

Grade 6 Social Studies: Year-Long Overview

To be productive members of society, students must be critical consumers of information they read, hear, and observe and communicate effectively about their ideas. They need to gain knowledge from a wide array of sources and examine and evaluate that information to develop and express an informed opinion, using information gained from the sources and their background knowledge. Students must also make connections between what they learn about the past and the present to understand how and why events happen and people act in certain ways.

To accomplish this, students must:

1. Use sources regularly to learn content.
 2. Make connections among people, events, and ideas across time and place.
 3. Express informed opinions using evidence from sources and outside knowledge.

Teachers must create instructional opportunities that delve deeply into **content** and guide students in developing and supporting **claims** about social studies concepts.

In grade 6, students explore the factors that influence how civilizations develop as well as what contributes to their decline as they learn about early humans and the first permanent settlements, the ancient river valley civilizations, Greek and Roman civilizations, Asian and African civilizations, Medieval Europe, and the Renaissance. The [key themes](#) in grade 6 highlight the connections among the [GLEs](#) that students should make as they develop and express informed opinions about the grade 6 claims.

Grade 6 Social Studies: How to Navigate This Document

The grade 6 scope and sequence document is divided into 5 units. Each unit has an overview, instruction which includes topics and tasks, and a unit assessment. Click on a link below to access the content.

Unit Four: Civilizations in Africa and Asia: Expanding Trade

- [Unit Four Overview](#)
- [Unit Four Instruction](#)
 - [Topic One: Asian Civilizations](#)
 - [Topic Two: West African Empires](#)
- [Unit Four Assessment](#)

Unit Five: Medieval Europe and the Renaissance: Legacy

- [Unit Five Overview](#)
- [Unit Five Instruction](#)
 - [Topic One: Medieval Europe](#)
 - [Topic Two: Renaissance](#)
- [Unit Five Assessment](#)

Unit Four Overview

Description: Students explore the role of trade in the advancement of civilization by examining the development of civilizations in Asia and Africa. Students investigate the role of trade in the advancement of societies and how trade is responsible for the exchange of more than just goods.

Suggested Timeline: 7 weeks

Grade 6 Content	Grade 6 Claims
Civilizations in Africa and Asia: Expanding Trade	Is trade necessary for advancing civilizations?

Topics (GLEs):

1. [Asian Civilizations](#) (6.1.1-4, 6.2.6, 6.2.8, 6.3.3, 6.6.4)
2. [West African Empires](#) (6.1.1-4, 6.2.6-7, 6.3.1-3, 6.4.1-3, 6.6.1-4)

Unit Assessment: Students write a one-page essay in response to the following question: Is trade necessary for advancing civilizations?

Unit Four Instruction

Topic One: Asian Civilizations (6.1.1, 6.1.3-4, 6.2.6, 6.2.8, 6.3.1-4, 6.4.2-3, 6.6.3-4)

Connections to the unit claim: Students examine the social, political, and economic characteristics of the Chinese dynasties. Students explore the origin and spread of Eastern religions. Students also investigate the significance of the Silk Road.

Suggested Timeline: 18 class periods

Use this sample task:

- [Eastern Religions](#)
- [Chinese Dynasties](#)

To explore these key questions:

- How do religious beliefs impact social and political structures?
- How did China change under the control of different dynasties?
- How did trade, namely the Silk Road trade system, impact China?

That students answer through these assessments:

- Students complete the “Hinduism” and “Buddhism” columns of the [World Religions organizer](#), which can be collected for a grade.
- Students participate in various class discussions. Use a [discussion tracker](#) to keep track of students’ contributions to the discussions and use this information to assign a grade to students. ([ELA/Literacy Standards](#): SL.6.1-a-d, SL.6.6)
- Students write a summary of the similarities and differences between Hinduism and Buddhism. Grade the written response using the claims portion of the [LEAP assessment social studies extended response rubric](#). ([ELA/Literacy Standards](#): W.6.2a-f, W.6.4-6, W.6.9b, W.6.10)
- Students write a paragraph explaining how the physical geography of the eastern hemisphere affected the development and spread of the world’s five major religions. Grade the written response using the claims portion of the [LEAP assessment social studies extended response rubric](#). ([ELA/Literacy Standards](#): W.6.2a-f, W.6.4-6, W.6.9b, W.6.10)
- Students complete the [Chinese Dynasties organizer](#), which can be collected for a grade.
- Students work in groups to research one of the Chinese dynasties. Various work during the research process can be graded, such as notes taken from the sources. ([ELA/Literacy Standards](#): W.6.7-9)
- Students write a paragraph describing the Silk Road’s impacts on societies. Grade the written response using the claims portion of the [LEAP assessment social studies extended response rubric](#). ([ELA/Literacy Standards](#): W.6.2a-f, W.6.4-6, W.6.9b, W.6.10)

Grade 6 Instructional Task: Eastern Religions

Unit Four: Civilizations in Africa and Asia: Expanding Trade, Topic One: Asian Civilizations

Description: Students examine the origin and spread of Hinduism and Buddhism as well as the impact that these religions had on society.

Suggested Timeline: 5 class periods

Materials: [Latitude and Longitude map](#), [South Asian Civilizations](#), [Time Zone map](#), [Climate map](#), [Labeled Physical map](#), [Major rivers](#), [Mountain ranges](#), [Blank Map of the World](#), World Religions organizer ([blank](#) and [completed](#)), [Introduction to Hinduism](#), [History of Hinduism](#), [Hinduism](#), [Polytheism](#), [Origins of Hinduism map](#), [Buddhism: Basic Beliefs](#), [The Enlightenment of the Buddha](#), [The Enlightenment of the Buddha](#) ([blank](#) and [completed](#)), [The Spread of Hinduism and Buddhism](#)

Instructional Process:

1. Say: "In previous units, we have compared the major monotheistic religions of the world -- Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and discussed the shared and unique aspects of their religious traditions. In this task, we will examine two other major world religions, both originating from eastern Asia- Hinduism and Buddhism."
2. Provide each student with access to a [latitude and longitude map](#) of the world. Review the concepts of parallels and meridians with students as well as the major lines of latitude and longitude and how to read a latitude and longitude map.
3. Determine if you want students to work independently or in pairs and display the following latitude and longitude coordinates: 20°N, 80°E
4. Have students identify their location using the [latitude and longitude map](#) of the world. Students who struggle with executing this skill should be provided with intervention or [additional practice](#) as needed.
5. Review the main components of a map with students:
 - a. Title - Have students point to and identify the title of their map activity
 - b. Compass Rose - Have students draw a compass rose with cardinal and intermediate directions near their map
 - c. Map Key or Legend - review the concept
6. Use the [latitude and longitude map](#) to review hemispheres. Have students draw a circle to represent the world in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [South Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet. Then have students identify where India is on the [latitude and longitude map](#). Have students draw an equator and a prime meridian through the circle in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [South Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet and draw an "x" in India's approximate location. Have students record the hemisphere in which India is located (northern and eastern) in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [South Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet.
7. Distribute or display a [time zone map](#) of the world. Review the concept of time zones, then have students determine how many time zones are present in their assigned part of the world and record it on their [South Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet.
8. Ask: "If a modern person living in Rome, Italy called their friend in Kolkata, India at 10am (Roman time), at what time in Kolkata would their friend answer their phone? NOTE: the asterisk indicates that India includes an additional 30 minutes in their time zone."

9. Model for student how to break down the question, then allow time for students to reference the displayed [time zone map](#) and determine their answer. Call on a student to share their answer (2:30pm), then have a different student approach the map to illustrate how the solution was determined, including the extra 30 minutes for India's time zone.
10. Distribute or display a [climate map](#) of the world. Have students determine what climate zones are present in their assigned part of the world and record it on their [South Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet.
11. Distribute crayons or colored pencils so students may lightly shade in the climate zones on their maps. Instruct students to create a map key or legend of Mesopotamian climate regions in the climate zones section of the chart on their [South Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet.
12. Allow students time to [research](#) their climate zones (the research website is more detailed than the climate map but students should be able to identify their climate zones, model where necessary). Encourage students to research using the tabs for each climate zone in their assigned part of the world to investigate the characteristics of each climate zone including temperature, common plants and animals, etc.
13. Display and discuss the definitions of [political](#) and [physical](#) maps with students.
14. Have students reference a [labeled physical map](#) of the world and add the [major rivers](#) and [mountain ranges](#) that are present in Mesopotamia onto their map in marker or sharpie pen. Instruct students to add symbols in the physical features section of the chart on their [South Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet.
15. Conduct a discussion in which students predict the impact of climate on human settlement patterns in this region. Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources and outside knowledge to support their answers. Possible questions:
 - a. What would attract a group of humans to settle in this area?
 - b. What climate zones contain the best conditions for human settlement?
 - c. What physical features would attract or repel human settlement?
16. Project a [blank map of the world](#) onto the front board. Allow students to identify on the projected map where they expect human settlement to occur.
17. Instruct students to develop a claim identifying the region on the globe that presents the best environment for human settlement to develop? Students should reference climate and geographic features in their response, and include details from task materials and class discussions. Grade paragraphs using the [claims rubric](#).
18. Have students access their [World Religions organizer](#) from previous units.
19. Divide students into jigsaw groups and assign a student from each home group one of the sources.
 - a. [Introduction to Hinduism](#)
 - b. [History of Hinduism](#) (Introduction section only)
 - c. [Hinduism](#)
 - d. [Polytheism](#)
20. Have students read their assigned text based on their expert group. As students read, have them take notes on [key details](#) that can be shared with their group.
21. After they complete their reading, allow students to work in their expert groups to solidify their notes and determine the best way to share their information with their home groups. Have students record the information they learn from their text in the appropriate column of the [World Religions organizer](#).

22. Have each student return to their home group. Provide time for the students to present their information to their home group. As students share in their home groups, have students record information to complete the Hinduism column of their [World Religions organizer](#).
23. Define *polytheism* with students.
24. Conduct a discussion about Hinduism. Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources and outside knowledge to support their answers. Question can include:
 - a. What makes Hinduism polytheistic, and how does it compare to the monotheistic faiths of the ancient near east (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam)?
 - b. What are the main beliefs of Hinduism, and how do they compare to the monotheistic beliefs of the ancient near east?
 - c. How do Hindus practice their beliefs, and how does that practice compare to the practice of the monotheistic faiths of the ancient near east?
 - d. What role do you think geography or climate played in forming some Vedic/Hindu beliefs, such as reincarnation?
25. Display the [origins of Hinduism map](#) and have students label the area on their map in marker or sharpie pen. Instruct students to add symbols in the political features and major civilizations sections of the chart on their [South Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet.
26. Have students complete the [Caste System](#) task to evaluate how Hindu society was organized.
27. Say: "Now that we have analyzed one example of an eastern polytheistic faith, we will compare that knowledge to the other major Eastern religion that originated near the same area as Hinduism."
28. Have students locate their [South Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet.
29. Display the [origins of Buddhism map](#) and have students label the origin area for Buddhism on their map in marker or sharpie pen. Instruct students to add symbols in the political features and major civilizations sections of the chart on their [South Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet.
30. Have students locate their [World Religions organizer](#).
31. Have students annotate [Buddhism: Basic Beliefs](#) using an established classroom procedure to gain a general understanding of Buddhism. As they read, have students record information in the Buddhism column of their organizer.
32. Have students watch the following video on the [Enlightenment of the Buddha](#) and complete the [Enlightenment of the Buddha worksheet](#). After watching the video, allow students time to complete their worksheet, including the reflection questions at the bottom.
33. Have students continue to work in pairs to create a Venn diagram comparing the beliefs of Hinduism and Buddhism. Instruct students to use their [World Religions organizer](#) for reference.
34. Have students work with a partner to explore [The Spread of Hinduism and Buddhism](#) and answer the accompanying questions.
35. Conduct a discussion in which students analyze what they have learned about the two Eastern religions. Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources and outside knowledge to support their answers. Possible questions:
 - a. Think about all of the cultures we have studied so far, from Mesopotamia through the end of the Roman Empire. Was it more natural for an ancient civilization to develop a monotheistic or polytheistic belief system?

- b. What ideas are common to Hinduism and Buddhism?
 - c. Display the [Spread of Hinduism and Buddhism map](#). Why do you think Buddhism spread further outside of India than Hinduism?
 - d. Replay [The Spread of Hinduism and Buddhism](#). How did geography impact the spread of Buddhism into central, eastern, and southeastern Asia?
 - e. Explain to students that India had a major Buddhist and a major Hindu Empire. Display the [map of Indian Empires](#). Explain to students that the Mauryan Empire was Buddhist and the Gupta Empire was Hindu. Ask: "How did geography impact the expansion of each empire?"
 - f. What role do you think trade played in the expansion of Indian Empires and religions?
36. Display the [labeled physical map of the world](#). Point out, or have students identify, where each major religion originated from on the globe (Judaism and Christianity in Israel/Palestine, Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, Hinduism and Buddhism in India).
37. Have students write a paragraph explaining how the physical geography of the eastern hemisphere affected the development and spread of the world's five major religions. Instruct students to cite specific physical features in their response. Grade using the claims portion of the [LEAP assessment social studies extended response rubric](#).

