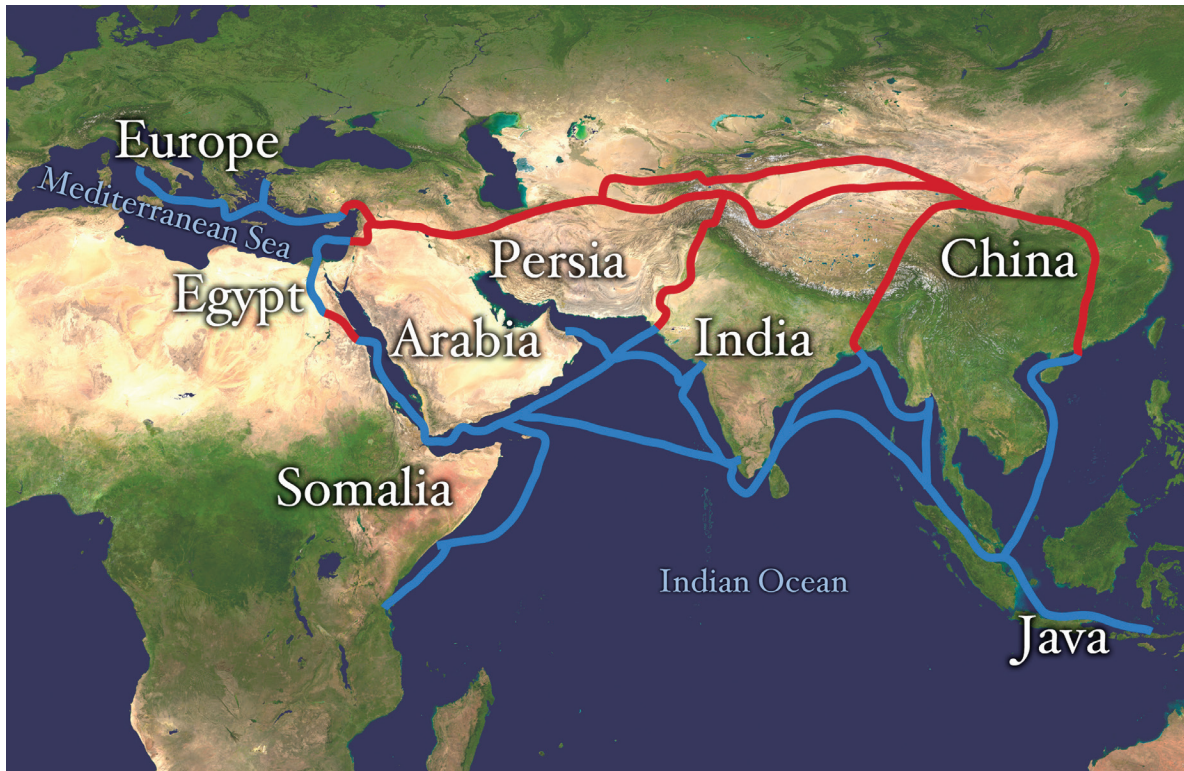
Look at language closely. Pay attention to images, emotional language, metaphors, and other literary devices. Think about what is implied, not merely what is stated or claimed in so many words. Think about what is left out as well as what is included. Make inferences based on your close reading. This will help you get more out of your source than even the source’s creator might have seen in it.

## SECONDARY SOURCE ▶

## 4.I

## By Land and By Sea

The term *Silk Road* is often used for the camel caravan routes across Central Asia, linking China with the Mediterranean region. Such a route was open at least as early as the Han Dynasty in China (206 BCE–221 CE). Silk was a major product transported; however, many other goods were also a part of the trade. The Silk Road was actually several routes by land across the vast Eurasian landmass. In addition, several sea lanes linked China, India, Mesopotamia, East Africa, and the Mediterranean.



Original Document Source: *Extent of Silk Route/Silk Road*, 2010, public domain via Wikimedia Commons.

