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## Exploring Primary Sources— Exploration

**This sample includes the following:**

- Teacher's Guide Cover** (1 page)
- Teacher's Guide Table of Contents** (1 page)
- How to Use This Resource** (5 pages)
- Card Lesson Plan** (4 pages)
- Card** (2 pages)
- Document Lesson Plan** (6 pages)
- Document** (1 page)

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# Exploration

Teacher's Guide





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# How to Use This Resource

## Lesson Plans

The learning outcomes are the focus throughout each lesson.

Digital-only reproducibles are clearly labeled.

Page references and digital filenames make lesson preparation easy.

Essential questions provide inquiry anchors for students as they investigate enduring understandings.

This lesson plan page is titled "The Line That Changed the World Forever" and focuses on the Treaty of Tordesillas. It includes a "Learning Outcomes" section with two bullet points: "Students will discover the roles of religion and diplomacy in peacekeeping and exploration." and "Students will be able to explain the geographical and historical significance of the line of demarcation and Treaty of Tordesillas." The "Materials" section lists: "copies of Treaty of Tordesillas primary source card (tordesillas.pdf)", "copies of A Line Drawn in the Ocean (page 49)", "copies of the Line of Demarcation Map document-based assessment (page 56)", and "copies of World Map Outline (digital only)". The "Essential Question" is "How and why are political boundaries formed?". The "Guiding Questions" include: "Who appears to be the leader in this image?", "What can you infer about the time period, location, and people in this image?", "Why would a religious leader have so much influence?", and "How did the line of demarcation change history?". The "Introducing the Primary Source" section has three numbered steps: 1. Ask students to talk with partners about recent disputes they've had with siblings or friends. Did someone—a parent, teacher, or another friend—have to intervene to resolve the conflict? Was the outcome fair? Did the person who intervened have a bias that impacted their decision making? 2. Share the image of the Treaty of Tordesillas from the primary source card. Give students a few minutes to write at least five observations they have about the image. 3. Introduce the essential question, and use the provided guiding questions to discuss the image. Encourage students to ask their own questions to facilitate further inquiry.

The guiding questions help support development of inquiry by focusing on the primary source being studied.

Students collaborate to interact with the primary source through inquiry, textual analysis, and engaging activities.

These assessments provide opportunities for students to independently practice primary source analysis.

Key content vocabulary from the historical background information is bolded in student texts and defined here for reference.

This lesson plan page is titled "A Trip around the World" and focuses on Magellan's Ships. It includes an "Analyzing the Primary Source" section with five numbered steps: 1. Have small groups of students read the background information, A Voyage Across Earth. (A copy of this text at a lower reading level is provided in the Digital Resources.) Review the text by underlining the challenges Magellan and his crew faced on their expedition. 2. Provide time for students to complete at least two of the activities from the back of the primary source card. Then, share this translation by Henry Stevens of the Latin words guidance, Magellan, / Have we the new world found / Victoria is my rightful name, / Sail on my wings, my guardian fame, / The sea my battlefield I claim. (Oxford: 1895) 3. Ask students to think of an overseas location they want to travel to. Then, ask them to design the ultimate sailboat, using any of today's technologies. Explain that they may have students share where they want to go, their sailboat designs, and ideas about how Magellan's voyage may have been different if he had their sailboats. 4. As an extension to this lesson, you may choose to have students write essays about how Magellan's voyage might have turned out differently if he had not tried to force the islanders to change their religion. What is the difference between sharing one's religious views and trying to force others to change their religious practices? 5. To learn more about Magellan, see page 119 for a technology-based extension activity. The "Document-Based Assessment" section includes: "Distribute copies of Circling the Globe. A digital copy of the primary source is provided in the Digital Resources (globe.jpg)." and "Have students think about what they've learned throughout this lesson, carefully analyze the primary source, and respond thoughtfully to the questions." The "Key Words" section defines: "circumnavigated—went completely around something", "marooned—abandoned on an island or coast", "defied—refused to obey an authority", and "zealot—a person who is overly passionate about a cause."



# How to Use This Resource (cont.)

## Background Information

The historical background information provides students with key information about both the time period and the primary source. It is provided at two different reading levels to support differentiation. When preparing for a lesson, decide which level best meets the needs of your students. Use one level for all students, or differentiate the reading levels by student need.

