

The Age of Faith

Jonathan Burack

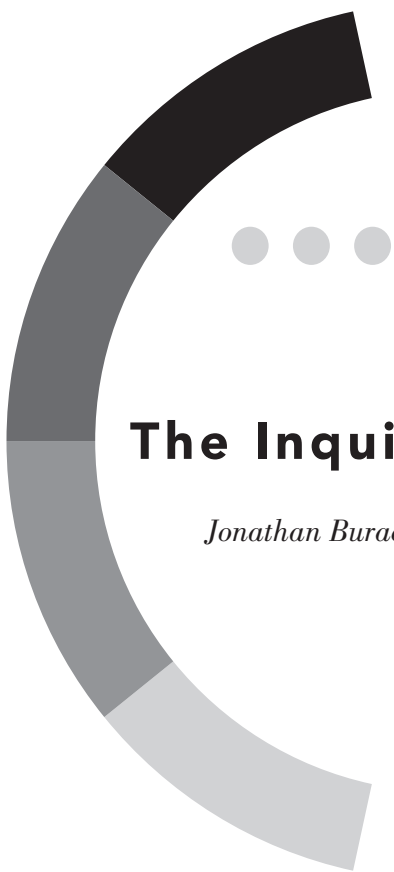
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The Inquiry Arc in World History



The Age of Faith



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Jonathan Burack

MindSparks®

CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

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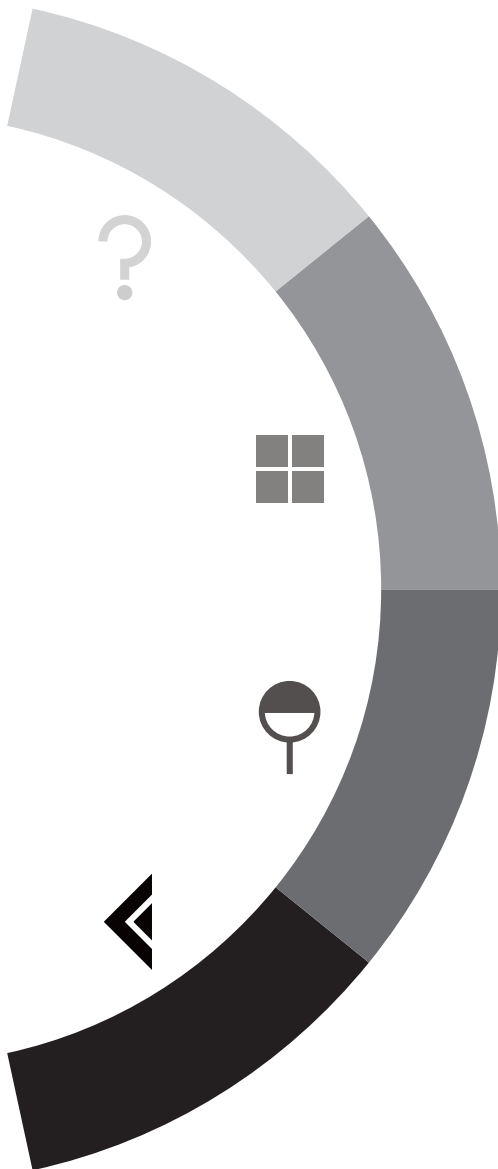
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C3 Framework

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.

Evaluating sources and using evidence

- 3 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



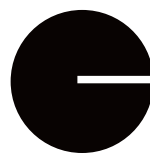
History



Civics



Economics



Geography



Nomads of the Steppes

What Made Them So Fearsome?

Overview

Introduction

No one knows for sure when tribes of horse-riding pastoral nomads appeared on the vast Eurasian steppe. Some archaeologists believe that people there began using horses as long ago as 4000 BCE. Others think it was as late as 1000 BCE before they truly mastered the use of the horse as a weapon of war. Whenever it was, such horse-riding tribes quickly spread across this vast, treeless land of grass stretching from the edge of Eastern Europe, across Ukraine and parts of Russia, to Central Asia and Mongolia. At times, the nomadic tribes would unite in larger federations. When this happened, their incredible war-fighting abilities terrified the otherwise wealthier and far more populous settled societies around them. At times, small nomad armies conquered and ruled far more complex societies—though usually not for long. How did they have such a fearsome and dramatic impact? That is the compelling question this lesson will focus on. Students will work with ten primary 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 nomads of the steppe. They will apply discipline-specific background knowledge, use scaffolding, and engage in instructional activities to interpret primary 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 views 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.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

What made the nomads of the Eurasian steppes so fearsome?

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 Nomads of the Steppes
This part of the lesson 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, economics, or geography. As they work, the groups should keep in mind the unit'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 sources for this unit. Each group may share a primary 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 primary 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 lesson 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 primary sources, they will select one that supports their claim.

7. Using the evidence gathered from primary sources, each group will then prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation about the nomads from their group's disciplinary perspective. The presentation can be in the form of an oral report, a debate among group members, a PowerPoint, or 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 lesson 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 unit'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 Nomads of the Steppes Rubric so they can understand how their performance will be evaluated. The projects are summarized below.

Communicating Results

- ◆ Ask students to focus attention on Primary Sources 1.2, 1.4, 1.5., 1.7, and 1.9. These are all descriptions of nomads by writers from settled societies. Ask each student to list some questions they have about the possible accuracy of each of these accounts. They should write a brief paper explaining what they think is most reliable in the accounts and what is least reliable. Share some of these papers in a class discussion about the reliability of these sources.
- ◆ Ask students to pretend that they are merchants in the 1300s. They should read Primary Source 1.10, a passage from Pegolotti's *Merchant Handbook*. Using this and at least two other primary sources, each student should write a journal with four entries. One should be about planning a trip from somewhere in present-day Iran or Turkey to China. Two entries should be about important stops along the way. The final entry should be about arriving in China. The entries should refer specifically to information in Pegolotti's handbook and two other primary sources for this lesson.
- ◆ Nomads were often vastly superior as warriors to the armies of more complex settled societies. Have students write a letter to the emperor of China explaining why these fighters were so fierce and effective. In explaining this to the emperor, the students should refer to the details of at least three of the primary sources for this lesson. Also recommend things the emperor might do to better defend against nomadic armies.

Taking Action

- ◆ According to one estimate, out of the earth's estimated population of 7.7 billion people, only 30 million or so lead nomadic migratory lives—for example the Tuareg of northern Africa, the Evenks of northeastern Russia, the Himba of southwestern Africa, the Kuchi of Afghanistan, the Aborigines of Australia, and the Laplanders (a.k.a. Sami) of Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Russia. Separate students into five small groups. Each group should research one of these nomadic peoples or one other modern-day nomadic society of their choice. Have each group prepare a brief presentation on the environment, lifestyle, and challenges facing its nomadic society. Have the groups present their findings to the class. Film these presentations and the discussions about them.
- ◆ Use online video-presentation software to make the video from the previous assignment available online. Use social media to link to and discuss the presentation. Ask those contacted in this way to comment and communicate with others about it. Invite suggestions for how best to help nomadic people adjust to the modern world around them.

Introductory Essay

Nomads of the Steppes



Depiction of a Cimmerian tribe from an Etruscan vase

No one knows for sure when tribes of horse-riding pastoral nomads appeared on the vast Eurasian steppe. Some archaeologists believe people there began using horses as long ago as 4000 BCE. Others think it was as late as 1000 BCE before they truly mastered the use of the horse as a weapon of war. Whenever it was, such horse-riding tribes quickly spread across this huge region. At times, they united into powerful federations of tribes. For a while, such tribal federations would spread terror during one conquest after another. They often gained control of huge swaths of land. Yet they would almost always lose that control just as quickly.

Nomads are defined as people who move from place to place. Simple hunter-gatherer bands are nomads. However, “pastoral nomads” are more complex than hunter-gatherers. Pastoral nomads are those who herd animals. Herding demands skills and involves challenges that are beyond the ability of earlier hunter-gatherer nomads. Pastoral nomads follow a way of life based on managing their herds of cattle, sheep,

goats, and, above all, the horse. The pastoral nomads of the Eurasian steppe inhabited a vast treeless land of grass that stretched from the edge of Eastern Europe, across Ukraine and parts of Russia, to Central Asia and Mongolia. Their herding skills led them to master horse riding and the use of the horse as a formidable weapon of war.

At times, such nomadic tribes would unite in larger federations. When this happened, their incredible war-fighting abilities terrified the otherwise wealthier and far more populous settled societies around them. The names of these nomadic federations—the Xiongnu, the Huns, the Tartars, the Mongols—still arouse fear in many people. They call attention to a way of war that was brutal and murderous on a massive scale.

Even as very young children, Eurasian nomads learned to ride and shoot arrows on horseback. These pastoral nomads did not need a special war-fighting army. The same skills they learned and used as herders also served them as warriors. As a result, every healthy adult was a warrior. This included a substantial number of females. Using a short, powerful bow, these warriors could shoot a continuous stream of arrows as they charged, when they pivoted, and even as they rode away. A key tactic was the feigned retreat. The nomads would first pretend to flee. They fooled their enemies into pursuing them wildly. At the right moment, they would turn and attack all over again against forces now disorganized and unprepared.

The nomads almost always had the military advantage over settled societies. Nevertheless, they rarely took over and controlled such societies, at least not for long. The number of nomads was always very small in relation to the settled societies they attacked. Moreover, the nomads were rarely more than loose collections of individual tribes. The great nomadic federations were usually held together by one highly admired, courageous tribal leader. It was hard to pass on such qualities to others. Hence, alliances of tribes often fell apart after just a few generations of a leader's heirs.

Nomads lacked the complex organized governments of settled societies. Those societies—whether Roman, Arab, Persian, Russian, or Chinese—had long-lasting, highly organized political, military, and economic systems. When nomads did conquer such societies, they had to rely on the local populations to run things. This is why they often quickly adopted settled ways themselves along with all the other cultural traits of the societies they had defeated.

It is also true that nomads often felt a greater need to cooperate with settled peoples than to fight with them. Settled societies had many things the nomads wanted to trade for—metals, grain, clothing, luxury items, and gold. In return, settled societies greatly admired the nomad's horses—or as the Chinese called them, their “heavenly” horses. During peaceful times, nomads kept the vast overland trade networks open. They benefited from the trade themselves since they could tax it and make a profit from it.

Nevertheless, when settled societies cut them off from such trade, nomads were all too ready to resort to raids and larger attacks. Their merciless violence in battle terrorized societies that were far larger, more complex, and richer. The question as to why they were so feared by those around them is not an easy one to answer. This essay suggests some of those reasons. The primary sources in this lesson may suggest others. They are meant to help you discuss, debate, and try to answer this question.



*Ancient coin from the Kushan Empire,
dating back to the first century*



History Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

Nomads of the Steppes

Your group's task is to explore history issues related to the Eurasian nomads. A disciplinary compelling question is provided. 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 answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Nomads were less developed than settled societies. However, for a long time they were superior to them in warfare. Why?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 1.4, 1.7, and 1.9.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Starting some 3,000 years ago, horse-riding pastoral nomads began to roam the Eurasian steppes in large numbers. They ranged from the Danube basin and Hungary in Europe, to Mongolia and Manchuria in the east. They terrorized settled societies that were often far wealthier than the nomads themselves. The settled societies were well organized states. In good times, their agricultural economies produced large surpluses. Craftsmen, merchants, and many other skilled workers produced many basic goods and luxuries. Yet these societies were often no match when attacked by warriors from much smaller nomadic societies. Why?

Nomads had to live in simple conditions. They moved in regular patterns from winter to summer quarters. This meant they had to take all they owned with them, along with their herds of sheep, horses, and other animals. This limited what they could own. It also limited the size of their communities. There was more to the nomads of the steppe than pillaging. They were in fact among the most ruthless warriors in history.

The skills that boys gained in caring for the tribe's herds were the same ones they needed to become masterful horse-riding warriors. Thus, the entire male population learned to engage in swift attack on horseback, planned retreats, coordinated deceptions, and many other tactics that gave Mongols superiority over the military forces of settled societies.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 1.4

Primary Source 1.7

Primary Source 1.9

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:

Nomads were less developed than settled societies. However, for a long time they were superior to them in warfare. Why?

State your group's claim here:

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:

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:

Nomads of the Steppes

Your group's task is to explore the civics issues related to the Eurasian nomads. A compelling question is provided. 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:

Nomadic tribes had trouble establishing well-organized states that could last. Why do you suppose that was so?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 1.2, 1.4, and 1.6.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

In 1206, Genghis Khan took control of the nomadic tribes of the Mongols. His forces soon began ranging far and wide. They invaded and conquered relentlessly, building up the largest land empire in history. By the middle of the thirteenth century, that empire stretched from Eastern Europe to all of China, from Siberia in the north, into Central Asia and much of what is now the Middle East, to the edge of India. Briefly, the Mongols imposed peace on this vast region. They united it through a great network of trade and the exchanges of ideas.

Genghis Khan's sons inherited his empire and expanded it to its greatest extent. However, that unity did not last long. Genghis's grandsons, their families, and their rival assemblies of tribal chiefs often argued over who should rule. No single system of government ever fully developed. In the late 1200s, the empire split into four separate realms. These realms were often at odds with one another. The Mongols never really imposed a Mongol way of life on the societies they conquered. Perhaps they were too

small in number to do this. They had to rely on the skilled workers and administrators of their subject peoples—and on their ideas and culture. No Mongol religion, language, system of government, or other set of ideas reshaped the societies they took over. Instead, those societies absorbed the Mongols, changed them, and reemerged much as they had been before.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 1.2

Primary Source 1.4

Primary Source 1.6

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:

Nomadic tribes had trouble establishing well-organized states that could last. Why do you suppose that was so?

State your group's claim here:

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:

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:

Nomads of the Steppes

Your group's task is to explore the economics issues related to the Eurasian nomads. A compelling question is provided. 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:

“Nomadic societies often fought with settled societies. Yet the two kinds of societies often also benefited from one another economically.” Explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.
3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 1.2, 1.5, and 1.10.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Nomadic pastoralism was not the earliest form of social life on the steppes. First, there were hunters and gatherers. Then some eked out a livelihood through farming along rivers and at oases scattered throughout the region. Only then did the herding of sheep, cattle, and oxen become the chosen lifestyle of the steppes. This was especially so once the horse was tamed, though pastoral nomads often did farm some land as well. However, the nomads lived mainly on the products of their herds: meat, cheese, wool, hides, and qumis, an alcoholic beverage made from horse's milk.

The nomads were not isolated. They depended on settled societies in complex ways. They learned from them and traded with them. They exchanged their horses for grain, textiles, and metals for tools and weapons. They often controlled the various Silk Road routes and took payment from caravans on them. More than goods came to the lands of the nomads along these overland routes. Conquerors and merchants alike also brought ideas,

skills, and various religious traditions. Oases and cities like Samarkand were central points from which influences radiated. Buddhism and Islam were perhaps the most important of the religious traditions brought to this region over the centuries. Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Nestorian Christianity, and Judaism were also carried along these overland routes—in many cases all the way to China.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 1.2

Primary Source 1.5

Primary Source 1.10

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:

“Nomadic societies often fought with settled societies. Yet the two kinds of societies often also benefited from one another economically.” Explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.

State your group's claim here:

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:

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:

Nomads of the Steppes

Your group's task is to explore geography issues related to the Eurasian nomads. A compelling question is provided. 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 geography help explain why nomadic empires of the Eurasian steppes could expand so rapidly and then shrink again just as rapidly?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 1.2, 1.3, and 1.6.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Those horse-riders of the Eurasian steppes were tough warriors. They had to be—they lived in one of the harshest environments on the planet. Where the region is not open grassland (good for grazing sheep, cattle, oxen, and horses), it is often desert (good for little at all). The Gobi Desert is harsh enough. The Taklimakan is a thousand miles of heat in summer and searing cold in winter, with winds and terrifying sandstorms. The open grasslands and deserts are divided up in many places by some of the highest mountains on earth. These also help to cut the region off from more settled societies

The nomads lived mainly on the open grasslands, which were good for herding animals but generally too dry and harsh for much farming. They lived in yurts made of felt produced from wool. In the bitter winters, the nomads moved to valleys or riverbeds less open to the winds. Over the course of a year, a tribe and its herds moved in a regular pattern perhaps a hundred miles or so from one pastureland to another. The nomads were

normally tribes made up of a few clans, or larger families. Chieftains would lead them in battle. Larger federations of tribes would arise at times. Their horse-riding warriors easily crossed the flat grasslands. Political unity never lasted long. The individual tribes and clans were small. They needed to maintain their own migration patterns, and normally held on fiercely to their independence.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 1.2

Primary Source 1.3

Primary Source 1.6

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 does geography help explain why nomadic empires of the Eurasian steppes could expand so rapidly and then shrink again just as rapidly?

State your group's claim here:

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:

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 differs 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.

PRIMARY SOURCE ►

I.I

Nomads and Horses

The nomadic societies of the Eurasian steppe lands may have been less complex than settled societies. However, they were the first to fully master the horse as a weapon of war. Photo 1A is an Akhal-teke stallion. Such horses are famous for speed, stamina, and intelligence. They are well adapted to the Eurasian steppes and are one of the oldest horse breeds. They were known in ancient times as "Golden Horses" due to their shiny coats. Steppe nomads trained from an early age to ride and shoot arrows from swift moving horses. As Photo 1B shows, this is still the case in modern Mongolia. The photo shows a boy taking part in a horse race at Naadam in Mongolia.

Original Documents



1A



1B

Original document sources: Akhal-teke stallion. © Artur Baboev / CC BY-SA 3.0
Horse race at Naadam. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons.