South Asian Civilizations

Location (hemispheres)		Major Climate Zones	
Major Physical Features		Major Political Features	
How many Time Zones in this region?		Major Civilizations in this region	



World Religions

	Judaism	Hinduism	Buddhism	Christianity	Islam
Important Texts					
Important People					
Important Places					
Beliefs and Practices					

Hinduism⁴³

Unlike other religious traditions, Hinduism does not originate in a single founder, a single book or a single point in time. It contains many different beliefs, philosophies and viewpoints, not always consistent with each other. These apparent contradictions strike only those who are not familiar with this tradition: the Hindu insight claims that the Oneness expresses itself in many different forms.

Hinduism is often labelled as a religion, but it is actually more than that: it is a vast and complex socio-religious body which, in a way, reflects the complexity of Indian society. A rich geography, many languages and dialects, lots of different creeds, racial diversity, all these elements have shaped Hinduism and made it so heterogenic. The lack of unifying overall religious authority and the total absence of a book claiming supreme truth and dogmas have contributed to the diversity of Hinduism as well. It is fair to mention that even the texts we find in Hinduism that claim some sort of divine inspiration do not declare their view to be better than any other and they all exist together in a tolerant fashion. The many manifestations of Hinduism go from highly intellectual philosophies concerning numerous and puzzling metaphysical concerns, many rituals, mental and physical exercises such as Yoga to simple, almost childlike, tales and legends.

This tradition has come down to us from prehistoric times. The foundations of Hinduism can be found in the teachings of anonymous ancient sages or *rishis*, which were originally transmitted orally. We know very little about Hinduism beyond what can be learned from the Vedas, a collection of hymns and other ritual texts composed in different periods. These texts contain a lot of material including the teachings of the early stages. The oldest evidence of religious practices in India date back approximately to 5500 BCE. It is a mistake to reduce all early Hinduism to Vedic religion: there were many other non-Vedic religious traditions in early Hinduism which have left no early texts and that can be known to some extent by archaeological evidence.

⁴³ This passage is excerpted from a work by Cristian Violatti which is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution License](#). The original work is available at <http://www.ancient.eu/hinduism/>.

Polytheism⁴⁴

MANY IS BETTER THAN ONE

Abrahamic religions are dominated by the notion that One is better than many: One God, One Book, One Son, One Church, One Nation of God. In Hinduism, the more the better: many gods, many books, many sages, many insights.

In this ever-growing community of endless gods and goddesses, the roles of the gods and even their hierarchy are somehow diffuse. Some gods get more attention than others and different accounts suggest different hierarchies. Olympian gods, who had a clear hierarchy, may look greedy and envious compared with the tolerant gods of Hinduism.

Agni, Indra, Shiva, Brahma, Vishnu and Ganesha are just a few examples of very important Hindu gods that were regarded at different times and by different sects as the most important gods. Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma were part of a holy Hindu trinity (trimurti). Shiva is sometimes associated with the destruction process and Vishnu as the creator who takes the remains destroyed by Shiva in order to regenerate what has been destroyed. For the Ganapatya Hindu sect, Ganesha is the most important deity. Ganesha is highly recognizable with his elephant head and human body, representing the soul (*atman*) and the physical (*maya*) respectively. He is also the patron of writers, travellers, students, commerce, and new projects (for which he removes obstacles from one's path) and is rather fond of sweets, to the slight detriment of his figure.



Krishna manifesting his full glory to Arjuna

⁴⁴ This passage is excerpted from a work by Cristian Violatti which is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution License](#). The original work is available at <http://www.ancient.eu/hinduism/>.

The Enlightenment of the Buddha

Stage in the life of Siddhartha Gautama	What knowledge does Siddhartha gain with each experience of his life?
Palace life as a Young Prince	
Journey into the Streets	
With the Wise Men in the forest	
When presented with an offering while Meditating Alone	
As an Enlightened Being	
<p>Describe the two points of view presented in the video:</p> <p>The Narrator:</p> <p>The Buddha:</p> <p>With which perspective do you identify, and which do you believe is more truthful? Explain why.</p>	

Grade 6 Instructional Task: Chinese Dynasties⁴⁵

Unit Four: Civilizations in Africa and Asia: Expanding Trade, Topic One: Asian Civilizations

Description: Students investigate the rise and fall of ancient Chinese dynasties. Students also explore the achievements of ancient China's dynasties.

Suggested Timeline: 13 class periods

Materials: [Latitude and Longitude map](#), [East Asian Civilizations](#), [Time Zone map](#), [Climate map](#), [Labeled Physical map](#), [Major rivers](#), [Mountain ranges](#), [Blank Map of the World](#), Chinese Dynasties organizer ([blank](#) and [completed](#)), [Fall of the Qin Dynasty](#), [Ancient Chinese Dynasties: Advancements and Achievements](#), [Silk Road Video](#), [Silk Road Trade Routes Map](#), [Excerpt from Travels of Marco Polo](#), [Excerpt from Suleiman](#), [Excerpt from Letter to the West](#), [Excerpt from "The Great Silk Road,"](#) [Excerpt from "The Legacy of the Silk Road."](#), Characteristics of Civilizations ([blank](#) and [completed](#))

Instructional Process:

1. Provide each student with access to a [latitude and longitude map](#) of the world. Review the concepts of parallels and meridians with students as well as the major lines of latitude and longitude and how to read a latitude and longitude map.
2. Determine if you want students to work independently or in pairs and display the following latitude and longitude coordinates: 30°N, 110°E
3. Have students identify their location using the [latitude and longitude map](#) of the world. Students who struggle with executing this skill should be provided with intervention or [additional practice](#) as needed.
4. Review the main components of a map with students:
 - a. Title - Have students point to and identify the title of their map activity
 - b. Compass Rose - Have students draw a compass rose with cardinal and intermediate directions near their map
 - c. Map Key or Legend - review the concept
5. Use the [latitude and longitude map](#) to review hemispheres. Have students draw a circle to represent the world in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [East Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet. Then have students identify where China is on the [latitude and longitude map](#). Have students draw an equator and a prime meridian through the circle in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [East Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet and draw an "x" in China's approximate location. Have students record the hemisphere in which China is located (northern and eastern) in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [East Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet.
6. Distribute or display a [time zone map](#) of the world. Review the concept of time zones, then have students determine how many time zones are present in their assigned part of the world and record it on their [East Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet.
7. Ask: "If a modern person living in Kolkata, India called their friend in Shanghai, China at 8pm (Kolkata time), at what time in Shanghai would their friend answer their phone? Remember: India's time zone is 30 minutes."

⁴⁵ This task is adapted from the [Silk Road Task](#) developed for the New York State Social Studies Resource Toolkit. The task is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#), which allows for it to be shared and adapted as long as the user agrees to the terms of the license.

8. Model for student how to break down the question, then allow time for students to reference the displayed [time zone map](#) and determine their answer (10:30pm). Call on a student to share their answer, then have a different student approach the map to illustrate how the solution was determined.
9. Distribute or display a [climate map](#) of the world. Have students determine what climate zones are present in their assigned part of the world and record it on their [East Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet.
10. Distribute crayons or colored pencils so students may lightly shade in the climate zones on their maps. Instruct students to create a map key or legend of China's climate regions in the climate zones section of the chart on their [East Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet.
11. Allow students time to [research](#) their climate zones (the research website is more detailed than the climate map but students should be able to identify their climate zones, model where necessary). Encourage students to research using the tabs for each climate zone in their assigned part of the world to investigate the characteristics of each climate zone including temperature, common plants and animals, etc.
12. Display and discuss the definitions of [political](#) and [physical](#) maps with students.
13. Have students reference a [labeled physical map](#) of the world and add the [major rivers](#) and [mountain ranges](#) that are present in China onto their map in marker or sharpie pen. Instruct students to add symbols in the physical features section of the chart on their [East Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet.
14. Conduct a discussion in which students predict the impact of climate on human settlement patterns in this region. Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources and outside knowledge to support their answers. Possible questions:
 - a. What would attract a group of humans to settle in this area?
 - b. What climate zones contain the best conditions for human settlement?
 - c. What physical features would attract or repel human settlement?
15. Project a [blank map of the world](#) onto the front board. Allow students to identify on the projected map where they expect human settlement to occur.
16. Instruct students to develop a claim identifying the region on the globe that presents the best environment for human settlement to develop? Students should reference climate and geographic features in their response, and include details from task materials and class discussions. Grade paragraphs using the [claims rubric](#).
17. Divide students into groups and assign each group one of the Chinese dynasties.
 - a. Group 1: [Shang](#)
 - b. Group 2: [Zhou](#)
 - c. Group 3: [Qin](#)
 - d. Group 4: [Han](#)
18. Say: "Each group will research an ancient Chinese dynasty to examine the characteristics of that dynasty's civilization and its achievements. Your group will create a present your findings."
19. Have students research their assigned dynasty and prepare a presentation for their classmates.
20. Once students have conducted their research, provide each group with poster paper and instruct students to create a poster presentation for a class Gallery Walk. Observe students as they create their posters and identify one "expert" student in each group.
21. Provide students with a copy of the [Chinese Dynasties organizer](#). As students complete their gallery walk, have students record information in the correct section of the [Chinese Dynasties organizer](#).

22. Organize students so that each member or a group is standing at a different Gallery Walk poster. (For example, if there were four members in Group 1, one member would stand at the Shang poster (their poster) while the others would stand at the Zhou, Qin and Han posters.) As students rotate, they will present the information on their poster.
23. After all students have rotated to all Gallery Walk posters, call the “expert” students to the front of the class and allow them to answer any clarifying questions from their classmates.
24. Before having students present on the Han dynasty, have students complete the [Fall of the Qin Dynasty](#) task to determine how the Qin Dynasty came to an end.
25. Conduct a discussion in which students consider the achievements of the Chinese dynasties. Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources and outside knowledge to support their answers. Possible questions:
 - a. What were the major achievements of each of the dynasties?
 - b. How did geography, trade, or military competition impact achievement in each of the dynasties?
 - c. Which of the dynasties had the greatest impact on China?
 - d. How is modern society impacted by the achievements of the Chinese dynasties?
26. Have students write a response in the bottom section of the [Chinese Dynasties organizer](#) in response to the question: Which dynasty do you feel most improved life for the Ancient Chinese?
27. Display [Chinese Dynasties map](#) and instruct students to add all political features present on the map key to their map in marker or sharpie pen. Instruct students to add symbols in the political features and major civilizations sections of the chart on their [East Asian Civilizations](#) worksheet.
28. Say: “What does the name “Silk Road” imply about the trade network? Pay attention to the implication of the individual words (“Silk” and “Road”), rather than just the meaning of the name itself.”
29. Provide each student with a copy of the [Silk Road Trade Routes Map](#).
30. Ask: “What do you notice about the Silk Road?” Note: Students should recognize that there is not one “road” but rather an extensive system of trade routes.
31. Have students view the [Silk Road Video](#) to gain a general understanding of the trade routes known as the Silk Road.
32. Say: “We will now look at a few sources to gain insight into the Silk Road. As you read the texts, be looking for information to help you fully answer the question: What was the Silk Road?”
33. Provide students with access to [Excerpt from “The Great Silk Road.”](#) Have students read through [Excerpt from “The Great Silk Road”](#) to gain additional knowledge about the trade routes.
34. Provide each student with a copy of the [Excerpt from Travels of Marco Polo](#), the [Excerpt from Suleiman](#), and the [Excerpt from Letter to the West](#). Have students work with a partner to analyze the primary sources using the [primary source analysis template](#). After they read, allow students an opportunity to discuss their primary sources and clarify their notes.
35. Have students use their map and the three texts to guide their thinking and conduct a discussion on the question: “Who travelled the Silk Road and for what purpose?”
36. Provide each student with a copy of [Excerpt from “The Legacy of the Silk Road”](#). Have students annotate the excerpt using an established classroom strategy.

37. Have students write a paragraph on the Silk Road's impact on Chinese and Western societies. Instruct students to cite specific physical features in their response. Grade using the claims portion of the [LEAP assessment social studies extended response rubric](#). In their written response, have students address the following:
- a. the impact of trade on cultural diffusion between the East and the West
 - b. the impact of geography in the speed at which trade was conducted
 - c. the impact of technology on how trade was conducted
38. Provide each student with a copy of the [Characteristics of Civilizations organizer](#). Have students reflect on their readings, class discussions, and writings when completing their organizer.

