

# Lesson 1: Traveling Asia's Silk Road

## Vocabulary

**emperor** the ruler of an empire

**magnetic compass** a tool sailors use to see what direction they are traveling

## The Silk Road

In 1271 Marco Polo traveled to China from what is now Italy. He traveled with his father and uncle, who wanted to bring back goods from China to sell in Europe. Marco Polo was amazed by the wealth of the Chinese **emperor**, Kublai Khan. An emperor is the ruler of an empire. The Chinese became wealthy when they learned to make silk cloth hundreds of years earlier. People in many countries bought the silk cloth. The Silk Road was the main trade route between China and other lands. Silk, tea, and spices were the main goods that traveled on the Silk Road. People in Europe wanted the spices to give their food more flavor. Spices were also used to keep food fresh for a longer time. People also learned new ideas and customs on the Silk Road. Marco Polo's journey made people in Asia and Europe want to know more about each other.

## Chinese Sailors

In about 1400 China built the biggest fleet of ocean ships in the world at that time. The Chinese wanted to trade more with other areas of the world. They also wanted to show the world how powerful China was. Zheng He was the leader of the fleet. Zheng He used a **magnetic compass** to figure out which direction he was traveling. The magnetic compass is a tool used by sailors that was invented in China. His ships sailed to the East Indies, India, the Persian Empire, Arabia, and the Red Sea to trade and explore. Everywhere the ships went, people wanted Chinese goods.

# Lesson 2: Africa's Trading Empires

## Vocabulary

**caravan** a group of traders traveling together

**pilgrimage** a journey taken for religious reasons

**astrolabe** an instrument that helped sailors use the sun and stars to find their distance from the equator

## Ghana, Kingdom of Gold

Trading kingdoms grew in West Africa more than one thousand years ago. In about 700, the kingdom of Ghana became powerful. There was much gold in Ghana. But Ghana did not have salt. Arab traders traveled across the Sahara desert in **caravans** to Ghana. A caravan is a group of traders traveling together. The caravans crossing the Sahara used camels. They traded their salt for Ghana's gold. The traders also brought their religion to West Africa. It was called Islam. Islam's followers are called Muslims. The kings of Ghana asked Muslims to help them rule the kingdom. Ghana's kings grew rich by taxing the traded goods. The kingdom of Ghana became less powerful by the 1100s.

## Mali and Songhai

The kingdom of Mali was also in West Africa. Mali was larger than Ghana. It also had a lot of gold, but no salt. Mali was very rich from trade. King Mansa Musa ruled Mali in the 1300s. He went on a **pilgrimage**, or religious journey, to Mecca. Mecca is a city that is special to Muslims. Mansa Musa traveled with thousands of people. He brought 500 slaves to carry his gold. The king brought back Muslim teachers and artists to the city of Timbuktu. This made Timbuktu a center of learning. Between 1300 and 1500, Songhai became another powerful kingdom in West Africa. In the early 1500s, Songhai controlled more land than Ghana and Mali.

## Connecting Different Parts of the World

People from different parts of the world were starting to learn about one another. People in Europe were learning about the people and geography of Asia and Africa. European mapmakers used the knowledge of travelers from around the world. The **astrolabe** was one Arab tool that helped sailors find their way by using the sun and stars. Maps and other tools made the connections stronger between different parts of the world.

# Lesson 3: European Explorers

## Vocabulary

**saga** a long, spoken tale repeated from one generation to the next

**Renaissance** a time of new interest in art and science

**navigation** the science that sailors use to find their direction at sea

**slave trade** the buying and selling of human beings

### The Vikings

The Vikings were sailors from Scandinavia, in northern Europe. Leif Ericsson was a Viking. In about 1000 he sailed west. He landed on what is now Canada. Ericsson was probably the first European on North America. Vikings lived there for about 15 years. We know about this journey because the Vikings told their story in **sagas**. Sagas are long stories that one generation tells to the next generation. Archaeologists have found huts, jewelry, lamps, and tools that the Vikings left behind.

### The Renaissance

In about 1350 the **Renaissance** began in Italy. The Renaissance marked a new beginning in art and science. People were also interested in learning about the world around them. For example, Italians studied the ancient cultures of Greece and Rome. They also studied the cultures of faraway lands such as China. In about 1450 Johann Gutenberg developed a printing press in Germany. People could print large numbers of books quickly using this machine. Now more people could learn and read books. Europeans borrowed ideas, such as the magnetic compass, from other cultures. They used these ideas to build better ships. The ships allowed them to travel farther than ever before.