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

I.2

The Nomadic Way of Life

The nomads lived mainly on open grasslands, which were good for herding animals but generally too dry and harsh for much farming. They lived in tents, known as “yurts.” This photo from the late 1800s shows a group still living in this manner. It shows a yurt and a group with a horse, sheep, and camel. In a treeless environment, yurts were made of felt produced from wool. Over the course of a year, a tribe and its herds usually moved in a regular pattern, perhaps a hundred miles or so from one pastureland to another. This photo was published between 1865 and 1872. It shows a dwelling in the Kyrgyz Republic, or Kyrgyzstan.

Original Document



Original document source: Circa 1865, courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsca-12191.

PRIMARY SOURCE ►

I.3

The Eurasian Steppe

The highlighted region on this map shows the approximate extent of the flat or rolling treeless grassland of the Eurasian steppe. This ecological region extends from Hungary in Eastern Europe westward through Russia and Ukraine north of the Black and Caspian Seas and into northern Eastern and Central Asia.

Original Document



© Nystrom Education

The Scythians – Early Nomads in the West

The Scythians were a group of Iranian nomadic people in the western and central Eurasian steppes. They were most powerful from about the seventh century to the third century BCE. As with many nomadic tribes on the steppes, their military skills were developed by regular raiding of other tribes. In time, nomadic federations organized huge military forces to mount large-scale conquests. However, young men were brought up from early childhood to master the arts of war in smaller raids, based on small groups of individual volunteers, single tribes or several tribes. In this passage, Lucian, a historian in ancient Rome, describes the way Scythians organized a tribal raid.

Original Document

When a man has been injured by another, and desires vengeance, but feels that he is no match for his opponent, he sacrifices an ox, cuts up the flesh and cooks it, and spreads out the hide upon the ground. On this hide he takes his seat, holding his hands behind him, so as to suggest that his arms are tied in that position, this being the natural attitude of a suppliant among us. Meanwhile, the flesh of the ox has been laid out; and the man's relations and any others who feel so disposed come up and take a portion thereof, and, setting their right foot on the hide, promise whatever assistance is in their power: one will engage to furnish and maintain five horsemen, another ten, a third some larger number; while others, according to their ability, promise heavy or light-armed infantry, and the poorest, who have nothing else to give, offer their own personal services. The number of persons assembled on the hide is sometimes very considerable; nor could any troops be more reliable or more invincible than those which are collected in this manner, being as they are under a vow; for the act of stepping on to the hide constitutes an oath.

CONTINUED

Adapted Version

When a man has been injured, he may want revenge against the man who injured him. He may feel he is no match for his opponent. In that case, he sacrifices an ox, cuts up the flesh and cooks it, and spreads the hide out on the ground. He sits on the hide, holding his hands behind him, suggesting that his arms are tied in that position. This is the typical posture of someone making a humble plea for help. Meanwhile, the flesh of the ox has been laid out. The man's family and any others who are willing to join with him come up and take a portion of this flesh. Then, setting their right foot on the hide, they promise to do whatever they can to help. One may promise to furnish and maintain five horsemen. Another promises ten. A third some larger number. Others, according to their ability, may promise heavy or light-armed infantry. The poorest, who have nothing else to give, offer their own personal services. Sometimes a very large number assemble on the hide. Nor could any troops be more reliable or more invincible than those who join in this way. That is because they have taken an oath by stepping on to the hide.

Original document source: Lucian of Samosata, Complete Works of Lucian (Hastings, UK: Delphi, 2016).

Sima Qian (145–90 BCE) was a court historian during the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). His *Records of the Grand Historian* was the official history of China up through his own lifetime. Among other things, he described various groups of people who lived outside China. As the Han emperors expanded China's territory, they came into conflict with the nomadic tribes along their borders. Many of those tribes formed the powerful Xiongnu nomadic empire that challenged Chinese expansion. In this passage, Sima Qian describes the Xiongnu.

Original Document

The Xiongnu . . . live among the northern barbarians, moving to follow their flocks. They primarily raise horses, oxen, and sheep, but also keep unusual animals like camels, asses, mules, and wild horses. They move about in search of water and grass, having no cities, permanent dwellings, or agriculture. Still, they divide their territory into regions. They have no written language, so make oral agreements. Little boys are able to ride sheep and shoot birds and mice with bows and arrows. When they are somewhat older they shoot foxes and rabbits for food. Thus all the men can shoot and serve as cavalry.

It is the custom of the Xiongnu to support themselves in ordinary times by following their flocks and hunting, but in times of hardship they take up arms to raid. This would appear to be their nature. Bows and arrows are the weapons they use for distant targets; swords and spears the ones they use at close range. When it is to their advantage, they advance; when not they retreat, as they see no shame in retreat. Concern for propriety or duty does not inhibit their pursuit of advantage.

Original document source: Sima Quian as quoted in Patricia Buckley Ebrey, ed., *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook* (New York: Free Press, 1993).

PRIMARY SOURCE ►

1.6

The Xiongnu Empire

This map shows the extent of the large Xiongnu Empire that arose as the Han Dynasty in China tried to expand into territories to its north and west. It also shows the variety of nomadic societies and tribes in the region. In some cases, these tribes joined with the Xiongnu and in other cases they remained independent or hostile to them.

Original Document



© Nystrom Education

Eurasian nomads often went to war with two or more horses per warrior. This gave them extra staying power in their battles. In the fourth century CE, Roman soldier and historian Ammianus Marcellinus wrote about this practice among the Sarmatians.

Original Document

[F]requent serious reports showed that the Sarmatians and the Quadi, who were in agreement because they were neighbors and had like customs and armor, had united and were raiding the Pannonias and Second Moesia in detached bands. These people, better fitted for brigandage than for open warfare, have very long spears and cuirasses made from smooth and polished pieces of horn, fastened like scales to linen shirts; most of their horses are made serviceable by gelding, in order that they may not at sight of mares become excited and run away, or when in ambush become unruly and betray their riders by loud neighing. And they run over very great distances . . . being mounted on swift and obedient horses and leading one, or sometimes even two, to the end that an exchange may keep up the strength of their mounts and that their freshness may be renewed by alternate periods of rest.

Adapted Version

The Sarmatians and the Quadi were in agreement. Serious reports say this is because they were neighbors and they had similar customs and armor. They united and were raiding the Pannonias and Second Moesia in detached bands. These people are better fitted for robbery and plunder than for open warfare. They have very long spears and armor made from smooth and polished pieces of horn, fastened like scales to linen shirts. Most of their horses are castrated. As a result, they do not become excited at the sight of mares and run away, or become unruly in ambush and betray their riders by loud neighing. They run over very great distances. The riders are mounted on swift and obedient horses. They lead one, or sometimes even two, extra horses with them. This enables them to change horses and keep up the strength of their mounts by giving them alternate periods of rest.

Original document source: Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, XVII, 12.3, in *Ammianus Marcellinus*, translated by John C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935).

The greatest nomadic empire of all was the one established by the Mongols in the thirteenth century. Genghis (or Chinggis) Khan united the Mongol tribes starting in 1206. He launched a century of conquest. By the late 1200s, the Mongols had gained control of China, much of what is now Russia, parts of Eastern Europe and India, and much of Central Asia and the Middle East. His grandsons split the vast Mongol Empire into the four “khanates,” shown on this map. The map depicts the extent of these territories during the last half of the thirteenth century.

Original Document

The Mongol Empire at Its Height

- A.** Golden Horde
- B.** Chagatai Khanate
- C.** Yuan Dynasty
- D.** Ilkhanate

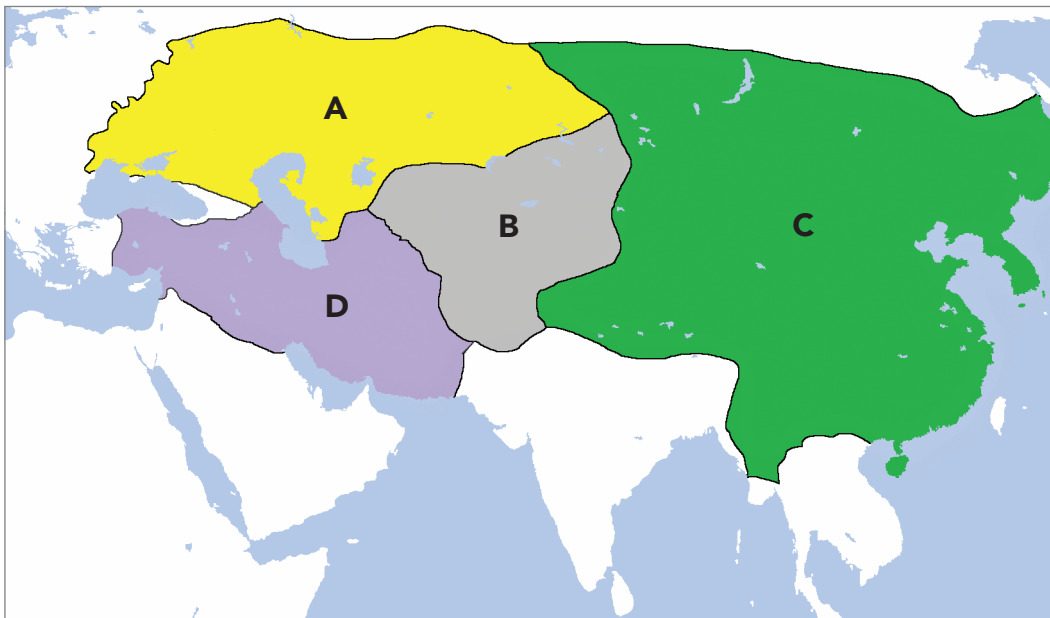


Image source: © Gabagool / CC BY 3.0

In 1245 CE, Pope Innocent IV sent two Franciscan monks to the Mongol kingdom. He was fearful about recent Mongol conquests in Russia and Eastern Europe. One of the monks the pope sent was John of Plano Carpini. John described his travels in his *History of the Mongols*. In this passage from that work, he describes the Mongol way of conducting their wars.

Original Document

[Genghis] Khan divided his Tartars by captains of ten, captains of a hundred, and captains of a thousand, and over ten millenaries, or captains of a thousand, he placed one colonel, and over one whole army he authorized two or three chiefs, but so that all should be under one of the said chiefs. When they join battle against any other nation, unless they do all consent to retreat, every man who deserts is put to death. And if one or two, or more, of ten proceed manfully to the battle, but the residue of those ten draw back and follow not the company, they are in like manner slain. Also, if one among ten or more be taken, their fellows, if they fail to rescue them, are punished with death.

Moreover they are required to have these weapons: two long bows or one good one at least, three quivers full of arrows, and one axe, and ropes to draw engines of war. But the richer have single-edged swords, with sharp points, and somewhat crooked. They have also armed horses, with their shoulders and breasts protected; they have helmets and coats of mail. Some of them have jackets for their horses, made of leather artificially doubled or trebled, shaped upon their bodies. The upper part of their helmet is of iron or steel, but that part which circles about the neck and the throat is of leather.

Adapted Version

Genghis Khan divided his Tartars by captains of ten, captains of a hundred, and captains of a thousand. He placed one colonel over ten “millenaries,” or captains of a thousand. Over one whole army he authorized two or three chiefs, with all of them under one of those chiefs. Once a battle is under way, any man who deserts is put to death, unless they all have agreed to retreat. If one or two or more out of ten go manfully into battle, but the rest hold back, they are slain. Also, if one among ten or more is captured, their fellows must rescue them. If they fail, they too are punished with death.

CONTINUED

PRIMARY SOURCE ►

I.9

THE MONGOL WAYS OF WAR CONTINUED

Moreover, they are required to have these weapons: two long bows or one good one at least, three quivers full of arrows, and one axe, and ropes to draw engines of war. The richer men have single-edged swords with sharp points, somewhat crooked. They also have armed horses, with their shoulders and breasts protected. They have helmets and coats of mail. Some of them have jackets for their horses, made of leather artificially doubled or tripled and shaped upon their bodies. The upper part of their helmet is made of iron or steel, but the part around the neck and the throat is made of leather.

Original document source: John of Pian de Carpini, History of the Mongols as included in Contemporaries of Marco Polo, edited by Manuel Komroff (New York: Liveright, 1928).

The Mongols were terrifying, ruthless warriors. However, once in control of much of Eurasia, they imposed a peace that benefited many other societies. In particular, they helped open, wider than ever, the series of land routes known as the Silk Road. These routes connected China across Central Asia to the Mediterranean Sea. Pegolotti's *Merchant Handbook* offers insight into the trading along these routes in the fourteenth century. Francesco Balducci Pegolotti worked for a merchant firm in the Italian city-state of Florence.

Original Document

You may calculate that a merchant with a dragoman, and with two men servants, and with goods to the value of twenty-five thousand golden florins, should spend on his way to Cathay from sixty to eighty sommi of silver, and not more if he manage well; and for all the road back again from Cathay to Tana, including the expenses of living and the pay of servants, and all other charges, the cost will be about five sommi per head of pack animals, or something less. And you may reckon the sommo to be worth five golden florins.

You may reckon also that from Tana to Sara [in what is now southern Russia] the road is less safe than on any other part of the journey; and yet even when this part of the road is at its worst, if you are some sixty men in the company you will go as safely as if you were in your own house.

Anyone from Genoa or from Venice, wishing to go to the places above-named, and to make the journey to Cathay, should carry linens with him, and if he visit Organci [in what is now Uzbekistan east of the Caspian Sea] he will dispose of these well. In Organci he should purchase sommi of silver, and with these he should proceed without making any further investment, unless it be some bales of the very finest stuffs which go in small bulk, and cost no more for carriage than coarser stuffs would do.

Merchants who travel this road can ride on horseback or on asses, or mounted in any way that they list to be mounted.

Whatever silver the merchants may carry with them as far as Cathay the lord of Cathay will take from them and put into his treasury. And to merchants who thus bring silver they give that paper money of theirs in exchange. This is of yellow paper, stamped with the seal of the lord aforesaid. And this money is called balishi; and with this money you can readily buy silk and all other merchandise that you have a desire to buy. And all the people of the country are bound to receive it. And yet you shall not pay a higher price for your goods because your money is of paper.

CONTINUED

Adapted Version

You can assume that a merchant with a guide, two man-servants, and 25,000 golden florins worth of goods, should spend sixty to eighty sommi of silver on his way to Cathay (China). If he manages well, he will not spend more. On the road back from Cathay to Tana, the cost will be no more than five sommi per head of pack animals, including living expenses, servants' pay, and all other charges. You may assume that the sommi is worth five golden florins.

Expect also that from Tana to Sara [in what is now southern Russia] the road is less safe than on any other part of the journey. Yet even at its worst there, if you have around sixty men with you, you will be as safe as if you were in your own house.

Anyone from Genoa or Venice going to these places and all the way to Cathay should carry linens with him. If he visit Organci [in what is now Uzbekistan east of the Caspian Sea] he will dispose of these well. In Organci he should purchase sommi of silver. With these he should continue without purchasing anything else. That is, unless he buys some bales of the very finest stuffs which go in small bulk and cost no more to transport than coarser stuffs.

Merchants who travel this road can ride on horseback or on asses or mounted any way they wish.

Whatever silver a merchant takes to Cathay, the lord of Cathay will accept and put in his treasury. To merchants who bring silver, they give that paper money of theirs in exchange. It is yellow paper, stamped with the seal of the lord of Cathay. This money is called balishi. With it, you can readily buy silk and all other merchandise you may want. All the people of the country have to accept it as payment. Yet you shall not pay a higher price for your goods because your money is of paper.

Communicating Results and Taking Action

Communicating Results

- ◆ Reread Primary Sources 1.2, 1.4, 1.5., 1.7, and 1.9. These are all descriptions of nomads by writers from settled societies. List some questions you have about the likely accuracy of each of these accounts. Write a brief paper explaining what you think is most reliable in the accounts and what is least reliable. Be prepared to share your paper with the rest of the class in a discussion about the reliability of these sources.
- ◆ Pretend you are a merchant in the fourteenth century. Reread Primary Source 1.10, a passage from Pegolotti's *Merchant Handbook*. Using this and at least two other primary sources, write a journal with four entries. One should be about planning a trip from somewhere in present-day Iran or Turkey to China. Two entries should be about important stops along the way. The final entry should be about arriving in China. The entries should refer specifically to information in Pegolotti's handbook and two other primary sources from this lesson.
- ◆ Nomads were often vastly superior as warriors to the armies of more complex settled societies. Write a letter to the emperor of China explaining why these fighters were so fierce and effective. In explaining this to the emperor, you should refer to the details of at least three of the primary sources for this lesson. Also recommend things the emperor might do to better defend against nomadic armies.

Taking Action

- ◆ According to one estimate, out of about seven billion people, only thirty million or so lead nomadic migratory lives—for example the Tuareg of northern Africa, the Evenks of north-eastern Russia, the Himba of Southwestern Africa, the Kuchi of Afghanistan, the Aborigines of Australia, and the Laplanders (a.k.a Sami) of Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Russia. In a small group, research one of these nomadic peoples or one other modern-day nomadic society of your choice. Your group should prepare a brief presentation on the environment, lifestyle, and challenges facing the nomadic society you chose. Present your findings to the class. Your teacher will film these presentations and the discussions about them.
- ◆ Your teacher will upload the video from the previous assignment. Use social media to link to and discuss the presentation. Ask those contacted in this way to comment and communicate with others about it. Invite suggestions as to how best to help nomadic people live near and adjust to the modern world around them.

