

1 **Chapter 11**

2 **Grade Seven – World History and Geography: Medieval and**

3 **Early Modern Times**

- 4 • How did the distant regions of the world become more interconnected  
5 through medieval and early modern times?
- 6 • What were the multiple ways people of different cultures interacted at sites  
7 of encounter? What were the effects of their interactions?
- 8 • How did the environment and technological innovations affect the  
9 expansion of agriculture, cities, and human population? What impact did  
10 human expansion have on the environment?
- 11 • Why did many states and empires gain more power over people and  
12 territories over the course of medieval and early modern times?
- 13 • How did major religions (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and  
14 Sikhism) and cultural systems (Confucianism, the Scientific Revolution,  
15 and the Enlightenment) develop and change over time? How did they  
16 spread to multiple cultures?

17 The medieval and early modern periods provide students with opportunities to  
18 study the rise and fall of empires, the diffusion of religions and languages, and  
19 significant movements of people, ideas, and products. Over this period, the  
20 regions of the world became more and more interconnected. Although societies  
21 were quite distinct from each other, there were more exchanges of people,

22 products, and ideas in every century. For this reason, world history in this period  
23 can be a bewildering catalog of names, places, and events that impacted  
24 individual societies, while the larger patterns that affected the world are lost. To  
25 avoid this, the focus must be on questions that get at the larger world  
26 geographical, historical, economic, and civic patterns. To answer these  
27 questions, students study content-rich examples and case studies, rather than  
28 surveying all places, names, and events superficially. Students approach history  
29 not only as a body of content (such as events, people, ideas, or historical  
30 accounts) to be encountered or mastered, but as an investigative discipline. They  
31 analyze evidence from written and visual primary sources, supplemented by  
32 secondary sources, to form historical interpretations. Both in writing and  
33 speaking, they cite evidence from textual sources to support their arguments.

34 The thematic questions listed above relate to the following major changes that  
35 took place during medieval and early modern times:

- 36 • Long-term growth, despite some temporary dips, in the world’s population,  
37 beyond any level reached in ancient times. A great increase in agricultural  
38 and city-dwelling populations in the world compared to hunters and  
39 gatherers, whose numbers steadily declined.
- 40 • Technological advances that gave humans power to produce greater  
41 amounts of food and manufactured items, allowing global population to  
42 keep rising.
- 43 • An increase in the interconnection and encounters between distant  
44 regions of the world. Expansion of long-distance sea-going trade, as well

45 as commercial, technological, and cultural exchanges. By the first  
46 millennium BCE, these networks spanned most of Afroeurasia (the huge  
47 interconnected landmass that includes Africa, Europe, and Asia). In the  
48 Americas, the largest networks were in Mesoamerica and the Andes  
49 region of South America. After 1500 CE, a global network of  
50 intercommunication emerged.

- 51 • The rise of more numerous and powerful kingdoms and empires,  
52 especially after 1450 CE, when gunpowder weapons became available to  
53 rulers.
- 54 • Increasing human impact on the natural and physical environment,  
55 including the diffusion of plants, animals, and microorganisms to parts of  
56 the world where they had previously been unknown.

57 One of the great historical projects of the last few decades has been to shift  
58 from teaching Western Civilization, a narrative that put Western Europe at the  
59 center of world events in this period, to teaching world history. Decentering  
60 Europe is a complicated process, because themes, periods, narratives, and  
61 terminology of historical study was originally built around Europe. For example,  
62 the terms “medieval” and “early modern” were invented to divide European  
63 history into eras. Neither of the meanings of “medieval” – “middle” or “backward  
64 and primitive” – are useful for periodizing world history, or the histories of China,  
65 India, Southeast Asia, or Mesoamerica. Students can analyze the term  
66 “medieval” to uncover its Renaissance and Eurocentric biases, as a good  
67 introduction to the concept of history as an interpretative discipline in which

68 historians investigate primary and secondary sources, and make interpretations  
69 based on evidence.

70 Themes and large questions offer cohesion to the world history course, but  
71 students also need to investigate sources in depth. For this, a useful concept is  
72 the site of encounter, a place where people from different cultures meet and  
73 exchange products, ideas, and technologies. A site of encounter is a specific  
74 place, such as Sicily, Quanzhou, or Tenochtitlán/Mexico City, and students  
75 analyze concrete objects, such as a porcelain vase or the image of a saint,  
76 exchanged or made at the site. As students investigate the exchanges that took  
77 place and the interactions of merchants, bureaucrats, soldiers, and artisans at  
78 the site, they learn to consider not only what was happening in one culture but  
79 also how cultures influenced each other. They also gain fluency in world  
80 geography through maps.

81 Although this framework covers the existing seventh grade content standards,  
82 it reorganizes the units. Each of the new units has investigative focus questions  
83 to guide instruction and concrete examples and case studies for in-depth  
84 analysis. The new units are:

- 85 **1. The World in 300 CE** (Interconnections in Afroeurasia and Americas)
- 86 **2. Rome and Christendom, 300 CE to 1200** (Roman Empire, Development  
87 and Spread of Christianity, Medieval Europe, Sicily)
- 88 **3. Southwestern Asia, 300 to 1200; World of Islam** (Persia, Umayyad &  
89 Abbasid Caliphates, Development and Spread of Islam, Sicily, Cairo)

- 90 **4. South Asia, 300 to 1200** (Gupta Empire, Spread of Hinduism and Buddhism,  
91 Srivijaya)
- 92 **5. East Asia, 300 to 1300** (China during Tang & Song, spread of Buddhism,  
93 Korea & Japan, Quanzhou)
- 94 **6. West Africa, 900-1400** (Ghana, Mali)
- 95 **7. Americas, 300 to 1490** (Maya, Aztec, Inca)
- 96 **8. Sites of Encounter in Medieval World, 1200-1490** (Mongols, Majorca,  
97 Calicut)
- 98 **9. Global Convergence, 1450-1750** (Voyages, Columbian Exchange, Trade  
99 Networks, Gunpowder Empires; Colonialism in Americas & Southeast Asia,  
100 Atlantic World)
- 101 **10. Impact of Ideas, 1500-1750** (Spread of Religions; Reformation;  
102 Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, Enlightenment)

103

#### 104 **The World in 300 CE**

- 105 • How interconnected were the distant regions of the world in 300 CE?

106 This unit serves an introduction to world regions and interconnections as of  
107 the year 300 CE. The teacher explains that a central question of the seventh  
108 grade world history course is: **How did the distant regions of the world**  
109 **become more interconnected through medieval and early modern times?** In  
110 this unit, they will study the interconnections of world cultures in 300 CE. The  
111 world's people were fundamentally divided into two regions: Afroeurasia or the  
112 Eastern Hemisphere, and the Americas, or the Western Hemisphere. In the

113 Americas, there were many different cultures. In two areas, Mesoamerica and  
114 the area along the Andean mountain spine, there were states and empires with  
115 large cities supported by advanced agricultural techniques and widespread  
116 regional trade. In 300 CE, the Maya were building a powerful culture of city-  
117 states, and Teotihuacán in central Mexico was one of the largest cities in the  
118 world. These two centers traded with each other. In the Andes region, the state  
119 of Tiahuanaco extended its trade networks from modern-day Peru to Chile. While  
120 these two regions were probably not in contact with each other, trade routes  
121 crossed much of North and South America.

122       Within Afroeurasia, there were many distinct cultures that spoke their own  
123 languages, followed distinct customs, and had little contact with other cultures.  
124 However, across the center of Afroeurasia, many cultures were connected by  
125 trade routes. These trade routes were across land, such as the Silk Road  
126 between Central Asia and China, and across seas, such as the Indian Ocean  
127 and the Mediterranean Sea. Luxury goods, such as silk from China or  
128 frankincense from the Horn of Africa, traveled from merchant to merchant across  
129 Afroeurasia from the Atlantic to Pacific Coasts, but the merchants themselves did  
130 not travel that far. A small group of elite people (wealthy, land-owning, ruling,  
131 noble, religious leaders) in each of those cultures bought imported luxury  
132 products. Besides trade goods, travelers on the trade routes carried ideas and  
133 technologies from one culture to other cultures. Missionaries of Buddhism and  
134 Christianity spread their religious ideas. In 300 CE, the regions of Afroeurasia  
135 were much more connected to each other than ever before. However, they were

136 not as connected and intertwined as they are today. In 300 CE, the most  
137 important influences in each culture came from within that culture, rather than  
138 from contacts with the outside world.

139       Although there were hundreds of different cultures in Afroeurasia, there were  
140 four empires, states, and cultures that dominated the center of Afroeurasia.  
141 These were the Roman Empire (Mediterranean Region and Europe), the  
142 Sasanian Persian Empire (Southwestern Asia), Gupta Empire (South Asia), and  
143 China (East Asia). Students analyze maps that show these empires across  
144 Afroeurasia and trace the trade routes (on land and sea) that connected them.

145       Migrations continued to be important change factors. Along the northern edge  
146 of the agricultural regions of China, India, Persia and Rome, in the steppe  
147 grasslands, pastoral nomad societies moved east and west. Some formed  
148 mounted warrior armies which attacked the empires of China, India, Persia, and  
149 Rome and disrupted commerce on the silk roads and land trade routes across  
150 Eurasia. In Oceania, Polynesian explorers used outrigger canoes and  
151 navigational expertise to expand their settlement to new islands across the  
152 Pacific. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Bantu-speaking farmers were expanding  
153 southward and founding communities, mixing with or displacing older cattle-  
154 herding and foraging populations and expanding town and trade networks.

155       Between 300 and 600 CE, the disruptions caused by the migrations and  
156 attacks and the decline of some empires (such as Han China, Parthian Persia,  
157 and the Western Roman Empire), made these turbulent times for many peoples  
158 of the world. The number of big cities declined from an estimated 75 in 100 CE to

159 only 47 by 500 CE. But in other areas of the world, the networks of trade and  
160 interconnection expanded. As trade across the Sahara increased, Ghana  
161 emerged as a new commercial kingdom along the southern edge of the desert.  
162 The routes expanded southward to Aksum in East Africa, which flourished as a  
163 center of Indian Ocean trade. In the seventh century, a dynamic period of trade  
164 and cultural interchange took hold across Afroeurasia. Trade and the spread of  
165 religious ideas between societies in Afroeurasia increased again.

166

### 167 **Rome and Christendom, 300 to 1200**

- 168 • How did the environment and technological innovations affect the growth  
169 and contraction of the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, and  
170 Medieval Christendom? What impact did human expansion have on the  
171 environment?
- 172 • How was Rome a site of encounter?
- 173 • How did the Roman Empire gain and maintain power over people and  
174 territories?
- 175 • Did the Roman Empire fall?
- 176 • How did the religion of Christianity develop and change over time? How  
177 did Christianity spread through the empire and to other cultures?
- 178 • How did the decentralized system of feudalism control people but weaken  
179 state power?

180 This unit builds on the sixth-grade study of Roman civilization. Even if  
181 students did not study the Roman Republic in sixth grade, the seventh-grade

182 teacher should not spend time reviewing that phase of Roman history. Instead  
183 the teacher should begin with the question: **How did the environment and**  
184 **technological innovations affect the growth and contraction of the Roman**  
185 **Empire?** Rome began on the Italian peninsula and spread around the  
186 Mediterranean Sea. At its greatest extent, the empire stretched from Britain to  
187 Egypt and from the Atlantic to Iraq. It united the entire Mediterranean region for  
188 the first (and only) time. Although the Romans did conquer northwestern Europe,  
189 they were more at home in the warm, dry climate around the Mediterranean Sea.  
190 Geographically, northern Europe lies within the temperate climatic zone that in  
191 ancient and early medieval times was heavily forested. Atlantic westerly winds  
192 bring high rainfall, mostly in winter, to ocean-facing Europe. Deeper into Eurasia,  
193 however, these latitudes become drier and colder. In Mediterranean Europe,  
194 mild, rainy winters and hot, dry summers prevail. Beginning in ancient times,  
195 farmers converted forests of southern Europe into wheat fields, olive orchards,  
196 and vineyards. Farming advanced more slowly in the dense woodlands and  
197 marshes of the north. The California EEI Curriculum Unit, “Managing Nature’s  
198 Bounty,” has a map of the physical features and natural regions of Europe and  
199 lesson 4 explores the products of different European regions. Students analyze  
200 what effect geographic location had on the Roman Empire and on the Germanic  
201 peoples who lived in the northern forests beyond the Danube and Rhine rivers.  
202 Students map the extent of the empire and label the most important provinces  
203 (Egypt, Spain, Gaul, Greece, Syria, Palestine) and bodies of water. They also  
204 examine Roman buildings and roads to see the application of the two most

205 important Roman technological innovations: the arch and cement. Studying maps  
206 of roads, trade routes, and products traded within the empire shows that the  
207 Roman Empire was based on a network of cities. Those cities were dependent  
208 on trade with other regions of the empire. This is common today, but in the  
209 ancient world, it was not.

210 The teacher does not review the Roman Republic, but begins with the Roman  
211 Empire at its height, with the question: **How was Rome a site of encounter?** A  
212 site of encounter is a place where people of different cultures meet and  
213 exchange products, ideas, and technologies. At the site of encounter, new  
214 products, ideas, and technologies are often created because of the exchange.  
215 Rome was a multicultural empire. Romans spoke Latin, but they conquered  
216 Egyptians, Greeks, Syrians, Jews, Celts and Gauls, people who spoke Greek,  
217 Aramaic, and hundreds of other languages, and followed dozens of religions.  
218 Roman emperors built up the city of Rome to bring together the best from their  
219 empire and the world. Through studying Rome as a site of encounter, students  
220 explore the character and contributions of Roman civilization at its height.  
221 Residents benefited from sophisticated art, architecture, and engineering. For  
222 example, the Romans constructed huge aqueducts to bring water to cities from  
223 many miles away. Imports of grain and olive oil fed the city of between one and  
224 two million people at its height. The city featured a Colosseum for gladiatorial  
225 contests, a race track, theaters, baths (for both bathing and socializing), and  
226 elegant forums with markets and law courts. Many great thinkers and writers,  
227 such as the Pliny the Elder, Juvenal, Plutarch, and Virgil (or Vergil), lived and

228 wrote during the Roman Peace (Pax Romana), the two centuries of prosperity  
229 that began with the reign of Augustus Caesar (27 BCE-14 CE). However, this  
230 prosperity was based on riches from conquest and slave labor on large  
231 agricultural estates that provided food and luxuries for the cities. Wealthy  
232 Romans also purchased luxuries, such as silk from China, medicines and jewels  
233 from India, and animals from sub-Saharan Africa, brought into the empire by  
234 merchants on the Silk Road and other Afroeurasian trade routes.