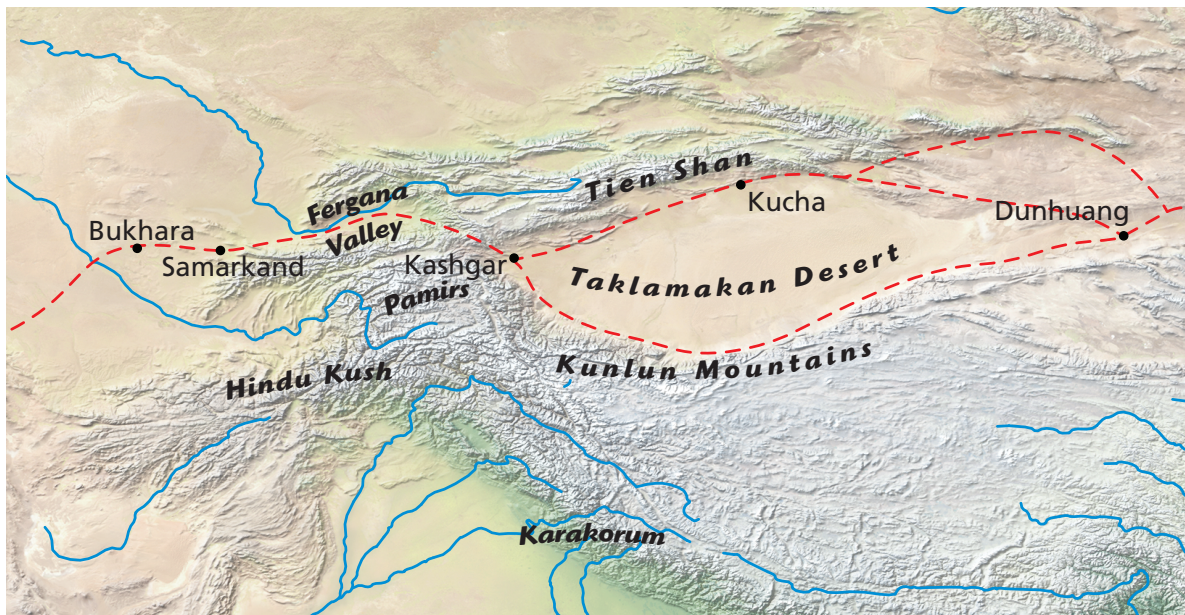


## SECONDARY SOURCE ▶

## 4.2

## The Central Asian Crossroads

This map shows the middle part of the Silk Road in Central Asia. This is a region of dramatic contrasts. Some of the tallest snowcapped mountains in the world line the Taklamakan Desert. The Taklamakan is a huge desert of shifting sands that no one could hope to cross and survive. The route from China therefore split at Dunhuang into a northern and southern branch, each following the edge of a mountain range. East from Kashgar the route shown here goes over mountain passes to the Fergana Valley. The Chinese especially sought this valley's "heavenly horses." This was also the easternmost point reached by ancient Greeks and Romans starting with Alexander the Great's conquests. It was a key point where east truly did meet west.



Original Document Source: © Nystrom Education, 2018.



PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

4.3

## Gandhara's Greco-Buddhist statue

This statue is of Buddha, India's great spiritual leader. However, the style is that of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture. The statue is from Gandhara, a state in what is now northern Pakistan. Gandhara was conquered by Alexander the Great and came under Greek influence for several centuries. Later, Buddhism entered the area. Gandhara was in the region where connecting trade routes allowed the spread of many diverse cultural influences both east and west. In time Buddhist missionaries carried their teachings into the rest of Central Asia and on to China, Korea, and Japan.



Original Document Source: *Gandhara Buddha*, 1st–2nd century CE, sculpture, Tokyo National Museum.



PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

4.4

## A Multicolored Silk from Sogdiana

Sogdiana was a territory to the west of the Fergana Valley in Central Asia. Sogdians, who spoke an Iranian language, were the greatest traders on the Silk Road for many centuries. Among the many goods carried by these merchants were huge quantities of Chinese silk. Silk is the product that gave the great inner Asian routes their name. This photo shows one such Sogdian silk from the eighth century CE.



Original Document Source: Yann Forget, *Lions, Sogdian Polychrome Silk, Central Asia, 8th century CE*, photograph, CC-BY-SA-3.0 via Wikimedia Commons.



PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

4.5

## Horses of the Inner Asian Nomads

In trading its silk, jewels, and other goods, the Chinese were most interested in obtaining horses. In particular they wanted the powerful horses raised by nomadic peoples in Central Asia. They needed these horses to better equip their own cavalry to be able to fight the powerful nomadic societies on their borders. Shown here are horses in the steppe lands of modern-day Kazakhstan (5A) and two Chinese Han Dynasty terracotta horse figurines (5B).

5A



5B



Original Document Source: Togzhan Ibrayeva, *Horses in the Poppy Valley of Kazakhstan near City of Almaty*, 2013, photograph, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons.  
Two horse figurines, 1st–2nd century CE, terracotta, 100 cm, Musée Guimet, Paris.



## Zhang Qian's Description of Dayuan

In the second century BCE, Chinese official Zhang Qian (Chang Ch'ien) spent thirteen years or more traveling west. He skirted the Taklamakan Desert and visited the states of Central Asia. He was the first Chinese official to report fully on these regions. The Chinese called one of those states *Dayuan* (Ta-yuan), in the Fergana Valley. The great Han historian Sima Qian (Ssu-ma Ch'ien) included Zhang Qian's reports in his official *Records of the Grand Historian* in the first century BCE. The passage refers to *piculs*. A *picul* is a load that a man can carry on a shoulder pole.

**Original Document**

The regions around Dayuan make wine out of grapes, the wealthier inhabitants keeping as much as 10,000 or more piculs stored away. It can be kept for as long as twenty or thirty years without spoiling. The people love their wine and the horses love their alfalfa. The Han envoys brought back grape and alfalfa seeds to China and the emperor for the first time tried growing these plants in areas of rich soil. Later, when the Han acquired large numbers of the "heavenly horses" and the envoys from foreign states began to arrive with their retinues, the lands on all sides of the emperor's summer palaces and pleasure towers were planted with grapes and alfalfa for as far as the eye could see. . . .

The men all have deep-set eyes and profuse beards and whiskers. They are skilful at commerce and will haggle over a fraction of a cent. Women are held in great respect, and the men make decisions on the advice of their women. No silk or lacquer is produced anywhere in the region, and the casting of coins and vessels was formerly unknown. Later, however, when some of the Chinese soldiers attached to the Han embassies ran away and surrendered to the people of the area, they taught them how to cast metal and manufacture weapons.

**Adapted Version**

The regions around Dayuan make wine out of grapes. The wealthier inhabitants keep as much as 10,000 or more piculs stored away. The wine can be kept for as long as twenty or thirty years without spoiling. The people love their wine, and the horses love their alfalfa. The Han envoys brought back grape and alfalfa seeds to China and the emperor for the first time tried growing these plants in areas of rich soil. Later, the Han acquired large numbers of the "heavenly horses" of this region. Envoys from foreign states began to arrive with large groups of assistants. The lands on all sides of the emperor's summer palaces and pleasure towers were planted with grapes and alfalfa for as far as the eye could see.

CONTINUED

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

4.6

ZHANG QIAN'S DESCRIPTION OF DAYUAN CONTINUED

The men all have deep-set eyes and large beards and whiskers. They are skillful at commerce and will haggle over a fraction of a cent. Women are held in great respect. The men make decisions based on the advice of their women. No silk or lacquer is produced anywhere in the region. The casting of coins and vessels was formerly unknown. Later, some Chinese soldiers attached to the Han embassies ran away and taught the people of the area how to cast metal and manufacture weapons.

Original Document Source: Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian*, trans. Burton Watson (Hong Kong: Columbia University Press, 1993), 2:246.



Kuche (K'iu-chi) was a small Buddhist state lying along the Silk Route that followed the northern edge of the Taklamakan Desert in the Tarim Basin. Another famous traveler, Chinese Buddhist Xuanzang, visited this ancient kingdom during his long pilgrimage from 629 to 645 CE. Xuanzang traveled through Central Asia and across the Hindu Kush Mountains into India. He described his travels for the Tang emperor in his *Buddhist Records of the Western World*. In this passage from that account, he describes the country of Kuche. (A *li* is a Chinese measure equal to about a third of a mile.)