- Encourage students to write strong questions they have as they read these texts. The *Creating Strong Questions* lesson on pages 28–30 will prepare students for this important aspect of the inquiry arc.
- Suggestions for annotations students could make while reading are provided in each lesson plan.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Adventure of a Lifetime

Marco Polo was born in 1254 into an adventurous family. His father and uncle were jewel merchants. They spent 15 years of Marco's early life on an adventure exploring the Far East. There, they met the ruler of the Mongol Empire—Kublai Khan. He was the son of Genghis Khan. When they returned to their home in Venice, Italy, they were ambassadors to Kublai Khan. Khan wanted them to bring him 100 men and a special oil from Jerusalem. In 1271, they took Marco Polo and two friars who had letters from the pope with them. However, the friars quickly abandoned the journey and gave the letters to Marco to deliver instead.

The Polo expedition sailed from Venice to Acre (modern-day Akko in Israel). Next, they travelled through Turkey and to the Persian port of Hormuz in modern-day Iran. They continued across the deserts, and evidence suggests that they rested one year in the mountains to recover from illness. Then, they crossed the mountains of Tibet and traveled through the Gobi Desert. In 1274, they finally reached the Khan's summer palace in Shangdu, China. There, they were received with an excited welcome.

The Polos stayed with the emperor for the next 16 or 17 years. Polo helped the government with many administrative duties throughout this time. He also explored different places in the empire. But, the Polos had been wanting to go back home for a while, and Khan finally let them leave in 1292. They accompanied a huge bridal party to

Persia. For the trip, they were provided with 14 ships. They sailed to the port of Hormuz in Persia. After leaving the wedding party in Persia, the Polos traveled onward to Europe. They went to the Turkish port of Trebizond (Trabzon). They were robbed there. Next, they sailed to Constantinople (Istanbul) and finally arrived back in Venice in 1295.

Their relatives and neighbors were happy to see them alive. But, upon returning, they found Venice at war with Genoa. Marco Polo was captured and imprisoned. During his jail sentence, he dictated stories to his cellmate, a popular romance writer. The book was originally called *The Description of the World*, but it has become known as *Il Milione*. In this book, Polo commented on many Far Eastern customs and the unique things that he had seen. But, there is no original, authentic manuscript, so it is difficult to authenticate the events in it. In many ways, Marco's book changed the world by sparking European interest in the exploration of the Far East and eventually the exploration of a new world.

Marco Polo and the Silk Road

Within the Teacher's Guide, the texts are leveled at a seventh- to eighth-grade reading level and are denoted by a triangle in the top right of each page.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Adventure of a Lifetime

Marco Polo was born in 1254 into an adventurous family. His father and uncle were jewel merchants. They spent 15 years of Marco's early life on an adventure exploring the Far East. There, they met the ruler of the Mongol Empire of Genghis Khan. He was the son of Kublai Khan. When they returned to their home in Venice, Italy, they were ambassadors to Kublai Khan. Khan wanted them to bring him 100 men and a special oil from Jerusalem. So in 1271, they decided to go back. They brought two friars with them. They also gave up on the journey. They gave the letters to Marco to deliver instead.

The Polos sailed from Venice to Acre. Acre is now modern-day Akko in Israel. Next, they traveled through Turkey, the deserts, and evidence suggests that they rested one year in the mountains to recover from illness. Then, they crossed through the Gobi Desert. In 1274, they finally reached the Khan's summer palace. It was in Shangdu, China. The people were excited to welcome them back.

The Polos stayed with the emperor for the next 16 or 17 years. Polo helped the government with many administrative duties throughout this time. He also explored different places in the empire. But, the Polos had been wanting to go back home for a while. Khan finally let them leave in 1292. They accompanied a huge bridal party to Persia. For the trip,

they had 14 ships. They sailed to the port of Hormuz in Persia. They left the wedding party in Persia. The Polos traveled onward to Europe. They went to the Turkish port of Trebizond (Trabzon). They were robbed there. Next, they sailed to Constantinople (Istanbul). They finally arrived back in Venice in 1295.

Their relatives and neighbors were happy to see them alive. But, upon returning, they found Venice at war with Genoa. Marco Polo was captured. He was imprisoned. During his jail sentence, he dictated stories to his cellmate, a popular romance writer. The book was originally called *The Description of the World*. But, there is no original, authentic manuscript. It is difficult to authenticate the events in it. In many ways, Marco's book changed the world. It sparked European interest in the exploration of the Far East and eventually the exploration of a new world.

Marco Polo and the Silk Road

Texts leveled at a fifth- to sixth-grade reading level are denoted by a square and are only provided in the Digital Resources.

Glossary terms are bolded to highlight their importance to the content. All glossary words are included in both levels of the information.

A Student Glossary is provided in the digital resources. This document includes the vocabulary words and definitions from all 16 lessons.

