

Medieval History

476–1776 A.D.



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Common Questions

What are the topics covered in this course?

Unit 1: The Fall of Rome & the Byzantine Empire
Unit 2: The Rise of Islam
Unit 3: Medieval China, Korea, & Japan
Unit 4: Medieval Africa
Unit 5: Medieval Europe
Unit 6: Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations
Unit 7: The Renaissance & Reformation
Unit 8: Scientific Revolution, Exploration, & the Enlightenment

Is this course parent-led or student-led?

While we always encourage parent involvement, this course is designed for students to be able to complete on their own with some supervision or occasional involvement.

What ages/grades is this course designed for?

This course is designed with a 12–14 year-old in mind and covers 6th–8th grade national social studies standards (C3 framework) and all of the California state 7th–grade social studies standards. The entire Medieval History course was written around these standards. With that being said, all of our curriculum can be done family-style, meaning it can be enjoyed together by learners of all ages.

How much time should be spent on each lesson? How many days a week should they do social studies?

Students should plan to spend about **45 minutes per lesson, 3 times a week**, to complete the course within one school year. Because the number of books and videos may vary, we recommend allowing about **four to five weeks per unit** to fully understand the key concepts. Units will have anywhere from 10–16 lessons each when following the pacing guide. **Please have your student read “Before You Begin” to better understand how to use this course.**

Do you have a book list available for the full course?

You can find a comprehensive list of all of our book recommendations for this course on our Amazon Storefront- Medieval History section [here](#).



Amazon storefront- Medieval
History Book List

**I receive a very small commission if
purchased through this link.*

Are there any books you recommend for the entire course (not unit specific)?

Yes, I love these Usborne books on Medieval History.

- [The Usborne Medieval World](#)
- [The Usborne Internet Linked Medieval World](#)

Are there Answer Keys?

Yes, for many of the activities/worksheets, there are Answer Keys that can be found at the end of the course book. No cheating! 😊

NOTE TO PARENTS:

While we do our best to avoid overly graphic or inappropriate content, some artwork and historical videos from this time period may include mild nudity or mature imagery because they reflect the culture, art, and history of the medieval and Renaissance world. We encourage parents to preview videos in advance if their child may be especially sensitive to this content.

Additionally, we try to include as many family-friendly movie recommendations as possible (G or PG). However, there are certain PG-13 movies recommended that we felt were more mild in nature and fit especially well with the unit. Please review these ahead of time and decide if they are appropriate for your child. Movies are optional and NOT required.

If any supplies are needed for an activity, we have highlighted that in red on the Unit Introduction Pages (start of each unit). Please help your student acquire these supplies in advance of the activity.

Finally, please help your child maintain integrity by not using the Answer Keys at the back of the book before completing the worksheet on their own.

Before You Begin

Welcome to **Medieval History**! This course is designed to be flexible, giving you choices about how you learn. There isn't just one "right" way to complete it!

Unit Introduction Cards

Before each unit, read the Unit Introduction Card (printed separately on cardstock). These cards give you a quick overview of what you'll be learning. Punch a hole in the corner and keep them together on a ring or string as you complete the course.

Book Recommendations

Each unit includes a variety of book recommendations. Read about 15–20 minutes per lesson, choosing whichever books interest you most. You might read several picture books or work through a chapter book over multiple units—it's completely up to you!

Videos & Movies

Many lessons include a YouTube video with a QR code for easy access. Movie recommendations are optional and can be enjoyed on lighter or catch-up days near the end of each unit.

Critical Thinking Journal

Each lesson includes a short critical thinking question. We recommend keeping a journal and spending about 5 minutes writing your response at the end of the lesson. These questions are meant to help you think more deeply about history.

Quizzes

Each unit ends with a short 10-question quiz to help you review what you've learned before moving on.

Explore More

Review days are intentionally left lighter so you can explore topics that interest you. Read another book, watch a documentary, or research a person or event you'd like to learn more about. We like to call these “Rabbit Trail” days, because it gives you time to go down whatever “rabbit trail” your mind takes you.

Make It Your Own

If a lesson feels too long, talk with your parent or teacher about adjusting the schedule. You don't have to complete every optional resource. The goal is to spark curiosity, not overwhelm you.

Suggested Pace

Plan to complete **10–16 lessons per unit, 3 lessons per week, with each lesson taking about 45 minutes**. At this pace, you'll finish the course in one academic year, spending about 4–5 weeks on each unit. You will find what to do for each lesson (aka Pacing Guides) at the beginning of each unit.