235       Next students examine the question: **How did the Roman Empire gain and**  
236 **maintain power over people and territories?** After Augustus, Rome was ruled  
237 by an emperor who theoretically had total power. However, in practice, the power  
238 of the emperor was limited by the lack of an effective administration, except in  
239 the military. The Roman legions were the source of imperial authority. For civilian  
240 government, the empire relied on attracting local elites (landowners, wealthy  
241 and/or powerful people, religious leaders) to become local administrators.  
242 Corruption was a huge problem, and military leaders had too much power.  
243 However, the unity of Rome and the power of its culture gave many people a  
244 strong reason to support the empire. Roman citizenship was initially given to  
245 people from the provinces as a reward for service, for example, to retired  
246 auxiliary soldiers. They and their sons then had the right to vote. Gradually,  
247 everyone in the provinces gained citizenship, except for slaves. Broadening  
248 citizenship was a deliberate policy of certain emperors, who believed it would  
249 cause more people to support the empire and help it run smoothly. Roman laws  
250 also helped solidify the empire. A body of laws was passed down through the

251 centuries and ultimately influenced legal systems in modern states such as

252 France, Italy, and Spain, as well as Latin American countries.

### Grade Seven Classroom Example: The Roman Empire

To understand the Roman perspective on the empire’s power over other people and territories, students do a close reading of an excerpt from Vergil’s *Aeneid* (Book VI, lines 845-853). Mr. Taylor gives students a copy of the excerpt with the guiding question: **What did the poet Vergil think about the Roman Empire’s power over people and territories?** The handout also has a sentence deconstruction chart for the excerpt and a source analysis template.

For the first reading, the students read the excerpt to themselves and then discuss these questions: **Did Vergil think Roman power was good or bad for the conquered people? What words support your answer?** For the second reading, Mr. Taylor guides the students through a sentence deconstruction chart, pointing out the parallel phrases describing the “others” (the Greeks and Persians) and “you” (the Romans). The students also complete the source analysis template, with information from the textbook or teacher notes. They learn that Vergil was a Roman poet in the first century BCE. His patron was Augustus Caesar, the founder of the Roman Empire.

The historical context for the writing of the *Aeneid* was the beginning of the Roman Empire. In fact, Vergil wrote this poem to glorify the new empire and Augustus as its leader. For the third reading, Mr. Taylor divides the students up into pairs. Each pair marks up the text with cognitive markers and annotates it in

the margins. He then displays several of the pairs' annotated texts on the elmo, explains difficult points, and answers questions. For the fourth reading, students answer text-dependent questions. For the final question, Mr. Taylor calls for an interpretation to answer the focus question.

**CA HSS Standards:** 7.1.1

**CA HSS Analysis Skills (6–8):** Research, Evidence, and Point of View 5, Historical Interpretation 1

**CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy:** RH.6–8.1, 2, 6, SL.7.1, L5a

**CA ELD Standards:** ELD.PI.7.1, 6a

253

254 In the late second century, the Romans came up against limits. Roman  
255 armies could not defeat the Persian Empire in the east, and there was little  
256 reason to expand into the rural communities and forests of northeastern Europe.  
257 Deprived of its income from conquest, Rome still had to defend its frontier on the  
258 Rhine and Danube rivers from the Germanic peoples and its border with the  
259 Persian Sasanian Empire in the east. In the third century, the emperors  
260 Diocletian and Constantine separated the Roman Empire into two halves and  
261 reformed the empire to focus its resources on military defense. Constantine  
262 established a new capital for the Eastern Roman Empire at Byzantium, which he  
263 renamed Constantinople.

264 At this point, the teacher shifts to the development of Christianity. In the early  
265 years of the Roman Empire, Christianity began as a sect of Judaism in Palestine,  
266 a province of the Roman Empire. The teacher focuses on the question: **How did**

267 **the religion of Christianity develop and change over time? How did**  
268 **Christianity spread through the empire and to other cultures?** According to  
269 the New Testament of the Christian Bible, Jesus, a Jewish carpenter from the  
270 small Judean city of Nazareth, began to preach a message of peace and divine  
271 salvation through love. He taught that God loved all his creation, regardless of  
272 status or circumstance, and that humans should reflect that love in relations with  
273 one another. Jesus confirmed the Jewish belief in one God, but he added the  
274 promise of eternal salvation to believers. The Roman authorities in Judea  
275 executed Jesus. But under the leadership of his early followers, notably Paul, a  
276 Jewish scholar from Anatolia, Christians took advantage of Roman roads and  
277 sea lanes to travel widely, preaching to both Jews and others. As missionaries  
278 spread Christianity beyond the Jewish community, they abandoned some Jewish  
279 customs, such as dietary laws, to make the new religion more accessible to non-  
280 Jews. Christian communities multiplied around the Mediterranean, through  
281 Persia, and into Central Asia. The church communities welcomed new converts  
282 without consideration of their political or social standing, including the urban poor  
283 and women. Upper class and influential Romans who converted appear to have  
284 been predominantly women, and some of them assumed leadership positions.  
285 Many Jews did not convert to Christianity, and Judaism and Christianity split into  
286 two separate religions.

287       The Romans had an official state religion (Jupiter, Juno, deified former  
288 emperors) but they allowed people they had conquered to follow other religions.  
289 However, after some Jews rebelled against Roman rule, the Romans exiled

290 many Jews from Palestine, which led to the diaspora, or spreading out, of Jewish  
291 communities across Afroeurasia. Christians also got into trouble with Roman  
292 authorities because Christians refused to attend the official sacrifices to the  
293 Roman gods. The Roman authorities sometimes persecuted Christians and  
294 executed them, but at other times, Christians were left alone.

295       In the fourth century CE, Emperor Constantine legalized the religion of  
296 Christianity, and soon after, it became Rome’s state religion. Constantine wanted  
297 the Christian Church to unify and support the now divided Roman Empire. As it  
298 became a state religion, Christianity changed. The bishops who had been  
299 leaders of semi-secret, persecuted communities were now charged with  
300 supporting the Roman Empire. Constantine insisted that the bishops hold a  
301 council at Nicaea and agree on one set of Christian beliefs, summarized in the  
302 Nicene Creed. Church leaders selected certain texts (gospels and letters) for the  
303 official Christian Bible, which was translated into Latin. They organized the  
304 Christian Church with a Roman structure and gave their support to Roman  
305 authorities. Church leaders then vigorously tried to convert everyone to  
306 Christianity. As the Western Roman Empire shrank, Christian bishops often took  
307 over administration and defense of Roman cities.

308       The teacher points out that all religions change over time. In the historical  
309 context of 203 CE, when Christians were sometimes persecuted by the Romans,  
310 martyrs were very admired and made into saints of the early church. When  
311 Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, the religion  
312 changed again, and the new emphasis was on obeying Roman authorities,

313 behaving well, and converting non-believers to Christianity. The teacher  
314 concludes by telling students that they will return to this question about the  
315 development and changes in Christianity later in the unit.

316 Teachers now introduce students to the question: **Did the Roman Empire**  
317 **fall?** In 476 CE, the empire in the west disappeared, though the eastern half  
318 continued to thrive. As the Byzantine Empire, this Greek-speaking Roman state  
319 survived until 1453. Students examine the evidence (from the textbook or teacher  
320 notes) and form their own interpretations to answer the lesson question. They  
321 examine factors that might have contributed to the collapse of western Rome:  
322 declining financial resources, political corruption and insubordinate military  
323 groups, excessive reliance on slave labor, depopulation from epidemics, and  
324 worsening frontier assaults, as the Huns migrated westward and pushed waves  
325 of Germanic tribes into the empire. By the time the Western Roman Empire  
326 ended in 476 CE, it had already shrunk into a small area, a shadow of its former  
327 extent. The teacher may point out that mounted warrior armies from Central  
328 Eurasia caused problems for China, India, and Persia as well, and contributed to  
329 a decline of trade on the silk roads and other land routes across Eurasia between  
330 300 and 600 CE. The teacher has students meet together in groups to discuss  
331 the question and use their notes to make a T-chart of the reasons and evidence  
332 that support the “fall” of Rome, and the reasons and evidence that contradict the  
333 “fall” of Rome. Then the groups evaluate the reasons and evidence and  
334 formulate a one-sentence interpretation answering the question: **Did the Roman**  
335 **Empire fall?** The teacher also explains that if they argue that Rome did not fall,

336 they should choose another word to characterize the end of the Western Roman  
337 Empire and the transition to the Byzantine Empire in the east. After student  
338 groups prepare their T-charts and write their interpretations, a student volunteer  
339 from each group writes the group’s interpretation on the board. Groups share  
340 their reasons and evidence for and against, as the teacher records it on a T-chart  
341 on the board. Then the teacher and students review and discuss each of the  
342 interpretations. The teacher instructs student groups to review and revise their  
343 interpretations if necessary and identify the two pieces of evidence that best  
344 support their interpretation. The teacher explains that evidence must be specific.  
345 After students have selected the evidence in groups, each student writes a  
346 paragraph answering the question: **Did the Roman Empire fall?** They must  
347 include the two pieces of evidence. To support English Learners, the teacher  
348 provides a paragraph frame that starts each sentence with appropriate academic  
349 historical language.

350       Next students study the Byzantine Empire, with the question: **How did the**  
351 **environment and contact with other cultures affect the growth and**  
352 **contraction of the Byzantine Empire?** The Eastern Roman Empire was  
353 stronger than the Western portion. It had more people, more cities, greater  
354 manufacturing and commerce, more tax revenues, and more effective defenses  
355 against mounted warrior attacks from the north. Its military strength and wealth  
356 from the Afroeurasian luxury trade caused a flowering culture in the period  
357 between 600 and 1000 CE. The Byzantine Empire, as the eastern lands became  
358 known, had strong historical connections to earlier Hellenistic civilization. Its

359 language was Greek, not Latin. This state was highly centralized around its  
360 capital of Constantinople and the rule of the emperor and his officials. The  
361 Christian church in the Byzantine Empire was closely connected to the emperor  
362 and his administration.

363       The Byzantine Empire continued the Roman Empire’s conflicts with the  
364 Persians along the eastern frontier. This long conflict weakened both empires  
365 and left them vulnerable when Muslim armies attacked in the mid-seventh  
366 century. While Muslim Arabs conquered the Sasanid Empire, the Byzantine  
367 Empire survived, but lost huge territories in North Africa and western Asia. The  
368 Byzantine Empire shrank but it did not fall until 1453.

369       In the fourth and fifth centuries, the Western Roman Empire fragmented,  
370 causing population to fall, cities to shrink, and agriculture to contract. As the  
371 empire shrank, Germanic armies and migrants overran Europe, dividing the  
372 region into small rudimentary kingdoms. The teacher begins to prepare students  
373 for the question: **How did the decentralized system of feudalism control**  
374 **people but weaken state power?** The teacher points out that early medieval  
375 kingdoms did not have strong authority. Local leaders and landholders were  
376 much more effective rulers of their small territories. In the Middle Ages, all power  
377 was local, not centralized in a state. Over the next few centuries, there was little  
378 trade, and most cities disappeared. In the eighth century, a Muslim dynasty  
379 founded a strong state in Iberia. Charlemagne (768-814), was an exceptionally  
380 strong Christian king, who temporarily united a large part of Europe in the late  
381 eighth century and contributed much to the advancement of Latin literacy,

382 learning, and the arts. Students may read excerpts from Einhard’s *Life of*  
383 *Charlemagne* to analyze the factors that made Charlemagne’s rule so  
384 successful.

385       After Charlemagne, political order was again fragmented by Viking, Magyar,  
386 and Muslim invasions. Local power, established in parts of Western Christendom  
387 through feudal relations, was the key to defeating the invaders. In feudalism,  
388 kings and powerful regional rulers offered protection and farm estates, or  
389 manors, to less powerful knights in return for loyalty and military service. The  
390 manors provided the income needed for a knight’s horses, armor, and training.  
391 Knights, as lords of the manors, also controlled the serfs, peasants who were tied  
392 permanently to manor and obligated to give their lord labor and crops in return for  
393 security. Knights, regional lords, and aristocrats gained rights to hand down fiefs  
394 to heirs. Mothers and prospective wives often exerted great influence over  
395 marriages and family alliances. Gradually the elite mounted warriors began to be  
396 known as nobles.

397       These nobles wanted to keep control over local areas rather than to give  
398 power to the king and central government. Students learn about the conflict  
399 between King John and the great nobles in England, who forced the king to grant  
400 the Magna Carta. This document guaranteed trial by jury of one’s peers and the  
401 concept of no taxation without representation. From this root, other medieval  
402 developments in England, such as common law and Parliament, gradually limited  
403 the king’s power and laid the foundations of English constitutional monarchy.

404 In addition to considering the political aspects of feudalism, students look at  
405 these questions: **How did the environment and technological innovations**  
406 **affect the growth of Medieval Christendom? What impact did human**  
407 **expansion have on the environment?** In the tenth century, serfs and free  
408 peasants employed new technologies, such as the moldboard plow and the  
409 horse collar, to cultivate new farmland and boost agricultural production. Around  
410 1000 CE, these innovations caused an agricultural revolution in Western  
411 Christendom, which caused the population to increase, trade to expand, and  
412 cities to grow again. In this expansion, many of the forests of northern Europe  
413 were cut down, as humans used wood for heating and cooking and cleared land  
414 for farming. Lessons 2 and 3 of the California EEI Curriculum Unit, “Managing  
415 Nature’s Bounty: Feudalism in Medieval Europe,” analyze how feudal relations  
416 and the manor system allocated ecosystem resources, and how physical  
417 geography influenced feudal administrative positions and resource management.

418 As students return to study of Christianity, they return to the question: **How**  
419 **did the religion of Christianity develop and change over time?** First, they  
420 trace on a map the spread of Christianity across Europe and Afroeurasia (as far  
421 east as Central Asia). In the Middle Ages, people called the Christian parts of  
422 Europe “Christendom,” which shows that an important part of their identity was  
423 being Christian. Since kings and states were so weak, the Church, whose  
424 hierarchy of clerics extended from the Pope down to the village priest, became  
425 the largest, most integrated organization in Europe. The Church followed a  
426 hierarchy adopted from the Roman Empire. Missionaries spread out to convert

427 Germanic and Slavic people to Christianity. Christianity spread in Central and  
428 Eastern Europe, facilitating formation of states such as Poland in 966. Although  
429 most of the conversions were voluntary, some Christian kings forced people to  
430 convert to Christianity, as Charlemagne did to the Saxons in early 800s. Wealthy  
431 Christians donated land to monasteries, filled with monks and nuns who pledged  
432 themselves to live separately from the world. These monks and nuns were the  
433 only educated people, and they devoted themselves to copying Roman and  
434 Christian texts. Around 900, popes began to assert their control over the church  
435 hierarchy, which brought them into conflict with secular monarchs. Students learn  
436 about the split between the Orthodox Church, which acknowledged the  
437 leadership of the patriarch of Constantinople, and the Catholic Church, which  
438 recognized the authority of the pope in Rome. Churches in Eastern Europe  
439 (Russian, Greek, Serbian) followed the Orthodox or Greek Church, since  
440 missionaries led by Constantinople had converted their people to Christianity.  
441 Because missionaries led by Rome had converted people in Western, Central  
442 and Northern Europe, these remained in “the Church,” also called the Latin  
443 Church and, later, the Roman Catholic Church.