### Original Document

The country of K'iu-chi is from east to west some thousand li or so; from north to south about 600 li. The capital of the realm is from 17 to 18 li in circuit. The soil is suitable for rice and corn, also [a kind of rice called] *keng-t'ao*; . . . grapes, pomegranates, and numerous species of plums, pears, peaches, and almonds, also grow here. The ground is rich in minerals—gold, copper, iron, and lead, and tin. The air is soft, and the manners of the people honest. The style of writing [literature] is Indian, with some differences. They excel other countries in their skill in playing on the lute and pipe. They clothe themselves with ornamental garments of silk and embroidery. They cut their hair and wear a flowing covering [over their heads]. In commerce they use gold, silver, and copper coins. The king is of the K'iu-chi race; his wisdom being small, he is ruled by a powerful minister. The children born of common parents have their heads flattened by the pressure of a wooden board.

There are about one hundred [Buddhist] convents [*sangharamas*] in this country, with five thousand and more disciples. . . . Their doctrine (teaching of Sutras) and their rules of discipline [principles of the Vinaya] are like those of India, and those who read them use the same [originals]. They especially hold to the customs of the “gradual doctrine,” and partake only of the three pure kinds of food. They live purely, and provoke others [by their conduct] to a religious life.

Original Document Source: Xuanzang, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, trans. Samuel Beal (London: Trübner & Co. Ltd., 1884), 19–20.

## The Voyage around the Erythraean Sea

The *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (or *Voyage around the Erythraean Sea*) was written in the first century CE by a merchant in the Roman Empire. It describes many ports visited by Roman merchant vessels. These included some ports in East Africa and India. This passage describes the trading activity at Barygaza, a port on India's western coast in what is now the Indian state of Gujarat. Barygaza (Bharuch today) was one of the main centers of Roman trade in India.

### Original Document

There are imported into this market-town, wine, Italian preferred, also Laodicean and Arabian; copper, tin, and lead; coral and topaz; thin clothing and inferior sorts of all kinds; bright-colored girdles a cubit wide; storax, sweet clover, flint glass, realgar, antimony, gold and silver coin, on which there is a profit when exchanged for the money of the country; and ointment, but not very costly and not much. And for the King there are brought into those places very costly vessels of silver, singing boys, beautiful maidens for the harem, fine wines, thin clothing of the finest weaves, and the choicest ointments. There are exported from these places spikenard, costus, bdellium, ivory, agate and carnelian, lycium, cotton cloth of all kinds, silk cloth, mallow cloth, yarn, long pepper and such other things as are brought here from the various market-towns. Those bound for this market-town from Egypt make the voyage favorably about the month of July.

### Adapted Version

Wines are imported into this market-town. Italian wine is preferred, also Laodicean and Arabian. Also imported are copper, tin, and lead; coral and topaz. Also thin and inferior sorts of clothing of all kinds, bright-colored girdles a cubit wide. Fragrant substances such as storax and sweet clover. Also imported are minerals such as flint glass, realgar, antimony, as well as gold and silver coin. On these a profit can be made when exchanged for the money of the country. Also ointment, but not very costly and not much. And for the King there are brought very costly vessels of silver, singing boys, beautiful maidens for the harem, fine wines, thin clothing of the finest weaves, and the choicest ointments. Many things are exported from these places, including perfume ingredients such as spikenard, costus, and bdellium. Also brought from various market-towns are ivory, agate and carnelian, lycium, cotton cloth, silk cloth, mallow cloth, yarn, long pepper and more. Those bound for this market-town from Egypt make the voyage favorably about the month of July.



PRIMARY SOURCE ►

4.9

## An Ancient Chinese View of Rome

This passage is from a third century geographical and historical text called the *Weilüe*, by Yu Huan. The original text of the *Weilüe* has been lost. However, its chapter on lands to the west of China was quoted in another ancient Chinese text published in 429 CE. This passage offers one Chinese writer's notion of what the Roman Empire was like. (A *li* is a Chinese measure equal to about a third of a mile.)

