

Title: China's Influence in the ancient World: Cultural Diffusion along the Silk Road and Globalization Past and Present

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Introduction: The Silk Road was a 4,000 mile ancient trade route that provided opportunities for the ancient Chinese civilization and other civilizations as far west as the Roman and the Greek Empires to trade and spread ideas. This ancient trade route gave isolated civilizations a way to connect to one another and lead to cultural diffusion and the beginning of globalization. This cultural exchange of goods began in Xi'an ancient China and continued through numerous stops including Dunhuang, Kashgar, and Herat. Archeologists use various primary sources found along the Silk Road as evidence of this cultural exchange of ideas. The activities in this lesson will provide opportunities for students to not only learn about the Silk Road, but to evaluate and draw conclusions about the types of cultural exchanges that occurred and how this ancient form of globalization impacted these parts of the world. Students will also work in small groups to complete a webquest to search for some of the newest improvements in technology, communication, and transportation and again draw conclusions about how these improvements impact the world and encourage cultural diffusion. Both activities will help the students begin to make connections to how cultural diffusion impacts and influences societies from the past and present.

Subject(s)/Grade Level: social studies, grade 7

Duration of Lesson: three full class days with each lesson running 42 minutes

Connection to Standards:

World Studies from 750 B.C. to 1600 A.D.: Ancient Greece to the First Global Age

1. Empires in Africa (Ghana, Mali and Songhay) and Asia (Byzantine, Ottoman, Mughal and China) grew as commercial and cultural centers along trade routes.
2. Trade routes connecting Africa, Europe and Asia fostered the spread of technology and major world religions.
3. Improvements in transportation, communication and technology have facilitated cultural diffusion among peoples around the world.

Guiding Questions/Essential Questions:

1. What is cultural diffusion and how did the Silk Road influence cultural diffusion between numerous civilizations from the past?
2. How does cultural diffusion impact and influence individual civilizations like China?

3. What is globalization and how would you explain the similarities and differences between modern globalization and the Silk Road.

Learning Objective: Using primary source documents and artifacts discovered from various stops along the Silk Road, students will be able to identify examples of cultural diffusion among ancient eastern and western empires and discuss the influences these cultural exchanges had in the ancient world, compare and contrast these cultural exchanges to modern exchanges and globalization, and discuss how they influenced and continue to influence China and other parts of the world.

Materials Needed: access to computer, online interactive map of Silk Road and images listed in the resources section of this lesson, large sheets of colored paper, and markers

Activity:

Days 1

1. As students walk in the room, they will be handed a small slip of paper with two images they are assigned for today's lesson (see a list of these group images listed in the resource section at the bottom of this lesson). One of the images will be an image of an artifact from a specific stop near the Silk Road and the other image will be an artifact from China. The students will be asked to join other students who were assigned the same images (2-3 students per group). All images will be linked to a classroom website before the implementation of the lesson.
2. Before beginning the lesson, each group will review the interactive map of the Silk Route (see link in the resources section) and have to use their prior knowledge from the sixth grade social studies curriculum to write their own definition of cultural diffusion. As a large group we will review small group definitions to make sure we have a common understanding of cultural diffusion.
3. Each group will have about 30 minutes to read the descriptions and background information about each image/artifact they were assigned and record observations about each image/artifact. Students will be encouraged to make observations about the following:
 - materials used to create the artifact
 - notes about the artifact or writing observed
 - inferences about the meaning of the artifact/image
 - possible uses for the artifact
 - social classes that created and/or used the artifact
 - what this artifact may tell you about the culture that created it
 - how the artifact and the culture it came from may have influenced and impacted the culture of various societies along the Silk Road
4. These questions will be listed on the group's slip of paper with their assigned images (see student handout sample at the bottom of the lesson).

Day 2

1. Today the students will split into 2-3 larger groups (about 10 students per group), but you will want to make sure a representative from each of the image/artifact groups from the previous day is present in these groups. These groups will conduct an informal discussion that uses notes from yesterday's group work to discuss the artifacts their groups were assigned and the following questions:
 - a. How did the Silk Road influence cultural diffusion between numerous civilizations from the past?
 - b. How do you think cultural diffusion impacts and influences individual civilizations like China?
2. Students will creatively display their group's responses on large pieces of paper. They will also need to create a title for their poster (i.e #cultural diffusion).
3. These same groups will then be asked to look up various definitions of globalization, select their favorite definition of globalization, and write their definition on the same poster.

Day 3

1. Today students will review their definition of globalization from the previous day with the rest of the class.
2. In their groups of 10 from the previous day, the students will work with partners to conduct a webquest to search for new improvements in transportation, communication and technology that have facilitated cultural diffusion and globalization among people around the world today. Teachers can share the example of the Marmaray Tunnel that links Europe and Asia (see link in the resource section at the bottom of this lesson). Partners will share some of their findings with the larger groups of 10 and the group will need to creatively record some of the examples they found on their posters.
3. Groups will be asked to discuss the final question: What is globalization and how would you explain the similarities and differences between modern globalization and the Silk Road. They will need to creatively display their responses to this answer in some sort of graphic representation (i.e. venn diagram) on their posters.
4. Each group will share their posters with the rest of the class.
5. **Assessment:** These posters serve as a learning tool and notes that have helped us answer the lesson's guiding questions. To assess each student's understanding of the three lessons, the teacher could require the students to complete an exit ticket after each lesson with the specific guiding questions listed on the exit ticket. Students would be required to use one or more specific examples they have learned from the lessons to help them answer the guiding questions.