444

445 **Southwestern Asia, 300-1200: Persia and the World of Islam**

- 446       • How did the environment affect the development and expansion of the  
447       Persian Empire, Muslim empires, and cities? What impact did this  
448       expansion have on the environment?

- 449 • How did Islam develop and change over time? How did Islam spread to  
450 multiple cultures?
- 451 • What were the multiple ways people of different cultures interacted at the  
452 sites of encounter, such as Baghdad?
- 453 • Why was Norman Sicily a site of encounter?
- 454 • What were the effects of the exchanges at Cairo?
- 455 • How did the Muslim empires and institutions help different regions of  
456 Afroeurasia become more interconnected?

457 This unit examines the geography of Southwestern Asia (including the Middle  
458 East), the Persian Sasanian Empire, the emergence and development of Islam,  
459 the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates, and the spread of Islam, and interactions  
460 at three sites of encounter, Baghdad in the eighth century, Sicily in the twelfth  
461 century, and Cairo in the fourteenth century. The teacher begins with introducing  
462 the question: **How did the environment affect the development and**  
463 **expansion of the Persian Empire, Muslim empires, and cities? What impact**  
464 **did this expansion have on the environment?** A climatic map of Southwestern  
465 Asia shows that much of this area falls within a long belt of dry country that  
466 extends from the Sahara Desert to the arid lands of northern China. In lesson  
467 one of the California EEI Curriculum Unit, “Arabic Trade Networks,” students  
468 examine the physical features and natural systems of the Arabian Peninsula and  
469 the human improvements to farming practices which increased supplies of food.  
470 Across this dry zone, including Arabia, pastoral nomads herded camels and other  
471 animals, and oasis cities sheltered farmers, artisans, and merchants. North of the

472 Arabian peninsula is the lush agricultural land of Mesopotamia and Persia. Here  
473 settled farmers had supported an advanced civilization going back to ancient  
474 Mesopotamia. A map of the eastern hemisphere also shows students that  
475 Southwestern Asia, Persia, Arabia, the Red Sea, and the Persian (Arabian) Gulf  
476 were natural channels for land and sea trade in spices, textiles, and many other  
477 goods between the Indian Ocean world and the Mediterranean area. These  
478 geographical factors put Southwestern Asia and Arab, Persian, and Indian  
479 merchants and sailors at the center of the Afroeurasian trade networks, which  
480 began to grow dynamically after the seventh century.

481       The teacher turns briefly to the Persian Sasanian Empire from 300 to 651,  
482 when it was conquered by Muslim armies. The teacher reminds students that the  
483 Persian Empire (under different names, which aren't important for the students to  
484 memorize) had existed from about 550 BCE and was the heir to the ancient  
485 civilization of Mesopotamia. It was the most important state in Southwestern Asia  
486 and Rome and the Byzantine Empire's great rival for power in the eastern  
487 Mediterranean and western Asia. In the sixth century, the Sasanians ruled an  
488 empire that began at the Euphrates River and covered modern Iraq, Iran,  
489 Afghanistan, and parts of central Asia. Their ruler was called by the title "King of  
490 Kings." The official religion of Persia was Zoroastrianism, but they practiced  
491 religious toleration. Many Jews and Christians lived in the Persian Empire. Every  
492 land trade route across central Eurasia passed through the Persian Empire, and  
493 the tax income from the trade made the Persians wealthy. Continued warfare

494 against the Byzantine Empire weakened the Sasanian Persian Empire in the  
495 mid-seventh century and contributed to its fall to Muslim armies.

496 The students now turn to the emergence of the religion of Islam, as they study  
497 the question: **How did Islam develop and change over time? How did Islam**  
498 **spread to multiple cultures?** Along with Judaism and Christianity, Islam is an  
499 “Abrahamic” religion, that is, a faith built on the ancient monotheism of Abraham.  
500 Beginning in 610, Muhammad (570-632 CE), a resident of the small Arabian city  
501 of Mecca, preached a new vision of monotheistic faith. According to Muslim  
502 tradition, Muhammad, an Arabic-speaking merchant, received revelations from  
503 God, which were written down in the *Qur’an*. This message declared that human  
504 beings must worship and live by the teachings of the one God and treat one  
505 another with equality and justice. Divine salvation will come to the righteous, but  
506 those who deny God, “Allah” in Arabic, will suffer damnation. God’s  
507 commandments require all men and women to live virtuously by submitting to  
508 Allah and following the Five Pillars. Like Christianity and unlike Judaism, there is  
509 an afterlife in Islam; faithful believers are promised paradise after death. Islamic  
510 teachings are set forth principally in the *Qur’an* and the *Hadith*, the sayings and  
511 actions of Muhammad. These were the foundation for the Shariah, the religious  
512 laws governing moral, social, and economic life. Islamic law, for example,  
513 rejected the older Arabian view of women as “family property,” declaring that all  
514 women and men are entitled to respect and moral self-governance, even though  
515 Muslim society, like all agrarian societies of that era, remained patriarchal, that is,  
516 dominated politically, socially, and culturally by men.

517 Muhammad also founded a political state in order to defend the young Muslim  
518 community. He led armies of desert tribes to take over all of the Arabian  
519 peninsula. After his death, the leaders of the Muslim community chose one of his  
520 followers to be their new leader, with the title “caliph.” The caliphs sent armies  
521 northward to conquer part of the Christian Byzantine Empire and all of the  
522 Persian Sasanian Empire. As the Muslim conquests multiplied, the Umayyad  
523 dynasty of caliphs ruled an empire called the Umayyad Caliphate. Muslim armies  
524 continued to conquer land until by 750 CE, the Umayyad Caliphate extended  
525 from Spain to northern India. Muslims did not force Christians or Jews, “people of  
526 the book,” to convert, but people of other religions were sometimes forced to  
527 convert. Non-Muslims had to pay a special tax to the caliphate. Gradually more  
528 and more people in the caliphate converted to Islam, and Arabic, the language of  
529 both the conquerors and the *Qur’an*, achieved gradual dominance across much  
530 of Southwestern Asia (except in Persia) and North Africa. The Umayyad  
531 caliphate broke into several states after 750, but most of the Middle East  
532 remained unified under the caliphs of the Abbasid dynasty (751-1258) with its  
533 capital in Baghdad.

534 The teacher introduces the new capital of Baghdad as the next site of  
535 encounter, with the question: **What were the multiple ways people of different**  
536 **cultures interacted at sites of encounter, such as Baghdad?** The teacher  
537 asks students to think about what they have just studied about the spread of the  
538 Muslim Empire as one way people of different cultures interact. That is, Arabs,  
539 who were nomadic tribesmen from Arabia, converted to a new religion, and

540 inspired by that religion, fought wars against other cultures. One type of cultural  
541 interaction is war. After the conquest, people of other cultures had to live under  
542 Umayyad Muslim rule and pay special taxes if they belonged to another religion.  
543 This type of cultural interaction is called coexistence in communities. Another  
544 type is adoption and adaptation. Some of these conquered people adopted the  
545 new religion for various reasons, such as religious conversion, access to political  
546 power, and socio-economic advantages. As they converted, they changed their  
547 names, their social identity, and associated with Muslims in their area, rather  
548 than with their home group of Jews, Christians, or others. Over time, they  
549 adopted more of Arab culture as well. However, as they adopted the Muslim  
550 religion and Arab culture, they also adapted religious and cultural practices to  
551 accommodate local customs. For example, the custom of secluding elite women  
552 inside a special part of the house and only allowing them to go out when their  
553 hair and most of their bodies were covered predates the religion of Islam. It was  
554 actually a Persian and Mediterranean (and ancient Athenian) custom. Before  
555 Islam, Arabian women were not confined to the household. The Persians and  
556 Mediterranean people who converted to Islam adapted social practices to include  
557 their custom. This is just one example of the cultural adaptation process.

558       Under the Abbasids, Baghdad grew from an insignificant village to one of the  
559 leading cities of the world. The city's culture was a mix of Arab, Persian, Indian,  
560 Turkish, and Central Asian culture. The Abbasids encouraged the growth of  
561 learning and borrowing from Greek, Hellenistic, and Indian science and medicine.  
562 They built schools and libraries, translated and preserved Greek philosophic,

563 scientific, and medical texts, and supported scientists who expanded that  
564 knowledge. In Baghdad and other Muslim-ruled cities, Muslim, Christian, and  
565 Jewish scholars collaborated to study ancient Greek, Persian, and Indian  
566 writings, forging and widely disseminating a more advanced synthesis of  
567 philosophical, scientific, mathematical, geographic, artistic, medical, and literary  
568 knowledge. To investigate the question: **What did the interaction of Arab,  
569 Persian, Greek, Hellenistic, and Indian ideas and technologies at Baghdad  
570 (and the Abbasid caliphate) produce?** students analyze visuals of libraries,  
571 schools, and scientific drawings from Muslim manuscripts, the circulation of  
572 “Arabic” numerals, and words of Arabic origin (such as algebra, candy, mattress,  
573 rice). The teacher sets up a gallery walk and provides student groups with a  
574 source analysis template. The template asks students to record source  
575 information, describe the contents of the visual, and cite evidence from the visual  
576 that answers the lesson question. Students share some of their observations and  
577 answers to the whole class, as the teacher lists the products on the board. Then  
578 the teacher guides students through developing a one-sentence interpretation  
579 that answers the question. The students then return to their groups to discuss the  
580 evidence they have gathered. The teacher stresses that they should choose the  
581 best two pieces of evidence from their gallery walk. The group chooses two  
582 pieces of evidence and each group member completes an evidence analysis  
583 chart (with columns for evidence, meaning, significance, and source). The  
584 teacher displays several group charts on the elmo, clears up any

585 misconceptions, and showcases examples of good evidence choices, analyses,  
586 and citations.

587       After 900, the Abbasid Empire began to fragment into many smaller states.  
588 However, the common knowledge of Arabic, the pilgrimage to Mecca, and  
589 extensive trade and travel unified the Muslim world. Islam continued to spread,  
590 sometimes by conquest, but also by the missionary work of Sufis and traveling  
591 Muslim merchants. Sufi saints and teachers combined local and Islamic  
592 traditions, and inspired common people on the frontier areas of the Muslim world  
593 – east Africa, Southeast Asia, and India – to convert.

The History Blueprint is a free curriculum developed by the California History-Social Science Project (<http://chssp.ucdavis.edu>), designed to increase student literacy and understanding of history. Three units are available for free download from the CHSSP's website, including Sites of Encounter in the Medieval World, a comprehensive standards-aligned unit for seventh-grade teachers that combines carefully selected and excerpted primary sources, original content, and substantive support for student literacy development. For more information or to download the curriculum, visit:

<http://chssp.ucdavis.edu/programs/historyblueprint>.

594

595       The teacher now tells students that they are going to look at Western  
596 Christendom and the World of Islam together through studying the site of  
597 encounter in twelfth-century Norman Sicily, using the History Blueprint's Sites of  
598 Encounter in the Medieval World unit, starting with the question: **Why was**

599 **Norman Sicily a site of encounter?** Because of its geographical location,  
600 multicultural population and tolerant rulers, the Norman kingdom of Sicily was a  
601 major site of exchange among Muslims, Jews, Latin Roman Christians, and  
602 Greek Byzantine Christians in the twelfth century. At the same time, Latin  
603 Christian crusaders were battling with Syrian, Arab, Egyptian, and North African  
604 Muslim warriors over territory and religious differences. Whereas in the past  
605 historians placed emphasis on religious differences and the Crusades, historians  
606 now emphasize the common features of these Mediterranean cultures and the  
607 many ways in which Christians, Muslims, and Jews interacted. The Sicily lesson  
608 reflects this new world history approach to the medieval Mediterranean. Rather  
609 than directly teaching one interpretation, the teacher presents the primary  
610 sources, guides students through analyzing them and gathering evidence, and  
611 asks students to form their own interpretation to answer the question: **Was there**  
612 **more trade (with peace and tolerance) or conflict (especially conflict**  
613 **between religious groups)?** Students investigate Al-Idrisi's world map, excerpts  
614 from Geoffrey Malaterra and Ibn Jubayr, documents from the Cairo Geniza and  
615 the Venetian archives, lists of trade goods, and visuals of objects created and  
616 sold in Sicily through map activities, close readings, a gallery walk, and  
617 discussion. Students analyze the content of the lesson in a graphic organizer that  
618 also introduces them to the concept of cause-and-effect historical reasoning.

619       The central position of Islamic world in Afroeurasia became increasingly  
620 important as trade and exchange expanded. Muslim merchants, scholars and  
621 Sufis traveled between the great cities, such as Córdoba, Damascus and Cairo,

622 which produced luxury goods such as steel swords and embroidered silk capes.  
623 Students investigate the question: **How did the Muslim empires and**  
624 **institutions help different regions of Afroeurasia become more**  
625 **interconnected?** through the second site of encounter in the History Blueprint  
626 lesson, Cairo in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Cairo was at the center of  
627 the network of roads, sea routes, and cities that supported trade and pilgrimage  
628 in the Islamic world, making it one of the most important trade cities in  
629 Afroeurasia. Students work with the Sites of Encounter in the Medieval World  
630 interactive map either online or through the teacher’s projection to make an  
631 interpretation about the question: **Looking at its geographic position, what**  
632 **advantages did Cairo have as a trade city?** Either individually or in pairs,  
633 students read a secondary informative text, “Cairo Background Reading,” answer  
634 text-dependent questions, and, in a group, summarize the main ideas of the text  
635 in a cause-and-effect graphic organizer around the question: **What were the**  
636 **effects of the exchanges at Cairo?** The Islamic world was a network of cities  
637 that was tied together by common religion, pilgrimage, trade, and intellectual  
638 culture. Islamic institutions, such as the pilgrimage (or hajj), caravans,  
639 caravanserais, funduqs, souqs, and madrassas, and favorable policies of city  
640 and state governments provided major assistance to merchants and travelers. In  
641 a gallery walk of primary-source visuals of and text excerpts about these  
642 institutions, students gather and analyze evidence using an evidence analysis  
643 chart. The same routes also transmitted technologies and food plants. For  
644 example, paper-making technology reached the Southwestern Asia from China

645 around the eighth century and spread from there to Europe in the following 300  
646 years. Food plants, including sugar cane, oranges, melons, eggplants, and  
647 spinach, were diffused widely along the exchange routes. Lesson three of the  
648 California EEI Curriculum Unit, “Arabic Trade Networks,” helps students analyze  
649 the circulation of regional products throughout Afroeurasia. Less positive things  
650 also spread along trade routes, such as the bubonic plague. The Black Death of  
651 the 1300s killed millions in China and caused the population of Europe and the  
652 Muslim world to plummet temporarily by about a third. In the Cairo lesson,  
653 students read primary sources from Ibn Battuta, Agnolo di Tura, and al-Maqrizi  
654 describing the impact of the Black Death of 1348-1350 in Europe and the Muslim  
655 world.