Nomads of the Steppes Rubric

Criteria	Unacceptable	Developing	Proficient	Excellent
Focus	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
Research	Refers to some sources but fails to connect these in a way 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
Development and Use of Evidence	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
Content	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
Conventions	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 Source Bibliography

- 1.1: 1A. Akhal-teke stallion. © Artur Baboev / CC BY-SA 3.0.
1B. Horse race at Naadam. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons.
- 1.2: Circa 1865, courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsca-12191.
- 1.3: © Nystrom Education
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The Rise of Islam

Why Did It Spread So Rapidly?

Overview

Introduction

In the seventh century CE, soldiers and tribal leaders inspired by Islam united the people of the Arabian Peninsula. Arab armies then moved north to a region that includes what is now Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. By the middle of the eighth century, they had united all of the key centers of ancient civilization except for those in the Far East. The lands of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, along with large parts of the former Roman Empire, were under their control. Persia was taken over completely, and the Byzantine Empire drastically reduced in size. From Spain to the borders of India, the conquerors' Islamic faith and Arabic language began to reshape and transform the culture and political life of the region. Islam's rise is one of the great success stories of human history. Why did it succeed so rapidly in spreading across such a large and diverse territory? That is the compelling question this lesson will focus on. Students will work with ten primary 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 rise of Islam. They will apply discipline-specific background knowledge, use scaffolding, and engage in instructional activities to interpret primary 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 views 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

What explains the rapid rise and successful spread of Islam?

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 rise of Islam

This part of the lesson 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 back 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, economics, or geography. 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 sources for this unit. Each group may share a primary 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 primary 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 primary sources, they will select one that supports their claim.

7. Using the evidence gathered from primary sources, each group will then prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation about the rise of Islam from their group's disciplinary perspective. The presentation can be in the form of an oral report, a debate among group members, a PowerPoint, or 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 lesson 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 Rise of Islam Rubric so they can understand how their performance will be evaluated. The projects are summarized below.

Communicating Results

- ◆ Historian Bernard Lewis wrote: *“The bulk of the Arab armies that achieved the conquests were desert people. The strategy of the Arabs in their wars of conquest was based very largely on the skillful use of desert power, reminiscent of sea power in the later empires built up by the maritime peoples of the West. The Arabs were at home in the desert; their enemies were not.”* Have students write a brief paper on how helpful the above quotation is in explaining the success of the Arab armies. Their answers should include detailed references to at least three of the primary sources for this lesson.
- ◆ In the Islamic world, Christians and Jews did not enjoy equal rights with Muslims. Some historians say they faced unfair discrimination that limited them in major ways. Others say they were treated in a very humane way that allowed them to flourish. Which of these two views is correct? Ask students to answer this question in a brief essay. In the essay, they should choose three primary sources for this lesson to support their position.
- ◆ Separate students into several small groups. Ask each group to discuss the following statement by the eleventh century Islamic historian al-Biruni describing his own history of India: *“This is not a book of controversy and debate. . . . It is a straightforward account, giving the statements of Hindus and adding to them what the Greeks have said on similar subjects, so as to make a comparison between them.”* Each group should decide what this statement tells us about the Islamic society the Arabs created in the region they conquered. The groups should prepare brief five-minute presentations of their views and use at least two primary sources for this lesson to support their interpretation of al-Biruni's statement.

Taking Action

- ◆ In recent decades, a great many violent political conflicts have made life difficult in parts of the Muslim world originally conquered by the Arab armies of the seventh and eighth centuries. Can the forces that have led to this violence be contained, and can a new Golden Age of Islam take its place? Select a small group of students to work on this question by looking closer at some of these conflicts. Have the group prepare a talk addressing this question. The talk should use the primary sources for this lesson as well as other sources and more current news stories to answer this question: “Could a new Golden Age of Islam soon develop?” Have the group present its findings to the rest of the class, along with a list of suggested readings. Film the presentation and the discussions about it.
- ◆ Send the video to local news outlets and invite them to contact the class, present the video themselves, or write about it.

Introductory Essay

The Rise of Islam



The Islamic prophet Muhammad on Mount Hira

In the seventh century CE, soldiers and tribal leaders inspired by Islam first united the people of the Arabian Peninsula. Arab armies then moved north to a region that includes what is now Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. By the middle of the eighth century, they had united all of the key centers of ancient civilization except for those in the Far East. The lands of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, along with large parts of the former Roman Empire, were under their control. Persia was taken over completely, and the Byzantine Empire drastically reduced in size. From Spain to the borders of India, the conquerors' Islamic faith and Arabic language began to reshape and transform the culture and political life. Islam's rise is one of the great success stories of human history. Why did it occur?

By the sixth century CE, Arabian caravans were already taking part in a complex network of overland and sea trade-routes. These extended far beyond Arabia itself. The networks linked

the Byzantine and Persian empires north of Arabia to civilizations far to the east. Traveling merchants brought new ideas as well as goods to the nomadic Arabian tribes along the routes. Tribal gods may have begun to seem less important to many Arabs as they learned of the monotheistic beliefs of Byzantine Christians, Zoroastrians from Persia, and Jews throughout the region. It was in this context of change that a new faith appeared. That faith was Islam.

According to Muslim teachings, Islam was founded by the prophet Muhammad who lived from around 571 to 632 CE. Historians actually know little about him with certainty, but traditional Muslim accounts of his life form the core of Islam's beliefs. According to these traditions, the angel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad in his fortieth year and told him to "recite," or repeat, words that came directly from God. Over the course of his life, Muhammad received many such revelations. Muslims see Muhammad as the last of a line of prophets from Abraham, to Moses, to Jesus. Muhammad's version of God's truth is seen as the final version.

Gabriel's revelations to Muhammad make up Islam's holy book, the Qur'an. The Qur'an is not seen as Muhammad's word, but God's. It is a part of God himself. It was revealed in Arabic. Hence, many Muslims did not accept translations of the Qur'an as the real Qur'an. This view meant that as Islam spread, Arabic language and culture spread with it. In time, Islam and the Arabic language would reshape the entire region taken by the invading Arab armies.

However, for a long time, these armies lived apart in several encampments. The two great empires they defeated had been weakened by centuries of constant warfare with each other. Many heretical Christian sects and Jewish communities in those empires had become deeply discontented; so much so that many of them welcomed their Arab Muslim conquerors. These new Muslim rulers did not demand that followers of these religions convert to Islam. They did impose certain restrictions and extra taxes on them, but non-Muslims were allowed to retain their own religions and customs.

In time, more and more non-Muslims did convert to the Muslim faith. Many of them found it convincing. Others adopted it in order to enjoy the more privileged status it conferred. As this happened, the region became more unified in a cultural and religious sense. However, this unity did not overcome political, ethnic, and economic divisions. Muslims did want Muhammad's successors, the caliphs, to rule over all of Islam. Nevertheless, ethnic groups, tribal and clan rivalries, local military leaders, and others often established their own Islamic states. In addition, ongoing conflicts between rich and poor prevented the smooth harmony Muslim leaders hoped for. The horrible cruelties of both sides in the vast Zanj slave uprising of 869–883 CE are perhaps an extreme example of this. In any case, real political unity and social harmony were as hard for the Muslim realm to attain as they were for most other large empires in history.

Still, Islamic civilization had many impressive achievements. This was especially true in the areas of culture, philosophy, science, and medicine during Islam's Golden Age, especially in the ninth and tenth centuries. How did the nomadic peoples of Arabia create this vast new Muslim civilization as rapidly as they did? This is not an easy question to answer. The primary sources for this lesson should help you discuss, debate, and try to answer it.



A Qur'an dating from the middle of the ninth century

Image sources: By Nakkaş Osman, circa 1595. From the *Siyer-i Nebi*. Courtesy of Bilkent University.
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History Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

The Rise of Islam

Your group's task is to explore history issues related to the rise of Islam. 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 it Islam's inspiring message to the Arab armies or the weaknesses of the societies they fought that enabled those armies to spread Islam so rapidly from 622 to 750 CE?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 2.2, 2.4, and 2.6.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

By the early seventh century CE, the Byzantine Empire and Persia under the Sassanid Dynasty were worn out. They had been fighting each other for centuries. That fighting began in the first century BCE. At first, the wars were between the Roman Empire and Persia. The Byzantine Empire was what was left after the western half of the Roman Empire fell apart in the fifth century CE. After that, the Byzantine-Persian wars continued to devastate the region. Each side conquered and slaughtered the other with unrestrained ferocity. The advantage kept shifting back and forth. Lands in what are today Syria and Iraq kept changing hands. In addition to war, Bubonic plague also weakened these empires. There was deep discontent with the Byzantine rulers among Jews and certain Christian sects.

By 629 CE, Byzantine emperor Heraclius had regained most of the lands lost earlier to Persia. However, once the Arab armies arrived, they rapidly pushed the Byzantines back from Syria, Egypt, and parts of North Africa.

Persia had also been drastically weakened by its wars with the Byzantines. In addition, it was divided by its own factions fighting for control. The Arabs conquered it rapidly by 651.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 2.2

Primary Source 2.4

Primary Source 2.6

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:

Was it Islam's inspiring message to the Arab armies or the weaknesses of the societies they fought that enabled those armies to spread Islam so rapidly from 622 to 750 CE?

State your group's claim here:

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:

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:

The Rise of Islam

Your group's task is to explore the civics issues related to the rise of Islam. 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:

Did early Muslim rulers give minorities in their realms equal rights and respect? Or did they limit those rights too strictly? Explain your answer.

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 2.4, 2.7, and 2.8.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

For a long time, Arab numbers were small in the vast lands their armies conquered. Arab rulers did not force non-Muslims to convert to Islam. Instead, they classified them as *dhimmi*. *Dhimmi* means “protected person.” The term was used for many non-Muslim groups—Christians, Jews, and Sabians, at first. These were the “people of the Book,” followers of monotheistic beliefs based on scriptures. Later Zoroastrians, Hindus, and others were also included. In time, the status of *dhimmi* was extended to all non-Muslims. These groups were granted certain legal protections in return for paying an additional head tax—the *jizya*, or *kharaj*.

According to some scholars, *dhimmi*s' rights were well protected. They controlled their own communal life, practiced their religious faiths, and had equal property rights protections. They were exempt from military service. The Arab armies and rulers may have preferred to protect these communities, tax them, and make use of their many skills. Other scholars say the limits on Christians and Jews were humiliating and sometimes

quite harsh. They could not carry weapons or ride on horses and camels. They often could not build new churches. Certain forms of religious expression were banned, such as ringing church bells. They could not wear certain colors. They could not marry Muslim women. At times, persecution of a more serious nature occurred. Yet for the most part, these groups still preferred the Muslims over previous rulers.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 2.4

Primary Source 2.7

Primary Source 2.8

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 early Muslim rulers give minorities in their realms equal rights and respect? Or did they limit those rights too strictly? Explain your answer.

State your group's claim here:

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:

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:

The Rise of Islam

Your group's task is to explore the economics issues related to the rise of Islam. 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:

Why might a merchant in the Middle East have welcomed the Arab conquering armies that united the region under Islam?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 2.3, 2.4, and 2.9.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Historians often describe the Abbasid Caliphate as a “Golden Age of Islam.” Usually they have in mind a flowering of literature, philosophy, medicine, science, and architecture. However, this golden age was also a time of economic growth throughout the region unified by Islam and the Arabic language. That region linked Spain, Egypt, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Persia, and parts of Central Asia. Camel caravans from Muslim lands crossed the Central Asian silk routes to China. Merchant vessels sailed down the Red Sea and Persian Gulf into the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. They traded with East Africa, China, India, and Southeast Asia.

Long distance trade brought new kinds of crops to Islam's realm. For example, cotton, rice, and sugar came from India. Citrus fruits came from China. Sorghum came from Africa. New crop rotation patterns, irrigation techniques, and other methods were introduced. These greatly increased the food supply. As a result, cities such as Baghdad grew rapidly. Arab and Persian seafarers improved navigation with Chinese compasses,

the astrolabe, and other inventions. New kinds of business partnerships developed. Banking and a uniform monetary system based on the dinar aided long-distance commerce. During these centuries, the Muslim lands prospered.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 2.3

Primary Source 2.4

Primary Source 2.9

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:

Why might a merchant in the Middle East have welcomed the Arab conquering armies that united the region under Islam?

State your group's claim here:

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:

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:

The Rise of Islam

Your group's task is to explore geography issues related to the rise of Islam. 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 geography help explain why Muslims had trouble keeping their empire united politically?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 2.3, 2.8, and 2.10.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Before Arabia united under Muhammad in the early seventh century CE, it was divided among many tribes. Once united under Islam, they rose up out of Arabia and rapidly took control of several huge regions in North Africa and the Middle East. In time, these areas were unified by Islam and the Arabic language. However, political unity did not last. Why not?

In part, it was because of geography. By the end of the eighth century, the vast Islamic empire reached from Spain in the east, across a thin band of North Africa to the Fertile Crescent lands, into the mountainous regions of Persia and Central Asia. In time, it reached down into India. It also included the Egyptian lands isolated along the Nile. Trade routes did link this vast elongated and divided region and Islam did spread along those routes. However, each part of Islam's empire was remote from the others. Various ethnic groups and religious factions kept Islam divided almost from the start. The remoteness of one region from another added to such divisions. To take one example, the Abbasids established their caliphate

in 750 CE. They soon murdered all but one member of the remaining Umayyad Dynasty. However, that one member, Abd ar-Rahman I, escaped to Spain. There, with the help of local Berber tribes, he established a rival caliphate.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 2.3

Primary Source 2.8

Primary Source 2.10

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 does geography help explain why Muslims had trouble keeping their empire united politically?

State your group's claim here:

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:

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 differs 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.

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

2.1

Gabriel's Command to Muhammad—"Recite"

According to Muslim teachings, Islam was founded by Muhammad who lived from around 571 to 632 CE. Traditional Muslim accounts of his life form the core of Islam's beliefs. According to these traditions, the angel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad in his fortieth year and told him to "recite." That is, he was asked to repeat words that came directly from God. Muhammad received many such revelations during the rest of his life. Muslims see Muhammad as the last of a line of prophets from Abraham, to Moses, to Jesus. In this Persian miniature from the fourteenth century, Muhammad is shown receiving his first revelation from the angel Gabriel.

Original Document

Original document source: Miniature illustration on vellum from the book *Jami' al-Tawarikh*, by Rashid al-Din, 1307 CE, Edinburgh University Library, Scotland.

The Qur'an [or Koran] is Islam's holy book. Muslims believe it is in fact the words of Allah, or God, as revealed to Muhammad when Gabriel told him to "recite." What he recited was collected, written down, and edited after his death. The Qur'an is divided into chapters, or suras. Muhammad's message stresses a belief in one god, the evil of sin, the truth of Allah's words, and the need to create a worldwide Muslim community, the *ummah*. This passage is a part of Sura 47. It makes a sharp distinction between those who believe the Qur'an's message and those who do not.

Original Document

47: 1. In the name of ALLAH, the Gracious, the Merciful.

47: 2. Those who disbelieve and hinder men from the way of ALLAH—HE renders their works vain.

47: 3. But as for those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in that which has been revealed to Muhammad—and it is the truth from their Lord—HE removes from them their sins and sets right their affairs.

47: 4. That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood while those who believe follow the truth from their Lord. Thus does ALLAH set forth for men their lessons by similitudes.

47: 5. And when you meet in regular battle those who disbelieve, smite their necks; and, when you have overcome them, by causing great slaughter among them, bind fast the fetters—then afterwards either release them as a favor or by taking ransom—until the war lays down its burdens. That is the ordinance. And if ALLAH had so pleased, HE could have punished them Himself, but HE has willed that HE may try some of you by others. And those who are killed in the way of ALLAH—HE will never render their works vain.

47: 6. HE will guide them to success and will improve their condition.

47: 7. And will admit them into the Garden which HE has made known to them.

47: 8. O ye who believe! If you help the cause of ALLAH, HE will help you and will make your steps firm.

47: 9. But those who disbelieve, perdition is their lot; and HE will make their works vain.

47: 10. That is because they hate what ALLAH has revealed; so HE has made their works vain.

CONTINUED

47: 11. Have they not traveled in the earth and seen what was the end of those who were before them? ALLAH utterly destroyed them, and for the disbelievers there will be the like thereof.

47: 12. That is because ALLAH is the Protector of those who believe, and the disbelievers have no protector. . . .

47: 33. Those, who disbelieve and hinder men from the way of ALLAH and oppose the Messenger after guidance has become manifest to them, shall not harm ALLAH in the least; and HE will make their works fruitless.

47: 34. O ye who believe! Obey ALLAH and obey the Messenger and make not your works vain.

47: 35. Verily, those who disbelieve and hinder people from the way of ALLAH, and then die while they are disbelievers—ALLAH certainly, will not forgive them.

47: 36. So be not slack and sue not for peace, for you will, certainly, have the upper hand. And ALLAH is with you, and HE will not deprive you of the reward of your actions.

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

2.3

The Middle East on the Eve of Islam's Rise

By the time of his death in 632, Muhammad had united the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula into a single Arab Muslim community. As this map shows, the land north of Arabia was occupied by two ancient and once powerful societies—the Christian Byzantine and the Sassanid Persian empires. Each had worn the other down in a long series of wars. Both contained religious minorities, ethnic and tribal groups discontented with their imperial rulers. As powerful as these two empires were, conditions were ripe for drastic change.

Original Document

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Arab armies inspired by Islam carried their faith north to conquer vast regions in North Africa and the Middle East. They mainly fought the weakened empires of Christian Byzantium and Sassanid Persia. In the Battle of Yarmuk in Syria on August 20, 636, Muslims won a crushing victory. This passage is part of an account of the battle by al-Baladhuri (d. c. 892). It makes clear that many inhabitants of Syria were already hostile to Byzantium and willing to welcome the invaders.