### The Portuguese Explore the African Coast

In the early 1400s, Europeans wanted more spices and other goods from Asia. But traveling by road was too expensive and dangerous. Prince Henry of Portugal wanted to find better sea routes to Asia. He hired experts to build better ships and improve **navigation**. This is the science sailors use to find their way across the sea. These new ships then explored the western coast of Africa. The Portuguese brought home African gold and slaves. The **slave trade** grew. Other European countries began bringing African slaves to Europe.

### A Sea Route to India

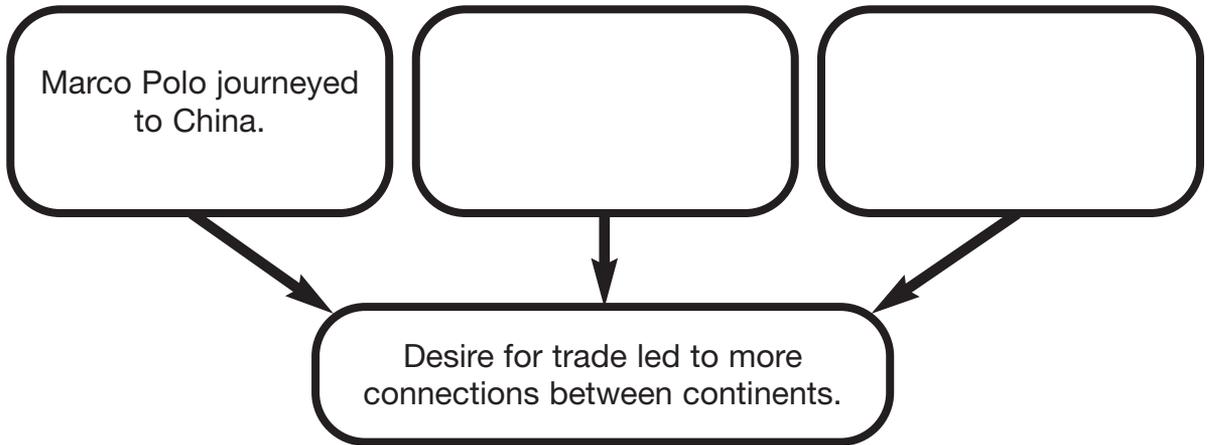
The Portuguese continued exploring. In 1488 Bartolomeu Dias sailed around the southern tip of Africa. He had reached the Indian Ocean! The king of Portugal named the tip of Africa the Cape of Good Hope. Ten years later Vasco da Gama sailed even farther and reached India. The Portuguese brought spices from India back to Europe. Portugal's sea routes made it a rich country.

### Exploration Continues

Sea trade continued to grow. By the late 1400s, sea routes linked Europe to Asia and Africa. Europeans would soon travel to the Americas and meet the people who lived there.

# Lesson 1: Review

1.  **Summarize** Fill in the missing details or events of the summarizing statement. The first detail has been provided as an example.



2. What effect did Marco Polo’s journey have on people of Asia and Europe?

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3. Name two goods that traveled along the Silk Road.

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4. **Critical Thinking: Cause and Effect** What were the goals of Zheng He’s journeys?

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5. Look at the map on page 103. Which continents were connected by the Silk Road?

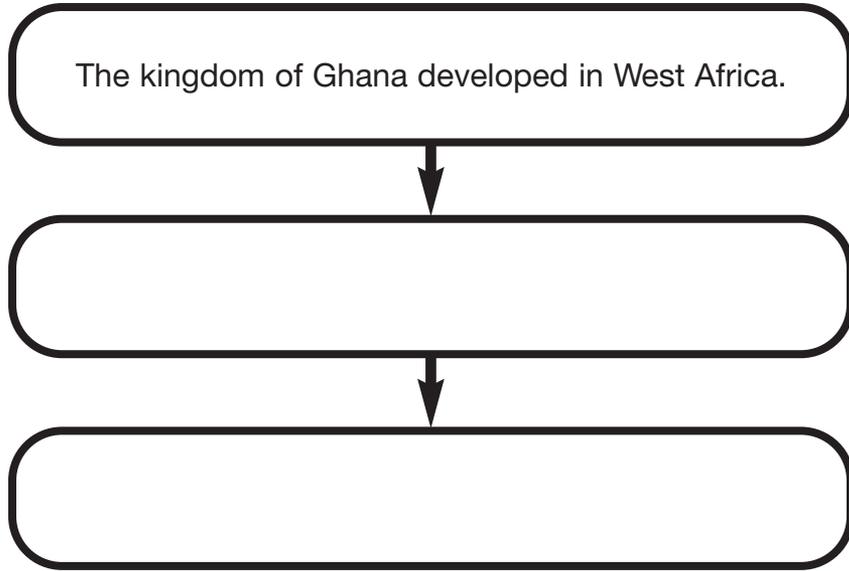
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# Lesson 2: Review