The Byzantine Empire

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in A.D. 476, the Eastern Roman Empire continued to thrive. Historians later gave it a new name: **the Byzantine Empire**. Although we use this name today, the people who lived there considered themselves Romans. They continued to follow Roman laws, government traditions, and many Roman customs. Over time, however, the Byzantine Empire developed its own unique culture. Greek became the primary language, and Christianity played an important role in daily life. The empire's capital, Constantinople, grew into one of the wealthiest and most influential cities in the world.

One of the most famous Byzantine emperors was **Justinian I**, who ruled from A.D. 527 to A.D. 565. Justinian worked to strengthen the empire and organize Roman laws into a collection known as **Justinian's Code**. This legal system influenced many later governments and helped preserve Roman ideas for future generations.

The Byzantines were also known for their **beautiful art and architecture**. While Roman architecture often focused on roads, aqueducts, amphitheaters, and public buildings, Byzantine architecture **emphasized churches and religious spaces**. Byzantine buildings featured large domes, colorful mosaics, and richly decorated interiors designed to inspire worship.

The most famous example of Byzantine architecture is the **Hagia Sophia** in Constantinople. Built during Justinian's reign and completed in A.D. 537, the Hagia Sophia was crowned with a massive dome and decorated with dazzling mosaics. It became a symbol of Byzantine engineering, wealth, and faith.

The Byzantine Empire survived for nearly 1,000 years after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. By preserving Roman laws, learning, and traditions while developing its own unique culture, the Byzantine Empire helped connect the ancient world to the medieval world.

ROMAN VS. BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE

Roman:

- Arches
- Aqueducts
- Bridges
- Amphitheaters
- Public baths
- Government buildings
- Practical engineering

Byzantine:

- Large domes
- Churches
- Mosaics
- Religious artwork
- Decorative interiors
- Christian symbols
- Focus on worship

Architecture Detective

Instructions: Using the chart on the previous page, determine whether the image of the famous site is Roman or Byzantine architecture. Use evidence from the image to support your answer. The first one is done for you.

Name of Site	Image	Roman or Byzantine?	Evidence?
Colosseum		Roman	Uses arches and amphitheater design
Pont du Gard Aqueduct			
Hagia Sophia			
Roman Forum			
Mosaic in the Basilica of San Vitale			
Church of the Holy Apostles			

The Expansion of Muslim civilizations

When Muhammad died in A.D. 632, Islam had spread throughout much of the Arabian Peninsula. Over the next several centuries, Muslim leaders and their followers expanded far beyond Arabia, creating one of the largest and most influential civilizations in history.

After Muhammad's death, leadership passed to a series of rulers known as **caliphs**. The word caliph means "successor." These leaders guided the growing Muslim community and helped spread Islam throughout the Middle East and beyond.

The first group of caliphs, known as the **Rashidun Caliphate**, expanded Muslim rule into parts of the Byzantine Empire and the Persian Empire. Within a few decades, Muslim-controlled lands stretched from Egypt in North Africa to Persia in Southwest Asia.

In A.D. 661, the **Umayyad Caliphate** came to power. Under the Umayyads, Muslim territory expanded even farther. Their empire eventually stretched from Spain in the west to parts of Central Asia in the east. This made it one of the largest empires the world had ever seen.

As Muslim civilizations grew, trade routes connected people from Europe, Africa, and Asia. Merchants traveled across deserts, seas, and mountains, carrying goods such as spices, silk, gold, and textiles. Along with products, people exchanged ideas, knowledge, languages, and cultures.

In A.D. 750, the **Abbasid Caliphate** replaced the Umayyads and established a new capital city called **Baghdad**. Located near major trade routes, Baghdad became one of the most important cities in the world. It attracted scholars, merchants, artists, and travelers from many different regions.

Muslim civilizations expanded rapidly through **military conquest** during the early caliphates. Over time, trade, migration, and cultural exchange also helped spread Islamic ideas and influence to regions far beyond the original empire. Their cities became centers of trade, learning, and innovation. These connections helped shape the development of science, mathematics, medicine, literature, and art for centuries to come.

By the A.D. 1200s, Muslim civilizations stretched across parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia. Their influence could be seen in architecture, education, government, and trade networks that linked much of the known world.



Unit Three

Medieval China, Korea, & Japan (600–1600 A.D.)