Extending the Lesson:

1. Partners could work with the large groups of 10 to map out the examples they found of improvements in transportation, communication and technology that have facilitated in cultural diffusion and globalization among people around the world today. Partners could add their examples on Google Maps with images, videos, links and/or information.
2. Teachers and students can link with other seventh grade classrooms around the world on Google Hangout to discuss and compare and contrast one another's culture and any examples of improvements in transportation, communication and technology that may have facilitated in cultural diffusion and globalization in their own cultures.

Student Handout and Directions for Daily Activities

Directions: Over the next two days you will be working with other students in our class and using primary source documents and artifacts discovered from various stops along the Silk Road, to identify examples of cultural diffusion among ancient eastern and western empires. You will also discuss the influences these cultural exchanges had in the ancient world, compare and contrast these cultural exchanges to modern exchanges and globalization, and discuss how they influenced and continue to influence China and other parts of the world. Use this handout to help you complete activities each day.

Day 1

1. As you walked into class today you were given a slip of paper that had links to two images. Find the other students in the class that have the same image and form a group to complete today's activities.
2. Work with this group to look at the interactive map of the Silk Road. Look at some of the artifacts and exchanges that were made along the Silk Road and discuss possible cultural exchanges that may have occurred through these transactions. We discussed this idea of cultural diffusion in sixth grade social studies. Work with your group to create a working definition of cultural diffusion.

Cultural diffusion is _____

3. Work with your group to read the descriptions and background information about each image/artifact you were assigned and record observations about each image/artifact. Make observations about the following:

- materials used to create the artifact
- notes about the artifact or writing observed
- inferences about the meaning of the artifact/image
- possible uses for the artifact
- social classes that created and/or used the artifact
- what this artifact may tell you about the culture that created it

- how the artifact and the culture it came from may have influenced and impacted the culture of various societies along the Silk Road

Day 2

1. Today you will join a new group formed with students from other image groups. Each student in your new group will use notes from yesterday's group work to discuss the artifacts their groups were assigned and the following questions:
 1. How did the Silk Road influence cultural diffusion between numerous civilizations from the past?
 2. How do you think cultural diffusion impacts and influences individual civilizations like China?
2. After this discussion, creatively display some of your group's responses to these questions on large pieces of paper and create a title for your poster (i.e #cultural diffusion).
3. As a group, look up various definitions of globalization, select the one your favorite definitions of globalization, and write the definition on the same poster.

Day 3

1. Today you will work with partners to conduct a webquest to search for new improvements in transportation, communication and technology that have facilitated cultural diffusion and globalization among people around the world today. Partners will share some of their findings with the larger groups of 10 and the group will need to creatively record some of the examples they found on their posters.
2. In your large groups, discuss the final question: What is globalization and how would you explain the similarities and differences between modern globalization and the Silk Road. Creatively display your responses to this answer in some sort of graphic representation (i.e. venn diagram) on your group's poster. Each group will share their posters with the rest of the class.

Images for Small Groups Day 1

Images for Group 1

Tankar/Iznik, Turkey

<http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/exhibitions/silkroad/artwork/69109>

Jade Brass Rings/China <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/set-white-jade-brass-rings>

Images for Group 2

China, Ming Dynasty

<http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/25230>

Tang Dynasty Statue/China <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/color-painted-hu-tribesman-riding-camel>

Images for Group 3

Pakistan, Bodhisattva

<http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/exhibitions/Indian/Bodhisattva>

Statue of a Lady in the Tang Dynasty/China <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/color-painted-lady-bamboo-hat-riding-horse>

Images for Group 4

Talismantic Textile/Senegal <http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/155969>

Porcelain Jar/China <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/dotted-caramel-glazed-porcelain-jar>

Images for Group 5

Mandala/Nepal <http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/58540>

Food Container/China

<https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/food-container-phoenix-ornamentation>

Images for Group 6

Persian Silver Coin <http://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/persian-silver-coin>

Jade Belt Buckle/China <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/white-jade-belt-buckle-engravings-musicians-and>

Images for Group 7

Glass Cup from Rome <http://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/glass-cup>

Statue of a Strong Man/China <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/white-rock-statue-strong-man>

Images for Group 8

Shoes South Korea <http://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/shoes>

Silver Jar/China <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/silver-jar-cover-and-hunting-design>

Images for Group 9

Clay Tablet/Syria <http://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/alphabet-ugarit>

Vase/China <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/light-colored-glazed-vase-peony-and-tendrils-carvings>

Images for Group 10

Elephant Statue/ Egypt <http://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/elephant-statue>

Textiles/China <http://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/piece-chinese-textile>

Sources:

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