East Asian Civilizations

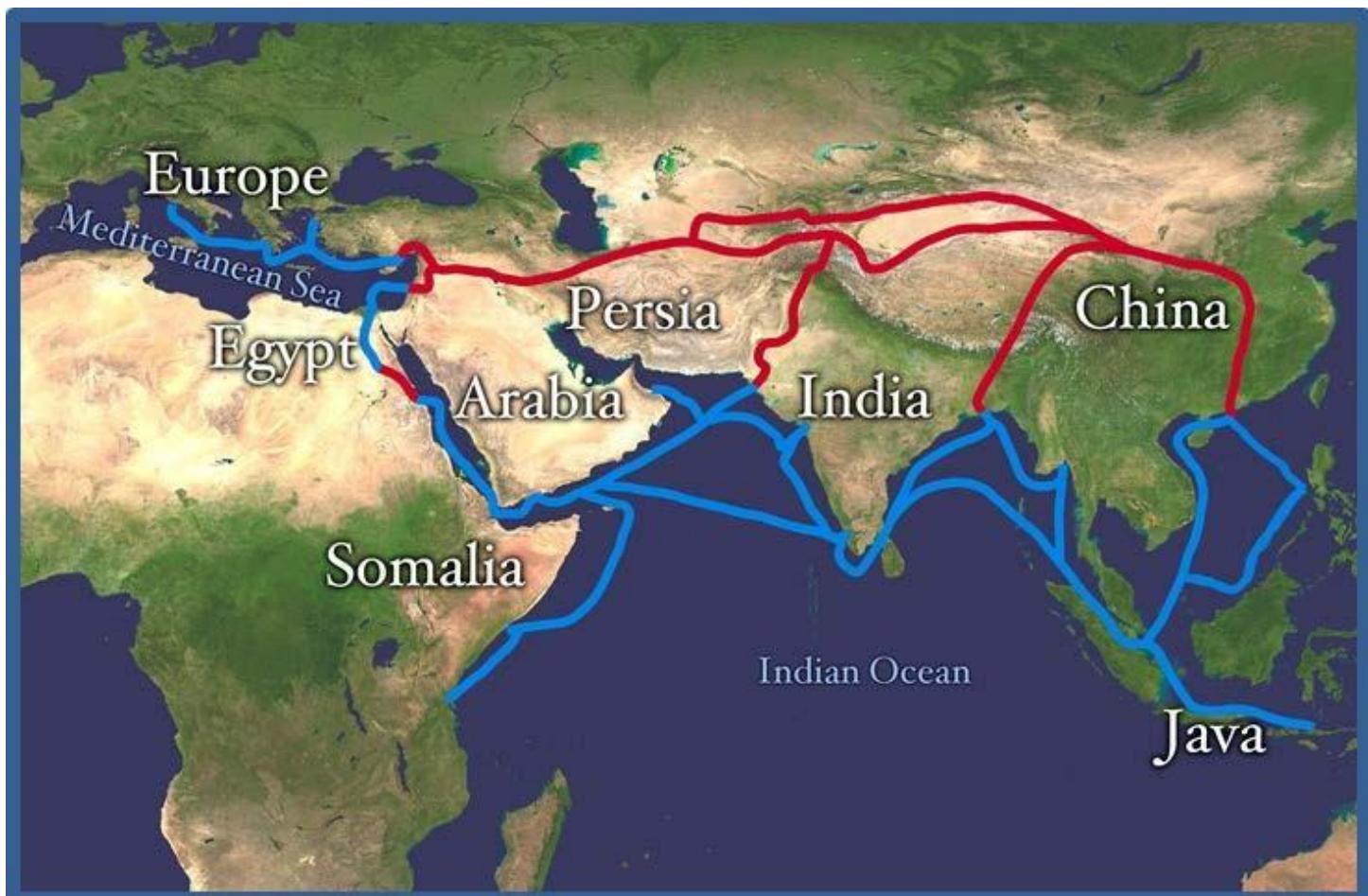
Location (hemispheres)		Major Climate Zones	
Major Physical Features		Major Political Features	
How many Time Zones in this region?		Major Civilizations in this region	



Chinese Dynasties Organizer

Dynasty	Notable Characteristics	Achievements/ Discoveries
Shang _____ to _____		
Zhou _____ to _____		
Qin _____ to _____		
Han _____ to _____		
Which dynasty do you feel most improved life for the Ancient Chinese? Use evidence to support your answer.		

Silk Road Trade Routes Map



Public domain. NASA Visible Earth via Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Silk_route.jpg

Excerpts from *The Travels of Marco Polo*

NOTE: Marco Polo, a Venetian merchant, achieved fame from his travelogue, The Travels of Marco Polo (c. 1300), wherein he described many of the cultural and economic activities of Asian societies. Though the authenticity of his experiences in China has come into question, his book nonetheless introduced Europe to Eastern cultures. In the following excerpts, Polo provides descriptions of Silk Road trading.

The people of Tabriz [Iran] live by trade and industry; for cloth of gold and silk is woven here in great quantity and of great value. The city is so favourably situated that it is a market for merchandise from India and Baghdad, from Mosul and Hormuz, and from many other places; and many Latin merchants come here to buy merchandise imported from foreign lands. It is also a market for previous stones, which are found here in great abundance. It is a city where good profits are made by travelling merchants....

Merchants come here by ship from India, bringing all sorts of spices and previous stones and pearls and cloths of silk and of gold and elephants' tusks and many other wares. In this city they sell them to others, who distribute them to various customers through the length and breadth of the world. It is a great centre of commerce, with many cities and towns to subordinate to it, and the capital of the kingdom....

When the traveller rides through this province [Tenduc, Northeast China] for seven days towards the east in the direction of Cathay, he finds many cities and towns inhabited by Mahometans [follower of Muhammad], idolaters, and Nestorian Christians. They live by commerce and industry, weaving the cloths of gold called *nasich* and *nakh* and silk of various types. Just as we have woolen cloths of many different types, so have they of cloth of gold and silk. They are subject to the great Khan....

Ho-kien-fu [in Cathay province, China] is a great and splendid city, lying towards the south. The people are idolaters and burn their dead. They are subject to the Great Khan and use paper money. They live by trade and industry, for they have silk in plenty. They produce cloths of gold and silk and sandal in great abundance. This city has many cities and towns subject to its dominion. Through the midst of the city flows a great river, by which quantities of merchandise are transported to Khan-balik; for they make it flow thither through many different channels and artificial waterways.

Public domain. Polo, M., & Rugoff, M. (2004). *The Travels of Marco Polo*. New York, N.Y: Penguin.

Excerpt from *Suleiman*

NOTE: Suleiman, an Arab merchant, describes his travels through India and China. The excerpts below are his description of the Chinese use of silk.

Young and old Chinese all wear silk clothes in both winter and summer, but silk of the best quality is reserved for the kings....During the winter, the men wear two, three, four, five pairs of pants, and even more, according to their means. This practice has the goal of protecting the lower body from the high humidity of the land, which they fear. During the summer, they wear a single shirt of silk or some similar material.

Bentley, J. H., & Ziegler, H. F. (2006). *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Excerpt from *Letter to the West*

I, Friar John of Monte Corvino, of the Order of Friars Minor [The Franciscans], departed from Tauris, a city of the Persians, in the year of the Lord 1291, and proceeded to India. And I remained in the country of India, wherein stands the church of St. Thomas the Apostle, for thirteen months, and in that region baptized in different places about one hundred persons.... I proceeded on my further journey and made my way to Cathay [China], the realm of the emperor of the Tatars who is called the Grand Khan. To him I presented the letter of our lord the pope, and invited him to adopt the Catholic faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, but he had grown too old in idolatry. However he bestows many kindnesses upon the Christians, and these two years past I am abiding with him.

The Nestorians, a certain body who profess to bear the Christian name, but who deviate sadly from the Christian religion, have grown so powerful in those parts that they will not allow a Christian of another ritual to have ever so small a chapel, or to publish any doctrine different from their own....

I have built a church in the city of Khanbaliq [modern Beijing], in which the king has his chief residence. This I completed six years ago; and I have built a bell tower to it, and put three bells in it. I have baptized there, as well as I can estimate, up to this time some 6,000 persons; and if those charges against me of which I have spoken had not been made, I should have baptized more than 30,000. And I am often still engaged in baptizing.

Also I have gradually bought one hundred and fifty boys, the children of pagan parents, and of ages varying from seven to eleven, who had never learned any religion. These boys I have baptized, and I have taught them Greek and Latin after our manner.

Dated at the city of Khanbaliq in the kingdom of Cathay, in the year of the Lord 1305, and on the 8th day of January.

Public domain. Henry Yule, ed. and trans., *Cathay and the Way Thither*, 2nd ed., (rev. by H. Cordier), 4 vols. (London; Hakluyt Society, 1913-1916), pp. 45-51. Reprinted in: Alfred J. Andrea and James H. Overfield, *The Human Record: Sources of Global History*, 3rd ed., Vol. I: To 1700 (Boston; Houghton Mifflin, 1998) pp. 420-422.

Excerpt from “The Legacy of the Silk Road”

We use the term “Silk Road” to refer generally to the exchanges between China and places farther to the west, specifically Iran, India and, on rare occasions, Europe. Most vigorous before the year 1000, these exchanges were often linked to Buddhism.

Refugees, artists, craftsmen, missionaries, robbers and envoys traveled along these routes in Central Asia. The most influential people moving along the Silk Road were refugees. Waves of immigrants brought technologies from their respective homelands, practicing those skills or introducing motifs in their new homes. Frequent migrations of people fleeing war or political conflicts meant that some technologies moved east, others west. As techniques for making glass entered China from the Islamic world, the technology for manufacturing paper was transported westward. Paper, the most convenient and affordable material for preserving writing, encouraged great cultural change, including the printing revolution in Western Europe. Of course, the Chinese developed woodblock printing much earlier than Gutenberg, starting around 700 AD.

People who spoke different languages often encountered one another on the Silk Road. Some had learned multiple languages since childhood. Others had to learn foreign languages as adults, a more arduous process than it is today given how few study aids were available.

The most important legacy of the Silk Road is the atmosphere of tolerance fostered by rulers. Over the centuries these rulers welcomed refugees from foreign lands, granting them permission to practice their own faiths. Buddhism entered China, and so too did the Christianity of the East. Archeological sites and the preserved artifacts offer a glimpse into this once tolerant world.

Used by permission from *Yale Global Online*, a publication of the Macmillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale University.
<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/print/8362>.

Characteristics of Civilizations

Characteristic	Description/Definition	Modern-Day Examples
Centralized government/state systems		
Organized religion		
Economy and job specialization		
System of tribute		
Surplus food		
Planned infrastructure		
Trade		
Accumulated learning		
Arts		

Unit Four Instruction

Topic Two: West African Empires (6.1.1-4, 6.2.6-7, 6.3.1-3, 6.4.1-3, 6.6.1-4)

Connections to the unit claim: Students examine the development and expansion of the West African kingdoms. Students also consider the role of trade in the expansion of an empire.

Suggested Timeline: 12 class periods

Use this sample task:

- [West African Empires](#)

To explore these key questions:

- How did geography impact the West African kingdoms?
- How was each kingdom able to develop and expand?
- What impact does trade have on empires?

That students answer through these assessments:

- Students create a map of climate and physical geography that affected [African Civilizations](#).
- Students create a timeline to understand the development of civilizations of West Africa. Check these for accuracy.
- Students complete the questions for the [West African Trade Map](#), which can be collected for a grade.
- Students complete the [Split-Page Notes for Research on Ancient Ghana, Mali, and Songhai](#), which can be collected for a grade.
- Students participate in various class discussions. Use a [discussion tracker](#) to keep track of students' contributions to the discussions and use this information to assign a grade to students. ([ELA/Literacy Standards](#): SL.6.1a-d, SL.6.6)
- Students complete the [Economies of West African Empires Organizer](#), which can be collected for a grade.
- Students write an essay that examines at least 3 factors which led to the rise in power of West African Kingdoms. Grade the written response using the claims portion of the [LEAP assessment social studies extended response rubric](#). ([ELA/Literacy Standards](#): W.6.2a-f, W.6.4-6, W.6.9b, W.6.10)
- Students complete a [Characteristics of Civilizations](#) organizer, which can be collected for a grade.

Grade 6 Instructional Task: West African Empires

Unit Four: Civilizations in Africa and Asia: Expanding Trade, Topic One: West African Empires

Description: Students investigate how the West African kingdoms used trade to gain power and wealth and to expand their empire.

Suggested Timeline: 12 class periods

Materials: [Latitude and Longitude map](#), [African Civilizations](#), [Time Zone map](#), [Climate map](#), [Labeled Physical map](#), [Major rivers](#), [Mountain ranges](#), [Blank Map of the World](#), [Africa 979 AD](#), [West African Trade Map](#), Split-Page Notes for Research on Ancient Ghana, Mali, and Songhai ([blank](#) and [completed](#)), [Ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhay](#), [Economy of African Kingdoms](#), Economies of West African Empires organizer ([blank](#) and [completed](#)), Characteristics of Civilizations organizer ([blank](#) and [completed](#))

Instructional Process:

1. Say: “In the previous task, we looked at how trade helped to shape societies in Asia through the Silk Road. In this task, we will examine West African Kingdoms and investigate the role of trade in their development and expansion. Before we look at the civilizations, let’s take a look at the area we will be studying.”
2. Provide each student with access to a [latitude and longitude map](#) of the world. Review the concepts of parallels and meridians with students as well as the major lines of latitude and longitude and how to read a latitude and longitude map.
3. Determine if you want students to work independently or in pairs and display the following latitude and longitude coordinates: 10°N, 20°E
4. Have students identify their location using the [latitude and longitude map](#) of the world. Students who struggle with executing this skill should be provided with intervention or [additional practice](#) as needed.
5. Review the main components of a map with students:
 - a. Title - Have students point to and identify the title of their map activity
 - b. Compass Rose - Have students draw a compass rose with cardinal and intermediate directions near their map
 - c. Map Key or Legend - review the concept
6. Use the [latitude and longitude map](#) to review hemispheres. Have students draw a circle to represent the world in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [African Civilizations](#) worksheet. Then have students identify where Africa is on the [latitude and longitude map](#). Have students draw an equator and a prime meridian through the circle in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [African Civilizations](#) worksheet and draw a large “X” in Africa’s approximate location. Have students record the hemispheres in which Africa is located (all) in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [African Civilizations](#) worksheet.
7. Distribute or display a [time zone map](#) of the world. Review the concept of time zones, then have students determine how many time zones are present in their assigned part of the world and record it on their [African Civilizations](#) worksheet.
8. Ask: “If a modern person living in Shanghai, China called their friend in Cape Town, South Africa at 4:30pm (Chinese time), at what time in Cape Town would their friend answer their phone?”