Books:

Picture books

1. The Emperor and the Kite by Jane Yolen
2. The Empty Pot by Demi
3. Marco Polo by Demi

Short-length chapter books

1. You Wouldn't Want to be a Samurai by Fiona Macdonald
2. Who Was Marco Polo? by Joan Holub

Full-length chapter books

1. A Single Shard by Linda Sue Park
2. Where the Mountain Meets the Moon by Grace Lin
3. The Samurai's Tale by Erik C. Haugaard

Movies/TV Shows:

- Mulan (1998, Rated G)
- Mulan (2020, **Rated PG-13**, live-action)
- The Forbidden Kingdom (2008, **Rated PG-13**)
- Kubo and the Two Strings (2016, Rated PG)

Videos:

1. Medieval China, 11m
2. How did the Silk Road Actually Work, 9m
3. Everything You Need To Know About Feudal Japan, 10m
4. The World of Shogun, 6m
5. Korea and China's Role in Ancient Japan's Rise, 6m
6. China's Entire Three Kingdoms Story, 15m



1



2



3



4



5



6

Unit Three

Medieval China, Korea, & Japan (600–1600 A.D.)

Activities:

1. **Tri-fold Study Guide**– Use this guide to take notes on medieval China, Korea, and Japan as you work through the unit.
2. **Civil Service Exam**– Learn about the civil service exams and take your own test to see if you could work for the Emperor! Which job will you qualify for?
3. **Silk Road Lantern Craft**– After learning about the Silk Road, color and create your own Chinese lantern in this simple craft.
4. **Hangul Name Tag**– Read about Korea and the invention of the Hangul writing system, then create your own name tag.
5. **Design Your Hanbok**– Learn about traditional Korean clothing and then roll a die to design your hanbok based on your place in society.
6. **Samurai Crest**– Design your samurai crest

Standards & Topics Covered:

- 7.3.1, 7.3.2, 7.3.3, 7.3.4, 7.3.5, 7.5.1, 7.5.2, 7.5.3, 7.5.4
- Tang and Song Dynasties, Spread of Buddhism, Chinese inventions and trade, Mongol invasions and Kublai Khan, Feudal Japan and samurai culture, Shinto and Zen Buddhism

Unit 3- Pacing Guide

Medieval China, Korea, & Japan (600–1600 A.D.)

UNIT 3	INTRO/ READING	CRITICAL THINKING	ACTIVITY	BOOK RECS	VIDEOS	
LESSON 1	Read the Unit 3 Intro Card & Medieval China: The Middle Kingdom	Why do you think China became one of the world's most advanced civilizations during the Middle Ages?	Begin your Tri-fold Study Guide	Read 15–20 minutes from any recommended book.	Medieval China (11 min)	
LESSON 2	China's Golden Age: The Tang & Song Dynasties	Why were education and government important to China's success?	Civil Service Exam	Read 15–20 minutes.		
LESSON 3		Which achievement of the Tang or Song Dynasty do you think had the greatest impact on history?	Continue Tri-fold Notes	Read 15–20 minutes.	China's Entire Three Kingdoms Story (15 min)	
LESSON 4	The Silk Road	How did trade spread more than just goods?	Silk Road Lantern Craft	Read 15–20 minutes.		
LESSON 5	History Spotlight: Marco Polo	How did Marco Polo change the way the East was viewed by the West?		Read 15–20 minutes.	How Did the Silk Road Actually Work? (9 min)	
LESSON 6	The Mongols and the Yuan Dynasty	Was the Mongol Empire more destructive or more beneficial to world history?	Add to Tri-fold Study Guide	Read 15–20 minutes.		
LESSON 7	Medieval Korea: A Kingdom Between Giants	How did Korea borrow ideas from China while creating its own identity?	Hangul Name Tag	Read 15–20 minutes.		
LESSON 8		Why do you think King Sejong wanted to create Hangul?	Design Your Hanbok	Read 15–20 minutes.		
LESSON 9	Medieval Japan and the Samurai	Who do you think had the most power in Japanese feudalism?	Samurai Crest	Read 15–20 minutes.	Everything You Need to Know About Feudal Japan (10 min)	
LESSON 10	The 47 Ronin Spotlight	Which Bushido value do you think is most important today? Why?	Finish Tri-fold Study Guide	Read 15–20 minutes.	Korea and China's Role in Ancient Japan's Rise (6 min)	
LESSON 11	Unit Review & catch up	Which civilization (China, Korea, or Japan) did you find most interesting?	Review notes, vocabulary, and maps, watch movie	Read 15–20 minutes.	The World of Shogun (6 min)	
LESSON 12	Rabbit Trail Day: research topics that interest you	Choose one invention, leader, or cultural tradition from this unit to research further.	Independent research, watch movie	Read 15–20 minutes.		
LESSON 13	Final Review	Review the key people, places, inventions, and ideas from the unit.	Unit 3 Quiz	Read 15–20 minutes.		
OPTIONAL MOVIES/TV	- Mulan (1998, Rated G) - Mulan (2020, Rated PG-13, live-action) - The Forbidden Kingdom (2008, Rated PG-13) - Kubo and the Two Strings (2016, Rated PG)					