Original Document

[Byzantine emperor] Heraclius gathered large bodies of Greeks, Syrians, Mesopotamians and Armenians numbering about 200,000. This army he put under the command of one of his choice men, . . . resolving to fight the Moslems so that he might either win or withdraw to the land of the Greeks and live in Constantinople. The Moslems gathered together and the Greek army marched against them. The battle they fought at al-Yarmuk was of the fiercest and bloodiest kind. Al-Yarmuk [Hieromax] is a river. In this battle 24,000 Moslems took part. The Greeks and their followers in this battle tied themselves to each other by chains, so that no one might set his hope on flight. By Allah's help, some 70,000 of them were put to death, and their remnants took to flight, reaching as far as Palestine, Antioch, Aleppo, Mesopotamia and Armenia. . . .

. . . When Heraclius massed his troops against the Moslems and the Moslems heard that they were coming to meet them at al-Yarmuk, the Moslems refunded to the inhabitants of Hims the kharaj [a tax on land and its produce] they had taken from them saying, "We are too busy to support and protect you. Take care of yourselves." But the people of Hims replied, "We like your rule and justice far better than the state of oppression and tyranny in which we were. The army of Heraclius we shall indeed . . . repulse from the city." The Jews rose and said, "We swear by the Torah, no governor of Heraclius shall enter the city of Hims unless we are first vanquished and exhausted!" Saying this, they closed the gates of the city and guarded them. The inhabitants of the other cities—Christian and Jew—that had capitulated to the Moslems, did the same, saying, "If Heraclius and his followers win over the Moslems we would return to our previous condition, otherwise we shall retain our present state so long as numbers are with the Moslems." When by Allah's help the "unbelievers" were defeated and the Moslems won, they opened the gates of their cities, went out with the singers and music players who began to play, and paid the kharaj.

CONTINUED

Adapted Version

Byzantine emperor Heraclius gathered large amounts of Greek, Syrian, Mesopotamian and Armenian soldiers. In total, they numbered about 200,000. He put this army under the command of one of his best men. He resolved he would fight the Muslims to win or he would withdraw and go home to live in Constantinople. The Muslims gathered together. The Greek army marched against them. The battle they fought at al-Yarmuk was of the fiercest and bloodiest kind. Al-Yarmuk is a river. In this one battle 24,000 Muslims took part. The Greeks and their followers tied themselves to one another by chains so that no one could hope to flee. By Allah's help, some 70,000 of them were put to death. Those that remained took flight, reaching as far as Palestine, Antioch, Aleppo, Mesopotamia and Armenia.

When Heraclius massed his troops and the Muslims heard that they were coming to al-Yarmuk, they returned the kharaj taxes on land and produce to the inhabitants of Hims. They said, "We are too busy to support and protect you. Take care of yourselves." But the people of Hims replied, "We like your rule and justice far better than the state of oppression and tyranny in which we were. The army of Heraclius we shall indeed . . . repulse from the city." The Jews rose and said, "We swear by the Torah, no governor of Heraclius shall enter the city of Hims unless we are first vanquished and exhausted!" They then closed the gates of the city and guarded them. The Christians and Jews of other cities that had submitted to the Muslims did the same. They said, "If Heraclius and his followers win, we will have to go back to the way things were. Otherwise we will remain in our present condition, so long as we are with the Muslims." When by Allah's help the "unbelievers" were defeated and the Muslims won, these people opened the gates of their cities, went out with the singers and music players who began to play, and paid the kharaj.

Original document source: Philip Khuri Hitti, *The Origins of the Islamic State Being a Translation from the Arabic with Annotations Geographic and Historic Notes of the Kitab Futuh al-Buldan of al-Imam abu-I Abbas Ahmad ibn-Jabir al-Baladhuri* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916), 207–211.

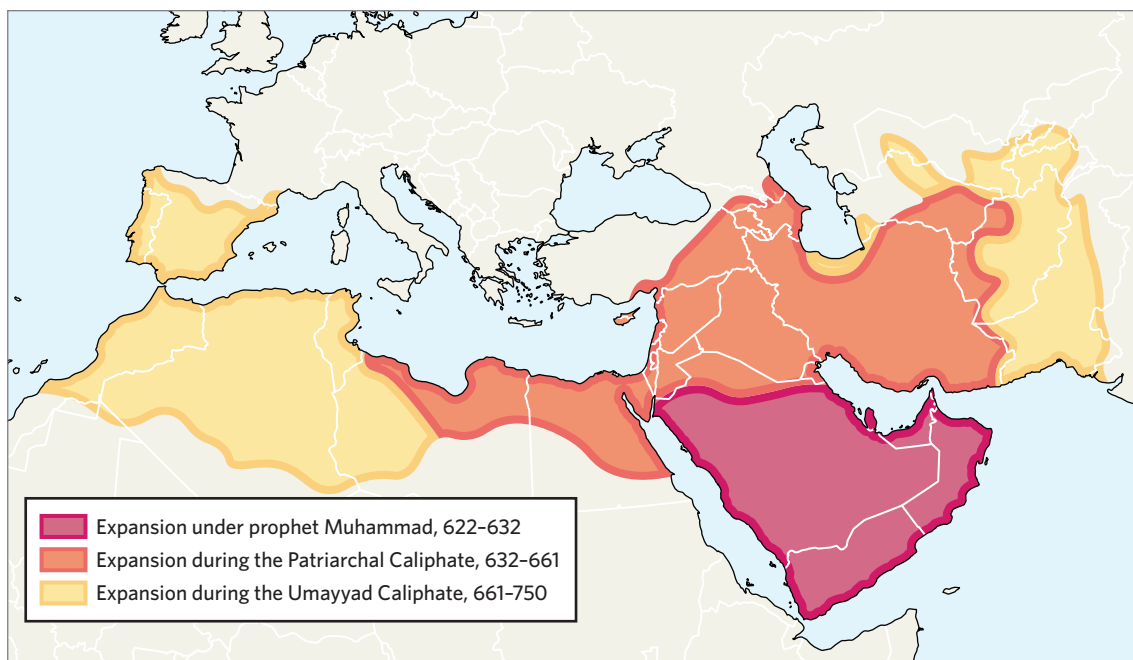
PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

2.5

Islam's Empire Expands

After Muhammad's death, the Arab armies marched north, inspired by their Islamic faith. As this map makes clear, they conquered a vast empire in little over a century. The empire included many regions that differed in resources, natural conditions, culture, religion, and political organization. Fusing all of these regions into a unified Islamic society would prove to be an enormous challenge.

Original Document



As Arab armies carried Islam into North Africa, many Berbers converted. The Berbers were an ethnic group spread throughout much of that region. In 711, it was a Berber named Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād who led the first Muslim forces into Spain. Within just a few years, Muslims controlled all of Spain and were raiding parts of France. Over the centuries, Christian forces drove the Muslims back out of Spain. The last Muslim territory in Spain, Granada, was conquered in 1492. This passage is from an address Tarik supposedly gave to his soldiers just before their invasion of Spain in 711.

Original Document

When Tarik had been informed of the approach of the enemy, he rose in the midst of his companions and, after having glorified God in the highest, he spoke to his soldiers thus:

“Oh my warriors, whither would you flee? Behind you is the sea, before you, the enemy. You have left now only the hope of your courage and your constancy. Remember that in this country you are more unfortunate than the orphan seated at the table of the avaricious master. Your enemy is before you, protected by an innumerable army; he has men in abundance, but you, as your only aid, have your own swords, and, as your only chance for life, such chance as you can snatch from the hands of your enemy. If the absolute want to which you are reduced is prolonged ever so little, if you delay to seize immediate success, your good fortune will vanish, and your enemies, whom your very presence has filled with fear, will take courage. Put far from you the disgrace from which you flee in dreams, and attack this monarch who has left his strongly fortified city to meet you. Here is a splendid opportunity to defeat him, if you will consent to expose yourselves freely to death. Do not believe that I desire to incite you to face dangers which I shall refuse to share with you. In the attack I myself will be in the fore, where the chance of life is always least.

“Remember that if you suffer a few moments in patience, you will afterward enjoy supreme delight. Do not imagine that your fate can be separated from mine, and rest assured that if you fall, I shall perish with you, or avenge you. You have heard that in this country there are a large number of ravishingly beautiful Greek maidens, their graceful forms are draped in sumptuous gowns on which gleam pearls, coral, and purest gold, and they live in the palaces of royal kings. The Commander of True Believers, Alwalid, son of Abdalmelik, has chosen you for this attack from among all his Arab warriors; and he promises that you shall become his comrades and shall hold the rank of kings in this country. Such is his confidence in your intrepidity. The one fruit which he desires to obtain from your bravery is that the word of God shall be exalted in this country, and that the true religion shall be established here. The spoils will belong to yourselves.”

CONTINUED

Adapted Version

When Tarik learned of the approach of the enemy, he rose to speak to his companions. After glorifying God in the highest, he spoke to his soldiers:

“Oh my warriors, where would you flee to? Behind you is the sea, before you, the enemy. Your only hope now is in your courage and your loyal devotion. Remember that in this country you are more unfortunate than an orphan sitting at the table of a greedy master. Your enemy is before you, protected by a vast army. He has men in abundance, but you have only your own swords. Your only chance for life is what you can snatch from the hands of your enemy. If you prolong this dire situation even a little, if you delay in seizing immediate success, your good fortune will vanish. Your very presence here has filled your enemies with fear. If you hesitate, they will take courage. Put far from you the disgrace from which you flee in dreams and attack this monarch who has left his strongly fortified city to meet you. You have a splendid opportunity to defeat him if you are ready to expose yourselves freely to death. I have no desire to force you to face dangers that I refuse to share with you. In the attack, I myself will be in the front, where the chance of life is always least.

“Remember that if you suffer patiently for a few moments, you will afterward enjoy supreme delight. Do not imagine that your fate can be separated from mine. Rest assured that if you fall, I shall perish with you, or avenge you. You have heard that this land has large numbers of ravishingly beautiful Greek maidens. Their graceful forms are draped in sumptuous gowns on which gleam pearls, coral, and purest gold. They live in the palaces of royal kings. The Commander of True Believers, Alwalid, son of Abdalmelik, has chosen you for this attack from among all his Arab warriors. He promises that you shall become his comrades and shall hold the rank of kings in this country. Such is his confidence in your fearlessness. All that he wants from your bravery is that the word of God shall be exalted in this country and that the true religion shall be established here. The spoils will belong to yourselves.”

The invading Muslim armies in the seventh and eighth centuries had to rule over huge numbers of Christians, Jews, and other non-Muslims. These non-Muslims continued to be in the majority for centuries. The Pact of Umar is a set of rules Muslims imposed on their Christian subjects. The rules in the pact applied to Jews as well. Historians believe this treaty was first established in 637 by Caliph Umar I after the conquest of Christian Syria. Changes were made to it from time to time and historians say this version of it dates from about the ninth century. Along with these restrictions, Christians and Jews paid a head tax for protection for their communities.

Original Document

This is a writing to Umar from the Christians of such and such a city. When You [Muslims] marched against us [Christians], we asked of you protection for ourselves, our posterity, our possessions, and our co-religionists; and we made this stipulation with you, that we will not erect in our city or the suburbs any new monastery, church, cell or hermitage; that we will not repair any of such buildings that may fall into ruins, or renew those that may be situated in the Muslim quarters of the town. . . .

That we will not teach our children the Qur'an; that we will not make a show of the Christian religion nor invite any one to embrace it; that we will not prevent any of our kinsmen from embracing Islam, if they so desire. That we will honor the Muslims and rise up in our assemblies when they wish to take their seats; that we will not imitate them in our dress, either in the cap, turban, sandals, or parting of the hair; that we will not make use of their expressions of speech, nor adopt their surnames; that we will not ride on saddles, or gird on swords, or take to ourselves arms or wear them, or engrave Arabic inscriptions on our rings; that we will not sell wine; that we will shave the front of our heads; that we will keep to our own style of dress, wherever we may be. . . .

That we will not display the cross upon our churches or display our crosses or our sacred books in the streets of the Muslims, or in their market-places; that we will strike the clappers in our churches lightly; that we will not recite our services in a loud voice when a Muslim is present; that we will not carry Palm branches [on Palm Sunday] or our images in procession in the streets; that at the burial of our dead we will not chant loudly or carry lighted candles in the streets of the Muslims or their market places; that we will not take any slaves that have already been in the possession of Muslims, nor spy into their houses; and that we will not strike any Muslim.

CONTINUED

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

2.7

NON-MUSLIMS UNDER MUSLIM RULE CONTINUED

All this we promise to observe, on behalf of ourselves and our co-religionists, and receive protection from you in exchange; and if we violate any of the conditions of this agreement, then we forfeit your protection and you are at liberty to treat us as enemies and rebels.

Original document source: Jacob Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Sourcebook*, 315–1791 (New York: JPS, 1938), 13–15.

In 713 CE, two years after the Islamic conquest of Spain began, the Treaty of Tudmir was agreed to. It was a pact made between the Muslim governor of North Africa and the Christian Visigoth Theodemir, called “Tudmir” in Arabic. The treaty described terms the invaders would impose on the Christians in the city of Orihuela and several other nearby communities.

Original Document

We will not set special conditions for him [Tudmir] or for any among his men, nor harass him, nor remove him from power. His followers will not be killed or taken prisoner, nor will they be separated from their women and children. They will not be coerced in matters of religion, their churches will not be burned, nor will sacred objects be taken from the realm, [so long as] he remains sincere and fulfills the conditions that we have set for him. He has reached a settlement concerning seven towns: Orihuela, Valentilla, Alicante, Mula, Bigastro, Ello, and Lorca. He will not give shelter to fugitives, nor to our enemies, nor encourage any protected person to fear us, nor conceal news of our enemies. He and [each of] his men shall [also] pay one dinar every year, together with four measures of wheat, four measures of barley, four liquid measures of concentrated fruit juice, four liquid measures of vinegar, four of honey, and four of olive oil. Slaves must each pay half of this amount.

Adapted Version

We will not set special conditions for Tudmir or for any among his men. Nor will we harass him or remove him from power. His followers will not be killed or taken prisoner. Nor will they be separated from their women and children. They will not be forced to give up their religion. Their churches will not be burned. Nor will sacred objects be taken from the realm, so long as Tudmir remains sincere and fulfills the conditions that we have set for him. He has reached a settlement concerning seven towns: Orihuela, Valentilla, Alicante, Mula, Bigastro, Ello, and Lorca. He will not give shelter to fugitives or to our enemies. Nor will he encourage any protected person to fear us. He will not hide news of our enemies from us. He and each of his men shall also pay one dinar every year, along with four measures of wheat, four measures of barley, four liquid measures of concentrated fruit juice, four liquid measures of vinegar, four of honey, and four of olive oil. Slaves must each pay half of this amount.

Original document source: Olivia Remie Constable, ed., *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

When historians speak of a “Golden Age of Islam,” they have in mind the advances in medicine, science, philosophy, and the arts under the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258 CE). One of the most important centers of this flowering was the city of Baghdad. The city was founded in 764 CE by the Abbasid caliph al-Mansur. This description of Baghdad is by Yaqut al-Hamawi (1179–1229) in his *Geographical Encyclopedia*. This passage gives us a sense of what the city was like, perhaps around 1000 CE.

Original Document

The city of Bagdad formed two vast semi-circles on the right and left banks of the Tigris, twelve miles in diameter. The numerous suburbs, covered with parks, gardens, villas and beautiful promenades, and plentifully supplied with rich bazaars, and finely built mosques and baths, stretched for a considerable distance on both sides of the river.

In the days of its prosperity the population of Bagdad and its suburbs amounted to over two millions! The palace of the Kalif stood in the midst of a vast park “several hours in circumference” which beside a menagerie and aviary comprised an inclosure for wild animals reserved for the chase. The palace grounds were laid out with gardens, and adorned with exquisite taste with plants, flowers, and trees, reservoirs and fountains, surrounded by sculptured figures. On this side of the river stood the palaces of the great nobles. Immense streets, none less than forty cubits wide, traversed the city from one end to the other, dividing it into blocks or quarters, each under the control of an overseer or supervisor, who looked after the cleanliness, sanitation and the comfort of the inhabitants.

The water exits both on the north and the south were like the city gates, guarded night and day by relays of soldiers stationed on the watch towers on both sides of the river. Every household was plentifully supplied with water at all seasons by the numerous aqueducts which intersected the town; and the streets, gardens and parks were regularly swept and watered, and no refuse was allowed to remain within the walls.

An immense square in front of the imperial palace was used for reviews, military inspections, tournaments and races; at night the square and the streets were lighted by lamps.

There was also a vast open space where the troops whose barracks lay on the left bank of the river were paraded daily. The long wide estrades at the different gates of the city were used by the citizens for gossip and recreation or for watching the

CONTINUED

flow of travelers and country folk into the capital. The different nationalities in the capital had each a head officer to represent their interests with the government, and to whom the stranger could appeal for counsel or help.

Bagdad was a veritable City of Palaces, not made of stucco and mortar, but of marble. The buildings were usually of several stories. The palaces and mansions were lavishly gilded and decorated, and hung with beautiful tapestry and hangings of brocade or silk. The rooms were lightly and tastefully furnished with luxurious divans, costly tables, unique Chinese vases and gold and silver ornaments.