9. Model for student how to break down the question, then allow time for students to reference the displayed [time zone map](#) and determine their answer. Call on a student to share their answer, then have a different student approach the map to illustrate how the solution was determined.
10. Distribute or display a [climate map](#) of the world. Have students determine what climate zones are present in their assigned part of the world and record it on their [African Civilizations](#) worksheet.
11. Distribute crayons or colored pencils so students may lightly shade in the climate zones on their maps. Instruct students to create a map key or legend of African climate regions in the climate zones section of the chart on their [African Civilizations](#) worksheet.
12. Allow students time to [research](#) their climate zones (the research website is more detailed than the climate map but students should be able to identify their climate zones, model where necessary). Encourage students to research using the tabs for each climate zone in their assigned part of the world to investigate the characteristics of each climate zone including temperature, common plants and animals, etc.
13. Display and discuss the definitions of [political](#) and [physical](#) maps with students.
14. Have students reference a [labeled physical map](#) of the world to label the desert found in Africa, then add the [major rivers](#) and [mountain ranges](#) that are present in Africa onto their map in marker or sharpie pen. Instruct students to add symbols in the physical features section of the chart on their [African Civilizations](#) worksheet.
15. Conduct a discussion in which students predict the impact of climate on human settlement patterns in this region. Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources and outside knowledge to support their answers. Possible questions:
 - a. What would attract a group of humans to settle in this area?
 - b. What climate zones contain the best conditions for human settlement?
 - c. What physical features would attract or repel human settlement?
16. Project a [blank map of the world](#) onto the front board. Allow students to identify on the projected map where they expect human settlement to occur.
17. Instruct students to develop a claim identifying the region on the globe that presents the best environment for human settlement to develop? Students should reference climate and geographic features in their response, and include details from task materials and class discussions. Grade paragraphs using the [claims rubric](#).
18. Provide each student with a copy of [Africa 979 AD](#). Have students locate West Africa and the the empires in that area (Mali, Songhai, and Ghana) and label these empires in marker or sharpie on the [African Civilizations](#) map as well as the political features and major civilizations sections on the chart for their [African Civilizations](#) map.
19. Conduct a discussion about the role of geography in this area of Africa. Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources and outside knowledge to support their answers. Possible questions:
 - a. What physical features are located near these empires?
 - b. Why would these geographic features have importance to the societies that developed in West Africa?
 - c. Why would people living in the societies in eastern or southern Africa have limited contact with people living in the lands to the North?
20. Provide students with access to [West African Trade Map](#), either by projecting the map for the whole class or allowing students to access the map on their own on a computer.
21. Have students use the interactive map to complete the following directions:
 - a. Read aloud the overview on the map.

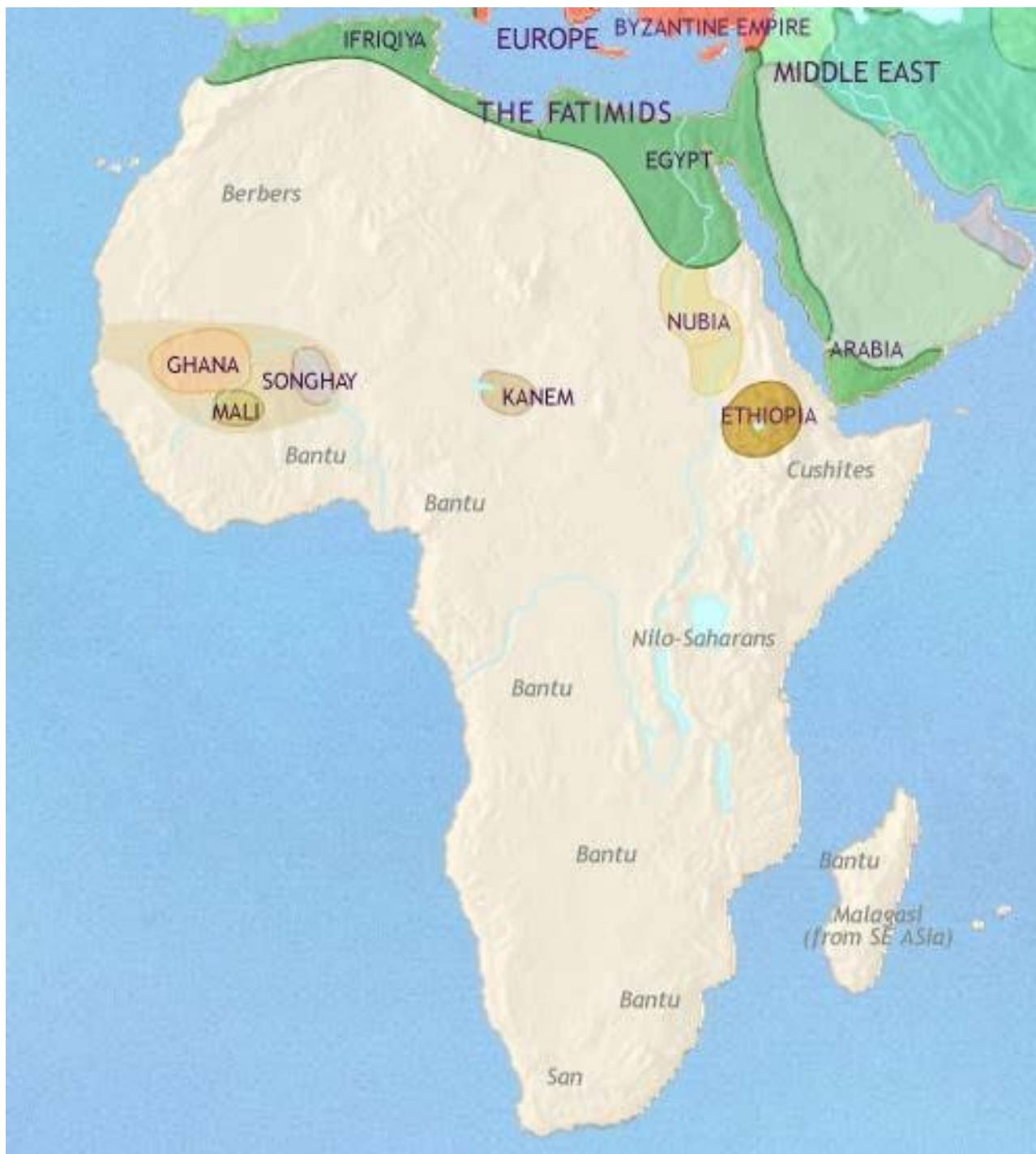
- b. Click on Ghana. (Note: If students have access to individual computers, direct them to follow these directions on their own computer.) Answer the following question in writing: "How did Ghana become a thriving trade center?"
 - c. Click on Mali. Answer the following question in writing: "Why was the location of Timbuktu important to trade?"
 - d. Click on Songhai. Answer the following question in writing: "What did the Songhai Empire do when they broke away from Mali?"
 - e. Click on trade routes on the map key. Answer the following question in writing: "Besides gold and salt, what else was carried on the trade routes?"
 - f. Finally, click on gold and salt. Answer the following question in writing: "Which resource was found in the north and which resource was found in the south? What is the significance of people living in the north and people living in the south?"
22. Provide each student with a copy of the [Split-Page Notes for Research on Ancient Ghana, Mali, and Songhai](#) and access to [Ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhay](#) and the [Economy of African Kingdoms](#). Divide the class into cooperative groups and have the groups independently read the information on the three civilizations using [Ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhay](#) to organize their information using the split-page notes.
23. Define *imports* and *exports* for students to set up for an understanding of the source reading.
24. Provide each student with a copy of the [Economies of West African Empires Organizer](#). Instruct students to complete the organizer based on class readings and discussions.
25. Conduct a discussion in which students discuss the impact trade has on civilizations. Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources and outside knowledge to support their answers. Possible questions:
- a. What were some similarities between each of the empires' economies?
 - b. What were some differences between each of the empires' economies?
 - c. How did trade impact each of the kingdoms?
26. Provide students with a [Characteristics of Civilizations](#) organizer. Have students complete their organizer using class readings, organizers, and discussion notes.
27. Provide students with paper and review the concept of [vertical timelines](#)
28. Have students create a timeline including significant events from each of the three major empires of West Africa to their ongoing timelines. Instruct students to include four events for each kingdom that describes its rise, leadership, trade, and decline. Instruct students to complete their timeline by adding images in the margins.

African Civilizations

Location (hemispheres)		Major Climate Zones	
Major Physical Features		Major Political Features	
How many Time Zones in this region?		Major Civilizations in this region	



Africa 979AD⁴⁶



⁴⁶This map by TimeMap of World History is used with permission. The original work is available at <https://www.timemaps.com/history/africa-979ad/>.

Split-Page Notes for Research on Ancient Ghana, Mali, and Songhai

Civilization	Notes (Focus: Rise of empire, leaders, trade, decline)
Ghana from _____ to _____	
Mali from _____ to _____	
Songhay (Songhai) from _____ to _____	

Economy of African Kingdoms⁴⁷

Ghana Empire

Overview

Complex societies had existed in the region that became the Ghana Empire since about 1500 BCE. When Ghana's ruling dynasty began is uncertain, it is first mentioned in sources around 830 CE. The introduction of the camel, which preceded Muslims and Islam by several centuries, brought about a gradual change in trade, and for the first time, the extensive gold, ivory trade, and salt resources of the region could be sent north and east to population centers in North Africa, the Middle East and Europe in exchange for manufactured goods.

The Empire grew rich from the trans-Saharan trade in gold and salt. This trade produced an increasing surplus, allowing for larger urban centers. It also encouraged territorial expansion to gain control over the lucrative trade routes.

The first written mention of the kingdom comes from Arabic-language sources some time after the conquest of North Africa by Muslims, when geographers began compiling comprehensive accounts of the world known to Islam around 800 CE.

The Capital

The empire's capital is believed to have been at Koumbi Saleh on the rim of the Sahara desert. According to the description of the town left in 1067 CE, the capital was actually two cities six miles apart but "between these two towns are continuous habitations", so that they might be said to have merged into one.

The major part of the city was called El-Ghaba and was the residence of the king. It was protected by a stone wall and functioned as the royal and spiritual capital of the Empire. It contained a sacred grove of trees in which priests lived and used for religious rites. It also contained the king's palace, the grandest structure in the city.

The name of the other section of the city is not recorded. It was surrounded by wells with fresh water, where vegetables were grown. It was inhabited almost entirely by Arab Muslims along with twelve mosques, one of which was designated for Friday prayers, and had a full group of scholars, scribes and Islamic jurists. Because the majority of these Muslims were merchants, this part of the city was probably its primary business district.

⁴⁷ This work by TimeMap of World History is used with permission. The original work is available at <https://www.timemaps.com/civilizations/african-kingdoms/>.

Economy

Most of our information about the economy of Ghana comes from merchants, and therefore we know more about the commercial aspects of its economy, and less about the way in which the rulers and nobles may have obtained agricultural products through tribute or taxation. Merchants had to pay a one gold dinar tax on imports of salt, and two on exports of salt. Imports probably included products such as textiles, ornaments and other materials. Many of the hand-crafted leather goods found in old Morocco may also had their origins in the empire. The main centre of trade was the capital, Koumbi Saleh. The king claimed as his own all nuggets of gold, and allowed other people to have only gold dust. In addition to the influence of the king on local regions, tribute was also received from various tributary states and chiefdoms to the empire's periphery. The introduction of the camel played a key role in economic success as well, allowing products and goods to be transported much more efficiently across the Sahara. These factors all helped the empire remain powerful for some time, providing a rich and stable economy that was to last over several centuries.

Politics

Much testimony on ancient Ghana depended on how well disposed the king was to foreign travelers, from which the majority of information on the empire comes. Islamic writers often commented on the social-political stability of the empire based on the seemingly just actions and grandeur of the king.

The Arabic sources, the only ones to give us any information are sufficiently vague as to how the country was governed. It is mentioned that the king had officials who surrounded his throne when he gave justice, and these included the sons of the kings of his country. Detailed accounts on the geography of the region show that in 1067 CE Ghana was surrounded by independent kingdoms, and Sila, one of them located on the Senegal River was “almost a match for the king of Ghana.”

Decline

Given the scattered nature of the Arabic sources and existing archaeological evidence, it is difficult to determine when and how Ghana declined and fell. A tradition in historiography maintains that Ghana fell when it was sacked in 1076 CE, but this interpretation has been questioned. Other argue that internal political instability, rather than military actions or conquest, was at fault for Ghana’s decline.