# How to Use This Resource *(cont.)*

## Student Activity Pages

**Amerigo Vespucci**

**About the Portrait**  
Amerigo Vespucci was an Italian sailor from a wealthy family. He was also a scholar, navigator, and geographer. Vespucci sailed the same route as Christopher Columbus. But while Columbus thought he was in Asia, Vespucci realized he had reached a new continent. A famous mapmaker later labeled the new continents "America." He named them after Vespucci's first name. This portrait was done by Crispin van de Passe. It was created between 1590 and 1637. The text around the portrait calls Vespucci "the discoverer and conqueror of Brazilian land."

**Analyzing History**

- Why is there a North and South America rather than a North and South Columbus?
- Imagine you got to interview Vespucci when he returned from his first expedition. What two questions would you like to ask him? How do you think he would answer?
- Why do you think Vespucci was able to figure out that he reached a new continent? Why didn't Columbus figure this out?
- Create a compare-and-contrast poster of Amerigo Vespucci and Christopher Columbus.

**Historical Writing**

**Fiction**  
Vespucci wrote letters about his journey along the coast of South America. He believed he was seeing a new continent. Write a letter to a friend as if you are Vespucci. Describe what you see, and explain why you think this is a new continent.

**Nonfiction**  
Write a letter to the leaders of Canada, the United States, and Mexico. In it, suggest a holiday that celebrates Vespucci. Give this holiday a name and date. Describe the activities that will take place on this day.

**Writing Challenge**  
Research Martin Waldseemüller. He was the mapmaker who named the new continent after Vespucci. Present a multimedia presentation about his life and accomplishments.

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Background information provides a concise description of the primary source image students will study.

Activities for students increase in complexity, providing scaffolded opportunities for student engagement.

Fiction and nonfiction writing prompts promote deeper connections to the primary source.

An inquiry-driven writing task challenges students to take their learning to the next level.

Key information about the primary source reproduction prepares students for the activity.

Engaging activities encourage students to use higher-order thinking skills as they analyze the primary source.

Extension challenges are provided to engage students in more complex tasks.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Chinese Treasure Fleet**

**About the Painting**  
In 1414, Zheng He sailed with his enormous treasure fleet to Bengal, India. The ruler of Bengal gave a giraffe to Zheng He as tribute or tax to the Ming emperor. Zheng He put the giraffe onto one of his ships and sailed back to China. He brought back many other exotic animals, such as elephants, rhinos, zebras, peacocks, and ostriches. They were given as gifts to the emperor. The giraffe was thought to be a very special gift. It resembled a qilin, or Chinese unicorn. This was a mythical beast believed to appear when an emperor was true and kind. The Ming emperor commissioned Chinese artist, Shen Du, to create this painting. Shen Du also included a poem at the top.

**Directions:** Historians estimate that Zheng He's ships were around 400 feet (121 meters) in length. Christopher Columbus commanded three ships. They each measured 70 to 80 ft (21 to 24 m) long. Complete the following activities to better understand Zheng He's ships.

- Outside, use a measuring tool and chalk to mark off the length of one of Zheng He's ships on the ground. Then, starting at the same spot, mark off the length of one of Columbus's ships.
- Research the types of ships used in Zheng He's fleet. Find out what they looked like! Then, on a separate sheet of paper, draw one of the ships. Add an animal or animals that might have been carried on the ship.

**Challenge**  
In seven voyages, Zheng He traveled about 35,000 miles (56,327 kilometers). Compare this amount with the total distance traveled by each of these explorers: Christopher Columbus, Sir Francis Drake, and James Cook. Who traveled the farthest? List the explorers in order of distance traveled.

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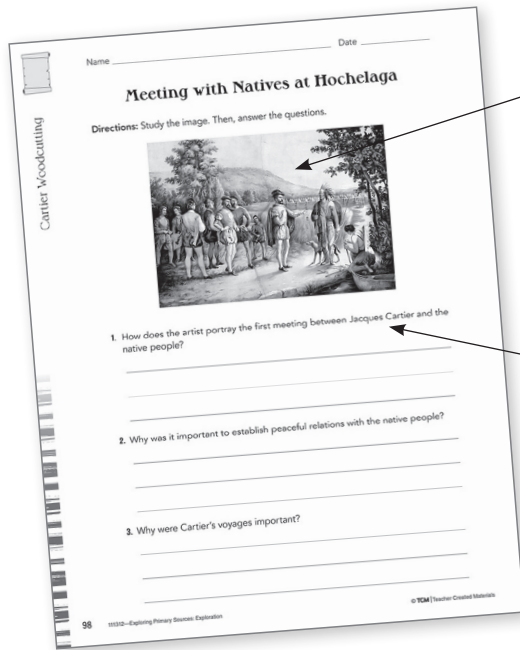
- **Hint:** Find and use the photograph button on your copier when copying student reproducibles, including document-based assessments. This will produce clearer images that will be easier to analyze.