The Silk Road

During the Tang and Song Dynasties, China became one of the most prosperous and innovative civilizations in the world. Much of this success came from trade and new inventions that improved daily life. Through a vast network of trade routes known as the **Silk Road**, Chinese goods, ideas, and technologies spread across Asia and beyond.

Despite its name, the Silk Road was not a single road. Instead, it was a 5,500 mile network of land and sea routes that connected China to Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. Merchants traveled these routes carrying valuable goods such as silk, tea, porcelain, spices, precious stones, and metals. Some journeys took months or even years to complete.

Trade was not always easy. Merchants faced harsh deserts, rugged mountains, storms, and bandits. To protect themselves, many traveled in large groups called **caravans**. Camels were especially important because they could carry heavy loads and travel long distances across dry deserts.

The Silk Road did more than move goods from one place to another. It also allowed people to exchange ideas, religions, technologies, and cultures. Buddhism, which had originated in India centuries earlier, spread into China along these trade routes. Travelers shared new foods, languages, stories, and customs wherever they went.

China's merchants traded many products that were highly valued throughout the world. **Silk** was one of the most famous. Chinese silk was soft, colorful, and difficult to produce, making it a luxury item in many countries. Chinese craftsmen also created beautiful **porcelain**, a strong and elegant type of ceramic that became highly sought after by wealthy families around the world.

Trade helped support another important part of China's Golden Age: **innovation**. Chinese inventors and scholars developed technologies that changed the course of history.

One of China's most important inventions was paper. Before paper became common, people often wrote on bamboo strips, silk, or animal skins. Paper was less expensive and easier to produce, making books and written records more accessible.

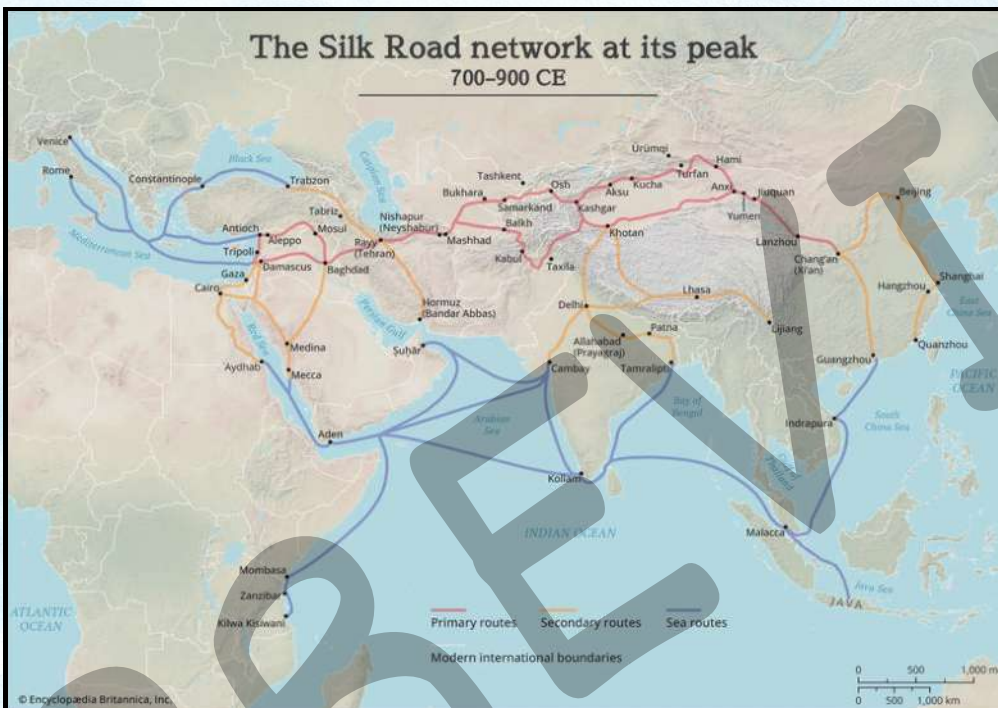
Chinese inventors also improved **printing**. Instead of copying books by hand, printers could create many copies of the same text. This allowed knowledge to spread more quickly and helped preserve important works of literature, history, and philosophy.