656 Using the information from the lesson sources, graphic organizers and  
657 evidence analysis charts, students write an argumentative paragraph on the  
658 question: **Which of the effects of the exchanges at Cairo do you think was**  
659 **the most important?** They make a claim, state their reasons, and support the  
660 reasons with evidence from the primary sources. The “Effects Paragraph”  
661 assignment has sentence starters for the claim and reasons and an evidence  
662 analysis chart that helps student paraphrase, analyze, and cite evidence. For  
663 English Learners, there are also sentence frames with appropriate academic and  
664 disciplinary language to paraphrase, analyze, and cite the two pieces of  
665 evidence. After providing feedback to students on their claims, reasons, and use  
666 and analysis of evidence, the teacher concludes by telling students that they will  
667 be returning to the Islamic trade and pilgrimage network in future units. Muslim

668 merchants eventually traded from China to the Mediterranean, and Jewish  
669 merchants also traded freely in the Muslim world. They established communities  
670 across Afroeurasia that were connected by family ties and trade connections.

671

## 672 **South Asia, 300 to 1200**

- 673 • Under the Gupta Empire, how did the environment, cultural and religious  
674 changes, and technological innovations affect the people of India?
- 675 • How did Indian monks, nuns, merchants, travelers, and states spread  
676 religious ideas and practices and cultural styles of art and architecture to  
677 Central and Southeast Asia?
- 678 • How did the religions of Hinduism and Buddhism spread and change over  
679 time?

680 The Gupta monarchs reunified much of the subcontinent in the third century  
681 CE, ushering in the Classical Age of India. As they study the question: **Under the**  
682 **Gupta Empire, how did the environment, cultural and religious changes,**  
683 **and technological innovations affect the people of India?** students learn that  
684 the Gupta dynasty (280-550 CE) presided over a rich period of religious, socio-  
685 economic, educational, literary, and scientific development, including the base-  
686 ten numerical system and the concept of zero. The level of interaction in all  
687 aspects of life—commercial, cultural, religious—among the people of various parts  
688 of India was intensive and widespread during this time period, much more so  
689 than in earlier periods. This helped produce a common Indic culture that unified  
690 the people of the subcontinent. Buddhist monasteries and Hindu temples and

691 schools spread. Sanskrit became the principal literary language throughout India.  
692 Enduring contributions of ancient Indian civilization to other areas of Afroeurasia  
693 include the cotton textile industry, the technology of crystalizing sugar,  
694 astronomical treatises, the practice of monasticism, the game of chess, and the  
695 art, architecture, and performing arts of the Classical Age. Students analyze  
696 maps of the extent of the Gupta Empire and visuals of its achievements in  
697 science, math, art, architecture, and Sanskrit literature. After the fall of the Gupta  
698 Empire, India had many states. The Chola Empire ruled over much of southern  
699 India and established maritime commercial trading networks throughout much of  
700 the Indian Ocean. The Chola are associated with significant artistic achievement  
701 that included the building of monumental Hindu temples and the creation of  
702 remarkable sculptures and bronzes.

703 Building on their previous study of Hinduism in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, students study the  
704 question: **How did Hinduism change over time?** Hinduism continued to evolve  
705 with the Bhakti movement, which emphasized personal expression of devotion to  
706 God, who had three aspects: Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the protector, and  
707 Siva, the transformer. The Bhakti movement placed emphasis on social and  
708 religious equality and a personal expression of devotion to God in the popular,  
709 vernacular languages. People of all social groups now had personal access to  
710 their own personal deities, whom they could worship with songs, dances,  
711 processions, and temple visits. Bhakti grew more popular, thanks to saints such  
712 as Meera Bai and Ramananda. Even though India was not unified into one state,  
713 nor did its people belong to a single religion, the entire area was developing a

714 cultural unity.

715       Students next examine this question: **How did Indian monks, nuns,**  
716 **merchants, travelers, and states spread religious ideas and practices and**  
717 **cultural styles of art and architecture to Central and Southeast Asia?** During  
718 and after the Gupta Empire, trade connections between India and Southeast Asia  
719 facilitated the spread of Hindu and Buddhist ideas to Srivijaya, a large trading  
720 empire after 600, Java, and the Khmer Empire. In the Sites of Encounter in the  
721 Medieval World Lesson 6: Calicut, the “Indian and Southeast Asian Art” activity  
722 has students compare art and architecture from India and Southeast Asia. When  
723 students have compiled their evidence, the teacher asks them why they think  
724 Southeast Asian rulers would adopt religious ideas and artistic styles from Indian  
725 kingdoms. After they share their interpretations, the teacher points out that pre-  
726 modern rulers displayed their power through temples and that the architectural  
727 similarities among the temples are evidence of a shared culture of rulership in the  
728 region. In addition to personal religious motives, Southeast Asian kings could  
729 build up their prestige and legitimacy by adopting the cultural, religious, and  
730 artistic styles of the powerful and prestigious Indian kingdoms and empires.

731       Next students examine the question: **How did Buddhism spread and**  
732 **change over time?** Buddhist missionaries and travelers carried Buddhism from  
733 India to Central Asia and then to China, as well as to Southeast Asia, during this  
734 period as well. At the same time, Christian and Muslim missionaries were also  
735 spreading their religions. As it moved outside of India and became a universal  
736 religion, Buddhism changed. In 600 BCE, Buddha was sage, a wise man; but by

737 300 CE, his followers were worshipping the Buddha as a god. Nirvana changed  
738 from “nothingness” or “extinction” to a kind of heaven for believers in the afterlife.  
739 Mahayana Buddhists also added the idea that there were bodhisattvas, divine  
740 souls who delayed entering nirvana to help others on earth. Either here, or in the  
741 China unit, students trace the journey of Xuanzang, who departed from China in  
742 627 CE on pilgrimage to Buddhist holy sites in India. He returned home with 527  
743 boxes of Buddhist texts, which he devoted the rest of his life to translating. The  
744 building of monasteries along the Silk Road, at Dunhuang, Yungang and  
745 Bamiyan, helped transmit texts, people, and religious ideas through Central to  
746 East Asia.

747 After 1000, Turks from Central Asia, who were recent converts to Islam,  
748 began to conquer states in northwestern India. Sometimes Turkish Muslim  
749 leaders forced Hindus to convert, but at other times rulers practiced religious  
750 toleration. The most powerful of these states was the Delhi Sultanate. Islam  
751 became firmly established politically in the north as well as in some coastal towns  
752 and parts of the Deccan Plateau, although the majority of the population of South  
753 Asia remained Hindu. There were continuous close trade relations and  
754 intellectual connections between India and the Islamic World. As a concrete  
755 example of cultural transmission, students may trace the Gupta advances in  
756 astronomy and mathematics (particularly the numeral system which included a  
757 place value of ten) to the work of al-Khwarizmi, a Persian mathematician of the  
758 ninth century, who applied the base-ten numerical system pioneered in India to  
759 the study of algebra, a word derived from the Arabic *al-jabr*, meaning

760 “restoration.” As trade grew along the sea-routes of the Indian Ocean, India  
761 became a major producer of cotton cloth, spices, and other commodities with a  
762 volume of exports second only to China.

763

#### 764 **East Asia, 300-1300: China and Japan**

- 765 • How did the Tang and Song dynasties gain and maintain power over  
766 people and territories?
- 767 • How did the environmental conditions and technological innovations cause  
768 the medieval economic revolution? What were the effects of this  
769 revolution?
- 770 • Why was Quanzhou such an important site of encounter?
- 771 • How did Chinese culture, ideas, and technologies and Buddhism influence  
772 Korea and Japan?
- 773 • What influence did samurai customs and values have on the government  
774 and society of medieval Japan?

775 From 300 to 1300 CE, China had a larger population and economy than any  
776 other major region of the world. Students begin their study with the question:

777 **How did the Tang and Song dynasties gain and maintain power over people**

778 **and territories?** After a long period of disunity, the Sui (589-618) and Tang

779 dynasties (618-907) reunited China. The Tang rulers rebuilt a government

780 modeled on the Han dynasty. Scholar-officials, trained in Confucianism, advised

781 the emperor and administered the empire. Confucian principles specified that

782 government should operate as a strict hierarchy of authority from the emperor,

783 who enjoyed the “Mandate of Heaven” as long as he ruled justly, down to the  
784 local village official. The Tang had an active foreign policy and spread their  
785 influence along the Silk Road to the west, as far as the border of the Abbasid  
786 Caliphate. The two empires fought a battle in Central Asia in 751, from which the  
787 Chinese retreated. The Tang dynasty extended influence and cultural pressure  
788 on Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. The Song dynasty took over in 960. The Song  
789 supervised strong cultural and economic growth, with magnificent cities and  
790 cultural productions. The *Visual Sourcebook of Chinese Civilization* website has  
791 visuals and interactive activities to help students analyze primary sources from  
792 the Song and other dynasties. The Song instituted an official examination system  
793 for scholar-officials, which gave China a civil service bureaucracy many centuries  
794 before any other state. China had the strongest and most centralized government  
795 in the world. However, the Song struggled militarily against nomadic tribes from  
796 the north. One group of nomads overran the Northern Song region and captured  
797 the emperor. Survivors of the Song imperial family maintained the Southern Song  
798 Empire from 1126 to 1260, when they fell to the Mongols. Under the pressure  
799 from the loss of the north to “barbarians,” the Southern Song emphasized the  
800 superiority of Chinese traditions.

801       Despite these military problems, China became Afroeurasia’s major economic  
802 powerhouse in this period, due to the medieval economic revolution. Students  
803 analyze the question: **How did the environmental conditions and**  
804 **technological innovations cause the medieval economic revolution? What**  
805 **were the effects of this revolution?** Cause-and-effect graphic organizers help

806 students analyze the many factors that contributed to the Chinese economic  
807 revolution that occurred between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. The  
808 factors of population growth, expansion of agriculture, urbanization, spread of  
809 manufacturing, and technological innovation were both causes and effects of the  
810 economic revolution, as each factor intensified the effects of the others. The  
811 economic revolution began with the introduction (from Vietnam) of champa rice, a  
812 variety that produces two crops per year. Farmers migrated to the Yangzi River  
813 valley to take advantage of the increased yield, and the population grew rapidly.  
814 Chinese laborers and merchants extended the empire’s system of canals  
815 connecting navigable rivers to about 30,000 miles. The system was financed by  
816 state taxes on trade, and led to even more trade. Blast furnaces quadrupled the  
817 output of iron and steel in the eleventh century alone. Availability of steel enabled  
818 increased production in other industries. Technicians experimented with  
819 gunpowder rockets and bombs. Woodblock printing became a standard industry,  
820 and printed books circulated widely. The hundreds of inventions of the Tang and  
821 Song eras included the magnetic compass, advanced kilns for firing porcelain,  
822 and wheels for spinning silk. In California EEI Curriculum Unit, “Genius Across  
823 the Centuries,” students research five important Chinese inventions of this period  
824 (tea, the manufacture of paper, wood-block printing, the compass, and  
825 gunpowder), examine a map of China’s natural regions, identify the sources of  
826 raw materials used in each invention, and evaluate the influence of these  
827 Chinese inventions on the natural systems of medieval China. The teacher points  
828 out the similarity of the agricultural revolution in Medieval Christendom at about

829 the same time (ca. 1000). In both cases, improvements in farming technology led  
830 the way, and growth in trade, inventions, cities, and population resulted. Both  
831 cultures benefited from increased Afroeurasian trade as well.

832 Students then investigate this question: **Why did Quanzhou become such**  
833 **an important site of encounter?** Located on China’s southeast coast,  
834 Quanzhou was a primary destination for Arab, Persian, Indian, and Southeast  
835 Asian ships carrying merchants eager to buy China’s famed porcelain and silk.  
836 Because of its extensive internal economy and technological advances, China  
837 exported more than it imported. Although the land route to China was sometimes  
838 difficult to travel, shipping to and from the southeast coast meant that China was  
839 never isolated from outside world. China was also the largest and most  
840 centralized state in the medieval world, and government regulations of merchants  
841 and foreigners were more thorough. As one of the official trade cities of the  
842 Chinese empire, Quanzhou had large foreign communities. In this lesson,  
843 students compare the accounts of Ibn Battuta, Marco Polo, and Zhao Rugua  
844 about Quanzhou for their multiple points of view on trade and cultural exchange.  
845 They write an essay answering the focus question and citing evidence from the  
846 primary sources. Students analyze a concrete example of cross-cultural  
847 production in the porcelain vases and flasks made in China for export to the  
848 Muslim world and Spain.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Grade 7 Classroom Example: Quanzhou, Site of Encounter</b> <b>(Integrated ELA/Literacy and World History)</b></p>
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In Ms. Hutton’s seventh-grade world history class, students are learning about medieval world history. They do this by touring Sites of Encounter, or places of exchange, in the medieval world. Quanzhou, located on China’s southeast coast, and one of the largest and busiest ports in the world, is a centerpiece in Ms. Hutton’s classroom. Students in Ms. Hutton’s class have learned how Quanzhou was a prime destination for Arab, Persian, Indian, and Southeast Asian ships carrying merchants eager to buy China’s famed porcelain and silk. As one of the official trade cities of the Chinese empire (which was the largest and most centralized state in the medieval world), Quanzhou had large foreign communities.

As an important part of learning about Quanzhou as a Site of Encounter, students in Ms. Hutton’s class participate in a guided discussion about the city’s laws, customs, and multicultural coexistence. Students practice Common Core and ELD discussion skills based on excerpts from primary-source documents to answer this discussion question: How did laws and customs help people from different cultures live together in Quanzhou?

First, Ms. Hutton divides the class up into groups of three or four. Each student in the group is asked to read one or two primary sources, write a short summary of the document, and highlight evidence that helps answer the discussion question on a graphic organizer. To support students’ interrogation of their sources, she asks them questions like, “Who benefited from this law or custom? Did the law or custom make people feel safe and welcome? Did it keep

people from cheating or causing trouble?”

Ms. Hutton then directs her students to share out what they’ve written with their group. To support student discussion, Ms. Hutton provides various discussion starters designed to start the conversation, such as, “My document is about...,” “This law / custom kept people from cheating by...,” “This law/custom helped people from different cultures live together because...,” and “The evidence that supports my idea is....” She also provides starters that can be used to respond to conversation, such as, “Tell me more about...,” “What evidence do you have?” “How did you come to that conclusion?”

After all group members have shared, Ms. Hutton’s students collectively try to formulate an interpretation (or main idea) that answers the discussion question based on all of the evidence. She offers additional sentence starters to support this part of the discussion, such as “Document xx does not seem to fit with the other documents, because ...,” “Document xx seems to support the ideas in document xxx ...,” “I agree / disagree with what Carmen said, because ...,” “Does the evidence about your law /custom support the interpretation that ...,” and “Where is the evidence to support this interpretation?”