# How to Use This Resource *(cont.)*

## Document-Based Assessments

A document-based assessment (DBA) connected to the content of each lesson gives students an opportunity to practice primary source analysis. These DBAs practice key skills needed for many social studies assessments in middle school and high school.



Each DBA includes a visual or textual primary source.

Students use general knowledge of the time period, what they learned in the lesson, and details in the primary source to respond to the constructed-response questions.

## Digital Resources

Projecting primary sources while students are analyzing them allows for whole-class discussions.

At times, projecting full-color versions of a primary source may be more beneficial than copying them on black-and-white copiers.



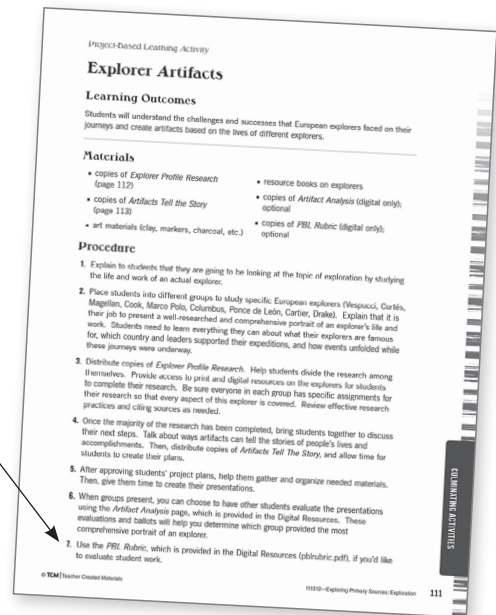
# How to Use This Resource *(cont.)*

## Culminating Activities

### Project-Based Learning Activity

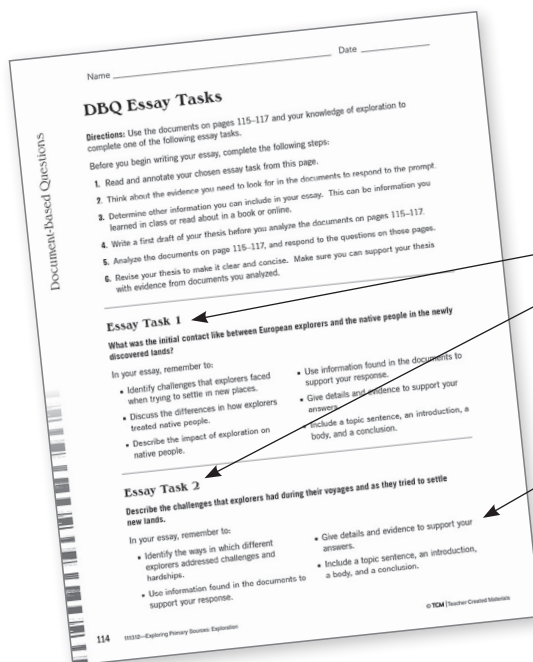
Engaging project-based learning (PBL) activities provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively and share what they've learned about the content.

Student presentations of PBL work are excellent for inviting guests to visit and see what students are doing.



### Document-Based Questions

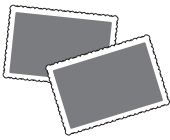
Document-based questions (DBQs) require students to analyze multiple DBAs and then respond to essay tasks in cohesive, well-supported essays.



Two essay tasks allow students to choose which DBQ they'd like to answer.

Each has a specific question and indicators to guide student responses.





# Viking Conquests

## Learning Outcomes

- Students will examine Viking exploration of new lands, their ships, and their settlements in European territory.
- Students will use their knowledge of Vikings to create board games about their conquests, ships, and lifestyles.



## Materials

- copies of *Viking Ships* primary source card (vikingships.pdf)
- copies of *Life of the Vikings* (page 37)
- copies of the *Leif Erikson* document-based assessment (page 38)

### Essential Question

- What motivates individuals and countries to explore new and unknown places?

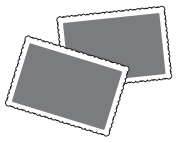
### Guiding Questions

- Looking at the photograph of the Viking ship, how do you think it was constructed?
- What is unique or interesting about the ship's design?
- How did the variety of Viking ship styles help the Vikings in their explorations and battles?
- How were Viking conquerors different from European conquerors?