Both sides of the river were for miles fronted by the palaces, kiosks, gardens and parks of the grandees and nobles, marble steps led down to the water's edge, and the scene on the river was animated by thousands of gondolas, decked with little flags, dancing like sunbeams on the water, and carrying the pleasure-seeking Bagdad citizens from one part of the city to the other. Along the wide-stretching quays lay whole fleets at anchor, sea and river craft of all kinds, from the Chinese junk to the old Assyrian raft resting on inflated skins.

The mosques of the city were at once vast in size and remarkably beautiful. There were also in Bagdad numerous colleges of learning, hospitals, infirmaries for both sexes, and lunatic asylums.

Adapted Version

Baghdad formed two vast semi-circles on the right and left banks of the Tigris, twelve miles in diameter. The numerous suburbs were covered with parks, gardens, villas and beautiful promenades. They had many rich bazaars, and finely built mosques and baths. These stretched for a considerable distance on both sides of the river.

In its most prosperous times, Baghdad and its suburbs had a population of over two million! The palace of the Caliph stood in the midst of a vast park that took several hours to circle around. Beside a menagerie and aviary, it included an enclosure for wild animals reserved for the chase. The palace grounds were laid out with gardens. These were adorned in exquisite taste with plants, flowers, and trees, reservoirs and fountains surrounded by sculptured figures. On this side of the river stood the palaces of the great nobles. Huge streets at least forty cubits wide crossed the city from one end to the other. The streets divided the city into

CONTINUED

blocks or quarters, each under the control of a supervisor who looked after the cleanliness, sanitation, and the comfort of the inhabitants.

Like the city gates, water exits on the north and the south were guarded night and day by relays of soldiers stationed on the watch towers on both sides of the river. Every household had plenty of water at all times supplied by the numerous aqueducts intersecting the town. The streets, gardens and parks were regularly swept and watered. No refuse was allowed to remain within the walls.

A huge square in front of the imperial palace was used for reviews, military inspections, tournaments, and races. At night the square and the streets were lighted by lamps.

The troops whose barracks lay on the left bank of the river were paraded daily in a vast open space. The long wide platforms at the different city gates were used by the citizens for gossip and recreation or for watching the flow of travelers and country folk into the capital. Each different nationality in the city had a head officer to represent their interests with the government. The stranger could appeal to these officials for counsel or help.

Baghdad was a veritable City of Palaces. They were not made of stucco and mortar, but of marble. The buildings were usually of several stories. The palaces and mansions were lavishly gilded and decorated, and hung with beautiful tapestry and hangings of brocade or silk. The rooms were lightly and tastefully furnished with luxurious divans, costly tables, unique Chinese vases and gold and silver ornaments.

The palaces, kiosks, gardens, and parks of the grandees and nobles lined both sides of the river for miles. Marble steps led down to the water's edge. The river was made lively by thousands of gondolas, decked with little flags, dancing like sunbeams on the water. These carried the pleasure-seeking Baghdad citizens from one part of the city to the other. Along the wide-stretching quays lay whole fleets at anchor. There were sea and river craft of all kinds, from the Chinese junk to the old Assyrian raft resting on inflated skins.

The mosques of the city were vast in size and remarkably beautiful. There were also numerous colleges of learning, hospitals, infirmaries for both sexes, and lunatic asylums.

Original document source: William Stearns Davis, ed., *Readings in Ancient History: Illustrative Extracts from the Sources*, Vol. II: Rome and the West (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1913), 365–367.

PRIMARY SOURCE ►

2.IO

The Zanj Uprising (869–883 CE)

The Golden Age of Islam was not a time of political unity and harmony. Beyond Baghdad, the caliphs soon lost control to many other local governors and ethnic groups. Also, tensions between rich and poor, slave and free often undermined the unity of the Muslim *ummah*. One example was the huge uprising of the Zanj. These were black African slaves laboring in southern Iraq. The slaves labored to drain swamps and clean salt flats and turn them back into fertile lands. They were often worked to death in horrible conditions. In 869 CE, they and other poor people in this region rose in a vast revolt. It lasted for thirteen years and resulted in enormous destruction and suffering. This brief passage describes conditions in the city of Basra when it was under siege by the rebel forces.

Original Document

Most people hid in their homes and wells appearing only at night, when they would search for dogs to slay and eat, as well as for mice. . . . They even ate their own dead, and he who was able to kill his companion, did so and ate him.

Original document source: Mus'idi, *Les Prairies d'or*, II, Charles Pellat, trans. (Paris: Benjamin Duprat, 1962), as reproduced in Ghada Hashem Talhami, "The Zanj Rebellion Reconsidered," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 10, no. 3 (1977), 457.

Communicating Results and Taking Action

Communicating Results

- ◆ Historian Bernard Lewis wrote: *“The bulk of the Arab armies that achieved the conquests were desert people. The strategy of the Arabs in their wars of conquest was based very largely on the skillful use of desert power, reminiscent of sea power in the later empires built up by the maritime peoples of the West. The Arabs were at home in the desert; their enemies were not.”* Write a brief paper on how helpful the above quotation is in explaining the success of the Arab armies. Your answer should include detailed references to at least three of the primary sources for this lesson.
- ◆ In the Islamic world, Christians and Jews did not enjoy equal rights with Muslims. Some historians say they faced unfair discrimination that limited them in major ways. Others say they were tolerated in a very humane way that allowed them to flourish. Which of these two views is correct? Answer this question in a brief essay. In the essay, choose three primary sources for this lesson to use to support your position.
- ◆ You will be separated into several small groups. With your group, discuss the following statement by the eleventh century Islamic historian al-Biruni describing his own history of India: *“This is not a book of controversy and debate. . . . It is a straightforward account, giving the statements of Hindus and adding to them what the Greeks have said on similar subjects, so as to make a comparison between them.”* Decide what this statement tells us about the Islamic society the Arabs created in the region they conquered. Your group will prepare a brief five-minute presentation of your view, using at least two primary sources for this lesson to support your interpretation of al-Biruni’s statement.

Taking Action

- ◆ In recent decades, a great many violent political conflicts have made life difficult in parts of the Muslim world originally conquered by the Arab armies of the seventh and eighth centuries. Can the forces that have led to this violence be contained, and can a new Golden Age of Islam take its place? In a small group, work on this question by looking closer at some of these conflicts. Prepare a talk addressing this question. The talk should use the primary sources for this lesson as well as other sources and more current news stories to answer this question: Could a new Golden Age of Islam soon develop? Your group will present its findings to the rest of the class, along with a list of suggested readings. Your teacher will film the presentation and the discussions about it.
- ◆ Send the video to local news outlets and invite them to contact the class, present the video themselves, or write about it.

The Rise of Islam Rubric

Criteria	Unacceptable	Developing	Proficient	Excellent
Focus	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
Research	Refers to some sources but fails to connect these in a relevant way 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
Development and Use of Evidence	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
Content	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
Conventions	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 Source Bibliography

- 2.1: Miniature illustration on vellum from the book *Jami' al-Tawarikh*, by Rashid al-Din, 1307 CE, Edinburgh University Library, Scotland.
- 2.2: *The Qu'ran*, Maulvi Sher Ali, trans., Malik Ghulam Farid, ed. (Tilford, UK: Islam International, 1988)
- 2.3: © Nystrom Education
- 2.4: Hitti, Philip Khuri. *The Origins of the Islamic State Being a Translation from the Arabic with Annotations Geographic and Historic Notes of the Kitab Futuh al-Buldan of al-Imam abu-l Abbas Ahmad ibn-Jabir al-Baladhuri*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1916. 207–211.
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Sources for Further Study

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The Mandate of Heaven

What Does It Explain about China's Past?

Overview

Introduction

China's concept of the "Mandate of Heaven" was like the European concept of the "Divine Right of Kings." In China's case, "Heaven," not God, granted the emperor the sole right to rule on Earth. "Heaven" referred to the basic divine or spiritual force guiding the universe. The Chinese emperor had a right to rule because he had received Heaven's Mandate. An emperor with the Mandate could ensure that the natural and human world would be in harmony with Heaven's moral purpose. To keep the Mandate, an emperor and his heirs were expected to rule justly and benevolently. If one of them did not, he and the dynasty he headed could be overthrown. The Mandate would then pass to the founder of a new dynasty. Did Chinese reality ever correspond to this idea of the Mandate of Heaven? Why did this idea have such a long-lasting role in Chinese thought? What does it help us to understand about China? This last question is the compelling question this lesson will focus on. Students will work with ten primary 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 Mandate of Heaven. They will apply discipline-specific background knowledge, use scaffolding, and engage in instructional activities to interpret primary 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 views 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.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

The Mandate of Heaven: What does it explain about China's past?

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 Mandate of Heaven

This part of the lesson 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 back 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, economics, or geography. As they work, the groups should keep in mind the unit'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 sources for this unit. Each group may share a primary 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 primary 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 lesson 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 primary sources, they will select one that supports their claim.

7. Using the evidence gathered from primary sources, each group will then prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation about the Mandate of Heaven from their group's disciplinary perspective. The presentation can be in the form of an oral report, a debate among group members, a PowerPoint, or 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 lesson 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 Mandate of Heaven Rubric so they can understand how their performance will be evaluated. The projects are summarized below.

Communicating Results

- ◆ Confucius once said this about government: "Sir, in carrying on your government, why should you use killing at all? Let your evinced desires be for what is good, and the people will be good. The relation between superiors and inferiors is like that between the wind and the grass. The grass must bend, when the wind blows across it." Have students write a long letter to Confucius commenting on this passage. In the letter, they must refer in detail to at least three of the primary sources for this lesson in explaining their views about this quotation.
- ◆ Have students compose a set of letters exchanged by Confucius, Mencius, and Han Feizi in which they discuss with one another the true meaning of the idea of the Mandate of Heaven. The letters should make detailed comments on Primary Sources 3.7, 3.8, and 3.9.
- ◆ Separate students into small groups. Each group's task is to learn more about one large peasant uprising in China's past. The group should develop a presentation on this uprising using Power Point or some other presentation software. The presentation should include references to Primary Sources 3.4, 3.5, and 3.10 as well as any other sources the group feels are relevant. Have each group share its presentation with the class.

Taking Action

- ◆ Have students use Power Point or other presentation software to create a tourists' overview of the Forbidden City. Find photographs and diagrams of the entire compound of palaces and halls. Include information on the Meridian Gate, the Gate of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Medium Harmony, the Hall of Protective Harmony, the Hall of Heavenly Peace, the Hall of Union and Peace, and the Hall of Earthly Peace—and any other features that should be a part of the tour. Include brief written descriptions of these features explaining their purpose in the overall plan of the Forbidden City. The overall theme of the presentation should be to explain how the Forbidden City reflects the traditional Chinese view of the emperor as the “Son of Heaven,” ruling according to the Mandate of Heaven. Share the presentation with other classes in the school.
- ◆ Based on the work in the previous assignment, use social media to share the presentation with others. Invite people contacted in this way to comment and offer their own thoughts about the Forbidden City and the ideas the presentation expresses.

Introductory Essay

The Mandate of Heaven



King Wen of the Zhou Dynasty

Throughout history, powerful leaders have insisted on their right to rule. In our society, leaders claim that right by winning the votes of citizens in an election. That was not how rulers in most ancient societies justified their power. In Europe, leaders often claimed to rule by the “Divine Right of Kings.” This meant that God gave them and their family line the legitimate right to rule. Only their children or other family members could ever inherit this right.

China’s concept of the Mandate of Heaven was like the European concept of the Divine Right of Kings. This idea said that Heaven granted the emperor the

sole right to rule on Earth. “Heaven” in this case meant the basic divine or spiritual force guiding the universe. The Chinese emperor had a right to rule once he had received Heaven’s “mandate”—or permission. In that way, the Chinese emperor would ensure that the natural and human world would be in harmony with Heaven’s moral purpose.

However, this concept is not exactly like the Divine Right of Kings. A ruler could lose the Mandate of Heaven. He could do this by lacking good moral character and failing to rule for the good of his people. Signs that the Mandate had fallen would appear. A time of chaos and rebellion would set in. Foreign forces might invade. Huge natural disasters such as drought, floods, or famine might occur. In such times, an evil emperor could be overthrown. A new dynasty (that is, a royal family line) would begin. Ancient Chinese historical records usually describe that new ruler as morally upright and benevolent. They said the Mandate had been transferred to that new ruler and his heirs.

Another way in which the Mandate differed from the Divine Right of Kings had to do with who that new ruler could be. The new dynasty did not have to begin with a noble family. In fact, in a few cases, dynasty-ending rebellions have led to a new dynasty founded by a peasant leader.

According to ancient Chinese historians, the first ruler to claim the Mandate was King Wen of the Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 BCE). The emperor he replaced was seen as corrupt and selfish. By contrast, King Wen was said to be a virtuous and benevolent ruler. As a result, the previous Shang Dynasty was soon defeated, and the Zhou Dynasty took control.

There was only one Heaven. In the view of many Chinese, this meant there should be only one ruler. Hence, the emperor came to be referred to as the “Son of Heaven.” The widely held idea was that China was one unified society meant to be ruled by one all-powerful emperor. China was, at times, divided into several states. Nevertheless, most people in China felt that their land was meant to be united under one Son of Heaven. The concept of the Mandate supports this ideal of the unity of the entire Chinese realm.

Does the Mandate of Heaven concept represent the reality of China and its history? China has in fact been unified under several long-lasting dynasties—for example, the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), the Tang (618–906 CE), the Ming (1368–1644) and the Qing (1644–1912). However, China has also been divided into several states many times. The idea of the emperor as the Son of Heaven does not seem to allow for more than one emperor at a time. Yet China’s history shows that there have often been times when this was not the case.

It was also not true that every first emperor of a new dynasty was a model of virtue. Some were. Quite a few were clearly not. Likewise, the last emperors of a dynasty were not always corrupt and selfish. Earthquakes, massive floods, and other natural disasters were supposed to signal Heaven’s displeasure with a dynasty. The same is true of social unrest and peasant rebellions. Yet there have been many huge natural disasters that did not signal the end of a dynasty. While some peasant rebellions led to the overthrow of a dynasty, China has seen many huge rebellions that failed to change much at all.

Yet the Mandate of Heaven concept has been a central one throughout China’s history. In many ways, it fits well with the key ideas of many of China’s major philosophers and writers, starting with Confucius. So, what does it tell us about China’s long history? The primary sources in this booklet should help you discuss, debate, and try to answer this question.



Confucius

Image sources: Public domain via Wikimedia Commons
Confucius. Circa 1770, courtesy of the Encyclopedia Britannica.



History Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

The Mandate of Heaven

Your group's task is to explore history issues related to the concept of the Mandate of Heaven. A disciplinary compelling question is provided. 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:

At times, a single dynasty ruled China for centuries. Such dynasties sometimes collapsed suddenly, and a new dynasty took over. Does the concept of the Mandate of Heaven explain this pattern? Why or why not?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 3.4, 3.6, and 3.10.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

In 221 BCE, the Qin Dynasty united all of China under its first emperor, Shihuangdi. The Qin was the first dynasty to truly unify all of China under a centrally controlled government. The earlier Shang and Zhou dynasties ruled more indirectly through locally powerful aristocrats and landowners. Shihuangdi was a strong, often ruthless emperor. He only had one Qin successor before the Qin Dynasty lost power in 206 BCE. The dynasty lasted only fifteen years.

Did the rise and fall of the Qin Dynasty follow the pattern described by the Mandate of Heaven concept? According to that concept, an old and corrupt dynasty loses the Mandate. It then passes to a new dynasty ruled by benevolent emperors concerned about the well-being of the people. The Qin Dynasty's first ruler may have been strong and effective. However, he cannot easily be seen as "benevolent." He imposed a strict system based on legalist theories. He created a huge army that expanded the realm

through conquest. He mobilized hundreds of thousands of peasants to work on vast projects. One of those was connecting China's walls into one Great Wall. Tens of thousands died in carrying out such projects. His rule provoked great unrest, and his successor paid the price. The dynasty fell only four years after Shihuangdi died.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 3.4

Primary Source 3.6

Primary Source 3.10

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:

At times, a single dynasty ruled China for centuries. Such dynasties sometimes collapsed suddenly, and a new dynasty took over. Does the concept of the Mandate of Heaven explain this pattern? Why or why not?

State your group’s claim here:

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:

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:

The Mandate of Heaven

Your group's task is to explore the civics issues related to the Mandate of Heaven concept. A compelling question is provided. 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 Mandate of Heaven concept justify popular rebellion against the established government? Why or why not?
3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 3.6, 3.7, and 3.9.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

The Mandate of Heaven places great stress on the ruler's benevolence. The Confucian term for this is *ren*—which means “the humane way a virtuous person treats others.” Heaven grants the Mandate to the leader whose *ren* guides him in ruling his people. Likewise, the Mandate is withdrawn from the ruler who does not rule with *ren*. The idea is that if the ruler lacks virtue, he will not care properly for his people when difficult problems arise. Such problems may be brought on by the chaos of war. Or they may be caused by natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, drought, and epidemic diseases. A good ruler will act to prevent massive famine or other suffering due to such disasters. If he fails to do this, the Mandate concept says this proves he lacks *ren*, or benevolence.

Does this then give his subjects the right to overthrow him? That seems to be what the Mandate concept suggests. In fact, dozens of large peasant uprisings have occurred throughout China's history. Some have succeeded in changing a dynasty. However, others have not. If a rebellion fails, does

this mean the ruler never really lost the Mandate? If so, doesn't that mean the people had no right to rebel? Some might say the people have a right to an all-powerful benevolent ruler but no absolute right to rebel or rule on their own. It is a debatable issue.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 3.6

Primary Source 3.7

Primary Source 3.9

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:

Does the Mandate of Heaven concept justify popular rebellion against the established government? Why or why not?