After each group has formulated an interpretation, Ms. Hutton debriefs the students as a whole class using these questions to lead the discussion: what is your interpretation, what evidence supports this interpretation, and what evidence contradicts this interpretation? She circulates the room during the conversations to evaluate, and redirect if necessary, her students’ ability to make an oral

argument in response to the discussion question. As she listens to their conversation, Ms. Hutton considers her students' ability to marshal relevant evidence in support of their argument, their use of academic language, and their overall understanding of the specific content in this lesson.

This example is summarized from a full unit, *Sites of Encounter in the Medieval World - Quanzhou*, available for free download, developed by the California History-Social Science Project (<http://chssp.ucdavis.edu>) as part of the History Blueprint initiative. Copyright © 2014, Regents of the University of California, Davis campus.

**CA HSS Standards:** 7.2.5, 7.3.4, 7.4.3, 7.8.3

**CA HSS Analysis Skills (6–8):** Research, Evidence, and Point of View 5

**CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy:** RH.6–8.1, 2, 9, WHST.6–8.7, 8, 9, SL.7.1, 2, 3, 4, 6

**CA ELD Standards:** ELD.PI.7.3, 6b, 9

849

850 Buddhism spread widely and gained many followers in China during the Tang  
851 period and began to alter religious life in neighboring Korea and Japan as well.

852 Students return to the question: **How did Buddhism spread and change over**

853 **time?** In China Buddhist ideas intermingled with those of Daoism, a Chinese

854 religion emphasizing private spirituality, and Confucianism, the belief system that

855 stressed moral and ethical behavior. At its height in the ninth century, Buddhism

856 had 50,000 monasteries in China. As Confucian scholar-officials and Daoist

857 priests felt threatened by this “foreign religion,” the Tang emperors reversed their

858 earlier acceptance of Buddhism and began to persecute it. One result of this

859 persecution is that Buddhism did not become the official religion of China.  
860 Instead, Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist beliefs and practices fused together in  
861 China to form a syncretic popular religion, emphasizing moral living, daily ritual,  
862 and dedication to family and community.

863       Students turn their attention to the question: **How did Chinese culture,**  
864 **ideas, and technologies and Buddhism influence Korea and Japan?** Under  
865 the Tang dynasty, China expanded its trade and cultural influence to Korea,  
866 Japan, and Southeast Asia. At sites of encounter, these societies adopted and  
867 adapted Chinese ideas and institutions and combined those with their own ideas  
868 and institutions to build distinct civilizations. This is the adoption and adaptation  
869 form of cultural encounter. In the fourth century, three kingdoms emerged to rule  
870 the Korean population, and in 670, one of those kingdoms, Silla, unified the  
871 whole peninsula. Silla was closely connected to the Tang dynasty of China.  
872 Korean elites used Chinese as a written language, but later devised a phonetic  
873 script for the Korean language. In 936, the Koryo kingdom took over rule in  
874 Korea, and adopted a civil service exam system copied after that of China.  
875 Korean merchants were engaged in trade with Japan and China, and through  
876 those networks, to Indian Ocean and Afroeurasian trade networks as well. The  
877 Korea Society powerpoint, “Silla Korea and the Silk Road,” has images and  
878 archaeological evidence that provide opportunities for students to analyze  
879 cultural interaction and trade across Eurasia.

880       In a similar manner, Japan was influenced by China and Korea, but adapted  
881 outside institutions and ideas to fit with its own indigenous culture. Before the

882 sixth century, Japan was an agricultural society ruled by land-holding clan  
883 chieftains. Their religion, Shinto, emphasized the influence of the supernatural  
884 world and spirits of the ancestors. One clan rose above the others, founded a  
885 central state and a dynasty called the Yamato. Those rulers claimed the title of  
886 “heavenly sovereign,” or emperor. About 850 CE, the Yamato rulers lost their grip  
887 on political affairs, and aristocratic palace families assumed real power. The  
888 emperors retained their throne but played mainly a ritual role. The pattern of  
889 aristocratic clans warring and succeeding one another as rulers under the  
890 sovereignty of a ceremonial but powerless emperor continued into modern times.

891       Between the third and sixth centuries, when China was politically fragmented,  
892 many Chinese and Koreans migrated to Japan in search of refuge or opportunity.  
893 Those newcomers introduced many innovations, including advanced metallurgy,  
894 writing, silk production, textile manufacture, paper-making, and Buddhism.  
895 Japanese tradition links the introduction of Buddhism and beginning of Chinese  
896 cultural influence with Prince Shokotu (574-622). China’s immense power under  
897 the Tang Dynasty stimulated Japanese interest in Chinese and Korean culture.  
898 Literary scholars, officials, and Buddhist monks traveled to Japan. In turn,  
899 Japanese intellectuals went west to seek knowledge, learn Confucian statecraft,  
900 and acquire Buddhist texts, some made in Korea with some of the earliest known  
901 wood-block printing technology. The Japanese gradually adapted Buddhism to fit  
902 with older Shinto practices. For example, Shinto nature gods became associated  
903 with Buddhist spirits and saints. The Zen school of Buddhism spread widely  
904 among laboring men and women.

905 From about 1000 CE, the Japanese aristocratic class creatively combined  
906 Chinese and Korean ideas with Japanese ways to form a new civilization with  
907 distinctive institutions, literature, and arts. Japanese officials adopted rules of  
908 government derived from imperial China but tailored them to their own smaller  
909 population and territory. Scholars developed a writing system that used simplified  
910 Chinese characters to represent Japanese sounds. Moreover, several  
911 aristocratic women wrote literary works in Japanese. Students may read  
912 selections from the *Tale of Genji*, a novel about a courtier’s life written by Lady  
913 Murasaki Shikibu sometime between 990 and 1012.

914 Even though China had a great influence on Japan, Japanese government  
915 and society developed in its own direction. Students investigate the question:  
916 **What influence did samurai customs and values have on the government**  
917 **and society of medieval Japan?** Japan had an emperor, but the emperor and  
918 his court had no real power. Clans continued to control regional areas of Japan.  
919 Important clans fought each other for more land, power, and control over the  
920 weak central government. In the 1180s, the Minamoto clan dominated Japan.  
921 They instituted a military government headed by a “great general,” or *shogun*.  
922 The highest social status in the clan and in society went to the *samurai*,  
923 professional fighters. Most samurai were vassals of clan leaders, or *daimyo*, in a  
924 system that was similar to feudal lordship in Christendom at the same time.  
925 Samurai were dedicated to a code of courage, honor, and martial skill. To  
926 analyze samurai culture, students read *The Tale of the Heike* and view  
927 woodblock prints. The *Asia for Educators* website has a short excerpt of this

928 story of samurai warfare, and there are many woodblock prints on the Web,  
929 although most date from later periods. During those centuries, Japan's  
930 agriculture, population, and urbanization continued to expand. Exchanges with  
931 China and Korea grew, as merchants traded luxury goods in return for Japanese  
932 silver, copper, timber, and steel swords. By 1300, East Asia was an  
933 interconnected region dominated economically and culturally by China.

934

### 935 **The Americas, 300-1490**

- 936 • How did the environment affect the expansion of agriculture, population,  
937 cities, and empires in Mesoamerica and the Andean region?
- 938 • Why did the Maya civilization, the Aztec Empire and the Inca Empire gain  
939 more power over people and territories?
- 940 • How did Mesoamerican religion develop and change over time?
- 941 • Under the Aztecs, why was Tenochtitlán a site of encounter?

942 To begin their study of civilizations in the Americas, students investigate the  
943 question: **How did the environment affect the expansion of agriculture,**  
944 **population, cities, and empires in Mesoamerica and the Andean region?**

945 One important environmental factor was the separation of the Americas and  
946 Afroeurasia after 15,000 BCE. As a result, different ecosystems developed in the  
947 Americas than in Afroeurasia. The Americas had no beasts of burden; corn was  
948 the major staple rather than rice or wheat. A second environmental factor is the  
949 sheer size and variety of habitats in the Americas. The north-south axis of the  
950 Americas extends nearly 11,000 miles, from the frigid Arctic rim to the equatorial

951 rain forests of the Amazon River basin to Tierra Del Fuego at the southern tip of  
952 South America. A mountain spine runs nearly the entire length, and divides the  
953 Americas longitudinally, separating narrow coastal plains on the Pacific from  
954 broad plains on the eastern side that stretch toward the Atlantic. Several great  
955 river systems, especially the Mississippi and the Amazon, have been channels of  
956 human communication since ancient times. Thousands of different cultures,  
957 speaking many different languages and following different customs, lived on the  
958 two continents. Their ways of life varied from gathering and hunting to agrarian-  
959 urban states. Lesson 2 or 4 of the California EEI Curriculum Unit “Sun Gods and  
960 Jaguar Kings” guides students through the landforms and climate zones that  
961 formed the environment for the two urbanized regions of the Americas.

962       Agriculture developed independently in Mesoamerica and the Andean  
963 highlands after 3000 BCE. Farming and village settlement spread through those  
964 regions and by the second millennium BCE, the Olmec civilization appeared in  
965 Mesoamerica and the Chávin civilization in the central Andes. Unlike  
966 Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, or India, these civilizations did not develop along  
967 great rivers. The catalyst for developing the Olmec civilization may have been  
968 surplus farming produce, population growth, or increasing trade. Connected by  
969 exchange of crops and products from the ocean, the lowlands, the highlands,  
970 and the rainforest, the Chávin civilization extended across the high Andes range  
971 to the lowlands on either side. After the Olmec and Chavín fell, other civilizations  
972 took their place or grew up nearby. The Maya, Aztec, and Inca Empires built on  
973 the culture and accomplishments of two thousand years of previous civilizations.

974        Between about 200 to 900 CE, the Maya region of southern Mexico,  
975 Guatemala, and Belize had more than fifty independent city-states. The students  
976 focus on this question: **Why did the Maya civilization gain power over people**  
977 **and territories?** The teacher points out that although the Maya built on a basis  
978 of civilizations before them, the Maya city-states built larger and grander  
979 buildings, developed advanced writing, mathematics and astronomy, and had a  
980 more hierarchical and wealthy society. Two factors that gave the Maya power  
981 were rich agriculture and widespread trade. Among the largest cities were Tikal  
982 in Guatemala and Calakmul in Mexico. Maya societies produced monumental  
983 architecture, astronomic observatories, a pictographic writing system that yielded  
984 libraries of thousands of books, and a sophisticated calendar system based on a  
985 fifty-two-year cycle. These innovations would have given the Maya society strong  
986 cultural power, because many neighboring people would have been impressed.  
987 Students may compare mathematical systems that developed in Afroeurasia with  
988 Maya mathematics, which utilized positional notation, the concept of zero, and a  
989 base-20 numerical system. The monarchs and aristocratic families who ruled  
990 these city-states kept order and defended their lands in wars with other city-  
991 states. They also performed elaborate religious rituals to conciliate the gods who,  
992 Mayans believed, commanded the rain and sun. These rituals included blood-  
993 letting by members of the elite and royal families. The elites drew blood from their  
994 own bodies to offer to the gods. The Maya also sacrificed enemies captured in  
995 battle (instead of killing them on the battlefield). Farmers, artisans, and hunters  
996 paid taxes and supplied labor for construction of public temples, palaces, and

997 ceremonial ball courts. After about 750 CE, warfare intensified among city-states,  
998 monumental construction diminished, and cities were gradually abandoned.  
999 Deforestation, erosion, and drought may have contributed to their decline.

1000 The Aztec Empire emerged in the fifteenth century. Initially, students focus  
1001 on: **Why did the Aztec Empire gain more power over people and territories?**

1002 The Aztecs, a people who originally migrated from northern Mexico, owed a  
1003 strong cultural debt to the Maya, Teotihuacán, and the Toltec cities in  
1004 Mesoamerica. The Aztecs won their power by warfare. They unified much of  
1005 central Mexico by defeating all other powerful cities and states. They created a  
1006 state based on ingenious methods of farming, collection of tribute from  
1007 conquered peoples, and an extensive network of markets and trade routes.

1008 Next students investigate the question: **How did Mesoamerican religion**  
1009 **change over time?** The Aztec practiced ritual sacrifice of war captives (instead  
1010 of killing them on the battlefield), but to a greater extent than the Maya had. The  
1011 Aztecs believed that the god of the sun would stop shining and the universe  
1012 would collapse without a constant supply of human hearts and blood. Comparing  
1013 Maya and Aztec practices shows students how the Mesoamerican religion  
1014 changed over time. Students may analyze visuals from Aztec tribute records, the  
1015 *Florentine Codex*, and other codices made in the early Spanish period. Lesson 5  
1016 of the California EEI Curriculum Unit “Sun Gods and Jaguar Kings” has an  
1017 excellent activity based on the Aztec tribute records as sources. Ultimately, the  
1018 resentment of conquered people made the Aztec Empire unstable.

1019 Students also study the question: **Under the Aztecs, why was Tenochtitlán**

1020 **a site of encounter?** This is the first part of their study, as they will return to  
1021 “Mexico City” as a site of encounter in the Global Convergence unit. Tenochtitlán  
1022 was built on an island in Lake Texcoco, with three causeways linking it to the  
1023 mainland. The city was built in circles, with temples and government buildings in  
1024 an inner square, houses in the outer circles, and floating garden beds on the lake  
1025 around the city. It was one of the largest cities in the world at that time. Its  
1026 markets contained vast amounts and variety of goods from all over  
1027 Mesoamerica.

1028       Students compare the Aztec empire with the Inca state that arose in Andean  
1029 South America, with the question: **Why did the Inca Empire gain power over**  
1030 **people and territories?** Like the Aztecs, the Incas built on a series of earlier  
1031 civilizations, but combined cities and states together into a larger empire than  
1032 any before in that region. The Inca rulers built a highly centralized political  
1033 system that included methods of food distribution in times of poor harvests. They  
1034 also created a network of about 25,000 miles of government-controlled roads that  
1035 ran along the Andes spine and served military, administrative, and commercial  
1036 purposes. The Incas did rely on military power but they also offered important  
1037 social benefits to the population. In contrast to the Aztecs, the Incas did not have  
1038 a writing system, but they used Andean *quipus*, or sets of colored and knotted  
1039 strings, to keep complex records. To conclude this unit, students can meet in  
1040 groups and prepare graphic organizers comparing power, religion, social  
1041 customs, agriculture, intellectual developments, and trade in each culture.

1042

1043 **West Africa, 900-1400**

- 1044 • How did the environment affect the development and expansion of the  
1045 Ghana and Mali empires and the trade networks that connected them to  
1046 the rest of Afroeurasia?
- 1047 • Why was Mali a site of encounter? What were the effects of the  
1048 exchanges at Mali?
- 1049 • How did Arab/North African and West African perspectives differ on West  
1050 African kingdoms?

