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The Silk Road: The Trans-Eurasian Movement of Goods, Ideas, Art, Science, and Innovation

Lisa Senne

West Delaware County Community School District, Middle School

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The Silk Road: The Trans-Eurasian Movement of Goods, Ideas, Art, Science, and Innovation

Created by: Lisa Senne
West Delaware County CSD, Middle School

Grade Level (Req.): 6th	Content Area (Req.): Social Studies	Unit (Opt.): Ancient China
Connections to Other Disciplines (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Arts / Writing • • 		
Time Frame (Req.): 6-8 one hour class periods	Goal (Req.): Students will have a better understanding of the value of the Silk Road and it's contributions to early international trade.	
	Objective (Req.): Students will diagram the "route" and identify geographical hardships travelers endured along the Silk Road. Students will be able to explain the purpose of the Silk Road, the impact it had on early trading, and it's modern day relationship to international trade. Students will be able to visually track the spread of goods and ideas across Eurasia.	
Materials Needed (Req.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class set of "The Silk Road" Ancient China for Kids, or web access (http://china.mrdonn.org/silkroad.html) • Class set of outline maps of Europe/Asia • Large classroom map of Europe/Asia • Class set of "Stranger on the Silk Road" reader's theater • Class set of "Travelers on the Silk Road" reader's theater, or web access (http://www.silkroadfoundation.org/artl/srtravelmain.shtml) • • 	New Vocabulary (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • 	
Anticipatory Set/Introduction [Inquiry Question is required] (Req.): Given these 18 key words and phrases, come up with an answer to the following questions (in partners):		
Key Words: mountains, 4000, Middle East, silver, ivory, three, China, gold, ideas, bandits, caravans, Rome, silk, desert, pirates, spices, exchange, relay		
Questions to answer: 1) What is the Silk Road (definition and purpose)? 2) What is the route of the Silk Road? 3) What did the early civilizations gain by having this type of trade system and would the current world be different if it never existed? (To be answered after the lessons are all completed.)		

Instructional Sequence/Procedure (Req.):

1. Discuss answers to earlier questions and discuss some ideas that come to light.
2. The key words in the earlier activity are from “The Silk Road” Ancient China for Kids, Mr. Donn site (<http://china.mrdonn.org/silkroad.html>). Partner read the article and if needed, revise the answers to the questions so they are correct.
3. As a large group, discuss the basic idea of this type of movement of good and ideas. Introduce them to The Silk Roads Maps (created by Stanford) <http://virtuallabs.stanford.edu/silkroad/SilkRoad.html> to help them get a basic knowledge.
4. Using this basic knowledge as a starting point, partners research and analyze various routes on different maps and keep notes on an outline map of Europe and Asia. a) On that map, they need to develop a key to identify where traders went, and noticing what areas traders avoid and determine why. b) Research the geographic features and key cities along the Silk Road (American Museum of Natural History <http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/traveling-the-silk-road>) and “map” it on own map c) gather information from the groups and transfer info to a large classroom outline map that will be on display in the classroom
5. Watch the video “The Ancient Silk Road of China” by Michael Fairchild <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LowP8zYHDYA> on YouTube. It provides a good overview of geographic features, trade items and images of the type of travel it would have been in ancient times. After viewing the video, answer the questions: What is the Silk Road? What was the purpose? What were some of the geographic features?
6. Discuss how geographic differences can impact differences in goods / products from a region. As an introduction to the idea of movement of good and ideas on the Silk Road, view the following timeline as a group and discuss it: The Silk Road Timeline – part of Activities (Stanford) <http://virtuallabs.stanford.edu/silkroad/SilkRoad.html>
7. Trading Goods in Silk Road Cities: Partners will be given a city/location along the Silk Road. They will be responsible for researching and picking a product or resource available in that area that they would be willing to take on a leg of the Silk Road to trade. This will be presented to the class and added to the class outline map.
8. Possible Ideas: Baghdad—dates, nuts, dyes, lapis lazuli, Chang’an—silk, chrysanthemums, rhubarb, paper, lacquer, gunpowder, mirrors, bamboo, Damascus—almonds, purple dye, dried fruit, swords, glass, cloth goods, Delhi—cotton, herbal medicine, precious stones, jade, Ferghana—horses, rugs, nuts, dried fruit, copper, Kashgar—pack animals, tea, dried fruit, medicinal herbs, Rome—gold coins, glass and glazes, grapevines, alfalfa, Turfan (Turpan)—grapes, raisins, wine, cotton, dye for porcelain, alum, Glauber’s salt
9. Things to consider in your trading plan (answer each of these questions): 1) Where will you take your item to trade? 2) Will you have to grow, make, or mine your product? 3) What time or costs will this involve? 5) What resources are necessary for production? 6) What resources are available to you? 7) What difficulties might be encountered in growing, making or mining? 8) How is supply and demand going to impact your success? 9) How is your physical environment helpful or harmful in trading on the Silk Roads? 10) What geographical difficulties might you encounter on your way to your trading destination?
10. Movement and sharing of ideas. Discuss this quote: “The Great Silk Road can be considered a key factor in the development of civilization in China, Europe, Central Asia, India and Arabia because as well as facilitating the exchange of silk and other goods, the Silk Road also facilitated communication, the establishment and maintenance of diplomatic relations, and the transmission of culture, technology and religious and