State your group's claim here:

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:

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:

The Mandate of Heaven

Your group's task is to explore the economics issues related to the Mandate of Heaven concept. A compelling question is provided. 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:

“The Mandate of Heaven concept puts too much emphasis on the emperor's character as the key to keeping China's economy strong.” Explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.
3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 3.4, 3.5, and 3.8.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

China was almost entirely an agricultural economy. The vast majority of China's people were poor peasants. They provided the northern wheat and southern rice the population needed. They also provided other basic goods such as cotton, silk, tea, and building materials. Over the centuries, small groups of craftspeople and merchants grew in importance. They invented many things—paper, steel-making methods, gunpowder, porcelain, and the compass. However, these commercial people were not highly regarded by the ruling group.

The peasants and others were ruled by a very small class of government officials. This ruling group included the emperors and their civil servants, who were usually local aristocrats and other wealthy landowners. The Mandate of Heaven holds the emperor responsible for the economic well-being of the society. Yet how much could the emperor and his government really do for the economy? Their main activity was to collect goods

and taxes from the peasants. They also conscripted millions of peasants into the armed forces and as workers on huge building projects. Those projects, such as roads and major canals, did have commercial value, but when drought or flood led to famine throughout the land, officials could do little to prevent the deaths of millions. Did an emperor's moral character matter much when these disasters struck? Perhaps to some extent, but in this society of vast numbers of poor peasants, it is not clear how much of a difference moral character could make.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 3.4

Primary Source 3.5

Primary Source 3.8

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:

“The Mandate of Heaven concept puts too much emphasis on the emperor's character as the key to keeping China's economy strong.” Explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.

State your group's claim here:

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:

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:

The Mandate of Heaven

Your group's task is to explore geography issues related to the Mandate of Heaven concept. 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 might China's geography and environment help explain the attraction of the Mandate of Heaven concept?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 3.2, 3.3, and 3.6.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Over the centuries, millions of peasants in China farmed small plots of land using simple tools of wood or stone. Their skills helped them make the most of China's fertile lands. As food production grew, so did China's population. In time, every bit of fertile land in China's eastern plains and southern rice-growing lands filled up. To the west, China was hemmed in by dry land, empty desert, and some of the highest mountains on Earth. This put severe limits on China's ability to expand to new lands as its population soared. Pastoral nomads—herding and horse-riding peoples—were at times a threat to China. When China tried to expand into the dry regions, it often met with fierce opposition from such societies. As China pushed westward, a strong emperor and powerful army were a necessity.

The mountains feed two long rivers, the Huang He (Yellow River) and the Yangtze. These rivers carry huge loads of soils down to the eastern plains. This keeps those lands fertile. However, the rivers can also be incredibly destructive. In flood times, they would often change course dramatically and cause enormous damage, killing tens of thousands or more.

As a result of these environmental factors, China often experienced drought, flood, and famine on a colossal scale. It is no wonder the Chinese looked on these natural events as signs of Heaven's displeasure.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 3.2

Primary Source 3.3

Primary Source 3.6

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 might China's geography and environment help explain the attraction of the Mandate of Heaven concept?

State your group's claim here:

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:

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 differs 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.

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

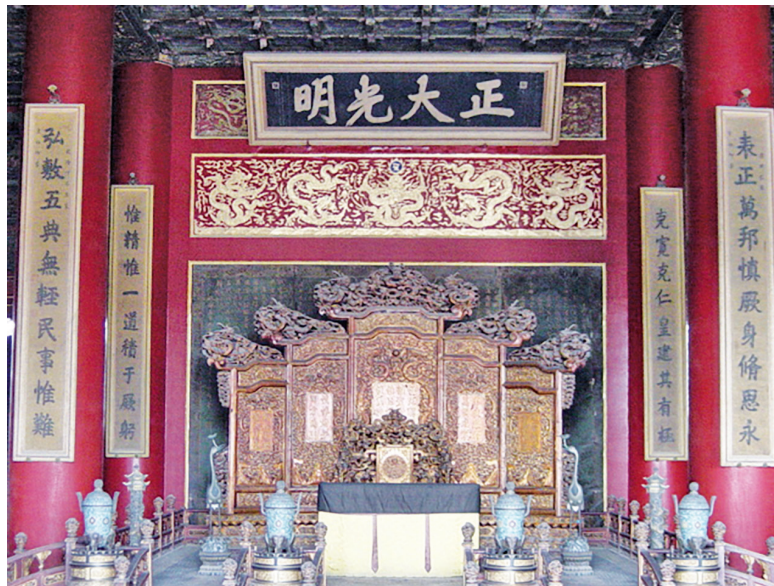
3.1

The Son of Heaven

Over the centuries, China was often ruled by a single all-powerful emperor who was regarded with awe as the “Son of Heaven.” He was seen to link the spiritual order of the universe (“Heaven”) with the human and natural orders. China has had sixty-seven dynasties with 446 emperors. Not all of these dynasties ruled the entire nation. One that did was the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). It was during that dynasty that the vast Forbidden City complex was built in Beijing. For over five hundred years, the emperors lived there. Photo 1A shows the Hall of Supreme Harmony, one of many palaces, halls, high walls, and other structures in the Forbidden City. Photo 1B is of the Dragon Throne of the Emperor in the Palace of Heavenly Purity. The Forbidden City was considered to be the center of the world. Together, these photos suggest the sense of power, mystery, and awe the emperor inspired in many Chinese people.

Original Documents

1A



1B

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PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

3.2

The Middle Kingdom and Its Surroundings

This map shows the main geographical regions of China. The most fertile areas are the Southern Hills, Sichuan, the Chinese Plain, and the Loess Plateau. Loess is a loosely compacted yellowish-gray soil. It blew in from drier areas to the west. The Loess Plateau is one place where China's civilization first arose. Its yellow silt filled China's rivers and made the Chinese Plain extremely fertile. Farther to the west are regions of desert, steppe grassland, and huge mountain ranges. Together, they isolate China from the rest of the Asian landmass. In this setting, it was easy for China to think of itself as the true center of civilization, the so-called Middle Kingdom.

Original Document



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As China's population grew, it found ways to use every available acre of land productively. The terraced hillside in Photo 3A illustrates this dramatically. Such terracing can keep land from eroding and washing away. Photo 3B shows how uncontrollable China's rivers can be and how easily they can wash away fertile soil. The photo makes clear why the Chinese called this river the Huang-He, or "Yellow River." Truly catastrophic floods on this river and the Yangtze often resulted in tens of thousands of deaths or more. Floods, earthquakes, and other natural disasters reached an enormous scale several times in China's history. This may explain why such destructive events came to be seen as signs of the approaching fall of a dynasty.

Original Document



3A



3B

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During the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE), changes in land-holding practices made it hard for the government to collect the taxes it needed. Taxation was always a challenge for China's imperial government. It was also often a key cause of peasant unrest and rebellion. In 780 CE, an official named Yang Yan recommended a new system of taxation. This excerpt from his proposal describes some of the problems he hoped to solve.

Original Document

Very little of the tax revenue that should have gone to the emperor was actually presented. Altogether there were several hundred kinds of taxation: those that had been formally abolished were never dropped, and those that duplicated others were never eliminated. Old and new taxes piled up, and there seemed to be no limit to them. The people drained the last drop of their blood and marrow; they sold their loved ones. . . . Rich people with many able-bodied adults in their families sought to obtain exemption from labor services by having them become officials, students, Buddhist monks, and Daoist priests. The poor had nothing they could get into [to obtain such an exemption] and continued to be registered as able-bodied adults liable to labor service. The upper class had their taxes forgiven, while the lower class had their taxes increased. Thereupon the empire was ruined and in distress, and the people wandered around like vagrants.

Adapted Version

The emperor received very little of the tax revenue that should have gone to him. Altogether, there were several hundred kinds of taxation. Some that had been officially abolished were actually never dropped. Some that duplicated other taxes were never eliminated. Old and new taxes piled up. There seemed to be no limit to them. The people were drained of the last drop of their blood and marrow. They sold their loved ones into slavery to pay what they owed. Rich people with many able-bodied adults in their families could get excused from labor services by having those adults become officials, students, Buddhist monks, and Daoist priests. The poor had no way to obtain such exemptions. They continued to be registered as able-bodied adults who owed labor service. The upper class had their taxes forgiven, while the lower class had their taxes increased. As a result, the empire was ruined and in distress, and the people wandered around like vagrants.

Original document source: William Theodore De Bary and Irene Bloom, eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition: Volume 1: From Earliest Times to 1600* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 554.

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

3.5

The Panthay Rebellion

Throughout China's history, many large and violent peasant uprisings have occurred. Some have led to the fall of dynasties. Others were suppressed, often in a very brutal fashion. In the mid-1800s, several rebellions broke out at about the same time. They came at a time when taxes and rents were rising, peasants were deserting their lands, and the Ming Dynasty was under attack for its corruption and weakness. One massive revolt was the Taiping Rebellion, an uprising of a Christian sect from 1850 to 1864. Another was the mainly Muslim Panthay Rebellion. These uprisings together resulted in tens of millions of deaths. They did not lead to the overthrow of the Ming Dynasty, but they weakened it greatly. That dynasty, China's last, ended in 1911. This painting illustrates one bloody incident in the Panthay Rebellion.

Original Document

Original document source: Battle of the Panthay Rebellion (1856–1873), from *Victory over the Muslims*, a set of twelve paintings. Circa 1890, Palace Museum, Beijing.

In the concept of the Mandate of Heaven, "Heaven" was not a personal god but a universal spiritual power. It is this Heaven that gives China's emperor the right to rule. In this document, a chief minister named Yi Yin expresses the idea of the Mandate. Here, Yi Yin is advising a young Shang king just after the former king died. The passage is from the *Shu Jing*, (the *Book of Historical Documents*). The *Shu Jing* is one of five Confucian classics used in the education system of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). The book itself is much older than that. Much of its "history" is probably a mixture of fact and legend.

Original Document

Oh! Of old the former kings of Xia cultivated earnestly their virtue, and then there were no calamities from Heaven. The spirits of the hills and rivers likewise were all in tranquility; and the birds and beasts, the fishes and tortoises, all enjoyed their existence according to their nature. But their descendant did not follow their example, and great Heaven sent down calamities, employing the agency of our ruler [Zheng Tang] who was in possession of its favoring appointment. . . . Our king of Shang brilliantly displayed his sagely prowess; for oppression he substituted his generous gentleness; and the millions of the people gave him their hearts. Now your Majesty is entering on the inheritance of his virtue;—all depends on how you commence your reign. To set up love, it is for you to love your relations; to set up respect, it is for you to respect your elders. The commencement is in the family and the state. . . .

. . . The ways of Heaven are not invariable;—on the good-doer it sends down all blessings, and on the evil-doer it sends down all miseries. Do you but be virtuous, be it in small things or in large, and the myriad regions will have cause for rejoicing. If you not be virtuous, be it in large things or in small, it will bring the ruin of your ancestral temple.

CONTINUED

Adapted Version

Oh! The former kings of Xia cultivated their virtue earnestly, and there were no calamities from Heaven. The spirits of the hills and rivers were tranquil as well; and the birds and beasts, the fishes and tortoises, all enjoyed their existence according to what was natural to them. Their descendants did not follow their example, and great Heaven sent down calamities, employing the power of our ruler, Zheng Tang, who possessed Heaven's favor. Our king of Shang brilliantly displayed his wisdom; for oppression, he substituted his generous gentleness; and the millions of people gave him their hearts. Now your Majesty is entering on the inheritance of his virtue;—everything depends on how you begin your reign. To set up love, if it is up to you to love your relations; to set up respect, it is up to you to respect your elders. The commencement is in the family and the state.

The ways of Heaven are not unchangeable;—on the good-doer it sends down all blessings, and on the evil-doer it sends down all miseries. Be virtuous, in small things or in large, and the various regions will have cause for rejoicing. If you are not virtuous, in large things or in small, it will bring the ruin of your ancestral temple.

PRIMARY SOURCE ►

3.7

Confucius on the Well-Ordered Kingdom

Confucius is thought to have been born in 551 BCE, though historians are not sure about this. His views came to influence China's educated classes and leaders for many centuries.

Original Document

The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own States. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things.

Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their States were rightly governed. Their States being rightly governed, the whole empire was made tranquil and happy.

From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides.

Original document source: *The Four Books: Confucian Analects, The Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, and the Works of Mencius*, translated by James Legge (China: Commercial Press, 1893).

Mencius was a Confucian philosopher who is thought to have lived from 372 to 289 BCE. He is considered by many to be Confucius's most important and faithful follower. In this passage, he tries to explain why it is wiser and more effective for a ruler to act benevolently.

Original Document

Now, if Your Majesty will institute a government whose action shall all be benevolent, this will cause all the officers in the empire to wish to stand in Your Majesty's court, and the farmers all to wish to plow in Your Majesty's fields, and the merchants, both traveling and stationary, all to wish to store their goods in Your Majesty's market places, and traveling strangers all to wish to make their tours on Your Majesty's roads, and all throughout the empire who feel aggrieved by their rulers to wish to come and complain to Your Majesty. And when they are so bent, who will be able to keep them back? . . .

They are only men of education, who, without a certain livelihood, are able to maintain a fixed heart. As to the people, if they have not a certain livelihood, it follows that they will not have a fixed heart. And if they have not a fixed heart, there is nothing which they will not do, in the way of self-abandonment, of moral deflection, of depravity, and of wild license. When they thus have been involved in crime, to follow them up and punish them;—this is to entrap the people. How can such a thing as entrapping the people be done under the rule of a benevolent man?

Therefore, an intelligent ruler will regulate the livelihood of the people, so as to make sure that, above, they shall have sufficient wherewith to serve their parents, and, below, sufficient wherewith to support their wives and children; that in good years they shall always be abundantly satisfied, and that in bad years they shall escape the danger of perishing. After this he may urge them, and they will proceed to what is good, for in this case the people will follow after that with ease.

CONTINUED

Adapted Version

Now if your Majesty's government acts benevolently, all of your officials will be proud to stand with you. The farmers will all wish to plough in your Majesty's fields. The merchants, both travelling and stationary, will all wish to store their goods in your Majesty's market places. Traveling strangers will all wish to travel on your Majesty's roads. And all throughout the empire who feel aggrieved by ruling princes or nobles will wish to come and complain to your Majesty. When they feel this way, who will be able to keep them back?

Only well-educated men can maintain a fixed and steady heart even when they do not have any certain livelihood. As to the ordinary people, if they have no certain livelihood, they will not have a fixed heart. And if they lack a fixed heart, there is nothing they will not do in the way of self-abandonment, moral deflection, depravity, and wild license. When they become involved in crime, to simply punish them is to entrap them. How can entrapping the people be done under the rule of a benevolent man?

Therefore, an intelligent ruler will regulate the livelihood of the people. He will do this above all to make sure they have enough to serve their parents, who are above them, and to support their wives and children, who are below them. In good years they will always be abundantly satisfied; in bad years they will at least not be in danger of perishing. After this, he may urge them to do what is good. And they will proceed to what is good. For in this case, the people will follow after their ruler with ease.

Original document source: *The Four Books: Confucian Analects, The Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, and the Works of Mencius*, translated by James Legge (China: Commercial Press, 1893).

Confucian philosophers taught that an emperor earned the Mandate of Heaven by ruling benevolently and by following the rituals of ancient Chinese tradition. In reality, many emperors ruled in a far more ruthless way. Legalism was a school of thought that at least some of these emperors found more to their liking. One who did was the founder of the Qin Dynasty, Emperor Shihuangdi. He was the first to fully unify all of China. One legalist scholar who lived just before this Qin unification was Han Feizi (280–233 BCE).

Original Document

When a sage rules the state, he does not depend on people's doing good of themselves; he sees to it that they are not allowed to do what is bad. If he depends on people's doing good of themselves, then within his borders, he can count less than ten instances of success. But if he sees to it that they are not allowed to do what is bad, then the whole state can be brought to a uniform level of order. Those who rule must employ measures that will be effective with the majority and discard those that will be effective with only a few. Therefore they devote themselves not to virtue but to law. . . .

The enlightened ruler works with facts and discards useless theories. He does not talk about deeds of benevolence and righteousness, and he does not listen to the words of scholars. Nowadays, those who do not understand how to govern invariably say, "You must win the hearts of the people!" If you could assure good government merely by winning the hearts of the people, then there would be no need for men like Yi Yin and Kuan Chung [famous wise statesmen]—you could simply listen to what the people say. The reason you cannot rely upon the wisdom of the people is that they have the minds of little children.

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

3.10

Shihuangdi's Terracotta Army

Qin emperor Shihuangdi did not accept Confucian teachings. His rule fit more with the legalist philosophy. Through military conquest, he greatly expanded the size of his nation. He ruled ruthlessly in many other ways. For example, he ordered hundreds of thousands to work on major projects such as linking together parts of the Great Wall. His famous mausoleum reflects his martial spirit well. It is filled with an entire terracotta army of six thousand warriors. Their purpose was to protect the emperor in the afterlife. These soldiers are shown in this photograph.

Original Document



Original document source: © Jmhullot / CC BY 3.0.

Communicating Results and Taking Action

Communicating Results

- ◆ Confucius once said this about government: *“Sir, in carrying on your government, why should you use killing at all? Let your evinced desires be for what is good, and the people will be good. The relation between superiors and inferiors is like that between the wind and the grass. The grass must bend, when the wind blows across it.”* Write a long letter to Confucius commenting on this passage. In the letter, you must refer in detail to at least three of the primary sources for this lesson in explaining your views about this quotation.
- ◆ Compose a set of letters exchanged by Confucius, Mencius, and Han Feizi in which they discuss with one another the true meaning of the idea of the Mandate of Heaven. The letters should make detailed comments on Primary Sources 3.7, 3.8, and 3.9.
- ◆ Separate into small groups. Each group’s task is to learn more about one large peasant uprising in China’s past. Your group should develop a presentation on this uprising using PowerPoint or some other presentation software. The presentation should include references to at least Primary Sources 3.4, 3.5, and 3.10, as well as any others your group feels are relevant. Share your presentation with the class.