While there is no clear cut account of a sack of Ghana in the contemporary sources, the country certainly did convert to Islam. They extended their domination over the Sudan, pillaged, charged poll taxes and other duties, and converted many to Islam. It is clear, however, that Ghana was eventually incorporated into the Empire of Mali, according to a detailed account written around 1340 CE.

Mali Empire

Overview

The Mali Empire was a West African empire from around 1230 to 1600 CE. The empire became renowned for the wealth of its rulers, especially Mansa Musa I. The Mali Empire had many profound cultural influences on West Africa, allowing the spread of its language, laws and customs along the Niger River. It extended over a large area and consisted of numerous vassal kingdoms and provinces.

Economy

The Mali Empire flourished because of trade above all else. It contained three immense gold mines within its borders, unlike the Ghana Empire which was only a transit point for gold. The empire taxed every ounce of gold or salt that entered its borders. By the beginning of the 14th century, Mali was the source of almost half the Old World's gold. There was no standard currency throughout the realm, but several forms were prominent by region. The Saharan towns of the Mali Empire were organized as both staging posts in the long-distance caravan trade and trading centers for the various West African products. At Taghaza, for example, salt was exchanged; at Takedda, copper. Ibn Battuta, a famous traveller and writer, observed the employment of slave labour in both towns. During most of his journey, Ibn Battuta traveled with a convoy that included slaves, most of whom carried goods for trade but would also be traded as slaves. On the return from Takedda to Morocco, his caravan transported 600 female slaves, suggesting that slavery was a substantial part of the commercial activity of the empire.

Gold

Gold nuggets were the exclusive property of the mansa (king), and were illegal to trade within his borders. All gold was immediately handed over to the imperial treasury in return for an equal value of gold dust. Gold dust had been weighed and bagged for use since the Ghana Empire, Mali borrowed the practice. Gold dust was used all over the empire, but was not valued equally in all regions.

Salt

The next great unit of exchange in the Mali Empire was salt. Salt was as valuable, if not more valuable as gold in Sub-Saharan Africa. It was cut into pieces and spent on goods with close to equal buying power throughout the empire. While it was as good as gold in the north, it was even better in the south. The people of the south needed salt for their diet, but it was extremely rare. The northern region on the other hand had no shortage of salt.

Copper

Copper was also a valued commodity in Mali. Copper, traded in bars, was mined from Takedda in the north and traded in the south for gold.

Military

The number and frequency of conquests in the late 13th century and throughout the 14th century indicate the mansas (kings) developed a capable military. Thanks to steady tax revenue and stable government beginning in the last quarter of the 13th century, the Mali Empire was able to project its power.

The Mali Empire maintained a semi-professional, full-time army in order to defend its borders. The entire nation was mobilized with each clan obligated to provide a quota of fighting age men. These men had to be freemen and appear with their own arms. Contemporary historians estimate that during the height and decline of the Mali Empire its army had approximately 100,000 warriors, with 10,000 of that number being made up of cavalry. With the help of the river clans, this army could be deployed throughout the realm on short notice.

Collapse

Around 1610 CE, the king died. Oral tradition states that he had three sons who fought over who would become king. No single person ever ruled Mali after the king's death, resulting in the end of the Mali Empire. The empire was divided into three parts: a northern sphere, a central region, and a southern sphere. Each part had a ruler who used the title of mansa, but their authority only extended as far as their own sphere of influence. The three states fought each other as much if not more than they did outsiders, but rivalries generally stopped when faced with invasion.

Songhai Empire

Overview

The Songhai Empire, also known as the Songhay Empire, was a state located in western Africa. From the early 15th to the late 16th century, Songhai was one of the largest Islamic empires in history. This empire bore the same name as its leading ethnic group, the Songhai. Its capital was on the bend of the Niger River.

The Songhai state has existed in one form or another for over a thousand years. The Songhai are thought to have settled in western Africa as early as 800 CE but did not establish it as the capital until the 11th century.

Economy

Economic trade existed throughout the Empire, due to the standing army stationed in the provinces. Central to the regional economy were independent gold fields. The merchants would form partnerships, and the state would protect these merchants and the port cities on the Niger. It was a very strong trading kingdom, known for its production of practical crafts as well as religious artefacts.

The Songhai economy was based on a clan system. The clan a person belonged to ultimately decided their occupation. The most common were metalworkers, fishermen, and carpenters. Lower caste participants consisted of mostly non-farm working immigrants, who at times were provided special privileges and held high positions in society. At the top were noblemen and direct descendants of the original Songhai people, followed by freemen and traders. At the bottom were war captives and European slaves obligated to labor, especially in farming.

Government

Upper classes in society converted to Islam while lower classes often continued to follow traditional religions. Sermons emphasized obedience to the king. Timbuktu was the educational capital of the Songhai Empire. Local chiefs were granted authority over their respective domains as long as they did not undermine Songhai policy.

Tax was imposed onto peripheral chiefdoms and provinces to ensure the dominance of Songhai, and in return these provinces were given almost complete autonomy. Songhai rulers only intervened in the affairs of these neighboring states when a situation became volatile; usually an isolated incident. Each town was represented by government officials.

Decline

Following the death of the emperor a civil war of succession weakened the Empire and the Songhai people, themselves, established the Dendi Kingdom.

Economies of West African Empires

West African Empire	Economy
Ghana	
Mali	
Songhai	

Characteristics of Civilizations

Characteristic	Description/Definition	Modern-Day Examples
Centralized government/state systems		
Organized religion		
Economy and job specialization		
System of tribute		
Surplus food		
Planned infrastructure		
Trade		
Accumulated learning		
Arts		

Unit Four Assessment

Description: Students write a one-page essay in response to the following question: Is trade necessary for advancing civilizations?

Suggested Timeline: 5 class periods

Student Directions: Using your understanding of the development of Asian and African civilizations and the sources from this unit, write an essay which explains the role of trade in advancing civilizations. Use evidence gathered throughout the unit and your knowledge of social studies to develop and support your explanation.

Resources:

- [Social Studies Extended Response Checklist](#)

Teacher Notes: In completing this task, students meet the expectations for social studies GLEs 6.1.1, 6.1.3, 6.2.7-8, 6.3.3, 6.6.4. They also meet the expectations for [ELA/Literacy Standards](#): WHST.6.2a-f, WHST.6.4-5.

Use the [LEAP assessment social studies extended response rubric](#) to grade this assessment. Note: Customize the Content portion of the rubric for this assessment. Use the Claims portion of the rubric as written.

Unit Five Overview

Description: Students explore how changing ideas led to the “modern world.” Students learn about the characteristics that defined the Middle Ages and the factors that brought about change that shifted Europe into the Renaissance.

Suggested Timeline: 7 weeks

Grade 6 Content	Grade 6 Claims
Medieval Europe and the Renaissance: Legacy	What makes civilizations regress and how do they renew themselves?

Topics (GLEs):

1. [Medieval Europe](#) (6.1.1-4, 6.2.6, 6.2.9, 6.3.1-4, 6.4.2-3, 6.6.1, 6.6.3)
2. [Renaissance](#) (6.1.1-4, 6.2.10, 6.3.1-4, 6.6.3)

Unit Assessment: Students participate in a Socratic seminar in response to the question: What makes civilizations regress and how do they renew themselves? They then write a multiparagraph essay in response to the same question.

Unit Five Instruction

Topic One: Medieval Europe (6.1.1-4, 6.2.6, 6.2.9, 6.3.1-4, 6.4.2-3, 6.6.1, 6.6.3)

Connections to the unit claim: Students examine characteristics of Medieval Europe. Students also investigate the various factors that contributed to the shift from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance.

Suggested Timeline: 18 class periods

Use this sample task:

- [Medieval Europe](#)

To explore these key questions:

- How did feudalism develop and how did it shape Medieval society?
- What was the role of religion in Medieval Europe?
- What were the contributing factors of the decline of feudalism?

That students answer through these assessments:

- Students complete a map of climate and physical geography, as well as important political sites in Medieval Europe.
- Students complete the [Roles in the Feudal System chart](#), which can be collected for a grade.
- Students complete the [European Civilizations](#) worksheet, which can be collected for a grade.
- Students complete the [Black Death organizer](#), which can be collected for a grade.
- Students participate in various class discussions. Use a [discussion tracker](#) to keep track of students' contributions to the discussions and use this information to assign a grade to students. ([ELA/Literacy Standards](#): SL.6.1a-d, SL.6.6)
- Students answer questions about the Magna Carta in writing, which can be collected for a grade.
- Students answer questions about the Medieval economy in writing, which can be collected for a grade.
- Students write an essay describing the factors that influenced the decline of feudalism. Grade the written response using the claims portion of the [LEAP assessment social studies extended response rubric](#). ([ELA/Literacy Standards](#): W.6.2a-f, W.6.4-6, W.6.9b, W.6.10)
- Students complete a [Characteristics of Civilizations](#) organizer which can be collected for a grade.
- Students complete a timeline depicting the important events that occurred during the Middle Ages.

Grade 6 Instructional Task: Medieval Europe

Unit Five: Medieval Europe and the Renaissance: Legacy, Topic One: Medieval Europe

Description: Students learn about the regression of knowledge in Europe under the feudal system and its impact on Medieval society, and investigate various factors that led to the decline of feudalism and the end of the Middle Ages.

Suggested Timeline: 18 class periods

Materials: [Latitude and Longitude map](#), [European Civilizations](#), [Time Zone map](#), [Climate map](#), [Labeled Physical map](#), [Major rivers](#), [Mountain ranges](#), [Blank Map of the World](#), [Middle Ages](#), [Feudalism and Medieval Life](#), Roles in the Feudal System Chart ([blank](#) and [completed](#)), Characteristics of Civilizations organizer ([blank](#) and [completed](#)), [The Magna Carta](#), [The Black Death](#), The Black Death organizer ([blank](#) and [completed](#)), [Understanding the Black Death](#), [The Crusades](#), [The First Crusade](#), [Key Moments in the Crusades: An Interactive Map](#), [Map - Crusades \(Early and Later\)](#), [Impact of the Crusades](#), [Economy in the Middle Ages](#)

Instructional Process:

1. Say: "In the last unit, we learned about the role of trade in connecting and advancing the civilizations in Asia and Africa. For this unit, we will be focusing on changes that impacted Europe."
2. Provide each student with access to a [latitude and longitude map](#) of the world. Review the concepts of parallels and meridians with students as well as the major lines of latitude and longitude and how to read a latitude and longitude map.
3. Determine if you want students to work independently or in pairs and display the following latitude and longitude coordinates: 55°N, 0°longitude
4. Have students identify their location using the [latitude and longitude map](#) of the world. Students who struggle with executing this skill should be provided with intervention or [additional practice](#) as needed.
5. Review the main components of a map with students:
 - a. Title - Have students point to and identify the title of their map activity
 - b. Compass Rose - Have students draw a compass rose with cardinal and intermediate directions near their map
 - c. Map Key or Legend - review the concept
6. Use the [latitude and longitude map](#) to review hemispheres. Have students draw a circle to represent the world in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet. Then have students identify where Europe is on the [latitude and longitude map](#). Have students draw an equator and a prime meridian through the circle in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet and draw an "x" in Europe's approximate location. Have students record the hemispheres in which Europe is located (northern; western and eastern) in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet.
7. Distribute or display a [time zone map](#) of the world. Review the concept of time zones, then have students determine how many time zones are present in their assigned part of the world and record it on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet.

8. Ask: "If a modern person living in Cape Town, South Africa called their friend in London, England at 8pm (South African time), at what time in London would their friend answer their phone?"
9. Model for student how to break down the question, then allow time for students to reference the displayed [time zone map](#) and determine their answer. Call on a student to share their answer, then have a different student approach the map to illustrate how the solution was determined.
10. Distribute or display a [climate map](#) of the world. Have students determine what climate zones are present in their assigned part of the world and record it on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet.
11. Distribute crayons or colored pencils so students may lightly shade in the climate zones on their maps. Instruct students to create a map key or legend of European climate regions in the climate zones section of the chart on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet.
12. Allow students time to [research](#) their climate zones (the research website is more detailed than the climate map but students should be able to identify their climate zones, model where necessary). Encourage students to research using the tabs for each climate zone in their assigned part of the world to investigate the characteristics of each climate zone including temperature, common plants and animals, etc.
13. Display and discuss the definitions of [political](#) and [physical](#) maps with students.
14. Have students reference a [labeled physical map](#) of the world and add the [major rivers](#) and [mountain ranges](#) that are present in Europe onto their map in marker or sharpie pen. Instruct students to add symbols in the physical features section of the chart on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet.
15. Conduct a discussion in which students predict the impact of climate on human settlement patterns in this region. Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources and outside knowledge to support their answers. Possible questions:
 - a. What would attract a group of humans to settle in this area?
 - b. What climate zones contain the best conditions for human settlement?
 - c. What physical features would attract or repel human settlement?
16. Project a [blank map of the world](#) onto the front board. Allow students to identify on the projected map where they expect human settlement to occur.
17. Instruct students to develop a claim identifying the region on the globe that presents the best environment for human settlement to develop? Students should reference climate and geographic features in their response, and include details from task materials and class discussions. Grade paragraphs using the [claims rubric](#).
18. Provide students with access to [Middle Ages](#).
19. Read aloud the overview page for [Middle Ages](#).
20. Instruct partner groups to "Enter" the site and read the information on feudal life.
21. Have students create an image depicting what a small Medieval community would look like. Instruct students to include all details mentioned in the information on feudal life, buildings (castle, church, village, farmland) and people (lord, peddler, pilgrim, soldier, peasant).
22. Have students pair up, compare their images, and add any missing details. Grade student work.
23. Instruct pairs to partner with another pair to create groups of four.
24. Provide students with a [Roles in the Feudal System chart](#).
25. Direct groups to divide the roles and complete their portion of the [Roles in the Feudal System chart](#) using the [Middle Ages](#) website or independent research to answer the following questions:
 - a. What was their role in society?