## Introducing the Primary Source

1. Open the discussion about Vikings by asking students to share what they already know about them. List their responses on the board. Tell students that when they read the background information about Vikings, they will look for new information that is not yet listed or determine whether anything on the list is incorrect.
2. Display the photograph of the Viking ship from the primary source card. Give students a few minutes to make lists of the different parts and materials of the ship they can identify in the image.
3. Introduce the essential question, and use the first two guiding questions to discuss the photograph of the Viking ship. Encourage students to make predictions about when and how the boat was built and used.



## Viking Conquests *(cont.)*

### Analyzing the Primary Source

1. Have small groups of students read the background information, *Life of the Vikings*. (A copy of this text at a lower reading level is provided in the Digital Resources.) Review the key words with students as necessary. As students read, encourage them to annotate the text by underlining information that was not already listed on the board. Then, have students share new information, and add it to the list on the board.
2. Review the essential question, and discuss the remaining guiding questions now that students have more background knowledge.
3. Provide time for students to complete at least two of the activities from the back of the primary source card.
4. Explain to students that a local publishing company wants to publish new educational games. Have students work in pairs to create board games that teach facts about Vikings. Encourage students to do additional research as necessary. Make sure students include information about the Vikings' conquests, their ships, and their lifestyles. After students have completed their games, host a game day.

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### Document-Based Assessment

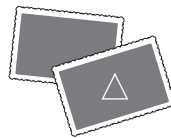
- Distribute copies of *Leif Erikson*. A digital copy of the primary source is provided in the Digital Resources (erikson.jpg).
- Have students think about what they've learned throughout this lesson, carefully analyze the primary source, and respond thoughtfully to the prompt.

#### Key Words

These key content words are included in both levels of the background information.

- **bow**—the front part of a ship
- **longships**—very long sail and oar ships
- **pagans**—people who believe in more than one god
- **settlements**—small villages in places that have been newly established





## Life of the Vikings

The Vikings were groups of Scandinavians from the countries we now call Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. They also had **settlements** in Iceland and Greenland. The Vikings were sailors, farmers, pirates, warriors, traders, raiders, and explorers.

Around AD 800, the Vikings first began raiding the British Isles, and they shocked and terrorized the citizens by committing crimes against the churches. It had been understood that churches were sacred places and were never to be seized during battles. But the Vikings were not Christians. They were **pagans**, meaning they believed in many gods. The Vikings raided villages and sacred places, killed people, and stole riches from the local churches. Other Viking groups conducted similar raids in France, Spain, Poland, and Russia. Raiders gained wealth from the money and goods they stole, while some of them forced and sold villagers into captivity.

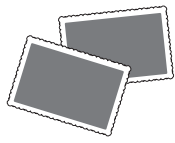
By 900, Scandinavians had formed settlements in Iceland. Around 980, a Viking named Erik the Red was exiled from Iceland for committing murder. He sailed west and found Greenland. He returned to Iceland in 985 and recruited other Icelanders to join him in setting up a colony. Erik the Red had three sons. One son, Leif Erikson, became one of the first Europeans to reach North America (about 500 years before Christopher Columbus). According to Viking legend, he learned of the new land from an earlier Viking explorer. Erikson decided to make his own journey to the land. He called the area

*Vinland*, which some historians believe is in modern-day Canada. According to legend, on his return trip to Greenland, he rescued people from a wrecked ship. He brought them back to Greenland and was given the nickname “Leif the Lucky.”

The Vikings used **longships** to make their sea journeys. Their ships had sails and oars so they could reach high speeds. Some of their ships had snake or dragon heads on the **bow**. Another type of boat style was the *knarr*, which was used both for cargo and exploring.

All ships were constructed using a special method. They were built using overlapping wooden planks, which is known as a clinker-built style. To keep water out, the overlapping boards were tarred and matted with animal hair. These ships had huge keels (or backbones) that extended front to back with a large sail. The ships were open, so the weather often made sailing a cold, wet adventure. It was better to sail in summer rather than winter to avoid violent storms. Vikings used the sun and stars to estimate northern and southern distances along with landmarks, wind, and water currents. Their boats suited both the heavy seas and shallow water, allowing the Vikings to sail easily and quickly.





Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Leif Erikson

**Directions:** This is a picture depicting a voyage led by Leif Erikson. Based on what you know about Vikings, describe what might have been the purpose of his voyage. Then, describe how the Vikings' explorations may have been different from other European exploration trips.