Taking Action

- ◆ Use PowerPoint or other presentation software to create a tourists’ overview of the Forbidden City. Find photographs and diagrams of the entire compound of palaces and halls. Include information on the Meridian Gate, the Gate of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Medium Harmony, the Hall of Protective Harmony, the Hall of Heavenly Peace, the Hall of Union and Peace, and the Hall of Earthly Peace—and any other features that should be a part of the tour. Include brief written descriptions of these features and explain their purpose in the overall plan of the Forbidden City. The overall theme of the presentation should be to explain how the Forbidden City reflects the traditional Chinese view of the emperor as the “Son of Heaven” ruling according to the Mandate of Heaven.
- ◆ Based on the work in the previous assignment, use social media to share the presentation with others. Invite people contacted in this way to comment and offer their own thoughts about the Forbidden City and the ideas the presentation expresses.

The Mandate of Heaven Rubric

Criteria	Unacceptable	Developing	Proficient	Excellent
Focus	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
Research	Refers to some sources but fails to connect these in a relevant way 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
Development and Use of Evidence	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
Content	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
Conventions	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 Source Bibliography

- 3.1: 1-A, © Daniel Case / CC BY-SA 3.0
1-B, © DF08 / CC BY-SA 3.0
- 3.2: © Nystrom Education
- 3.3: 3-A, Public domain via Wikimedia Commons
3-B, © Leruswing / CC BY-SA 3.0
- 3.4: De Bary, William Theodore, and Irene Cohen, eds. *Sources of Chinese Tradition: Volume 1: From Earliest Times to 1600*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
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- 3.9: Han Fei Tzu. *Basic Writings*. Trans. Burton Watson. New York: Columbia University Press, 1964.
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Sources for Further Study

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Ting, Renee, ed. *Chinese History Stories Volume 1: Stories from the Zhou Dynasty*. Walnut Creek, CA: Shen's Books, 2009.

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Gothic Cathedrals

What Do They Tell Us about Medieval Europe?

Overview

Introduction

By the time of the High Middle Ages (1000–1300 CE) a new dynamic Europe was starting to emerge. The Catholic Church was at the height of its power. Kings were gaining greater authority over lesser aristocrats in their realms. At times, these kings also clashed with the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, the Catholic popes were increasingly assertive. The thirteenth century was a high point in their claims to supreme authority over spiritual and secular matters. A sense of growing confidence can also be seen in the realm of ideas. Nothing expresses this increasing assertive confidence better than the soaring architecture of the great Gothic cathedrals of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These cathedrals are a good example of how architecture can express the spirit of an age. What exactly do these churches tell us about the High Middle Ages? That is the compelling question this lesson will focus on. Students will work with ten primary 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 Gothic cathedrals. They will apply discipline-specific background knowledge, use scaffolding, and engage in instructional activities to interpret primary 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 views 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.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

What do Gothic cathedrals tell us about the High Middle Ages?

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 Gothic cathedral

This part of the lesson 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 back 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, economics, or geography. 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 sources for this lesson. Each group may share a primary 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 primary 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 lesson 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 primary sources, they will select one that supports their claim.

7. Using the evidence gathered from primary sources, each group will then prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation about Gothic cathedrals from their group's disciplinary perspective. The presentation can be in the form of an oral report, a debate among group members, a PowerPoint, or 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 lesson 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 Gothic Cathedrals Rubric so they can understand how their performance will be evaluated. The projects are summarized below.

Communicating Results

- ◆ Ask students to study and learn more about the cathedrals illustrated in Primary Sources 4.1 and 4.2. Based on the photos displayed there, have them write a one- or two-page paper aimed at explaining the big change in Europe from Romanesque to Gothic architecture. The paper should be written so as to explain this change to a class of younger students.
- ◆ Separate students into small groups. Each group will read and discuss Primary Sources 4.8 and 4.9 (the papal bull *Unam sanctam* and the passage by Peter Abelard). Ask students to discuss how these documents illustrate a growing confidence by Church officials and other Christian thinkers about the place of Christian teachings in Europe in these centuries. Have each group choose two other primary sources that they think best illustrate this trend. Each group should present and explain its choices to the rest of the class.
- ◆ Separate students into five small groups. Each group should be assigned one of the following countries: England, Spain, France, Italy, or Germany. Using the map for Primary Source 4.7, each group should find six to eight photographs of Gothic cathedrals in its assigned country. Have the groups present their findings to the class and explain the most important features of the cathedrals they have illustrated. Have the class discuss any regional differences they can see in these cathedrals.

Taking Action

- ◆ Have students learn more about the National Register of Historic Places. This is the official list of America's historic places considered worthy of preservation. The National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a program to support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. Ask students to take photographs of several historic sites in their city or surrounding area. Use these photographs and other materials to prepare a PowerPoint or other presentation about these sites. Show the presentation to the class or the entire school and explain why the sites were seen as significant.
- ◆ Based on the work in the previous assignment, use social media and the internet to share your PowerPoint and urge others to offer feedback and suggest additional sites.

Introductory Essay

Gothic Cathedrals and the High Middle Ages



Saint Thomas Aquinas

The early Middle Ages were a bleak time in Europe. People for the most part lived in great poverty and insecurity. Yet this was not as backward and unchanging a time as it is often thought to be. A new iron plow, heavier than before, was able to dig deeper furrows. An effective horse collar allowed greater use of horses, which were far more efficient than oxen. For these and other reasons, a new dynamic Europe started to emerge. The High Middle Ages (1000–1300 CE) were a time of growing confidence in Europe.

The Catholic Church was at the height of its power. A sense of growing confidence can be seen in the realm of ideas. Scholars began to rediscover the works of the ancient Greeks, especially Aristotle. The Church was uneasy at first. After all, Aristotle relied only on reason and diverged in key ways from Church teaching. Some feared his ideas might lead people to lose their faith. Church scholars known as “scholastics” said reason would support the

Christian faith. Students gathered at certain cathedrals to hear scholars like Thomas Aquinas lecture. In this way the first universities were born. The monastic orders also seemed surer of themselves in the late Middle Ages. Earlier, most monks had separated themselves from society as a way to devote their lives to serving God. Some monastic orders now began to more actively promote the Christian faith or undertake good works in society. This approach led to a new concern for the sick, the poor, and other outcasts. It also inspired the “Dominicans,” who stressed the rigorous learning needed to counter ideas that the Church found to be heretical.

Kings were gaining greater authority over lesser aristocrats in their realms. At times, they also clashed with the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, the Catholic popes were increasingly assertive. The thirteenth century was a high point in their claims to supreme authority over spiritual and secular matters. Bloody though they were, the Crusades also signaled Europe’s revival

and its new outward-looking spirit. Another sign of this renewal was the growth of towns and trade. Early towns appeared in the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Italy. Some of these towns and cities were the headquarters for archbishops and other top Church officials. They were also home to the great cathedrals whose schools evolved into Europe's first great universities.

Nothing expresses this increasing assertive confidence as well as the soaring architecture of the great Gothic cathedrals of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and beyond. Pointed arches, ribbed vaults, delicate carvings, high walls, wide and colorful upper windows, and statues often surrounding the doorways characterized the Gothic style. Together, these features created a sense of light and the soaring spiritual grandeur of Gothic architecture.



Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris

This awe-inspiring style grew out of the earlier Romanesque style. That style resulted in buildings with thick walls, small windows, and very dim lighting. To express a new spirit, architects altered the Romanesque style in three basic ways.

First, the “pointed arch.” This is an arch that comes to a sharp point at the top. In Gothic churches these pointed arches support the vault, or curved ceiling. They allowed the churches to be much taller. Plus, they directed more of the vault’s weight down each arch and its column. This allowed for lighter, thinner walls between the arches. That made possible much larger windows, usually of colored glass with images of biblical tales.

Next, the “ribbed vault” added to the effectiveness of the pointed arch. It enabled sections of the ceiling to be connected to several stone columns at once, and it added to the soaring visual effect.

Finally, the “flying buttress.” These were structures outside the building that extended out from the walls and then down a thick pier. They transferred more of the weight of the vaulted ceiling out and away from the walls. This took more pressure off of the walls and allowed for a taller building and more light-admitting window space.

This combination of elements reflected not merely a new way to build churches. It resulted in an awe-inspiring space stressing light and color. The Gothic cathedrals were usually those churches supervised by archbishops or other top Church officials. They were often in growing cities that were centers of reviving trade or where kings or other key political figures were based. The Gothic cathedral is a good example of how architecture can express the spirit of an age.

This lesson asks you what exactly these churches do tell us about the High Middle Ages. The primary sources are meant to help you discuss, debate, and try to answer this question.

Image sources: *Saint Thomas Aquinas*. By Carlo Crivelli, 1476, courtesy of the National Gallery.
Peter Haas / CC BY-SA 3.0



History Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

Gothic Cathedrals

Your group's task is to explore history issues related to Gothic cathedrals of the High Middle Ages. A disciplinary compelling question is provided. 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:

How does the Gothic style show that a new, more confident, and hopeful spirit arose in the High Middle Ages (1000–1300 CE) compared with previous centuries?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 4.2, 4.9, and 4.10.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Europe's High Middle Ages were a time of growing confidence. The population grew. Food production went up. The countryside became less violent and dangerous. Towns and cities grew. Many other hopeful changes were underway. Various migrating peoples had finally stopped invading Europe. The Vikings in the North ended their raids by the eleventh century. Christianity soon spread to their Scandinavian homelands. It also spread eastward as Magyar raids ended. A Christian Kingdom of Hungary emerged there.

Europe's first universities appeared—in Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Modena. Jewish and Muslim scholars helped Europeans recover the work of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. Scholastics in the universities made Aristotle's ideas central to their own thinking. They vigorously began to question and debate all matters. They said human reason would only strengthen Christian teachings. Meanwhile, various new monastic orders arose. They tried to reform and strengthen Christianity. Some

focused on the spiritual life of their own members. Others sought to be more of a force in society. Popes often clashed with increasingly powerful kings. Yet the popes' spiritual and political authority reached its height in these centuries. European crusaders temporarily won control of Jerusalem and the Holy Lands. In many ways, the Church and its Christian message seemed to be on the march.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 4.2

Primary Source 4.9

Primary Source 4.10

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 does the Gothic style show that a new, more confident, and hopeful spirit arose in the High Middle Ages (1000–1300 CE) compared with previous centuries?

State your group's claim here:

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:

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.

**Civics Group****GROUP MEMBERS:**

Gothic Cathedrals

Your group's task is to explore the civics issues related to Gothic cathedrals of the High Middle Ages. A compelling question is provided. 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:

“Gothic architecture expressed the Church’s claim to supreme political authority in the High Middle Ages.” Explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.
3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 4.4, 4.5, and 4.8.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

In the High Middle Ages, the Catholic Church reached the height of its power. An early sign of this was the Investiture Controversy. It began in 1056, when Pope Gregory VII and German emperor Henry IV were pitted against each other. The struggle was over the right to appoint bishops, abbots, and other top Church officials. Such officials often controlled Church lands and other forms of wealth. Emperors and kings were used to choosing them. In this way they could count on such Church officials for support when powerful nobles challenged royal authority. However, Gregory VII insisted the Church alone had the right to choose its officials. After years of conflict, the Concordat of Worms of 1122 settled the matter with a compromise. It ruled that the pope alone could grant bishops their spiritual authority. Only then could kings grant them secular authority in the territories they controlled.

In the years after the Concordat of Worms, popes continued to assert the supreme spiritual and political power of the Church. Church officials did become more independent in political life. Archbishops were powerful figures on their own—often with huge cathedrals in the key towns and cities. A growing Church court system offered alternatives to secular systems of justice. By the end of the twelfth century, the popes could influence events all over Europe. It was then that they could make their strongest claims to supreme spiritual and secular authority.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 4.4

Primary Source 4.5

Primary Source 4.8

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:

“Gothic architecture expressed the Church’s claim to supreme political authority in the High Middle Ages.” Explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.

State your group’s claim here:

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:

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:

Gothic Cathedrals

Your group's task is to explore the economics issues related to Gothic cathedrals of the High Middle Ages. A compelling question is provided. 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:

As trade revived in Europe, many cities could see value in building Gothic churches of their own. Explain why this might have been so.

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 4.4, 4.6, and 4.7.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

The High Middle Ages took place during what historians call the Medieval Warm Period. This time of warmer, milder climates enabled Europe to grow more crops on more land. New practices also increased the land's productivity. A heavier plow was used to turn up the rich, thick soils of the region. New harnesses enabled more farms to use horses instead of oxen. The spread of three-field systems allowed for a greater variety of crops than the earlier two-field system. All of this helped fuel a rapid growth in population.

This increased food supply also freed more people to turn to trade and industry. Annual trade fairs in northern France became major events. They were places where merchants from southern Europe could exchange goods with those from the north. Early towns appeared in Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, and France. The rise of specialized industries often fueled the growth of towns—for example, the linen and wool industry of Flanders, in Belgium. Such towns often became independent of local

lords. They all hoped to attract merchants and the wealth they could bring with them. The Hanseatic League was a trade-promoting federation of free cities in Northern Europe. Italian city-states such as Venice and Genoa also thrived on long-distance trade with societies as far away as East Asia and became highly independent republics.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 4.4

Primary Source 4.6

Primary Source 4.7

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:

As trade revived in Europe, many cities could see value in building Gothic churches of their own. Explain why this might have been so.

State your group's claim here:

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:

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:

Gothic Cathedrals

Your group's task is to explore geography issues related to Gothic cathedrals of the High Middle Ages. A compelling question is provided. 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:

“Despite geographic divisions, Christian culture spread to a larger part of Europe in the High Middle Ages.” How does the spread of Gothic architecture support this statement?
3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 4.5, 4.7, and 4.8.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

In 1000 CE, Christianity was still limited to a small portion of Europe. This mainly included Italy, England, France, and part of what we call Germany. In the High Middle Ages, rapid expansion took place in many directions.

By 1000 CE, destructive Viking raids from Northern Europe stopped. Several Scandinavian kingdoms were soon Christianized. In northern Spain, a few Christian kingdoms began the *Reconquista*. This was an effort to take back Spanish territory from Muslims who had conquered it three centuries earlier. By the mid-thirteenth century, Christians controlled all of Spain except for one southern state, Granada.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, many areas in Northern Europe east of the Elbe River lost a good amount of their population. In some places, wilderness returned. However, starting around 1000 CE, vast forests and

marshes in these regions began to be cleared. Christian communities settled on new lands and farmed them more intensively. Meanwhile, the Magyars in Hungary stopped raiding. Hungary itself became another Christian kingdom. Catholic military orders led religious wars to convert Slavic people in what is now eastern Germany, Poland, and Lithuania. Europe's wars to take control of the Holy Land were called the Crusades. The efforts to spread Christianity to Eastern Europe were also considered Crusades. They greatly extended a common Christian culture to a much wider European realm.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source 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 4.5

Primary Source 4.7

Primary Source 4.8

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:

“Despite geographic divisions, Christian culture spread to a larger part of Europe in the High Middle Ages.” How does the spread of Gothic architecture support this statement?

State your group's claim here:

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:

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 differs 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.

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

4.I

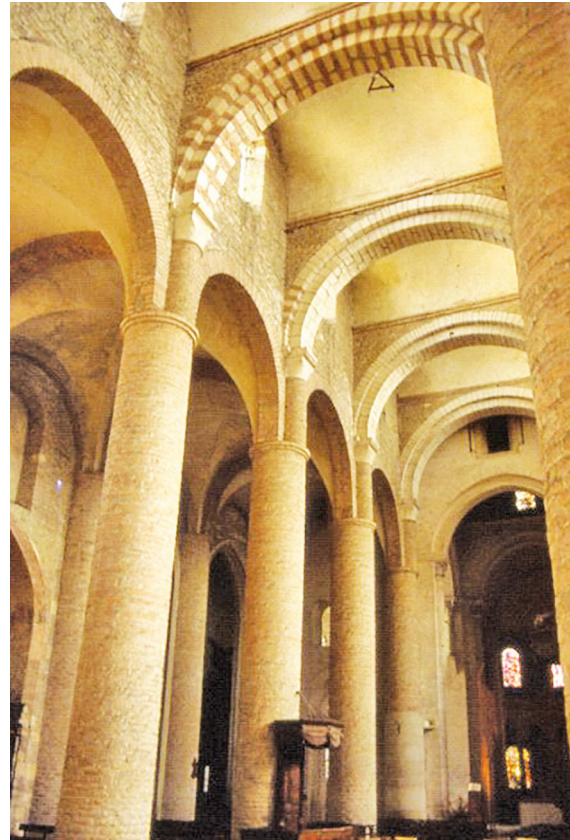
The Romanesque Style

These photos are of the Church of St. Philibert, Tournus, the main surviving building of a former Benedictine abbey in Tournus, Saône-et-Loire, France. The church was probably constructed in the eleventh century. It is a good example of the Romanesque style: on the outside, thick walls with few windows; on the inside, very heavy pillars supporting semicircular arches that uphold the barrel vault. The small windows keep the interior dim. The overall impression is one of a massive exterior and a dark and solemn interior. Photo 1A shows the exterior of the church. Photo 1B shows the church interior with its tunnel or barrel vault supported on circular arches.