- b. What were their responsibilities?
 - c. Who did they interact with and what was that interaction?
26. Allow time for students to present their research and assist one another in completing their [Roles in the Feudal System chart](#).
27. Instruct students to work individually and write a paragraph describing the relationship between each role within the society of the feudal system. Encourage students to provide evidence from their sources and outside knowledge to support their answers.
28. Distribute copies of [Characteristics of Civilizations organizer](#).
29. Organize students into groups of six and provide access to [Middle Ages](#) (students will need to “enter” the site again).
30. Have each group member choose a topic on feudal life: religion, homes, clothing, health, arts and entertainment, and town life, and click on their chosen topic tab to access information on their topic.
31. Instruct each group to record information from their topic onto the [Characteristics of Civilizations organizer](#). Allow time for students to conduct their research and fill in their information on their worksheet, then instruct groups to take turns presenting their information to their groups to complete their organizers.
32. Have students access the [Middle Ages](#) website, “enter” the website, and click on “Read More About Feudal Life.”
33. Read the first section on the Magna Carta to the class, then provide students with access to [The Magna Carta](#).
34. Instruct students to read [The Magna Carta](#) using an established annotation strategy.
35. Engage students in a discussion of the source. Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources and outside knowledge to support their answers. Pose the following questions:
- a. When and where was the Magna Carta written?
 - b. Who was the Magna Carta written by?
 - c. Who was the King and who was angry at the King?
 - d. Who was the Pope and what role did the Pope play in the adoption of the Magna Carta?
 - e. What was the Magna Carta meant to achieve?
 - f. What is the legacy of the Magna Carta on the modern world?
36. Say: “Political problems weren’t England’s only troubles during the Middle Ages.”
37. Provide students with access to [The Black Death](#) and have students annotate the reading using an established strategy.
38. Pair students and distribute a [Black Death organizer](#) to each student. Instruct students to record key information for each subheading of the source text listed.
39. Have students complete the [Understanding the Black Death](#) task to examine how people of the Middle Ages understood the plague.
40. In a whole-class discussion, have students review key information and details about the Black Death. Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources and outside knowledge to support their answers. Pose the following questions:
- a. Why was the Black Death so significant to Medieval Europe?
 - b. What did people understand about the plague?
 - c. How could a disease such as the Black Death cause feudalism to decline?

41. Pass out paper for students to create a [parallel timeline](#) of the Middle Ages. Have students label their map “Medieval Europe” and include the following dates (advise students to leave space at the top of their timeline for additional early dates to be added later):
 - a. **1100 CE:** Feudalism established in England
 - b. **1215 CE:** The Magna Carta signed
42. Say: “The Middle Ages caused much change and interaction in Europe. Governments changed as a result of interactions between the monarchy and nobility. Society changed as disease interacted with the population. At different points through the year, we have seen the major religions of the world interact. We have seen instances of when people of different faiths have come in contact at different points in history as a result of factors such as war and trade. Religious interaction during the Middle Ages caused further change in government and society.”
43. Write the word *crusade* on the board and read or project the following definitions:⁴⁸
 - a. any of the military expeditions undertaken by the Christians of Europe in the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries for the recovery of the Holy Land from the Muslims.
 - b. any war carried on under papal permission.
44. Ask students: “What do these definitions have in common?”
45. Take notes for the class or annotate the definitions as students share their answers.
46. Say: “Earlier in the year, we learned about the shared Holy Land. The Crusades were fought between Christians and Muslims in an attempt to control the Holy Land. This series of conflicts even had the support of the Pope, the head of the Christian Church.”
47. Provide students with access to [The Crusades](#) and have students read through the first section on the Crusades for an overview of the period.
48. Have students complete [The First Crusade](#) task to analyze different perspectives on the First Crusade.
49. Have students write a summary of what happened when Crusaders entered Jerusalem in the First Crusade.
50. Provide students with access to [Key Moments in the Crusades: An Interactive Map](#) and have students work with a partner to explore the events described in the map.
51. Provide students with access to [Map - Crusades \(Early and Later\)](#) and ask students to evaluate the maps with their partner to identify 2 similarities and 3 differences between the maps.
52. Have students identify key political locations of importance to the Middle Ages and label them on their [European Civilizations](#) in marker or sharpie pen, then complete the political features and major civilizations sections of the chart on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet.
53. Provide students with access to the [Impact of the Crusades](#) and have students annotate the reading using an established classroom strategy.
54. Conduct a brief discussion about the Crusades. Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources and outside knowledge to support their answers. Possible questions:
 - a. How did the Crusades impact territories, borders and nations?
 - b. How did the Crusades impact religious practice in both the West and the East?
 - c. How might the geography of Europe and the Holy Land have impacted Crusaders?

⁴⁸ From <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/crusade>

- d. How did the Crusades impact the feudal system in Europe?
 - e. Did the Crusade cause civilizations in Europe to regress or renew themselves?
 - f. How is the impact of the Crusades still evident in the world today?
55. Say: "Much like the extensive trade networks of Africa, the interaction of eastern and western cultures during the Crusades had lasting impacts on the European economy."
56. Provide students with access to [Economy in the Middle Ages](#).
57. Pair students using an established classroom routine and instruct pairs to note important changes that could affect the economy of Europe as they read.
58. Have each group take turns sharing details they noted as they read, record student notations on the board or a sheet of poster-sized paper, then conduct a class discussion identifying the details that would have the greatest affect on the economy of an area. Ask: "How might changes to the economy of Europe lead to a decline in the feudal system of Medieval Europe?" Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources and outside knowledge to support their answers.
59. Have students write an essay that examines the changes that led to the decline of feudalism in Medieval Europe.
60. Have students add the following dates to their parallel timeline:
- a. **637 CE**: Muslim conquest of the Holy Land
 - b. **711 CE**: Muslims conquest of Spain and Portugal
 - c. **1096 CE - 1099 CE**: First Crusade: Pope wins control of Jerusalem
 - d. **1147 CE - 1149 CE**: Second Crusade: Europe abandons the Holy Land
 - e. **1228 CE - 1229 CE**: Sixth Crusade: Europe finally reclaims the Holy Land
 - f. **1271 CE - 1272 CE**: Last Crusade (Ninth): Europe abandons attempts to recapture the Holy Land

European Civilizations

Location (hemispheres)		Major Climate Zones	
Major Physical Features		Major Political Features	
How many Time Zones in this region?		Major Civilizations in this region	



Roles in the Feudal System

King	Lord	Vassal	Peasant	Serf

Characteristics of Civilizations

Characteristic	Description/Definition	Modern-Day Examples
Centralized government/ state systems		
Organized religion		
Economy and job specialization		
System of tribute		
Surplus food		
Planned infrastructure		
Trade		
Accumulated learning		
Arts		

The Black Death

Introduction	
The Signs of Impending Death	
Varying Reactions to Disaster	
The Breakdown of the Social Order	

Mass Burials

Overview of *The Magna Carta*⁴⁹

"The democratic aspiration is no mere recent phase in human history . . . It was written in Magna Carta."

--Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1941 Inaugural address

On June 15, 1215, in a field at Runnymede, King John attached his seal to Magna Carta. Confronted by 40 rebellious nobles, he consented to their demands in order to avoid civil war. Just 10 weeks later, Pope Innocent III nullified the agreement, and England fell into internal war. Although the Magna Carta failed to resolve the conflict between King John and his nobles, it was reissued several times after his death.

Enduring Principles of Liberty

The Magna Carta was written by a group of 13th-century barons to protect their rights and property against a tyrannical king. It is concerned with many practical matters and specific grievances relevant to the feudal system under which they lived. The interests of the common man were not present in the minds of the men who made the agreement with the king, but there are two principles expressed in Magna Carta that resonate to this day:

- (1) *"No freeman shall be taken, imprisoned, outlawed, banished, or in any way destroyed, nor will We proceed against or prosecute him, except by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land."*
- (2) *"To no one will We sell, to no one will We deny or delay, right or justice."*

Inspiration for Americans

During the American Revolution, the Magna Carta served to inspire and justify action in liberty's defense. The colonists believed they were entitled to the same rights as Englishmen, rights guaranteed in the Magna Carta. They embedded those rights into the laws of their states and later into the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution, *"no person shall . . . be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law"* directly reflects the Magna Carta's principles.

⁴⁹ This text is in the public domain and is courtesy of the National Archives. It is available online at <https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/magna-carta>.

The Impact of the Crusades

Territorial expansion

First, crusading played a major role in European territorial expansion. Crusading in northern and eastern Europe led to the expansion of kingdoms like Denmark and Sweden, as well as the creation of brand-new states, like Prussia. Traders and settlers, mostly German, profited from the crusades. In the Mediterranean Sea, crusading led to the colonization of many islands. Crusading led to the conquest of Spain and Portugal by the Muslim Empire, who controlled these nations until 1492, when the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand II and Isabella I drove the last Muslim settlers out of the peninsula.

Impact in Europe (religious and secular)

Second, the crusading movement impacted internal European development in a few important ways. The movement helped to militarize the medieval western Church. It also helped solidify the pope's control over the Church and both reflected and influenced devotional trends. For example, while there was some dedication to St. George from the early Middle Ages, the intensity of that devotion soared in Europe after he reportedly intervened miraculously at the Battle of Antioch during the First Crusade. Government institutions also evolved to meet the needs of crusading, such as improving or creating infrastructure within Europe.

Impact world-wide

Third, the crusading movement has left an imprint on the world as a whole. For example, many of the national flags of Europe incorporate a cross. These trends also impacted the Islamic world. The divisions of the Crusades are reflected in the global divisions, alliances, and ideologies of today. Crusaders travelling to the Holy Land or Islamic areas brought about a diffusion between the two cultures as Christian beliefs were reemphasized in the east and ancient Greek and Roman knowledge was reintroduced into the west.

Unit Five Instruction

Topic Two: Renaissance (6.1.1-4, 6.2.10, 6.3.1-4, 6.6.3)

Connections to the unit claim: Students examine the ideas that brought about the Renaissance and how those ideas spread throughout Europe and changed society forever.

Suggested Timeline: 15 class periods

Use this sample task:

- [Renaissance Thinking](#)

To explore these key questions:

- How did Renaissance inventions help renew European civilization?
- How is Europe an example of how civilizations rise and fall?

That students answer through these assessments:

- Students complete a timeline on key events during the Renaissance, which can be collected for a grade.
- Students complete a [European Civilizations](#) map examining the climate as well as physical and political geography of Europe, which can be collected for a grade.
- Students complete a [Characteristics of Civilizations](#) organizer, which can be collected for a grade.
- Students complete the [Split-Page Notes organizer](#) on the printing press, which can be collected for a grade.
- Students participate in a class discussion in which students examine the changes that occurred in Europe as a result of the printing press. Use a [discussion tracker](#) to keep track of students' contributions to the discussions and use this information to assign a grade to students. ([ELA/Literacy Standards](#): SL.6.1a-d, SL.6.6)
- Students write a paragraph explaining the role of the printing press in the renewal of European society, economics, and knowledge. Grade the written response using the claims portion of the [LEAP assessment social studies extended response rubric](#). ([ELA/Literacy Standards](#): W.6.2a-f, W.6.4-6, W.6.9b, W.6.10)

Grade 6 Instructional Task: Renaissance Thinking

Unit Five: Medieval Europe and the Renaissance: Legacy, Topic Two: Renaissance

Description: Students investigate changes in thinking that are characteristic of the Renaissance. Students examine how new thinking created conflict with the church. Students also consider how inventions encouraged the spread of ideas and facilitated change throughout Europe and beyond.