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# Viking Ships

## About the Photograph

This is a photograph of a Viking ship called the *Oseberg*. It was first built in Norway around AD 820. The remains of the ship were found in a burial mound at the Oseberg farm in 1903. It took 21 years to prepare and restore it. It is now displayed at the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo, Norway. The *Oseberg* could have been sailed or rowed. It has 15 holes on each side for oars, which allowed 30 men to row it. Another man, known as the helmsman, would have stood at the steering oar in the back. A lookout person would have stood at the front of the ship to keep watch. The *Oseberg* was ultimately used as a burial ship. The skeletons of two Viking women and many fine burial gifts were found behind the mast of the ship.

### Analyzing History



- How did the Vikings use their ships? Why were ships so important to their communities?
- Compare and contrast this Viking ship to the ships Christopher Columbus sailed.
- You have just landed a job as a host for a new show called *This Old Boat*. Plan a short episode about Viking ships and how they were constructed and used. Write your script. Include any props and tools necessary.
- Create a map of the Vikings' voyages to the New World. Be sure to label the land masses with the correct Viking names.

### Historical Writing



#### Fiction

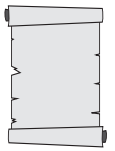
Write a short skit about the Vikings' exploration of Vinland. Include props, a narrator, and at least two scene changes.

#### Nonfiction

Write a report about another Viking ship at the Viking Ship Museum. Include information about its construction, materials, different parts and functions, and main uses.

## Writing Challenge

Write and create a script for a mini-documentary or podcast about the life of Leif Erikson.



# Traveling in Marco Polo's Steps

## Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to describe geographic knowledge during the fourteenth century and create maps of their own towns or cities.
- Students will map Marco Polo's adventures in the Far East and create informative safety lists for potential Silk Road travelers.



## Materials

- *Marco Polo and the Silk Road* reproduction (polo.pdf)
- copies of *Adventure of a Lifetime* (page 71)
- copies of *Desert Caravan* (page 72)
- copies of *The Catalan Atlas* (page 73)
- copies of the *Marco Polo's Journal Excerpt* document-based assessment (page 74)
- large world map

### Essential Question

- What are the impacts of sharing one's experiences and knowledge with others?

### Guiding Questions

- How does this map differ from typical maps today?
- What part of the world do you think this section of the map is showing? What clues can you find?
- What part of this journey would have been the most interesting to you?
- How might the world have been changed if the two friars had completed the journey and met Kublai Khan instead of having Marco Polo do their job?



## Introducing the Primary Source

1. Ask students to think about where they would want to travel if they could go anywhere in the world. In small groups, have them discuss why they would want to go there and how they would document their journeys (journals, photos, social media posts, etc.).
2. Share the *Marco Polo and the Silk Road* reproduction, and ask students to study it carefully. Then, project the digital copy of the document, and distribute copies of *Desert Caravan* for students to analyze more closely. It shows the section of the map believed to depict Marco Polo traveling with a group through the desert.
3. Introduce the essential question, and use the first two guiding questions to discuss the map. Encourage students to ask their own questions to facilitate further inquiry.

## Traveling in Marco Polo's Steps *(cont.)*

### Analyzing the Primary Source

1. Have small groups of students read the background information, *Adventure of a Lifetime*. (A copy of this text at a lower reading level is provided in the Digital Resources.) Review the key words with students as necessary. As students read, encourage them to annotate the text by circling all the different places Polo visited on his journey.
2. After students have finished reading the background information, have a large world map available at the front of the class. Have students take turns finding the various locations on the map that they circled in the background information. Use small sticky notes to mark each location. Then, discuss the last two guiding questions and any other questions students may have.
3. Distribute copies of *The Catalan Atlas*. Ask students to create maps of their towns or cities and include important places. If necessary, have students look up maps of the areas as a starting point. After students have finished, have them share their maps in small groups and discuss the locations they chose to include on their maps.
4. Bring the class back together, and explain that they are travel agents booking trips for people who want to walk in Marco Polo's footsteps. What do their clients need to know before traveling this dangerous road? Have each student create a personal list of suggestions for the client.

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### Document-Based Assessment

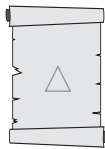
- Distribute copies of *Marco Polo's Journal Excerpt*.
- Have students think about what they've learned throughout this lesson, carefully analyze the primary source, and respond thoughtfully to the prompts.

#### Key Words

These key content words are included in both levels of the background information.