Original Documents



1A



1B

Original document sources: © Morburre / CC BY-SA 3.0
© He3nry / CC BY-SA 3.0

Pointed Arches and Ribbed Vaults

The Gothic church created a new, loftier interior space full of color and sunlight. Central to how it did that is the pointed arch and ribbed vault. The pointed arch's peak ends with a sharp point. The vault, or ceiling, is divided by stone ribs that direct the weight of the vault down along each arch into its supporting column. This takes pressure off the rest of the walls of the structure. It means those walls can be thinner and can support much larger windows. Together, the soaring arches and large windows draw the gaze upward and fill the church with light. These two photos give a good sense of how dramatic this effect is. Photo 2A shows the choir of Cologne Cathedral in Germany. Photo 2B illustrates the pointed arches forming the ribbed vault of the Cathedral in Reims, France.

Original Documents



2A



2B

Original document sources: © Wirginus Kaleta / CC BY-SA 3.0
© Magnus Manske / CC BY-SA 3.0

This photo shows the flying buttresses supporting the walls of St. Mary's Church in Lübeck, in northern Germany. Flying buttresses are massive arches outside the building that press up against its walls. In Romanesque churches, massively thick walls are needed to hold up the roof. In Gothic churches the roof presses outward against the much thinner walls. These buttresses help to hold those walls in place.

Original Document



Original document sources: © Andreas Praefcke / CC BY 3.0

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

4.4

The Cathedral of Reims

Even today, the massive Gothic cathedrals still stand out. In medieval times, they would have been the most impressive structures people had ever seen. This massive front entrance to the Cathedral of Reims is typical. In Gothic cathedrals, this front façade almost always faces west, with the altar at the other end facing east—toward the Holy Land. People entering would experience the overwhelming power of God and His Church here on Earth. Many cathedrals adopted this pattern of three entrances, reminding believers of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Original Document



Original document source: © bodoklecksell / CC BY-SA 3.0

Gothic cathedrals were full of details, sculptures, and stained-glass windows of great beauty and complexity. Photo 5A is of the main entrance to Notre Dame Cathedral. It presents those entering with a dramatic depiction of the Last Judgment, their ultimate fate. Photo 5B is a rose window. This one is in the Basilica of St. Denis. It depicts God at the center, the six days of Creation, Adam and Eve eating the fruit and being expelled from Eden, and many other Christian themes. In these and many other ways, the elaborate details of Gothic cathedrals were a way to teach key biblical themes to people who mainly could not read.

Original Documents



5A



5B

PRIMARY SOURCE ►

4.6

The Village Fair

This painting by Gillis Mostaert is titled *Village Fair*. In the High Middle Ages, the European population was growing. Agricultural methods were improving. Trade began to flourish. Life seemed less risky. Many people seemed to feel a greater sense of hope. In France, especially, annual fairs were held at which merchants from southern and northern Europe met to exchange goods. This painting conveys the excitement and growing optimism of the age.

Original Document



Original document source: *Village Fair*. By Gillis Mostaert, 1590, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

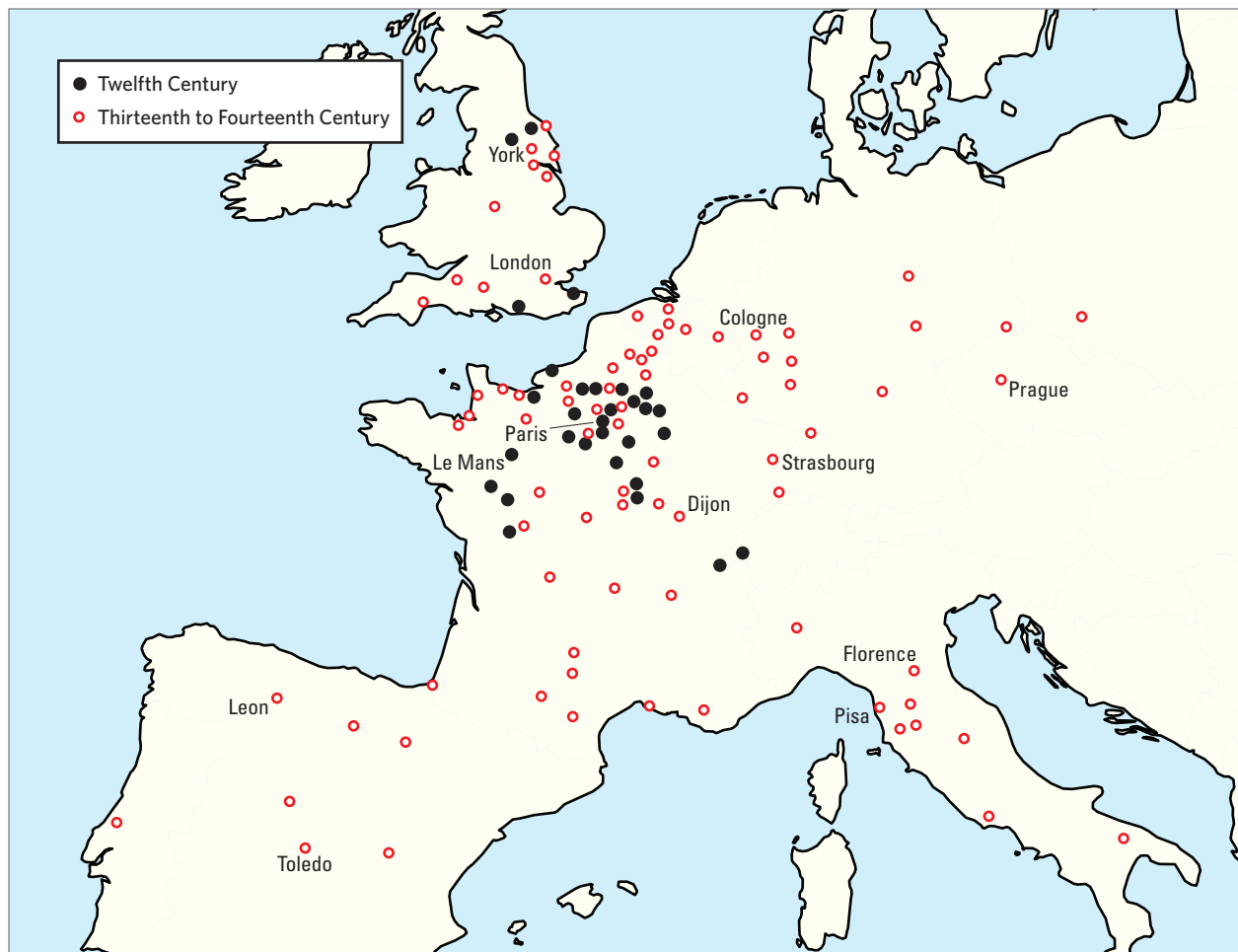
PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

4.7

The Spread of Gothic Architecture

This map shows that Gothic architecture first developed in the twelfth century in the regions of northern France in and around Paris. Gothic architecture then expanded over much of the rest of Western Europe over the next two or three centuries.

Original Document



© Nystrom Education

A papal bull is a public decree issued by the pope of the Catholic Church. It is named after the seal (bulla) that marked it as official. *Unam sanctam* was a bull issued by Pope Boniface VIII in 1302, when the Catholic Church was at the height of its power. It was directed at King Phillip the Fair of France, one of Europe's more powerful kings. *Unam sanctam* expresses the Church's confident view that the pope's "spiritual" and "temporal" (that is, political) authority was absolutely supreme throughout Christian Europe.

Original Document

Urged by faith, we are obliged to believe and to maintain that the Church is one, holy, catholic, and also apostolic. We believe in her firmly and we confess with simplicity that outside of her there is neither salvation nor the remission of sins. . . .

We are informed by the texts of the gospels that in this Church and in its power are two swords; namely, the spiritual and the temporal. For when the Apostles say: "Behold, here are two swords" [Lk 22:38] that is to say, in the Church, since the Apostles were speaking, the Lord did not reply that there were too many, but sufficient. Certainly the one who denies that the temporal sword is in the power of Peter has not listened well to the word of the Lord commanding: "Put up thy sword into thy scabbard" [Mt 26:52]. Both, therefore, are in the power of the Church, that is to say, the spiritual and the material sword . . . the former in the hands of the priest; the latter by the hands of kings and soldiers, but at the will and sufferance of the priest.

However, one sword ought to be subordinated to the other and temporal authority, subjected to spiritual power. For since the Apostle said: "There is no power except from God and the things that are, are ordained of God" [Rom 13:1–2], but they would not be ordained if one sword were not subordinated to the other and if the inferior one, as it were, were not led upwards by the other.

For, according to the Blessed Dionysius, it is a law of the divinity that the lowest things reach the highest place by intermediaries. Then, according to the order of the universe, all things are not led back to order equally and immediately, but the lowest by the intermediary, and the inferior by the superior. Hence we must recognize the more clearly that spiritual power surpasses in dignity and in nobility any temporal power whatever, as spiritual things surpass the temporal. . . .

Furthermore, we declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.

CONTINUED

Adapted Version

Our faith tells us the Church is one, holy, catholic, and also apostolic. We believe in her firmly and we say that only the Church can ensure salvation and the cancelling of sins.

The Gospels tell us the Church has two swords. One is spiritual, the other is temporal. For when the Apostles say: “Behold, here are two swords” [Lk 22:38], the Lord did not say these were too many, but just enough. Anyone who denies this has not listened well to the word of the Lord. Therefore, the Church has both kinds of power, that is to say, the spiritual and the material power. The former is in the hands of the priest completely. The latter is in the hands of kings and soldiers, but only as they act according to the will and with permission of the priest.

However, one sword should be subordinated to the other. And so temporal authority is subjected to spiritual power. The Apostle said: “There is no power except from God and the things that are, are ordained of God” [Rom 13:1–2]. They would not be ordained if the temporal sword were not subordinated to the spiritual sword. That temporal sword is the inferior one. It must be led upwards by the other.

According to the Blessed Dionysius, it is divine law that the lowest things reach the highest place by intermediaries. They are not led into order equally and all at once. Instead, the lowest is led by the intermediary; the inferior is led by the superior. Now it is clear that spiritual power surpasses in dignity and in nobility any temporal power whatever. After all, spiritual things surpass the temporal.

Furthermore, we declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pope.

During the High Middle Ages, university-based “Scholastics” turned to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle to support their Christian faith and provide a greater understanding of the natural world and the moral order. They did not question Scriptures, but they tried to strengthen their faith with logical proofs and reasoned arguments. Peter Abelard (1079–1142) openly invited students to debate various theological questions. He showed them that even the most revered Church fathers expressed conflicting views. He called on individuals to use reason to decide which views were right. He is an example of a growing confidence in Europe about human reason and its ability to arrive at truth.

Original Document

There are many seeming contradictions and even obscurities in the innumerable writings of the church fathers. Our respect for their authority should not stand in the way of an effort on our part to come at the truth. The obscurity and contradictions in ancient writings may be explained upon many grounds, and may be discussed without impugning the good faith and insight of the fathers. . . .

Not infrequently apocryphal works are attributed to the saints. Then, even the best authors often introduce the erroneous views of others and leave the reader to distinguish between the true and the false. . . .

The fathers did not themselves believe that they, or their companions, were always right. Augustine found himself mistaken in some cases and did not hesitate to retract his errors. He warns his admirers not to look upon his letters as they would upon the Scriptures, but to accept only those things which, upon examination, they find to be true.

All writings belonging to this class are to be read with full freedom to criticize, and with no obligation to accept unquestioningly; otherwise the way would be blocked to all discussion, and posterity be deprived of the excellent intellectual exercise of debating difficult questions of language and presentation. But an explicit exception must be made in the case of the Old and New Testaments. In the Scriptures, when anything strikes us as absurd, we may not say that the writer erred, but that the scribe made a blunder in copying the manuscripts, or that there is an error in interpretation, or that the passage is not understood. The fathers make a very careful distinction between the Scriptures and later works. They advocate a discriminating, not to say suspicious, use of the writings of their own contemporaries.

CONTINUED

In view of these considerations, I have ventured to bring together various dicta of the holy fathers, as they came to mind, and to formulate certain questions which were suggested by the seeming contradictions in the statements. These questions ought to serve to excite tender readers to a zealous inquiry into truth and so sharpen their wits. The master key of knowledge is, indeed, a persistent and frequent questioning. Aristotle, the most clear-sighted of all the philosophers, was desirous above all things else to arouse this questioning spirit, for in his *Categories* he exhorts a student as follows: "It may well be difficult to reach a positive conclusion in these matters unless they be frequently discussed. It is by no means fruitless to be doubtful on particular points." By doubting we come to examine, and by examining we reach the truth.

Adapted Version

Even the writings of the Church Fathers sometimes contradict one another. Many things in their writings are hard even to understand. We should respect their authority, but we should not let it stop us from seeking the truth. Many things can explain the contradictions in ancient writings. This does not mean we should question their good faith and insight. Sometimes, false works are attributed to these saints. Even the best authors may include untrue views of others and let readers decide between the true and the false.

Even the Church Fathers did not believe that they were always right. Augustine found himself mistaken in some cases. He admitted his errors. He warns his admirers not to look upon his letters as they would upon the Scriptures. He wanted them to accept only those things which, upon examination, they find to be true.

We should feel free to criticize all writings of this sort. We do not have to accept them unquestioningly. Otherwise, discussion would be blocked. People would miss the chance to debate difficult questions. The exception should be the Old and New Testaments. If something there seems absurd, we can't say the writer erred. We might think the scribe erred in copying the manuscript. Or we might say the passage was not interpreted properly. Or that it was not understood accurately. The Church Fathers clearly distinguished between Scriptures and later works. They were clearly critical of the other writings of their own day.

CONTINUED

As a result of all this, I have brought together various statements of the Holy Fathers. I have then asked certain questions about what seem to be contradictions in their statements. These questions are meant to encourage readers to search for truth and sharpen their own thinking. The master key to knowledge is exactly this kind of persistent and frequent questioning. Aristotle was the most clear-sighted of all the philosophers. Above all he wanted to arouse this questioning spirit. In his book *Categories*, he says: “It may well be difficult to reach a positive conclusion in these matters unless they be frequently discussed. It is by no means fruitless to be doubtful on particular points.” By doubting we come to examine, and by examining we reach the truth.

Original document source: Peter Abelard, *Sic et Non*, as reprinted in James Harvey Robinson, ed., *Readings in European History, Vol. I: From the Breaking up of the Roman Empire to the Protestant Revolt*, Boston: Ginn., 1904, 450–451.

Light was a central theme in Gothic churches. In the Middle Ages, many monks and church leaders believed light was divine. Abbot Suger (1081–1151) was one who believed this. He was the abbot in charge of the Saint-Denis church in Paris. It was the church used by the king of France. Suger undertook the task of completely remodeling the building. In doing this, he urged his architects to fill the interior of the church with as much light as possible. His remodeled church was one of the first to use all the features of Gothic architecture. Suger also wrote poetry, including this one on the Gothic style of his church.

Original Document

All you who seek to honor these doors,

Marvel not at the gold and expense but at the craftsmanship of the work.

The noble work is bright, but, being nobly bright, the work

Should brighten the minds, allowing them to travel through the lights.

To the true light, where Christ is the true door.

The golden door defines how it is imminent in these things.

The dull mind rises to the truth through material things,

And is resurrected from its former submersion when the light is seen.

Original document source: Abbot Suger: *On What Was Done in His Administration*, translation by David Burr, as reprinted in Katharine J. Luialdi, *Sources of the Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009).

Communicating Results and Taking Action

Communicating Results

- ◆ Study and learn more about the cathedrals in Primary Sources 4.1 and 4.2. Based on the photos displayed there, write a one- or two-page paper aimed at explaining the big change in Europe from Romanesque to Gothic architecture. The paper should be written so as to explain this change to a class of younger students.
- ◆ Separate into small groups. Each group will read and discuss Primary Sources 4.8 and 4.9 (the papal bull *Unam sanctam*, and the passage by Peter Abelard). Discuss how these documents illustrate a growing confidence by Church officials and other Christian thinkers about the place of Christian teachings in Europe in these centuries. Choose two other primary sources that you think best illustrate this trend. Each group will present and explain its choices to the rest of the class.
- ◆ Separate into small groups. Each group will be assigned one of the following countries: England, Spain, France, Italy, or Germany. Using the map for Primary Source 4.7, your group should find six to eight photographs of Gothic cathedrals in your assigned country. Present your findings to the class and explain the most important features of the cathedrals. As a class, discuss any regional differences you can see in these cathedrals.

Taking Action

- ◆ Learn more about the National Register of Historic Places. This is the official list of America's historic places considered worthy of preservation. The National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a program to support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. Take photographs of several historic sites in your city or surrounding area. Use these photographs and other materials to prepare a PowerPoint or other presentation about these sites. Show the presentation to the class or the entire school and explain why the sites were seen as significant.
- ◆ Based on the work in the previous assignment, use social media and the internet to share your PowerPoint and urge others to offer feedback and suggest additional sites.

Gothic Cathedrals Rubric

Criteria	Unacceptable	Developing	Proficient	Excellent
Focus	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
Research	Refers to some sources but fails to connect these in a relevant way 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
Development and Use of Evidence	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
Content	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
Conventions	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 Source Bibliography

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- 4.9: Abelard, Peter. *Sic et Non*. In James Harvey Robinson, ed. *Readings in European History, Vol. I: From the Breaking up of the Roman Empire to the Protestant Revolt*. Boston: Ginn, 1904.
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Sources for Further Study

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