1051 As of 500 CE, groups of farming and animal-herding peoples lived in West  
1052 Africa, a region with four large zones of climate and vegetation running west to  
1053 east. Students begin with the question: **How did the environment affect the**  
1054 **development and expansion of the Ghana and Mali empires and the trade**  
1055 **networks that connected them to the rest of Afroeurasia?** The most northerly  
1056 belt is the intensely arid Sahara, home to oasis-dwellers and pastoral nomads.  
1057 Just south of the desert is the semiarid Sahel zone, where cattle and camel  
1058 herding predominated. Third is the tropical grassland, or savanna, which had  
1059 sufficient rainfall to support farmers and their fields of rice, sorghum, and millet.  
1060 In the far south is the wet tropical forest. There, settled life depended on  
1061 cultivation of root crops and other forest foods. In the Sahel and savanna,  
1062 agriculture and herding supported the growth of regional trade. Tracing a great  
1063 arc across West Africa, the Niger River provided a natural highway of  
1064 communication linking different ecological zones. Farming, trade, and early  
1065 development of iron smelting stimulated town building. The city of Jenne-jeno,

1066 built in the early centuries CE, was home to artisans who produced iron tools,  
1067 copperware, gold jewelry, and fine painted ceramics.

1068 In addition to local markets, West Africa contained rich deposits of gold. Both  
1069 Muslim and Christian rulers and traders in the Mediterranean region craved  
1070 African gold, notably for coinage. West African merchants acquired gold from  
1071 mines in the Sudan and shipped it to towns in the Sahel, where Arab and Berber  
1072 merchants carried the gold north on trans-Saharan camel caravan routes. Some  
1073 of this African bullion then flowed into Europe or eastward toward India. Students  
1074 use the Sites of Encounter in the Medieval World interactive map to investigate  
1075 these environmental factors. Then they read Ibn Battuta’s account of the perilous  
1076 crossing of the Sahara in an excerpt from the Mali lesson of the “Sites of  
1077 Encounter in the Medieval World” unit. They read the text individually first, then  
1078 meet in group to discuss and report on one paragraph of the reading, and finally  
1079 read the text again and answer text-dependent questions.

1080 The centralized state of Ghana emerged around the eighth century in the  
1081 western part of the Sahel zone. The king of Ghana commanded a large royal  
1082 household, a hierarchy of officials, and an army of infantry archers. The Ghana  
1083 empire had Muslim officials, though the kings probably did not convert. Ghana  
1084 slowly crumbled in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but around 1240, Mali  
1085 emerged to rule over a large part of the western Sudan. Mali’s rulers  
1086 accumulated wealth collecting tribute from African farmers and taxing trans-  
1087 Saharan trade. The royal court employed staffs of both foreign and native-born  
1088 Muslims as administrators, and Arabic became the written language of

1089 government and diplomacy. Most of the kings and their officials professed Islam  
1090 and introduced Islamic law, though most of West Africa’s population adhered to  
1091 their local religions for several more centuries. In the 1300s Timbuktu, a city near  
1092 the Niger River, rose as a regional center of trade and Islamic learning.

1093       The gold trade across the Sahara involved Ghana and Mali in Afroeurasian  
1094 trade networks. Students focus on Mali with the question: **What made Mali a site**  
1095 **of encounter? What were the effects of the exchanges at Mali?** Northbound  
1096 caravans also shipped ivory, ostrich feathers, and slaves captured in raids and  
1097 wars. Merchants marched these captives, including many women, to the  
1098 Mediterranean or Middle East principally to serve in Muslim households. The  
1099 southbound trade included salt from Saharan mines, a commodity that  
1100 commanded huge demand in West Africa. Other southbound commodities  
1101 included copper, horses, and Arabic books. Arabic- and Berber-speaking  
1102 merchants from North Africa likely introduced Islam to West Africa in the eighth  
1103 century. They established bonds with Sudanic traders, many of whom converted  
1104 to the new faith. Even for those Africans who did not convert to Islam, Muslim  
1105 culture had a significant impact on West African architecture, education, and  
1106 languages. The “Sightseeing in Mali” gallery walk activity guides students  
1107 through analyzing artifacts from Mali, such as mosques, statues of mounted  
1108 warriors, an astronomy book, and the university at Timbuktu. The artifacts show  
1109 that the West Africans adopted Muslim culture but also adapted it to fit their own  
1110 culture.

1111 In order to probe more deeply into the history of West African kingdoms,  
1112 students analyze this question: **How did Arab/North African and West African**  
1113 **perspectives differ on West African kingdoms?** The “West African and  
1114 Arab/North African Perspectives” activity contains excerpts from Arab/North  
1115 African sources by al-Bakri, al-Umari, Ibn Khaldun, and Ibn Battuta, and one  
1116 West African source, *The Epic of Sundiata*. All of the written sources about the  
1117 West African kingdoms were written by Arab/North African writers, who thought  
1118 that West African culture was more primitive than Arab culture. If the historian  
1119 relies on their evidence alone, he or she would think that Islam and the gold trade  
1120 were almost the creators of West African states. Students access a West African  
1121 perspective in the *Epic of Sundiata (Sunjata)*, a heroic king associated with the  
1122 rise of Mali. The epic was passed down by griots in an oral tradition until the mid-  
1123 twentieth century, when one version of it was recorded in writing. In the close  
1124 reading activity, students learn how to identify perspective as they compare  
1125 passages. At the conclusion of this lesson, students work with the Sites of  
1126 Encounter in the Medieval World map to analyze the position of Mali in the  
1127 Islamic world, and compare that position at the end of a single trade route and  
1128 within a single trade circle with Cairo’s position at the center of many trade routes  
1129 and three trade circles. A brief discussion on the differences between the cultural  
1130 center and the periphery will introduce students to this geographical concept.  
1131  
1132 **Sites of Encounter in the Medieval World, 1150-1490**

- 1133       • How did the Mongol Empire destroy states and increase the  
1134       interconnection of Afroeurasia?
- 1135       • What were the effects of the exchanges at Majorca and Calicut?
- 1136       • How did increasing interconnection and trade, competition between states  
1137       (and their people), and technological innovations lead to voyages of  
1138       exploration?

1139       Around the year 1000 in Afroeurasia, technological innovations in agriculture  
1140       caused massive increases in productivity, population growth, settlement of new  
1141       lands, and a great expansion of manufacturing, trade, and urbanization. The  
1142       agricultural revolution between the Tang and Song dynasties made China the  
1143       center of industry, as it produced new inventions and luxury products desired  
1144       throughout Afroeurasia. Innovations spurred a huge expansion of agriculture in  
1145       Europe, cultivation of new lands, expansion of trade, and a rebirth of  
1146       manufacturing, trade, urban culture, and education. Networks of commercial,  
1147       technological and cultural exchange covered most of Afroeurasia. In the center,  
1148       the Muslim world (now divided into many states) and India prospered as  
1149       producers of goods such as cotton cloth, spices, and swords, and also as  
1150       middlemen along the east-west trade routes. While people rarely traveled from  
1151       Spain to China, products, technologies, and ideas did. From 1200 to 1490, those  
1152       networks grew stronger, busier, and tighter.

1153       The attacks and domination of the Mongol Empire had a huge negative effect  
1154       on states, empires, and many people of Eurasia, but it also greatly extended  
1155       trade, travel, and exchange between Afroeurasian societies. The teacher

1156 introduces the question: **How did the Mongol Empire destroy states and**  
1157 **increase the interconnection of Afroeurasia?** In the late twelfth century,  
1158 nomadic warriors from the steppe and deserts north of China, the Mongol tribes  
1159 (and other Central Asian nomadic tribes), were united by a charismatic leader,  
1160 Chinggis (Genghis) Khan, who lead them to conquests across Eurasia. At its  
1161 height, the Mongol Empire was the largest land empire in world history. Mongols  
1162 were fierce and highly mobile fighters who terrified the people they conquered,  
1163 even though their numbers were small. Students examine maps of the Mongol  
1164 conquests and empire, and compare these with the Sites of Encounter in the  
1165 Medieval World interactive map, which has physical, religious, political and other  
1166 maps of Afroeurasia. After Chinggis Khan’s death, the Mongol Empire split up  
1167 into four khanates. Chinggis’ grandson, Hulagu Khan, was ruler of the Il-Khanate.  
1168 Since the Muslim states were divided, individually they were no match for the  
1169 Mongol warriors. Hulagu conquered Persia, Syria and part of Anatolia and  
1170 destroyed the Abbasid Caliphate’s capital of Baghdad. Although some feared  
1171 that the Mongols would destroy the Muslim world, the Egyptian Mamluk  
1172 Sultanate fought the Mongol army and stopped its advance. Mongols in the  
1173 Khanate of the Golden Horde overran Russia and attacked Poland and Eastern  
1174 Europe. The Khanate of the Great Khan went to another grandson, Kubilai Khan,  
1175 who took over China from the Song dynasty. Kubilai established the Yuan  
1176 dynasty and kept many Chinese customs, but replaced Confucian scholar-  
1177 officials with foreign administrators. The Mongols conquered states in Southeast  
1178 Asia and tried twice to invade Japan in the late thirteenth century, but failed both

1179 times. The domination of the Mongols did not last long; three of the four Mongol  
1180 khanates fell by 100 years after the conquest.

1181       Although the Mongols killed many people and destroyed many cities in its  
1182 conquest, after the conquest, the Mongols tolerated all religions and protected  
1183 and promoted trade across Eurasia. Under their protection, the land trade route  
1184 from China to the Mediterranean re-opened and trade boomed. The Mongols  
1185 also moved people around throughout their empire, using, for example, Persian  
1186 and Arab administrators in China, and facilitating the journey of Marco Polo (and  
1187 many other less famous people) from Venice to China. The increase in  
1188 interaction also spread Chinese technologies and ideas into the Muslim and  
1189 Christian worlds. To understand both the negative and positive effects of the  
1190 Mongol conquest and empire, student groups do a gallery walk with visuals of a  
1191 Mongol passport, hunting scroll, gold textile, and a Persian tile with Chinese  
1192 motifs, and an excerpt from Marco Polo describing the Mongolian postal service.  
1193 Students cite evidence from each primary source on a source analysis template  
1194 to answer the question: **How did the Mongol Empire increase the**  
1195 **interconnection of Afroeurasia?**

1196       After the Mongol khanates fell, new states and empires arose. As the Il-  
1197 Khanate declined, Turkish kingdoms replaced the Mongols. These Turkish  
1198 warriors originally came from Central Asia, and spread into the Muslim world  
1199 after their conversion to Islam. Combining dedication to religious ideas with the  
1200 mounted warrior tradition of Central Asia, they took over the settled Muslim  
1201 lands. In the west, Turkish armies took over most of Anatolia from the Byzantine

1202 Empire (a conquest which set off the Crusades). One of the Turkish leaders,  
1203 Osman, created the Ottoman Empire in 1326. He and his successors conquered  
1204 all of Anatolia, Greece, and most of the Balkan peninsula in eastern Europe,  
1205 before conquering Constantinople in 1453 and bringing the Byzantine Empire to  
1206 an end. Other Turkish dynasties took over Persia (the Safavids) and northern  
1207 India (the Mughals). In China, the native Ming dynasty removed the Mongols and  
1208 returned the administration of China’s government to Confucian scholar-officials.

1209 In the remainder of this unit, students will engage with this question: **How**  
1210 **did increasing interconnection and trade, competition between states (and**  
1211 **their people), and technological innovations lead to voyages of**  
1212 **exploration?** Most states and empires supported trade as the rulers and elite  
1213 groups wanted access to products such as silk from China, Persia, Syria, and  
1214 Egypt; spices from India and Southeast Asia; cotton cloth from India and Egypt;  
1215 and gold from West Africa. Kings and their officials also realized that trade made  
1216 their states strong and increased their tax income. Some used their military  
1217 power to take over trade centers that belonged to other states or to dominate  
1218 trade routes. As trade connections, imperial expansion, and travel increased in  
1219 Afroeurasia, both conflict and cooperation occurred at sites of encounter.  
1220 Competition between states for land and resources and between the followers of  
1221 different religions made many encounters violent. At the same time, people from  
1222 different cultures found ways to cooperate so that they could trade and coexist.

1223 Of the major regions of Afroeurasia, medieval Christendom had one of the  
1224 least developed but also one of the fastest growing economies. There were few

1225 European products that people in Asia and Africa wanted to buy, but there was a  
1226 large and growing market in Europe for Asian spices, cloth, porcelain, and other  
1227 goods. Europe had to export silver and gold to pay for these goods. Most of the  
1228 silver ended up in China. Between about 1000 and 1300 CE, the ships and  
1229 traders from Venice and Genoa rose to dominate long-distance commerce to  
1230 Europe from Cairo and other Muslim trade cities in Southwestern Asia and North  
1231 Africa. During the same time period, certain states of Western Christendom,  
1232 notably England, France, Castile, and Aragon grew stronger and more  
1233 centralized. The kings of Castile, Aragon, and other Christian kingdoms of Iberia  
1234 fought against Muslim kingdoms of al-Andalus for both religious and political  
1235 reasons. As a case study of Christian, Muslim and Jewish interaction in medieval  
1236 Iberia, students analyze the site of encounter, Majorca, with the question: **What**  
1237 **were the effects of the exchanges at Majorca?** King James I of Aragon  
1238 conquered this island off the eastern coast of the Iberian Peninsula from its  
1239 Muslim Almohad rulers in 1229. Students read excerpts from James’s  
1240 *Autobiography* in a guided activity that teaches them how to cite evidence. They  
1241 learn that James was motivated in part by Majorca’s position as a trading and  
1242 shipping center for the western Mediterranean and the Maghribi ports, which  
1243 controlled the gold trade from Mali. Catalan merchants urged James to take over  
1244 Majorca because they wanted to gain access to those markets. On the Majorcan  
1245 base and elsewhere in Iberia, Catalans, Genoese, Iberian Jews, Iberian Muslims  
1246 (Moors), and Portuguese developed maps, such as the Catalan Atlas, ships, and  
1247 navigational technology which gave Mediterranean shippers access to the

1248 Atlantic Ocean. Accessing the Catalan Atlas reproductions online, students  
1249 closely examine this early map of Afroeurasia to identify its improved features,  
1250 such as accurate coastlines and a compass rose. In a gallery walk, they analyze  
1251 objects, such as the lateen sail and the astrolabe, adopted from the Islamic  
1252 world, and the compass, invented in China, and visuals of medieval ships to  
1253 identify the technological improvements. These examples demonstrate the  
1254 synthesis of creative energies that a site of encounter often produces. Using this  
1255 technology, Catalans and Portuguese began exploring the African coast (looking  
1256 for a different route to the gold fields of West Africa). However, increasing  
1257 intolerance of the Iberian Christian kingdoms to Jews and Muslims ended that  
1258 multicultural society by 1500. In the “Investigative Reporting on Intolerance,”  
1259 student groups read excerpts from al-Idrisi, Benjamin of Tudela, Ramon Llull, or  
1260 Ferdinand and Isabella. Then the student group designs and acts out an  
1261 investigative report (as for TV news or a cell phone I-Report). Each student in the  
1262 group plays a role in the report, which can be videotaped, recorded on a cell  
1263 phone, or acted out live. All reports are shown to the class, and students record  
1264 specific information and evidence on a chart. The teacher concludes by pointing  
1265 out that England, France, and other states also expelled Jews in this period.  
1266 Tired of the persecution, many European Jews migrated to Poland, where the  
1267 government gave them security and rights, Russia, and elsewhere in Eastern  
1268 Europe.