Suggested Timeline: 15 class periods

Materials: [Renaissance](#), [Renaissance “Movers & Shakers”](#), [Split-Page Notes - The Printing Press \(blank and completed\)](#), [Engraving of publisher and printer Johannes Gutenberg](#), [Excerpt from “Treasures in Full: The Gutenberg Press”](#), [Excerpt from “Treasures in Full: Gutenberg Bible”](#), [Excerpt from The Printing Press: Transforming Power of Technology](#), [Excerpt from “Gutenberg and the Printing Revolution in Europe,”](#) [Map of the Spread of Printing](#), [Latitude and Longitude map](#), [European Civilizations](#), [Time Zone map](#), [Climate map](#), [Labeled Physical map](#), [Major rivers](#), [Mountain ranges](#), [Blank Map of the World](#), [Excerpt from The History of Philosophy](#), [Excerpt from American Colonies: The Settling of North America](#), [Excerpt from a Letter from Columbus to the Spanish royals](#), [Map of diffusion of Columbus’ Letter](#), [Excerpt from The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe](#), [Excerpt from Gutenberg: How One Man Remade the World with Words](#), [Excerpt from “Information Technology and Economic Change,”](#) [Characteristics of Civilizations \(blank and completed\)](#)

Instructional Process:

1. Say: “In our previous task, we saw how conflict led to cultural exchange during the Middle Ages. In our last task, we will examine how this cultural exchange gave birth to a movement that brought Europe out of the Medieval “Dark Ages.”
2. Write the word *renaissance* on the board.
3. Provide students with access to the following resource on the [Renaissance](#) and read the first two paragraphs to the class. Ask the class to provide a definition for the *renaissance* and write that definition on the board.
4. Say: “The word renaissance means rebirth. This period in history is characterized by a rebirth of classical ideas. In unit 3, we learned about the Classical Age of ancient Greece and Rome. What achievements do you recall or know from your own information? (students should identify achievements in art, literature, philosophy, and government; record a list of student responses on the board or a piece of poster-sized paper)”
5. Have students complete the [Renaissance “Movers & Shakers”](#) task to explore Renaissance thinking.
6. Say: “Not only did the ideas of the Renaissance shape society, but the degree to which the ideas spread was also impressive. In our modern society, we often take for granted that we have access to vast amounts of information at our fingertips. In Medieval Europe, access to information was extremely limited and very expensive. Only the very wealthy could afford access to the papers and people who could provide information.”
7. Provide each student a copy of [Engraving of publisher and printer Johannes Gutenberg](#) and ask:
 - a. Aside from people, what do you see in this engraved imaged?
 - b. Looking at this picture, how might this invention impact all levels of society?
8. Divide students into jigsaw groups and assign a student from each home group one of the texts below:
 - a. Group 1: [Excerpt from “Treasures in Full: The Gutenberg Press”](#)
 - b. Group 2: [Excerpt from “Treasures in Full: The Gutenberg Bible”](#)

- c. Group 3: [Excerpt from The Printing Press: Transforming Power of Technology](#)
9. Have students read their assigned text based on their expert group. As students read, have them record key information that they learn from their text in the [Split-Page Notes organizer](#).
 10. After they complete their reading, allow students to work in their expert groups to solidify their notes and determine the best way to share their information with their home groups.
 11. Have each student return to their home group. Provide time for the students to present the information with their home group so that all students have an opportunity to complete their [Split-Page Notes organizer](#).
 12. Provide each student with a copy of the [Excerpt from “Gutenberg and the Printing Revolution in Europe”](#) and have students annotate the reading using an established class strategy.
 13. Conduct a discussion of the [Excerpt from “Gutenberg and the Printing Revolution in Europe”](#). Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources reviewed so far in this task along with their outside knowledge to support their answers. Possible questions:
 - a. Where did people gain knowledge from before the printing press?
 - b. Why did people in the lower levels of society have such difficulties accessing knowledge?
 - c. How did the unbalanced availability of knowledge create large class differences in society?
 - d. How did the printing press help to renew the availability of ancient knowledge to European populations?
 - e. Before the printing press, the center for learning in Europe was Paris, France. By the beginning of the Renaissance the printing press had relocated that center to what city and nation?
 14. Display the [Map of the Spread of Printing](#). Have students work with a partner to make four observations about the map and craft two questions related to the map topic.
 15. Have students locate their “Medieval Europe” timeline and create a second parallel line labeled “Renaissance Europe,” then have students add the following dates to their timeline:
 - a. **1440 CE:** Printing Press invented
 - b. **1455 CE:** First Bible printed
 16. Provide each student with access to a [latitude and longitude map](#) of the world. Review the concepts of parallels and meridians with students as well as the major lines of latitude and longitude and how to read a latitude and longitude map.
 17. Determine if you want students to work independently or in pairs and display the following latitude and longitude coordinates: 45°N, 14°E
 18. Have students identify their location using the [latitude and longitude map](#) of the world. Students who struggle with executing this skill should be provided with intervention or [additional practice](#) as needed.
 19. Review the main components of a map with students:
 - a. Title - Have students point to and identify the title of their map activity
 - b. Compass Rose - Have students draw a compass rose with cardinal and intermediate directions near their map
 - c. Map Key or Legend - review the concept
 - d. Scale - review the concept and inform students that they will be able to practice this skill after identifying key political locations on their map.
 20. Use the [latitude and longitude map](#) to review hemispheres. Have students draw a circle to represent the world in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet. Then have students identify where Europe is on the [latitude and longitude map](#). Have students draw an equator and a prime meridian

through the circle in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet and draw an "x" in Europe's approximate location. Have students record the hemispheres in which Europe is located (northern; western and eastern) in the hemisphere section of the chart on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet.

21. Distribute or display a [time zone map](#) of the world. Review the concept of time zones, then have students determine how many time zones are present in their assigned part of the world and record it on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet.
22. Ask: "If a modern person living in London, England called their friend in Venice, Italy at 1pm (London time), at what time in Venice would their friend answer their phone?"
23. Model for students how to break down the question, then allow time for students to reference the displayed [time zone map](#) and determine their answer. Call on a student to share their answer, then have a different student approach the map to illustrate how the solution was determined.
24. Distribute or display a [climate map](#) of the world. Have students determine what climate zones are present in their assigned part of the world and record it on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet.
25. Distribute crayons or colored pencils so students may lightly shade in the climate zones on their maps. Instruct students to create a map key or legend of Europe's climate regions in the climate zones section of the chart on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet.
26. Allow students time to [research](#) their climate zones (the research website is more detailed than the climate map but students should be able to identify their climate zones, model where necessary). Encourage students to research using the tabs for each climate zone in their assigned part of the world to investigate the characteristics of each climate zone including temperature, common plants and animals, etc.
27. Display and discuss the definitions of [political](#) and [physical](#) maps with students.
28. Have students reference a [labeled physical map](#) of the world and add the [major rivers](#) and [mountain ranges](#) that are present in Europe onto their map in marker or sharpie pen. Instruct students to add symbols in the physical features section of the chart on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet, then label cities that were important to learning either before or after the invention of the printing press (including, but not limited to, Paris and Venice) on their map and note them in the political features and major civilizations sections of their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet.
29. Have students measure the distance between political locations using the scale located on their [European Civilizations](#) worksheet. Students who struggle with executing this skill should be provided with intervention or [practice](#) as needed
30. Provide access to the [Excerpt from a Letter from Columbus to the Spanish royals](#) and have students annotate the letter using an established classroom strategy.
31. Conduct a discussion of the [Excerpt from a Letter from Columbus to the Spanish royals](#). Encourage students to use the [conversation stems](#) during the discussion and provide evidence from the sources reviewed so far in this task along with their outside knowledge to support their answers. Possible questions:
 - a. Who was Christopher Columbus and what did he accomplish on his voyage?
 - b. How did the printing press change the availability of Columbus' letter to all levels of society?
 - c. How might the lower classes having access to knowledge that previously was reserved for the nobility affect society?
32. Have students write a summary paragraph explaining the role of the printing press in the renewal of European

society, economics, and knowledge. Grade paragraphs using the [claims rubric](#).

33. Have students add the following dates to their timeline:
 - a. **1492 CE:** Columbus sails to the New World
 - b. **1455 CE:** Columbus' letter is printed and circulated

34. Have students complete the [Characteristics of Civilizations](#) organizer on Renaissance Europe.

European Civilizations

Location (hemispheres)		Major Climate Zones	
Major Physical Features		Major Political Features	
How many Time Zones in this region?		Major Civilizations in this region	



Characteristics of Civilizations

Characteristic	Description/Definition	Modern-Day Examples
Centralized government/state systems		
Organized religion		
Economy and job specialization		
System of tribute		
Surplus food		
Planned infrastructure		
Trade		
Accumulated learning		
Arts		

Engraving of publisher and printer Johannes Gutenberg



© iStock / © Grafissimo.

Split-Page Notes – The Printing Press

What was first printed?	
In what ways did the printing press preserve the past?	
How did the printing press stimulate interest in exploration?	
To what extent did the printing press facilitate change?	

“Treasures in Full: The Gutenberg Press”

Gutenberg's invention made it possible to mass-produce books. He himself did not make money out of it, but his method had great commercial potential and it became the basis of the success of many later printers and publishers. Technology is not enough for success however. A publisher needs to choose the right texts for his market. This was much more important for a printer than for the men and women who made a living from producing manuscripts. A printer had to sell many copies of the same work at the same time, and he had to sell them fast to recover his investment.

Books did not become cheap immediately after the appearance of Gutenberg's printed works, but prices soon began to fall. By 1500 access to books had changed profoundly. This meant more access to information, more informed discussion and more widespread criticism of thought.

© The British Library Board. <http://www.bl.uk/treasures/gutenberg/gutenbergstexts.html>.

“Treasures in Full: The Gutenberg Bible”

Gutenberg's first and only large-scale printing enterprise was the Bible in Latin. This is not an obvious choice of text, for the Bible was not very central to the daily life of the Church in the 15th century. Parts of the Bible would have been used in church every day, but not in the order in which they appear in the Bible. The texts of the Bible were reorganised in order to deliver a clear message to the mostly uneducated population attending mass. Missals containing these reorganized messages were different from region to region, however.

Perhaps Gutenberg realised that, in order for a large-scale printing project to be commercially successful, he had to aim at an international market. The Bible might sell fewer copies in each region, but it had the potential to sell all over Western Europe. Gutenberg and his team also knew that they needed to market their new invention. In 1454 they showed their product to an international audience in Frankfurt, perhaps even before the project was completed. They must have been aware that a successful launch would be much easier if they began with a high-profile book of importance, and he wagered correctly.

© The British Library Board. <http://www.bl.uk/treasures/gutenberg/bible.html>.

Excerpt from *The Printing Press: Transforming Power of Technology*

[Latin's] connection to the glorious days of the Roman Empire and its use in the classics written by such men as Cicero, Pliny, and Galen made it natural for elite Europeans to thrill to the Latin tongue, and for the first books to be printed in that language. All together, some 252 towns and cities recorded having a printing press by 1501. Three-quarters of the books they printed were in Latin; but as prices fell and books became affordable for the lower classes, Europeans began to want, even to demand, books printed in their own languages. This was the beginning of printing in the *vernacular*, or "native" language of an area, either French, English, Spanish, German, etc.

Copyright © 2003. Chelsea House.

Excerpt from “Gutenberg and the Printing Revolution in Europe”

During the Middle Ages in Europe, most people lived in small, isolated villages. If people traveled at all, they typically ventured only a few miles from where they were born. For most people, the only source of both religious and worldly information was the village Catholic priest in the pulpit. News passed from one person to another, often in the form of rumor. Written documents were rare and often doubted by the common people as forgeries. What counted in important matters was oral testimony based on oaths taken in the name of God to tell the truth.

Almost no one could read or write the language they spoke. Those few who were literate usually went on to master Latin. Books, all hand-copied, were rare, expensive, and almost always in Latin. They were so valuable that universities chained them to reading tables. Most people passed their lifetime without ever gazing at a book, a calendar, a map, or written work of any sort. Memory and memorization ruled daily life and learning. Poets, actors, and storytellers relied on rhyming lines to remember vast amounts of material. Craftsmen memorized the secrets of their trades to pass on orally to apprentices. Merchants kept their accounts in their heads.

Scribes, often monks living in monasteries, each labored for up to a year to copy a single book. Specialists or the scribes themselves “illuminated” (painted) large capital letters and the margins of many books with colorful designs and even miniature scenes. These books were beautiful works of art. But they took a long time to make and were very costly.

Less than 50 years after Gutenberg printed the Bible, over 1,000 print shops had sprung up in more than 200 European cities and towns. They turned out more than 10 million copies of books in Latin and other European languages. Books became cheaper in price and available to anyone who could read them. Books were no longer chained in libraries. The spread of knowledge, both factual and not, exploded throughout Europe. Books began to appear for the first time with the author’s name on a title page. This made writers responsible for the content of their books, thus improving their accuracy. It also gave rise to the first copyright laws, protecting authors from having others publish their works without permission.

By the 1400s, the Renaissance had already begun in Italy, and this cultural revival was spreading to other parts of Europe. Scholars wanted more copies of the writings of Aristotle, St. Augustine, Cicero, and other ancient authors recently rediscovered through contact with the Muslim world in the Crusades. The scribes, however, could not work fast enough to meet the demand. Printing presses provided the books in demand more quickly. Works were translated into Latin from Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and other classic languages. These books dealt with many subjects such as literature, the law, philosophy, architecture, and geography. By 1500, Renaissance Venice was Europe’s printing capital with 150 presses at work.

From the “Communication of Ideas” issue, *Bill of Rights in Action* 24, no. 4 (Winter 2009). © Constitutional Rights Foundation. <http://www.crf-usa.org/bill-of-rights-in-action/bria-24-3-b-gutenberg-and-the-printing-revolution-in-europe>.