secular philosophies.” from Ben Simpfendorfer (leading economist and China expert)

11. What ideas and innovations have moved across the Silk Road: research and determine a way to share what you’ve learned with the group. This will then be added to the outline map of the Silk Road.
12. Relating early international trade to modern international trade. Using the International Trade Centre (<http://www.intracen.org/trade-support/trade-statistics/>) go down to county imports. Choose a country to analyze in comparison to the US. Record total imports and exports for each country, and list a couple of the top imports/exports for each and their values. Discuss observations about international trade, the importance of it, as well as the role the Silk Road had in this. This set of data may also lead to other discussions about unbalanced import / export dollars.
13. “The Stranger on the Silk Road” Readers’ Theater. Assign parts and act out the first four pages of the play. It is written a level or two below our grade level, so the class will use what they know to continue the story from that point on. Each student will help Sun and Ki will continue along the Silk Road making stops at some of the places we’ve discussed. They will learn about some of the new ideas we’ve talked about, and determine where they are headed and what they’ll be able to trade the silk for. They will also have to be aware of the geography that they face and the dangers around each turn. This will follow the writing process and be graded as part of the writing class having the same grading rubric / guidelines as all pieces of writing. These will then be presented to the class after completion of final drafts.
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- 20.

Formative Evaluation (Req.): 1) After the video (#5) students answer 3 questions that relate to the previous activities. 2) Completion of Trading Goods in Silk Road Cities. 3) Completion of writing activity “The Stranger on the Silk Road”

Assessment (Req.): 1) Diary entry as if a traveler on the Silk Road. Points to address: what it is, purpose, geographical features, hardships, relationship to modern day trade, good/ideas/innovations spread through the use of the Silk Road.

Iowa Core Curriculum Standards Used (Req.):

- GE 1., Grades 6-8: Understand the use of geographic tools to locate and analyze information about people, places and environments.
- GE 2., Grades 6-8: Understand how geographic and human characteristics create culture and define regions.
- GE 3., Grades 6-8: Understand how human factors and the distribution of resources affect the development of society and the movement of populations.
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Common Core Curriculum Standards Used (Opt.):

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NGS Standards Used (Req.):

- 1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information.
- 4. The physical and human characteristics of places.
- 9. The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.
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Five Themes of Geography Used (Req.):

- Location
- Place
- Movement
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School District Standards and Benchmarks (Opt.):

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21st Century Universal Constructs (Opt.): Technology literacy: apply digital tools to gather, evaluate and use information.

Other Disciplinary Standards (Opt.):

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Other Essential Information (Opt.):

Other Resources (Opt.):

- Additional resources: National Geographic Channel: Lost in China: Silk Road on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=neFd2PeI7wg>)
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