Original Document

This country [the Roman Empire] has more than four hundred smaller cities and towns. It extends several thousand *li* in all directions. The king has his capital [that is, the city of Rome] close to the mouth of a river [the Tiber]. The outer walls of the city are made of stone.

This region has pine trees, cypress, sophora, catalpa, bamboo, reeds, poplars, willows, parasol trees, and all sorts of plants. The people cultivate the five grains [traditionally: rice, glutinous and non-glutinous millet, wheat and beans], and they raise horses, mules, donkeys, camels and silkworms. [They have] a tradition of amazing conjuring. They can produce fire from their mouths, bind and then free themselves, and juggle twelve balls with extraordinary skill.

The ruler of this country is not permanent. When disasters result from unusual phenomena, they unceremoniously replace him, installing a virtuous man as king, and release the old king, who does not dare show resentment.

The common people are tall and virtuous like the Chinese, but wear *hu* ["western"] clothes. They say they originally came from China, but left it.

They have always wanted to communicate with China but, Anxi [Parthia], jealous of their profits, would not allow them to pass [through to China].

The common people can write in *hu* ["western"] script. They have multi-storeyed public buildings and private; . . . and have a postal service with relay sheds and postal stations, like in the Middle Kingdom [China].

Adapted Version

The Roman Empire has more than four hundred smaller cities and towns. It extends several thousand *li* in all directions. The king's capital, Rome, is close to the mouth of the river Tiber. The outer walls of the city are made of stone. This region has pine trees, cypress, sophora, catalpa, bamboo, reeds, poplars, willows, parasol trees, and all sorts of plants. The people cultivate the five grains [tradi-

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tionally: rice, glutinous and non-glutinous millet, wheat and beans], and they raise horses, mules, donkeys, camels and silkworms. They have a tradition of amazing conjuring. They can produce fire from their mouths, bind and then free themselves, and juggle twelve balls with extraordinary skill. The ruler of this country is not permanent. When unusual disasters result, they quickly replace him. They install a virtuous man as king and release the old king, who does not dare show resentment. The common people are tall and virtuous like the Chinese, but they wear “western” clothes. They say they originally came from China, but left it. They have always wanted to communicate with China. However, Parthia in protecting its profits from trade would not let them pass through to China. The common people can write in “western” script. They have multi-storied public buildings, and have a postal service with relay sheds and postal stations, like China.



Lucius Annaeus Florus was a Roman historian of the second century CE. He lived at a time when the Roman Empire controlled the entire area surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. From the Roman point of view, China was very far away. It was only one of many other societies that Florus believed looked up to Rome admiringly. Chinese silk was one product that was very popular in Rome in these centuries.

### Original Document

Even the rest of the nations of the world which were not subject to the imperial sway were sensible of its grandeur, and looked with reverence to the Roman people, the great conqueror of nations. Thus even Scythians and Sarmatians sent envoys to seek the friendship of Rome. Nay the Seres [Chinese] came likewise, and the Indians who dwelt beneath the vertical sun, bringing presents of precious stones and pearls and elephants, but thinking all of less moment than the vastness of the journey which they had undertaken, and which they said had occupied four years. In truth it needed but to look at their complexion to see that they were people of another world than ours.

### Adapted Version

All the nations of the world, even those Imperial Rome did not rule, knew of its grandeur. And they had great respect for the Roman people, the great conquerors of nations. Even Scythians and Sarmatians sent envoys to seek the friendship of Rome. In fact, even the Seres [the Chinese] came, and so did the Indians who dwelt in a hot climate. Both societies brought presents of precious stones and pearls and elephants. They thought little of how vast a journey they had to undertake. They said it took them four years to complete. In truth, all one had to do was look at their complexion to see that they were from another world than ours.

Original Document Source: Lucius Annaeus Florus, quoted in *Cathay and the Way Thither: Being a Collection of Medieval Notices of China*, ed. Sir Henry Yule (London: Hakluyt Society, 1866), 1:xlii.