Another invention was **gunpowder**. Chinese alchemists first discovered gunpowder while experimenting with different substances. It was initially used in fireworks and celebrations, but people later found ways to use it in warfare. Over time, knowledge of gunpowder spread to other parts of the world.

The magnetic **compass** was another important Chinese invention. By using Earth's magnetic field, the compass helped sailors determine direction even when they could not see landmarks. This made long-distance travel and trade safer and more reliable.

The inventions of paper, printing, gunpowder, and the compass are often called the **"Four Great Inventions of China"** because of their lasting impact on world history. These technologies eventually spread to other regions through trade and cultural exchange, influencing societies far beyond China's borders.

By the end of the medieval period, China's trade networks and inventions had connected people across continents. Goods traveled thousands of miles, ideas crossed cultural boundaries, and new technologies transformed the way people lived. Through the Silk Road and its many innovations, China helped shape the development of the medieval world.



INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE SILK ROAD

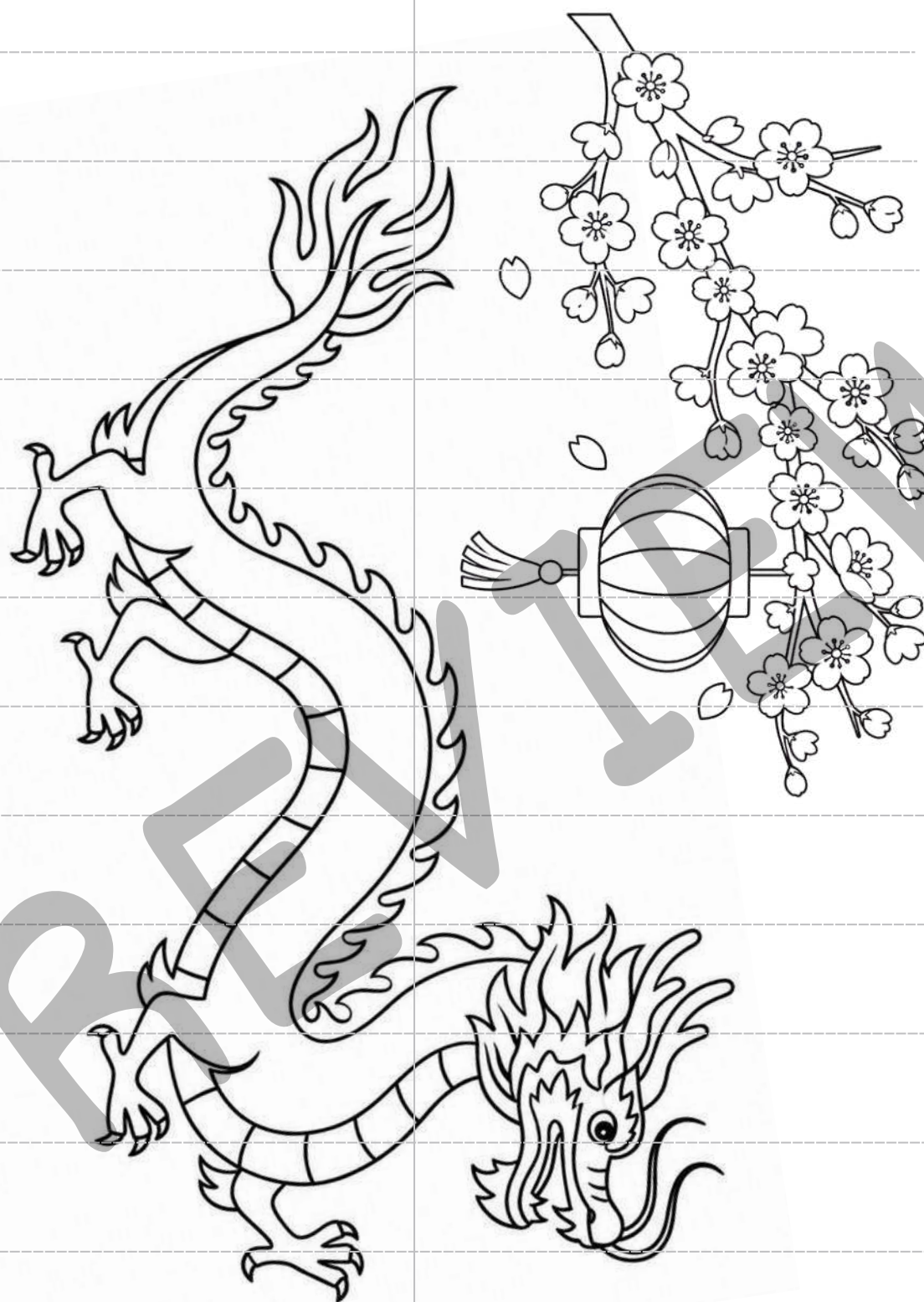
- It wasn't called the "Silk Road" until 1877
- The Han dynasty wanted powerful foreign horses which is one of the main reasons the Silk Road was started.
- Many believe the "Black Death" aka bubonic plague of 1340 traveled on the Silk Road.
- Fashion styles traveled on the Silk Road.