- **ambassadors**—people who are sent to other countries to officially represent their home governments
- **authenticate**—to verify that something is correct and authentic
- **dictated**—spoke aloud
- **friars**—members of a Roman Catholic religious order for men





## Adventure of a Lifetime

Marco Polo was born in 1254 into an adventurous family. His father and uncle were jewel merchants. They spent 15 years of Marco's early life on an adventure exploring the Far East. There, they met the ruler of the Mongol Empire—Kublai Khan. He was the son of Genghis Khan. When they returned to their home in Venice, Italy, they were **ambassadors** to Kublai Khan. Khan wanted them to bring him 100 men and a special oil from Jerusalem. In 1271, they took Marco Polo and two **friars** who had letters from the pope with them. However, the friars quickly abandoned the journey and gave the letters to Marco to deliver instead.

The Polo expedition sailed from Venice to Acre (modern-day Akko in Israel). Next, they traveled through Turkey and to the Persian port of Hormuz in modern-day Iran. They continued across the deserts, and evidence suggests that they rested one year in the mountains to recover from illness. Then, they crossed the mountains of Tibet and traveled through the Gobi Desert. In 1274, they finally reached the Khan's summer palace in Shangdu, China. There, they were received with an excited welcome.

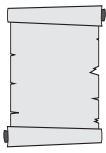
The Polos stayed with the emperor for the next 16 or 17 years. Polo helped the government with many administrative duties throughout this time. He also explored different places in the empire. But, the Polos had been wanting to go back home for a while, and Khan finally let them leave in 1292. They accompanied a huge bridal party to

Persia. For the trip, they were provided with 14 ships. They sailed to the port of Hormuz in Persia. After leaving the wedding party in Persia, the Polos traveled onward to Europe. They went to the Turkish port of Trebizond (Trabzon). They were robbed there. Next, they sailed to Constantinople (Istanbul) and finally arrived back in Venice in 1295.

Their relatives and neighbors were happy to see them alive. But, upon returning, they found Venice at war with Genoa. Marco Polo was captured and imprisoned. During his jail sentence, he **dictated** stories to his cellmate, Rustichello. He was a prisoner from Pisa and a popular romance writer. The book was originally called *The Description of the World*, but it has become known as *Il Milione*. In this book, Polo commented on many Far Eastern customs and the unique things that he had seen. But, there is no original, authentic manuscript, so it is difficult to **authenticate** the events in it. In many ways, Marco's book changed the world by sparking European interest in the exploration of the Far East and eventually the exploration of a new world.

