

The Silk Road

Purpose:

To introduce students to The Silk Road

Rationale:

The Silk Road is a topic that finds its way on to most of my district's short cycle assessments. It is a topic that touches on not only history and geography, but broader topics such as trade and cultural interactions.

Essential Questions:

1. What is the Silk Road?
2. What groups of people were involved in the trade that took place along its routes?
3. How did the geography of the area affect traveling on the Silk Road?

Materials:

Computers with internet access, historical atlas, maps of modern day Asia, blank Eurasia map

Activity:

This is a two to three day activity in which the students will study online resources about the Silk Road, then create a map with interesting facts along the route.

The students will start by viewing and interacting with the three websites. They are not limited to only these sites, but should start there before researching other sites. As they wade through the material, they are to take notes of interesting facts and/or events. This research should take a period or two to finish.

Once the students have collected their research, they should pick up the Eurasia map from the teacher. They are then to draw the routes that made up the Silk Road on the map. In addition, they are to create at least six “pop-up” facts on their map (essentially word balloons.) These facts can be about people, events, even geography. This portion should take about one class period.

Assessment:

The assessment for this activity will be the map that the students have created. They should be graded on correct route drawing, and accurate and well-written facts in the “pop-ups.”

<http://china.mrdonn.org/silkroad.html>

This is a great website for both teachers and students. While not delving deep into the topic of the Silk Road, it gives a good overview, and in a way that is easy for students to digest. It is a great starting

point for the emerging researcher.

<http://www.adventure-video.com/taklimakan/map/map.html>

This is one of the better online maps of the Silk Road. It uses Flash, so make sure that your computers are up to date with the latest version, which can be found for free at <http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>. It is interactive, providing facts and figures from different places along the Silk Road. Very easy to use, and students seem to enjoy being able to “play” with the map.

<http://virtuallabs.stanford.edu/silkroad/SilkRoad.html>

This website is broken into four sections (Explore the Silk Road Maps, Sights Along the Silk Road, Silk Road Timeline, and Music of the Silk Road.) Of the three websites I have recommended to use with this lesson, this one provides the most depth. Still, it is not overwhelming for the students. Lots of information, but in easy to use portions.

If you are looking for good books related to the Silk Road for your students, I would recommend starting here:

<http://www.silkroadproject.org/Education/Resources/ReadingRecommendationsforChildren/tabid/341/Default.aspx>

This site provides a rich selection of recommended readings for students.