1. **Sequence** Fill in the missing events in this sequence chart showing the three major kingdoms in West Africa.



2. Why did caravans cross the Sahara desert?

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3. Why did Timbuktu develop into a center of Muslim learning?

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4. What major resource did West African kingdoms control? Which important resource did they lack?

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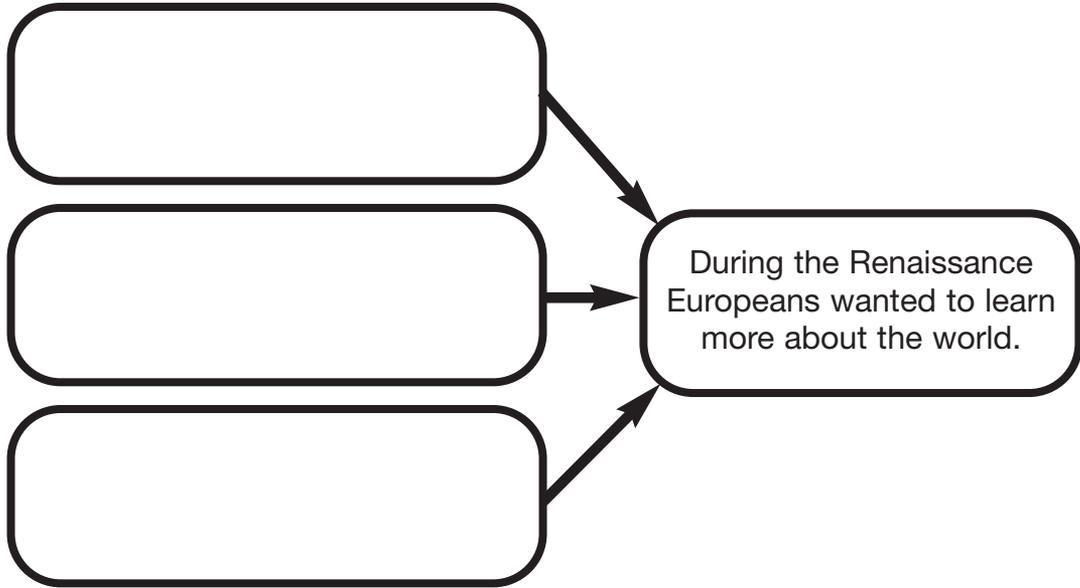
5. **Critical Thinking: Evaluate** Why did Mansa Musa travel with so many people and so much gold?

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# Lesson 3: Review

1. **Draw Conclusions** List facts which lead to the conclusion shown.



2. What were some of the effects of the Renaissance?

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3. What was the effect of Johann Gutenberg’s new machine? What did it make possible?

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4. **Critical Thinking: Cause and Effect** How did Prince Henry make Portugal the leading European country in the drive to explore other parts of the world?

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5. What records of their attempt to settle North America did the Vikings leave behind?

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# Vocabulary Review

**Directions:** Choose the vocabulary word from the box that best completes each sentence. Write the word on the line provided.

emperor	pilgrimage	Renaissance
magnetic compass	astrolabe	navigation
caravan	saga	slave trade

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ crossed the desert on camelback.
2. My brother went on a \_\_\_\_\_ to Mecca last year.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the journey to the new land was passed down from one generation to the next.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ is a tool that uses stars to determine distance from the equator.
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ will help you locate north, south, east, and west.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ is a science sailors use to guide them on the ocean.
7. Many cultural advances took place during the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ ruled a vast empire.
9. \_\_\_\_\_, or the business of buying and selling human beings, has existed for many centuries.

**Directions:** Write an original paragraph in the space below. Use as many of the vocabulary words as you can.

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**Notes for Home:** Your child learned terms about early life in the Eastern Hemisphere.  
**Home Activity:** Encourage your child to use each vocabulary word in an original sentence.