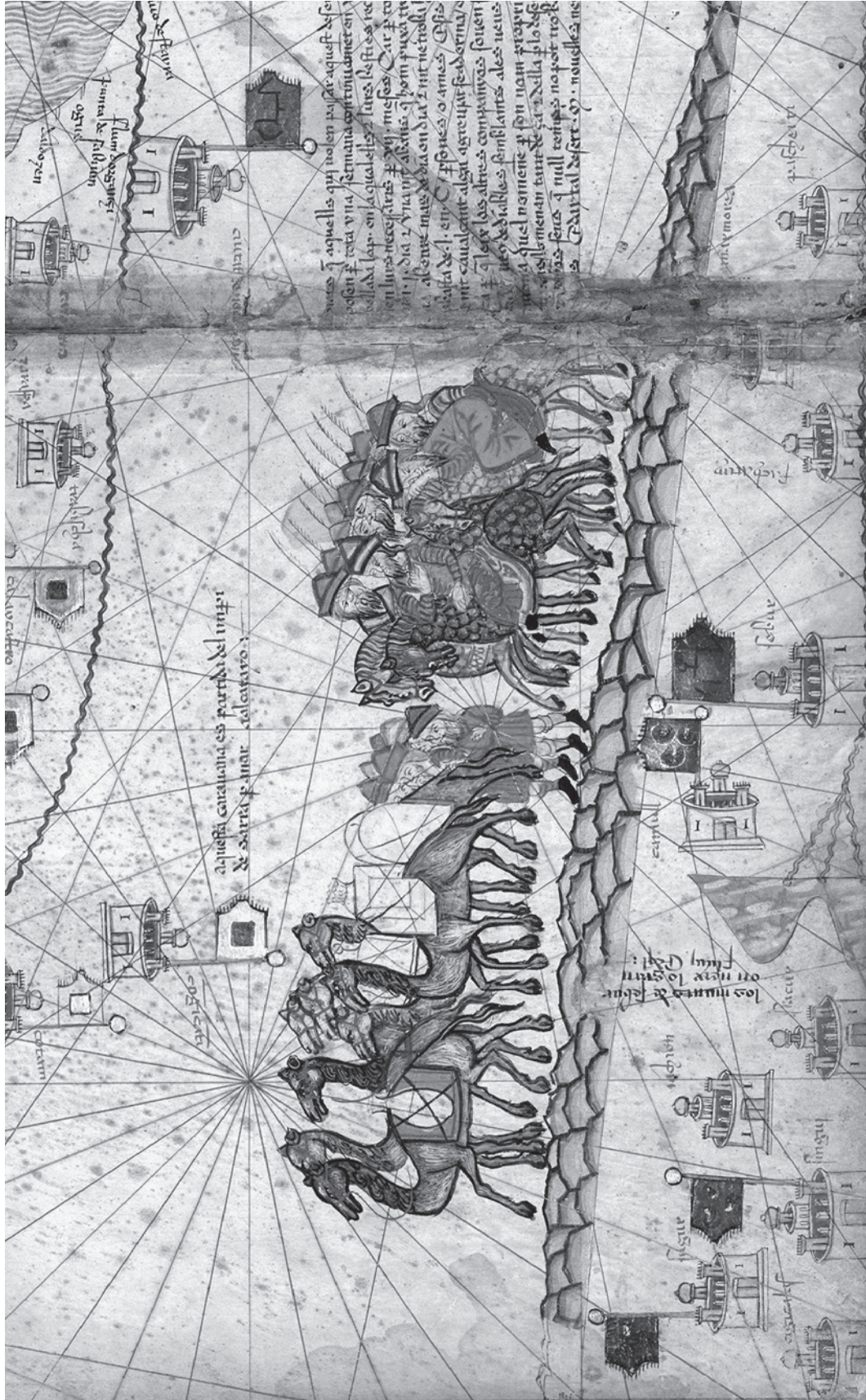


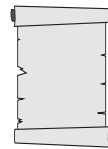




Marco Polo and the Silk Road

# Desert Caravan





# The Catalan Atlas

## About the Map

This image is part of the Catalan Atlas, a medieval map. It is thought to have been given to the king of France in 1375. It was created by Abraham Cresques. It is made of six panels. The map depicts a large portion of the world. It covers areas from the Atlantic Ocean to China. It also covers the areas from northern Europe to northern Africa. It shows details such as religious landmarks, important rulers, and even Marco Polo traveling with a caravan. Cresques wrote descriptive captions next to the map's most important features. He used information from many sources to create this map, including the stories Polo told about his travels. Once the Catalan Atlas was published, it inspired many people to embark on new explorations.

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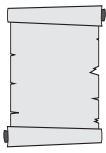
**Directions:** Create a map of the place you live inspired by the Catalan Atlas. Include symbols to show geographical details and important landmarks, such as government buildings and parks. Write captions for these important areas.



### Challenge

Research other medieval maps. How are they similar to and different from the Catalan Atlas?





# Marco Polo's Journal Excerpt

**Directions:** In this journal excerpt, Marco Polo describes a system of money that Kublai Khan started in his country. This type of money system is new to Polo. The money was made of mulberry tree bark and processed and shaped into rectangles of various sizes and amounts and sealed with the seal of the Great Khan. Then, answer the prompts about this money.

*"The procedure of issues is as formal and as authoritative as if they were made of pure gold or silver. On each piece of money several specially appointed officials write their names, each setting his own stamp... And then the money is authentic. And if anyone were to forge it, he would suffer the extreme penalty.*

*"Of this money the Khan has such a quantity made that with it he could buy all the treasure in the world. With this currency he orders all payments to be made throughout every province and kingdom and region of his empire. And no one dares refuse it on pain of losing his life. And I assure you that all the people and populations who are subject to his rule are perfectly willing to accept these papers in payment, since wherever they go they pay in the same currency, whether for goods or for pearls or precious stones or gold or silver. With these pieces of paper they can buy anything and pay for anything."*

The Travels of Marco Polo. Ronald Latham, trans. (1958)

1. Describe how this money system is like ours today and how it is different.

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2. Explain why this money system was so unusual to Polo during the years 1271–1295.

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Text in Voynich script, located in the upper central part of the map.

**ROY DELTAURIS**

**TARSSIH**

**LORAYDELLI**

**RRBBS HBHRR**

Text in Voynich script, located in the lower right quadrant of the map.

Text in Voynich script, located in the lower left quadrant of the map.

Text in Voynich script, located in the middle right part of the map.

Text in Voynich script, located in the middle left part of the map.

Text in Voynich script, located in the middle right part of the map.

Text in Voynich script, located in the lower right part of the map.

Text in Voynich script, located in the lower right part of the map.