1269       Next the students switch to a site of encounter in India, Calicut, a major trade  
1270 center of the Indian Ocean trading network. As they explore the question: **What**

1271 **were the effects of the exchanges at Calicut?** students learn about both the  
1272 fifteenth-century Indian Ocean trade and the advent of the Portuguese in 1498. In  
1273 the “What’s so Hot about Spices?” activity, students examine written and visual  
1274 primary sources about popular spices, where they were grown, and how they  
1275 were used as flavorings, medicines, and perfumes. Using the Sites of Encounter  
1276 in the Medieval World map, students study the Indian Ocean monsoon patterns  
1277 and tables of medieval sailing seasons to determine the effects on ships,  
1278 merchants, and sailors. Ships from many states visited Calicut, including Chinese  
1279 junks and the huge fleets led by Admiral Zheng He. Between 1405 and 1433, the  
1280 Ming emperor sent out enormous fleets of hundreds of ships on seven major  
1281 voyages to trade and collect tribute in the Indian Ocean, advancing as far west  
1282 as the Red Sea and East Africa. Although after 1433, the Ming emperors did not  
1283 send out any more naval fleets, trade continued. In the “Analyzing Perspectives  
1284 on Calicut and Trade” group activity, students read primary sources written by  
1285 Arab travelers, Jewish merchants, Persian ambassadors, Chinese officers and  
1286 explorers, and Portuguese explorers. Each group member chooses an equal  
1287 share of the sources, which he or she reads aloud to the group and then guides a  
1288 discussion, as everyone else fills out a source analysis chart. Students use the  
1289 evidence to write an essay on the question: **What were the effects of the**  
1290 **exchanges at Calicut?** The lesson has the writing prompt, instructions for  
1291 evidence use, an effects organization chart, an evidence analysis chart, an essay  
1292 frame, and a grading rubric. The teacher selects among these resources those  
1293 that will support English Learners and struggling writers as appropriate.

1294 To conclude, the teacher returns to central question: **How did increasing**  
1295 **interconnection and trade, competition between states (and their people),**  
1296 **and technological innovations lead to voyages of exploration?** He or she  
1297 asks students to identify examples of each of these causes from Majorca and  
1298 Calicut. Comparison of the voyages of Zheng He with those of Columbus and/or  
1299 Da Gama makes a good transition to the next unit.

1300

### 1301 **Global Convergence, 1450-1750**

- 1302 • What impact did human expansion in the voyages of exploration have on  
1303 the environment, trade networks, and global interconnection?
- 1304 • Why did the Europeans use colonialism to interact with Native Americans  
1305 and some Southeast Asians? What were the effects of colonialism on the  
1306 colonized people?
- 1307 • What were the effects of exchanges at Tenochtitlán/Mexico City in the 16<sup>th</sup>  
1308 through 18<sup>th</sup> centuries?
- 1309 • Was slavery always racial?
- 1310 • How did the gunpowder empires (Ming/Manchu China, Mughal India,  
1311 Safavid Persia, Ottoman Empire, Russia, Spain, later France and  
1312 England) extend their power over people and territories?

1313 This unit begins with the question: **What impact did human expansion in**  
1314 **the voyages of exploration have on the environment, trade networks, and**  
1315 **global interconnection?** In the last unit, students investigated the state of  
1316 Afroeurasian trade and power before the voyages of exploration and the

1317 technological developments in ships and navigation that enabled the European  
1318 voyages. They examined the Chinese voyages of exploration led by Zheng He  
1319 and the initial Portuguese voyages around Africa to India and Calicut. Now they  
1320 turn to the Spanish and Portuguese voyages across the Atlantic begun by  
1321 Columbus. As a result of these voyages, new oceanic routes connected nearly  
1322 every inhabited part of the world. The Early Modern Period witnessed greater  
1323 global connection and exchange, as European conquests and encounters in the  
1324 Americas linked both hemispheres in significant ways.

1325       People, plants, and animals were introduced to places where they had  
1326 previously been unknown. This “Columbian Exchange” led to profound changes  
1327 in economies, diets, social organization, and, in the Americas, to a massive  
1328 devastation of Indian populations because of exposure to new disease  
1329 microorganisms originating in Afroeurasia. The Columbian Exchange marks the  
1330 important biological exchange of disease, flora, and fauna between both  
1331 hemispheres. Students investigate the transfers of American crops such as  
1332 maize, potatoes, and manioc to Afroeurasia, as well as addictive substances  
1333 such as tobacco and chocolate. From Afroeurasia, the Americas acquired  
1334 horses, cows, pigs, and sheep. Introduction of new staple crops helped increase  
1335 the population in much of Afroeurasia, and the imported animals and plants  
1336 transformed the landscapes of the Americas. The Columbian Exchange also  
1337 occurred across the Pacific Ocean: American crops transplanted to China grew  
1338 the Chinese economy, while the chili pepper sent to Southeast Asia affected food  
1339 preparation, the economy, and culture. The diffusion of Afroeurasian diseases to

1340 the Americas had catastrophic demographic consequences. The mortality of as  
1341 much as 90% of Native American population allowed European newcomers to  
1342 conquer territories in the Americas. Migration by Europeans and forced migration  
1343 of Africans to the Americas led to a radically different population mix and the  
1344 emergence of new hybrid populations and cultures. Africans enslaved and forced  
1345 to migrate outnumbered Europeans in the Americas until the nineteenth century.  
1346 The loss of so many people caused severe economic and demographic  
1347 disruption in tropical Africa. The effects of the Columbian Exchange were  
1348 profound environmental change and huge human population shifts.

1349       European voyages to the Americas and the Indian Ocean transformed world  
1350 trade networks. The Spanish extracted precious metals, gold and especially  
1351 silver, and the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English extracted raw materials,  
1352 such as lumber and furs, from their American colonies and shipped them to  
1353 Afroeurasia. Europeans set up plantations to grow cash crops that were exported  
1354 to Afroeurasia. The result was a massive influx of wealth into Europe. However,  
1355 Asia remained the world's most productive center of agriculture and  
1356 manufacturing until near the end of this era. Chinese products were so highly  
1357 desired in the European market that a substantial portion of the silver taken from  
1358 the New World ended up in China as payment for Chinese products exported to  
1359 Europe. European states and merchants also took over the shipping of products  
1360 around the world's oceans and seas, gradually replacing the merchant fleets of  
1361 other regions. These European states frequently battled with each other to  
1362 dominate shipping routes, trade cities, and lands with desirable resources. The

1363 Portuguese battled Indian, Arab, and Southeast Asian shippers in the Indian  
1364 Ocean, but the Portuguese were soon themselves attacked and replaced by the  
1365 Dutch, who took over the spice islands of Southeast Asia. French and English  
1366 fleets and pirates battled Spanish fleets in the Atlantic and Pacific. Ocean trade  
1367 expanded and became more militarized as the Europeans took over shipping.  
1368 Students analyze maps to see how the more important voyages of exploration  
1369 led to the development of global trading patterns and the location of European  
1370 colonies by 1750.

1371       Next students investigate the question: **Why did the Europeans use**  
1372 **colonialism to interact with Native Americans and some Southeast Asians?**  
1373 **What were the effects of colonialism on the colonized people?** It's important  
1374 for students to recognize that the Europeans did not take over China, India,  
1375 Africa, and most of Asia until the nineteenth century. For this entire period,  
1376 therefore, the major Afroeurasian centers – China, India, and the Islamic World –  
1377 were too strong for Europeans to conquer. In lands where states were not as  
1378 strong, Europeans established colonies. European armies used gunpowder  
1379 weapons to defeat local resistance. Europeans became the government rulers  
1380 and officials and changed the laws. They also took desirable land away from the  
1381 native owners and gave it to Europeans. Often the Europeans used the land to  
1382 grow tropical commercial crops for sale in Afroeurasia. Sometimes the European  
1383 government and army forced the native people to work for the Europeans as  
1384 well. Finally, European Christian missionaries spread through the colonies trying  
1385 to convert local people to Christianity. Some states, such as Spain and Portugal,

1386 supported these missionaries and helped to force local people to change their  
1387 religion; other states, such as the Netherlands, did not pay much attention to  
1388 missionary activities. The teacher uses a guided discussion format to address the  
1389 question: **Why did the Europeans use colonialism to interact with Native**  
1390 **Americans and some Southeast Asians?** Students brainstorm possible  
1391 motives of Europeans and weigh the relative importance of power, wealth,  
1392 competition with other European states, and religion, using a discussion guide  
1393 with sentence starters modeling academic language. As a group, students rank  
1394 the possible motives and explain their reasons, and each student individually  
1395 writes a one-sentence interpretation (argument or claim) answering the question.  
1396 The teacher emphasizes that although many states had conquered sites of  
1397 encounter in the past, colonialism was a new form of interaction between cultures  
1398 that was unequal and exploitative.

1399 In addition to conquering areas where there were divisions among many  
1400 states, such as Sumatra, Java, Malaysia, and the Philippines, or where there  
1401 were no states, such as the Caribbean islands, Spanish conquerors took over  
1402 both the Aztec and Inca empires in the early sixteenth century. Students assess  
1403 explanations that historians have given for their defeat at the hands of small  
1404 numbers of Europeans. Two key factors aided European military efforts. The first  
1405 was the introduction of infectious diseases, such as smallpox and measles,  
1406 which were endemic in Africa and Eurasia, but against which American Indian  
1407 populations lacked even partial immunities. These diseases began to ravage  
1408 societies in both North and South America shortly after the Spanish invasions got

1409 underway. The second factor was Spanish success at allying with local groups,  
1410 notably the Tlaxcalans, who wished to free themselves from Aztec rule. In the  
1411 California EEI Curriculum Unit “Broken Jade and Tarnished Gold,” students learn  
1412 that the Spanish needed the natural resources of the region, with a goal of  
1413 sustaining their own economic and political systems in the “Old World.” They  
1414 explore many human social factors including greed, religious fervor, and disease  
1415 that left the Spanish in control of vast lands in Central and South America,  
1416 eventually propelling the empire to expand into the lands to the north, including  
1417 California.

#### **Grade Seven Classroom Example: The Spanish Conquest of Mexico**

To assess the impact of the Spanish conquest, Mr. Brown’s students return to the question: **What were effects of exchanges at Tenochtitlán/Mexico City in the 16<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup> centuries?** The students begin by analyzing images of the conquest and interactions between Spanish and Aztecs/Mexica, which can be found in the image exercises in the “Conquest of Mexico” materials at the American Historical Association’s *Teaching and Learning in a Digital Age* website.

After Mr. Brown explains how to analyze perspective or point of view, student pairs source the images and identify evidence of exchanges, effects of exchanges, and perspective. As they share their evidence, Mr. Brown guides and refines their understanding of perspective or point of view. Next they engage in a close reading of excerpts from accounts of the conquest and its early impact from

the Letters of Cortés, the *True History* of Díaz del Castillo, *Broken Spears*, the *Florentine Codex*, and the *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* by De Las Casas. (Excerpts in English and Spanish from all of these works are readily available on the web, except for *Broken Spears*, collection of Aztec writings about the conquest that was originally written in Nahuatl and recently edited and translated into English.) Sometimes Mr. Brown has all students read every document; other times he divides the documents between student groups. (The most effective division would have students read one Spanish account and one Aztec account that addressed the same event or topic.)

Each student reads the document individually first, and then discusses the question: **What is this reading about?** with a partner. In the second reading, students fill out a sentence deconstruction chart that breaks down the most crucial sentence or sentences of the text, complete a worksheet that helps them identify unfamiliar vocabulary in context, and then answer text-dependent questions. For the third reading, the students mark up and annotate the text, using cognitive markers (for exchanges, effects of exchanges, loaded words, evidence of perspective or point of view, questions).

After reading all the documents, students meet in groups, identify the exchanges and effects of exchanges and cite evidence for each on an effects analysis graphic organizer. As Mr. Brown displays the graphic organizer of several groups on the elmo, he or she helps students group together common exchanges, state their points in academic language, and understand any unclear

points. Students investigate examples of the hybrid nature of Colonial Latin America and assess the contributions of native peoples to the cultural, economic, and social practices of the region by 1750. (Two concrete examples of this are the building of the Mexico City cathedral on the location of the central pyramid, as well as other changes to the spatial geography of Mexico City, and the Virgin of Guadalupe. Seventeenth-century Dutch, English, and French conquest and colonization in the Caribbean and North America are introduced and can be compared with developments in Latin America.)

**CA HSS Standards:** 7.7.3, 7.11.2

**CA HSS Analysis Skills (6–8):** Chronological and Spatial Thinking 3, Research, Evidence, and Point of View 5

**CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy:** RH.6–8.1, 2, SL.7.1, 4, L4a

**CA ELD Standards:** ELD.PI.7.1, 6a, 6b, 12a; ELD.P.II.7.12a

1418

1419       Next students investigate the transport of African slaves to the Americas and  
1420 the creation of racialized slavery with the question: **Was slavery always racial?**  
1421 The teacher refers back to examples of slavery in the ancient and medieval  
1422 world, such as Rome, where slaves belonged to all ethnic groups and were  
1423 usually captives in war. In the medieval Mediterranean, Christians and Muslims  
1424 enslaved captives who did not belong to their own religions. However, slavery  
1425 was not necessarily for life, and the children of slaves were not always slaves  
1426 themselves. In the Americas and the trade circuit scholars call the Atlantic World,  
1427 European slave-traders imported kidnapped Africans to work on plantations and

1428 mines in response to shortages of Indian labor in the Americas. Since relatively  
1429 few Europeans wished to migrate to the Americas to perform grueling labor in  
1430 tropical climates, European planters and mine operators turned to western Africa  
1431 to acquire large numbers of enslaved men and women and thereby have the  
1432 labor for large-scale capitalist enterprises in the Americas. Teachers may also  
1433 highlight the role played by African leaders such as Queen Nzinga from Angola in  
1434 this increasingly global exchange. In the Americas, slavery became racialized  
1435 and Europeans began to cultivate the idea that Africans were lesser people who  
1436 were supposed to be enslaved. Students analyze visuals of the Middle Passage  
1437 and maps of the Atlantic World trade routes and the numbers of slaves who were  
1438 transported to the Caribbean and Brazil, which vastly outnumbered those who  
1439 were transported to the Thirteen Colonies. Attention to these points will prepare  
1440 students for studying colonial economies and slavery in Grade 8. Africans took  
1441 part in the world economy in ways that profited rulers and traders but that caused  
1442 misery for millions. The forced removal of millions of people also had severe  
1443 economic and demographic consequences in tropical Africa.