Map of the Spread of Printing



From Mortimer Chambers et al. *The Western Experience*. Vol. I, To the Eighteenth Century. 6th ed. Copyright © 1995. McGraw-Hill.

Excerpt from a Letter from Columbus to the Spanish royals

NOTE: 1492 CE was an important year in the history of Spain. It was in 1492 CE that the monarchs of Spain, King Ferdinand II and Queen Isabella I successfully drove the last of the Muslim invaders out of Spain and Portugal. In that same year Christopher Columbus set sail from Spain to find an all-water route to Asia. More than two months after setting sail, Columbus landed on an island in the Bahamas that he called San Salvador; the natives called it Guanahani. When Columbus arrived back in Spain in 1493 CE, he immediately wrote a letter announcing his discoveries to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, who had helped finance his trip. The letter was written in Spanish and sent to Rome, where it was printed in Latin. An excerpt from Columbus' letter follows.

I have determined to write you this letter to inform you of everything that has been done and discovered in this voyage of mine.

On the thirty-third day ... I came into the Indian Sea, where I discovered many islands inhabited by numerous people. I took possession of all of them for our most fortunate King by making public proclamation and unfurling his standard [flag], no one making any resistance. The island called Juana [Cuba], as well as the others in its neighborhood, is exceedingly fertile. It has numerous harbors on all sides, very safe and wide, above comparison with any I have ever seen. Through it flow many very broad and health-giving rivers; and there are in it numerous very lofty mountains. All these islands are very beautiful, and of quite different shapes; easy to be traversed, and full of the greatest variety of trees...

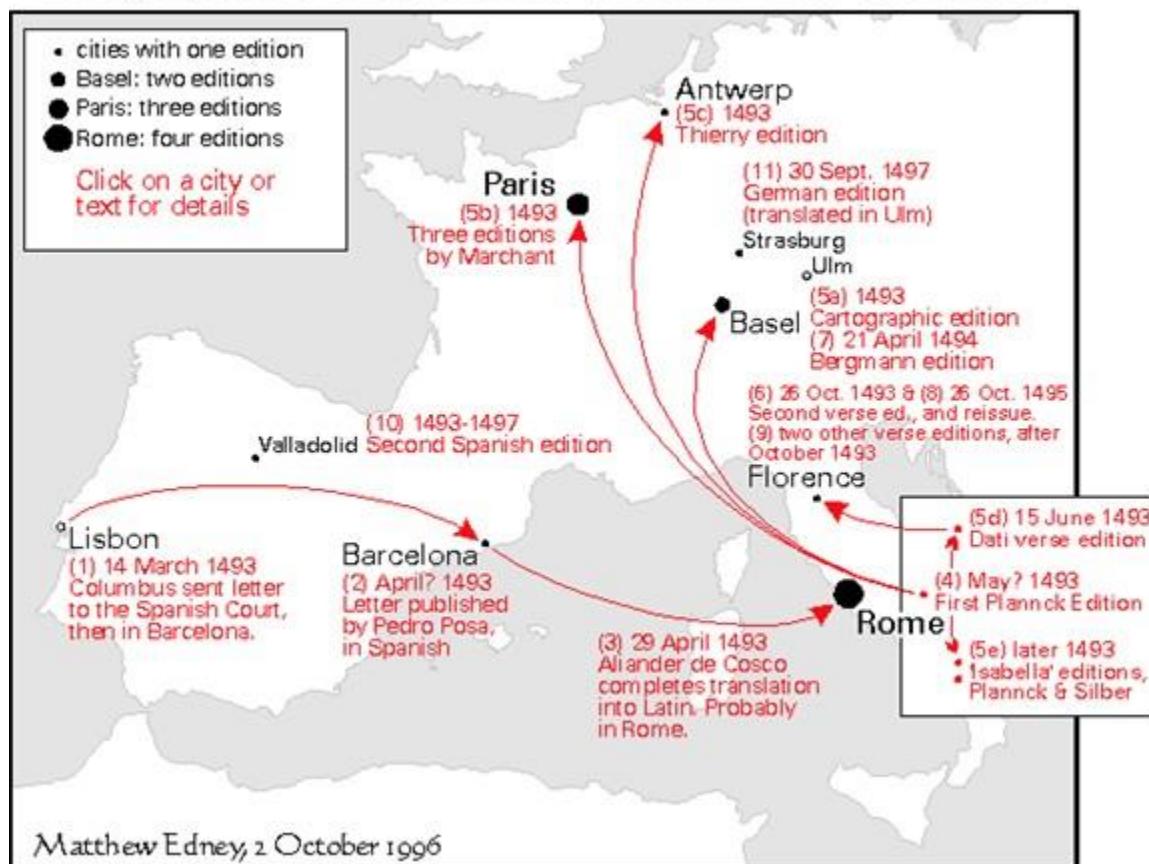
In the island, which...was called Hispana [Haiti], there are very lofty and beautiful mountains, great farms, groves and fields, most fertile both for cultivation and for pasturage, and well adapted for constructing buildings. The convenience of the harbors in this island, and the excellence of the rivers...surpass human belief...In it the trees, pasture-lands and fruits different much from those of Juana [Cuba]. Besides, this Hispana abounds in various kinds of species, gold and metals. The inhabitants ... are all...unprovided with any sort of iron, and they are destitute of arms, which are entirely unknown to them, and for which they are not adapted; not on account of any bodily deformity, for they are well made, but because they are timid and full of terror....and very liberal of all they have. No one refuses the asker anything that he possesses; on the contrary they themselves invite us to ask for it. They manifest the greatest affection towards all of us, exchanging valuable things for trifles, content with the very least thing or nothing at all....I gave them many beautiful and pleasing things, which I had brought with me, for no return whatever, in order to win their affection, and that they might become Christians and inclined to love our King and Queen and Princes and all the people of Spain; and that they might be eager to search for and gather and give to us what they abound in and we greatly need.

© Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. <http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/exploration/resources/columbus-reports-his-first-voyage-1493>.

Map of diffusion of Columbus' Letter

NOTE: Per the Osher Map Library, the map is no longer clickable.

Geographical Diffusion of Columbus's First Letter



Christopher Columbus's 1493 announcement of the success of his voyage westward across the Atlantic Ocean quickly became one of the earliest 'best sellers' of European publishing. No less than eleven editions were published in the year 1493! They were issued across western Europe, in Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. Six more editions were published in 1494–97. They are however all quite rare today; several of the editions survive in only a single copy; in total there are no more than 80 copies of all the editions.

Smith Center for Cartographic Education, University of Southern Maine. <http://www.oshermaps.org/special-map-exhibits/columbus-letter/iv-diffusion-columbus-letter-through-europe-1493-1497>. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>).

Unit Five Assessment

Description: Students participate in a Socratic seminar in response to the question: What makes civilizations regress and how do they renew themselves? They then write a multiparagraph essay in response to the same question.

Suggested Timeline: 8 class periods

Student Directions: Participate in a Socratic seminar in response to the question: What makes civilizations regress and how do they renew themselves? Use evidence gathered from the unit and your knowledge of social studies to develop and support your answer. Following the seminar, write a multiparagraph essay in response to the question: What makes civilizations regress and how do they renew themselves? Use evidence gathered throughout the units and your knowledge of social studies to develop and support your opinion.

Resources:

- [Conversation stems](#)
- [Social Studies Extended Response Checklist](#)

Teacher Notes: In completing this task, students meet the expectations for social studies GLEs 6.1.1, 6.1.3, 6.2.9-10. They also meet the expectations for [ELA/Literacy Standards](#): W.6.2a-e, W.6.4-6, W.6.9-10, SL.6.1a-d, SL.6.6.

Learn more about how to conduct a Socratic seminar by accessing the [Socratic seminar one-pager](#).

Possible guiding questions during the seminar:

1. What causes civilizations to rise and fall?
2. How does the shift from Medieval to Renaissance Europe reflect those causes?
3. How do other civilizations we've studied this year illustrate these factors?

Use a [discussion tracker](#) to keep track of students' contributions to the conversation and use this information to assign a grade to students. Use the [LEAP assessment social studies extended response rubric](#) to grade the essay. Note: Customize the Content portion of the rubric for this assessment. Use the Claims portion of the rubric as written.

Grade 6 Learning Tools

The following tools are used in multiple units throughout grade 6.

1. [Characteristics of Civilizations organizer](#)
2. [World Religions organizer](#)
3. [Conversation stems](#)
4. LEAP assessment social studies extended response rubric
 - a. [Content](#)
 - b. [Claims](#)
5. [Discussion tracker](#)

Characteristics of Civilizations

Characteristic	Description/Definition	Modern-Day Examples
Centralized government/state systems		
Organized religion		
Economy and job specialization		
System of tribute		
Surplus food		
Planned infrastructure		
Trade		
Accumulated learning		
Arts		

World Religions

Notes	Judaism	Hinduism	Buddhism	Christianity	Islam
Important Texts					
Important People					
Important Places					
Beliefs and Practices					

Grades 6-8 Conversation Stems⁵⁰

Purpose: Clearly express your ideas.	
Listener Prompt	Speaker Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think about_____? • How did you answer [the question] ? • What is the most important idea you are communicating? • What is your main point? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall what I'm trying to say is_____. • My whole point in one sentence is_____.
Purpose: Make sure you are listening carefully and clearly understand the ideas presented.	
Listener Prompt	Speaker Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let me see if I heard you correctly. Did you say_____? • I heard you say_____. Is that correct? • Put another way, are you saying_____? • Tell me more about_____ or Say more about_____. • I'm confused when you say_____. Say more about that. • Give me an example. • Who can rephrase what X said? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes/no. I said_____. • Sure. I said [restate what was said and add further explanation or examples] . • An example is_____because [explain why] . • _____ said_____.
Purpose: Dig deeper and provide evidence to support your claims.	
Listener Prompt	Speaker Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What in the text makes you think so? • How do you know? Why do you think that? • Explain how you came to your idea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the text _____. This means_____. • If you look at_____, it says_____. This means_____. • I think_____because_____.
Purpose: Establish new ways of thinking by elaborating on or challenging the thinking of others.	
Listener Prompt	Speaker Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who can add to what X said? • Who agrees/disagrees with X? • Who wants to challenge what X said? Why? • How does that idea compare with X's idea? • What do you think about X's idea? • Whose thinking has changed as a result of this conversation? How and why has it changed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding to what X said,_____. • I agree, and I want to add_____. • What X said supports what I am saying because_____. • I agree/disagree with X because_____. • I see it similarly/differently because_____. • I agree/disagree with X's view that_____because in the text,_____. • I agree that_____, but we also have to consider_____. • On one hand I agree with X that_____. But on the other hand, I insist that_____. • X's point_____is important/flawed because_____. • Before I thought_____, but now I think____because_____. • My new thinking is____because_____.

⁵⁰ Adapted from Michaels, S., & O'Connor, C. (2012). *Talk Science Primer* [PDF]. Cambridge, MA: TERC. Retrieved from https://inquiryproject.terc.edu/shared/pd/TalkScience_Primer.pdf

- Now that you've heard [summarize the conversation so far], what are you thinking? What are you still wondering about?
 - I still think_____, but now I wonder_____.

LEAP Assessment Social Studies Extended Response Rubric

The response should be scored holistically on its adherence to two dimensions: Content and Claims. Each response should be given the score that corresponds to the set of bulleted descriptors that best describes the response.

Dimension: Content	
Score	Description
4	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflects thorough knowledge of [CONTENT] by incorporating ample, focused factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; ● Contains accurate understandings with no errors significant enough to detract from the overall content of the response; ● Fully addresses all parts of the prompt.
3	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflects general knowledge of [CONTENT] by incorporating adequate factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; ● Contains mostly accurate understandings with minimal errors that do not substantially detract from the overall content of the response; ● Addresses all parts of the prompt.
2	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflects limited knowledge of [CONTENT] by incorporating some factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; ● Contains some accurate understandings with a few errors that detract from the overall content of the response; ● Addresses part of the prompt.
1	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflects minimal knowledge of [CONTENT] by incorporating little or no factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; ● Contains few accurate understandings with several errors that detract from the overall content of the response; ● Minimally addresses part of the prompt.
0	The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.

Dimension: Claims	
Score	Description
4	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develops a valid claim that effectively expresses a solid understanding of the topic; ● Thoroughly supports the claim with well-chosen evidence from the sources; ● Provides a logically organized, cohesive, and in-depth explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
3	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develops a relevant claim that expresses a general understanding of the topic; ● Supports the claim with sufficient evidence from the sources; ● Provides an organized explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
2	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presents an inadequate claim which expresses a limited understanding of the topic. ● Includes insufficient support for the claim but does use some evidence from the sources; ● Provides a weak explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
1	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does not develop a claim but provides evidence that relates to the topic; OR develops a substantially flawed claim with little or no evidence from the sources; ● Provides a vague, unclear, or illogical explanation of the connections among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
0	The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.

Discussion Tracker

[TYPE OF CONVERSATION]: [QUESTION(S)] Fill in student names prior to the seminar. Capture your notes about each student's participation and knowledge.

Student Name	Draws on preparation and other information to support ideas in discussion and demonstrate understanding	Uses <u>conversation stems</u>	Continues conversation by posing and responding to questions, connecting ideas, and reviewing and explaining ideas