## Communicating Results and Taking Action

### Communicating Results

- ◆ Pretend it is the second century CE and you are traveling from Dunhuang in China to Buchara in present-day Uzbekistan (see Secondary Source 4.2). Write five journal entries describing your activities and the things you notice most on your journey. The entries should refer to at least three of the sources for this lesson.
- ◆ Pretend to be advisers to a wealthy merchant back in ancient Greece or Rome. The merchant is planning to assemble a caravan to cross the Silk Routes to trade in China. Reread Primary Sources 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8. Using these sources, write to the merchant and offer detailed advice for the upcoming caravan. The letter should make reference to details in the three sources mentioned here.
- ◆ Working in a small group, find ten to fifteen photos, maps, or works of art related to the early Silk Routes. Assemble copies of these photos into a presentation using PowerPoint or some other presentation software. Your presentation should include references to at least three of the sources for this lesson to help explain the various geographical challenges to those traveling these routes hundreds of years ago.

### Taking Action

- ◆ Bring to class examples (or photographs of examples) of trade goods from other countries or U.S. goods often sold as exports to other countries. Use images of these goods to create a presentation using PowerPoint or some other presentation software titled “The Silk Road: Then and Now.” Other classes, parents, and local groups will be invited to a showing of the presentation and a discussion about the global economy we now have.

## The Early Silk Routes Rubric

Criteria	Unacceptable	Developing	Proficient	Excellent
<b>Focus</b>	Tries to respond to task instructions but lacks clear focus on a central idea or thesis	Addresses the task instructions adequately but focus on a central idea or thesis is uneven	Responds to the task instructions appropriately and convincingly; has a consistent focus on a central idea or thesis	Responds to all task instructions convincingly; has a clear and strong focus on a well-developed central idea or thesis
<b>Research</b>	Refers to some sources but fails to connect these in a way that is relevant to the task instructions	Refers to relevant sources well but does not always connect these clearly to the task instructions	Refers to relevant sources accurately and usually connects these to the task instructions and a central idea	Refers to relevant sources accurately and in great detail and connects these clearly to the task instructions and a central idea
<b>Development/ Use of Evidence</b>	Uses some details and evidence from sources but does not make clear the relevance to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources generally but not always in support of a clear focus relevant to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources in a way that effectively supports a focus relevant to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources along with clear explanations demonstrating deep understanding of the task purpose or instructions
<b>Content</b>	Refers to disciplinary content without clearly understanding it or while using it in an irrelevant or inaccurate manner	Refers to disciplinary content with some understanding but not always with a clear idea of its relation to the overall task	Accurately uses disciplinary content and demonstrates a clear idea of its relation to the overall task	Uses disciplinary content effectively and explains thoroughly and in depth its relation to the overall task
<b>Conventions</b>	Demonstrates only limited control of standard English conventions, with many errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates some command of standard English conventions, with limited errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates adequate command of standard English conventions, with few errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates a well-developed command of standard English conventions, with few errors and a use of language appropriate to the audience and the purpose of the task

## Primary and Secondary Source Bibliography

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- 4.2: © Nystrom Education, 2018.
- 4.3: *Gandhara Buddha*. 1st–2nd century CE. Tokyo National Museum.
- 4.4: Forget, Yann. *Lions, Sogdian Polychrome Silk, Central Asia*. 8th century CE. Photograph. CC-BY-SA-3.0 via Wikimedia Commons.
- 4.5: Ibrayeva, Togzhan. *Horses in the Poppy Valley of Kazakhstan near City of Almaty*. 2013. Photograph. CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons.  
Two horse figurines. 1st–2nd century CE. Terracotta. 100 cm. Musée Guimet, Paris.
- 4.6: Qian, Sima. *Records of the Grand Historian*. Vol. 2. Translated by Burton Watson. Hong Kong: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- 4.7: Xuanzang. *Buddhist Records of the Western World*. Translated by Samuel Beal. London: Trübner & Co. Ltd., 1884.
- 4.8: *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea: Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean by a Merchant of the First Century*. Translated by Wilfred H. Schoff. New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1912.
- 4.9: Yu, Huan. *The Peoples of the West*. Translated by John E. Hill. Seattle: Silk Road Seattle, 2004. <https://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/texts/weilue/weilue.html>
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## Sources for Further Study

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