1444 The final question of this unit is: **How did the gunpowder empires**  
1445 **(Ming/Manchu China, Mughal India, Safavid Persia, Ottoman Empire,**  
1446 **Russia, Spain, later France and England) extend their power over people**  
1447 **and territories?** Wide-scale use of gunpowder technology – cannon and  
1448 firearms – transformed warfare and armies. Since these weapons were so  
1449 expensive, only states could afford them. Gunpowder technology revolutionized  
1450 warfare and enabled the power of the central state or empire to expand greatly.

1451 With firearms, state armies could dominate internal rivals and decimate larger  
1452 armies that had no firearms. As a result, some states built large gunpowder  
1453 empires using the power of the new technology. These gunpowder empires,  
1454 which included Spain, Russia, Ming China, the Mughal Empire in India, the  
1455 Safavids in Persia, and the Ottoman Empire, were able to dominate weaker  
1456 polities and expand their territories. In England, France, Japan under the  
1457 Tokugawa Shogunate, and many other smaller states, rulers used the power of  
1458 their armies to deprive feudal lords of their local power and centralize authority in  
1459 their own hands. As a result, states became more centralized and governments  
1460 grew stronger. Gunpowder empires and states used their armies to attack other  
1461 states as well. For example, in the sixteenth century, Ottoman armies attacked  
1462 the Austrian Empire, Hungary, and Poland. French and English armies and  
1463 navies fought wars against the Spanish and Austrian Habsburg empires.

1464

#### 1465 **The Impact of Ideas, 1500-1750**

1466 • How did the Reformation divide the Christian Church, millions of people,  
1467 and European states?

1468 • How did world religions change and spread during the early modern  
1469 period?

1470 • What were the effects of the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution?

1471 • How were the social contract and other political ideas of the  
1472 Enlightenment revolutionary?

1473 This unit investigates religious, cultural, and intellectual changes in the period

1474 from 1500 to 1750. Students see the impact of new information flowing into  
1475 Europe from the “discoveries” in the Americas as a more critical factor in  
1476 reshaping European thought than the cultural movement of the Renaissance.  
1477 While the Reformation was a critically important development in Christianity,  
1478 other world religions continued to change and spread in this period as well. To  
1479 reflect this new historiography, this unit focuses on two strands, religion and  
1480 cultural and intellectual developments, both in the world context. Rewriting of this  
1481 unit also addresses the problem of teaching abstract concepts to seventh-  
1482 graders in May and June. It streamlines the content to focus on the most  
1483 important developments and recommends activities that will engage students as  
1484 well as challenge them.

1485 To introduce the Reformation, the teacher reminds students that there was  
1486 only one Church in Western Europe, headed by the Pope in Rome, but that there  
1487 were other Christian churches elsewhere, such as the Orthodox churches. In the  
1488 1500s, Roman Christianity split into multiple denominations. Students will focus  
1489 on the question: **How did the Reformation divide the Christian Church,**  
1490 **millions of people, and European states?** By the early sixteenth century,  
1491 criticism of the clerical and institutional practices of the Catholic Church (e.g., the  
1492 selling of indulgences and corruption by the clergy) was extensive. Martin Luther  
1493 not only criticized these practices, but also fundamental doctrines such as the  
1494 validity of five of the seven sacraments and the need for clergy and good works  
1495 to achieve salvation. He created a new theology that Christian religious practice  
1496 be strictly guided by knowledge from within the Bible alone and that salvation

1497 was justified by ‘faith alone.’ Students can analyze Martin Luther’s account of his  
1498 tower experience, using the excerpt, sentence deconstruction chart, and analysis  
1499 chart on the Blueprint for History blogpost “Martin Luther Primary Source and  
1500 CCSS Activity.” A generation later, John Calvin argued for predestination,  
1501 whereby those elected by God were certain of salvation. The distinctions  
1502 between Lutheranism and Calvinism were significant and led to many separate  
1503 denominations within Protestantism. Students examine a diagram showing how  
1504 modern Christian churches descended from these original splits in Protestantism.  
1505 The Catholic Reformation in response to Protestantism transformed the Roman  
1506 Church as well, especially in its practices. All churches stressed education,  
1507 understanding of doctrine, and social discipline for lay people.

1508       The Reformation had dramatic effects on European people. All of the new  
1509 denominations, Catholic and Protestant, were intolerant of each other and would  
1510 not allow believers from another denomination to coexist with their believers.  
1511 Mobs of ordinary people sometimes fought over religious differences. The rulers  
1512 of states chose one denomination and required all the people living in the state to  
1513 belong to that denomination. For example, if Calvinists found themselves living in  
1514 a Lutheran state, they had either to hide their belief or move to another country.  
1515 The threat of Protestantism added more fuel to the already growing religious  
1516 persecution in Spain, which had expelled the Jews in 1492. Spain expelled all  
1517 Muslims between 1500 and 1614 and persecuted converts and dissenters in the  
1518 Spanish Inquisition. Spanish identity became associated with Roman Catholic  
1519 belief and a strong sense of the Spanish mission to protect and spread it, which

1520 showed also in the strenuous and successful efforts of the Spanish to convert the  
1521 local people in their Latin American colonies and the Philippines. Protestant  
1522 states were also intolerant and executed Catholics and members of other  
1523 Protestant denominations. In addition, state authorities executed 50,000 people,  
1524  $\frac{3}{4}$  of them women, as witches who had sworn loyalty to the devil.

1525       Whereas the Catholic Church insisted that priests and nuns remain celibate  
1526 (unmarried), the new Protestant churches permitted their clergy to marry. In a  
1527 few radical Protestant sects, women sometimes became leaders in church  
1528 organization and propagation. However, male clergy, both Catholic and  
1529 Protestant, generally agreed that even though men and women are equal in the  
1530 sight of God women should bow to the will of their fathers and husbands in  
1531 religious and intellectual matters.

1532       Religious differences shaped European divisions for the rest of the early  
1533 modern era. Most of northwestern Europe, such as England, the Netherlands,  
1534 the northern German lands, and Scandinavia, became Protestant, while most of  
1535 southwestern Europe, such as France, Spain, the southern German lands, and  
1536 Italy, remained loyal to Rome. Religious differences led to wars between Spain  
1537 and England, the revolt of the Netherlands, the Huguenot civil wars in France,  
1538 and the Thirty Years War in Germany, which ended in 1648. By that time, after  
1539 150 years of religious warfare, many Europeans were calling for religious  
1540 toleration to bring an end to religious violence.

1541       Students now turn to the question: **How did world religions change and**  
1542 **spread during the early modern period?** The expansion of global

1543 communications facilitated the further expansion of major world religions, notably  
1544 Christianity in the Americas and Southeast Asia, Islam around the Indian Ocean  
1545 rim, and Theravada Buddhism from Sri Lanka to Southeast Asia. The Christian  
1546 reformation played a significant role in motivating colonization of the Americas.  
1547 European missionaries, especially Catholic missionary orders, spread reformed  
1548 Christianity in Africa and Asia during the early modern period.

1549       A new world religion, Sikhism, was founded in 1469 in South Asia. Sikhism  
1550 was founded by Guru Nanak, a social reformer who challenged the authority of  
1551 the Brahmins and the caste order. Students learn about the Sikh Scripture (Guru  
1552 Granth Sahib), articles of faith, the turban, and Sikh history. Guru Nanak taught  
1553 that all human beings are equal and can realize the divine within them without  
1554 any human intermediaries or priests. Sikhs believe that each individual can  
1555 realize the divine on his or her own through devotion to God, truthful living, and  
1556 service to humanity. The three basic principles of Sikhism are honest living,  
1557 sharing with the needy, and praying to one God. With the addition of Sikhism,  
1558 there were now four major religions of indigenous origin. While relations between  
1559 people of different religions were often peaceful, generally, most Muslim rulers  
1560 persecuted Sikhs as well as Hindus and Jains. Other Mughal rulers, most notably  
1561 Akbar, encouraged and accelerated the blending of Hindu and Islamic beliefs as  
1562 well as architectural and artistic forms.

1563       Religious enthusiasm and challenge to orthodoxy in the early modern period  
1564 was not unique to Europe. In China the philosopher Wang Yangming (1472-  
1565 1529) initiated a reform of neo-Confucian teaching and practice, which he found

1566 dogmatic and snobbish. He argued that ordinary women and men have the  
1567 capacity to lead honest lives and know good from evil without learning Confucian  
1568 texts and performing ceremonies. In Iran, the Safavid Dynasty gave support to  
1569 the Shi'a branch of Islam, thereby challenging Sunni authority. For another  
1570 example of adoption and adaptation, students can analyze art and texts from  
1571 Java to see how the journey of nine Sufi saints led to a synthesis of local  
1572 animism, Hinduism and Islam. On a global scale, religious change in the early  
1573 modern period tended to promote more personal forms of practice at the  
1574 expense of the power of entrenched religious institutions and clerics. Religions  
1575 continued to spread as people sought ways to understand the changes  
1576 happening around them.

1577       The teacher makes the transition to the question: **What were the effects of**  
1578 **the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution?** by telling students that they  
1579 will be studying the development and spread of other sets of ideas besides  
1580 religious ones. The Renaissance was a cultural and intellectual movement that  
1581 began in the Italian city-states in the mid-fourteenth century and spread across  
1582 Europe by the sixteenth century.

1583 The Italian Peninsula witnessed significant urbanization and the formation of  
1584 prosperous independent city-states such as Venice, Genoa, Florence and Milan.  
1585 With wealth generated from trade and industry, and inspired by commercial and  
1586 political rivalry with one another, these city-states experienced a remarkable  
1587 burst of creativity that produced the artistic and literary advances of the  
1588 Renaissance. Through extensive contact with Byzantine and Islamic scholars, a

1589 considerable body of Greco-Roman knowledge was rediscovered. This revival of  
1590 classical learning was named humanism. Humanists studied history, moral  
1591 philosophy, poetry, rhetoric, and grammar, subjects they thought should be the  
1592 key elements of an enlightened education. Humanism facilitated considerable  
1593 achievements in literature, such as the works of Dante Alighieri, Machiavelli, and  
1594 William Shakespeare, and the arts, such the painting and sculpture of Leonardo  
1595 da Vinci and Michelangelo di Buonarroti Simoni. Students investigate the  
1596 Renaissance artistic techniques, such as perspective and realistic portraits, and  
1597 architectural masterpieces, such as the Sistine Chapel. After 1455, the printing  
1598 press, using moveable metal type, and the availability of manufactured paper  
1599 disseminated humanism and Italian Renaissance learning to other parts of  
1600 Europe and beyond. In Northern Europe, humanist interest in the origin and  
1601 development of languages inspired the creation of new and more exacting Greek  
1602 and Latin versions of the New Testament as well as vernacular translations of the  
1603 Bible. This emphasis on exact reading of the Christian scriptures was an  
1604 important influence upon early Protestant thinkers.

1605 Humanism played a continuing role in advancing science, mathematics, and  
1606 engineering techniques, as well as the understanding of human anatomy and  
1607 astronomy. Discoveries led to a Scientific Revolution in early modern Europe.  
1608 The long-term origins of the Scientific Revolution were rooted in the historical  
1609 connections with Greco-Roman rationalism; Jewish, Christian, and Muslim  
1610 science; and Renaissance humanism. European exploration and colonization in  
1611 this period also stimulated a desire for intellectual understanding of the human

1612 and natural world. New information, new plants, and new animals from the  
1613 Americas, which were not mentioned in the Bible nor by Aristotle and other  
1614 ancient Greek authorities, led many to challenge traditional Christian and  
1615 classical ideas about the universe. Scientists replaced reliance on classical  
1616 authorities with the methodologies of the Scientific Revolution: empiricism,  
1617 scientific observation, mathematical proof, and experimental science. They  
1618 created what is today known as the scientific method. A number of significant  
1619 inventions and instruments in over the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries—the telescope,  
1620 microscope, thermometer, and barometer— furthered scientific knowledge and  
1621 understanding. There were significant scientific theories in astronomy and  
1622 physics, including those associated with Nicolaus Copernicus, Johannes Kepler,  
1623 Sir Isaac Newton, and Galileo Galilei (a physicist and astronomer who was  
1624 charged with heresy by the Catholic Church for his public support of Copernicus’  
1625 theory that the earth revolved around the sun; he spent his final days under  
1626 house arrest).

1627 By the eighteenth century, scientific thinking and rational thought in Europe  
1628 were reconciled with religious ideas and practice, as scientists justified their  
1629 studies as identifying the patterns of the natural world to discover the plan of the  
1630 divine. Many people accepted the concept that the universe operates according  
1631 to natural laws, which human reason can discover and explain. The development  
1632 of a culture of scientific inquiry in Europe was associated with its autonomous  
1633 universities in some countries. In these institutions scholars received some legal  
1634 protection and were relatively free to study and argue what they pleased.

1635 Gradually, European scientific knowledge began to inform military, agricultural,  
1636 and metallurgical technologies. By the early eighteenth century, this culture of  
1637 scientific inquiry was diffused beyond Europe through the establishment of  
1638 universities in Mexico, Peru, and North America. The teacher sets up a gallery  
1639 walk of major inventions and discoveries of the Scientific Revolution and gives  
1640 students a source analysis chart that includes the questions: **What were the**  
1641 **effects of the Scientific Revolution? What modern ideas or technologies**  
1642 **came from this invention or discovery?** When students have completed  
1643 gallery walk, the teacher leads a discussion of the effects of the Scientific  
1644 Revolution, and lists effects on the board as students identify them.

1645 Newton's recognition that nature was understandable, predictable, and bound  
1646 by natural laws proved an important inspiration to Locke and other early thinkers  
1647 associated with the Enlightenment who argued that such laws and  
1648 understandings were applicable to the human and moral world as well. The  
1649 Enlightenment emerged from the Scientific Revolution, and the political and  
1650 social conditions of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The students focus on the question: **Why**  
1651 **were the social contract and other ideas of the Enlightenment**  
1652 **revolutionary?** Beginning in the late seventeenth century, philosophers began to  
1653 employ the use of reason and scientific methods to scrutinize previously  
1654 accepted political and social doctrines. Enlightenment thinkers, such as John  
1655 Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Charles-Louis Montesquieu, and Thomas  
1656 Jefferson, proposed religious toleration, equal rights of all before the law, and the  
1657 Social Contract. The teacher focuses on the social contract, as it provides the

1658 necessary bridge to Grade 8. After explaining its three fundamental concepts, the  
1659 teacher assigns a choice project: students can either write a story, draw a visual,  
1660 or act out the three ideas of the social contract. Students work alone on stories or  
1661 visuals, but form small groups for the acting option. The students can also  
1662 engage in a service learning project that emphasizes the importance of the  
1663 responsibility of citizens in a democracy. If the people are the basis of the state,  
1664 then they must act to protect the state and other citizens, participate in state  
1665 institutions, such as jury duty and voting, and help insure rights for all.