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Silk-Road-trade-route>

Silk Road Lantern Craft

Instructions: Imagine your a traveler on the Silk Road. Use the template on the following page to design a traditional Chinese lantern to bring along your journey. First, use paint or markers to color the lantern. Then, cut along any dashed lines and fold on the solid line. Glue it together and attach the handle.





My Silk Road Lantern

Unit 3 Quiz

1. Which Chinese dynasty is known for many important inventions such as paper money, gunpowder, and the compass?
 - A. Qin Dynasty
 - B. Tang and Song Dynasties
 - C. Ming Dynasty
 - D. Han Dynasty
2. Which belief system taught the importance of respect, education, and good behavior?
 - A. Islam
 - B. Confucianism
 - C. Hinduism
 - D. Judaism
3. Which invention made it easier to share books and ideas?
 - A. Steam engine
 - B. Printing
 - C. Telephone
 - D. Telescope
4. What is Hangul?
 - A. A Japanese religion
 - B. The Korean alphabet
 - C. A Chinese dynasty
 - D. A type of armor
5. Who was the military ruler of Japan during the feudal period?
 - A. Emperor
 - B. Samurai
 - C. Shogun
 - D. Daimyo
6. What was the main job of a samurai?
 - A. Farming rice
 - B. Serving and protecting their lord
 - C. Trading goods along the Silk Road
 - D. Governing the empire
7. Which trade route connected China with Europe and the Middle East?
 - A. Oregon Trail
 - B. Silk Road
 - C. Spice Route
 - D. Appian Way
8. Which of the following was an important Chinese invention?
 - A. Aqueducts
 - B. Gunpowder
 - C. Concrete
 - D. The steam engine
9. True or False: Korea was influenced by Chinese culture but developed its own unique language and traditions.
10. True or False: Feudal Japan was organized into a system with emperors, shoguns, daimyo, samurai, and peasants.

Crossing the Sahara Board Game

2-4 players

Object: Reach Timbuktu with the most valuable supplies to win.

Getting Started:

Cut out the game pieces and cards on the following page. Place the cards in a pile to the side. Distribute the game pieces.

Each player receives-

- 1 camel (pawn)
- 10 barrels of water
- 4 salt bags
- 1 gold

How to Play:

On your turn, roll the die and move your camel that many spaces on the board.

After every turn, you lose 1 barrel of water.

If you land on a special space, find the card with the matching symbol and follow the instructions.

If you run out of water, forfeit a salt bag, gold, or skip a turn. Player chooses.

Scoring:

Once everyone has arrived at Timbuktu, they will count their points and the person with the highest points, wins!

- 1 pt for each barrel of water
- 3 pts. for each salt bag
- 5 pts. for each piece of gold
- 1 extra point if you're the first player to reach Timbuktu





OASIS

Gain 2 water barrels.



SANDSTORM

Lose your next turn and
1 salt.



CARAVAN TRADE

Trade 1 salt for 1 gold.



BANDITS

Lose 2 salts or 1 gold.
Player chooses.



HELPFUL GUIDES

Move ahead 2 spaces.



EXTREME HEAT

Lose 2 barrels of water
and 1 salt.



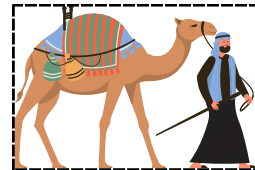
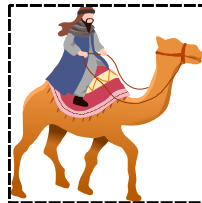
TRADE POST

1 salt = 2 gold
2 water = 1 gold
1 gold = 4 water



INJURY

Lose your next turn and
1 barrel of water.



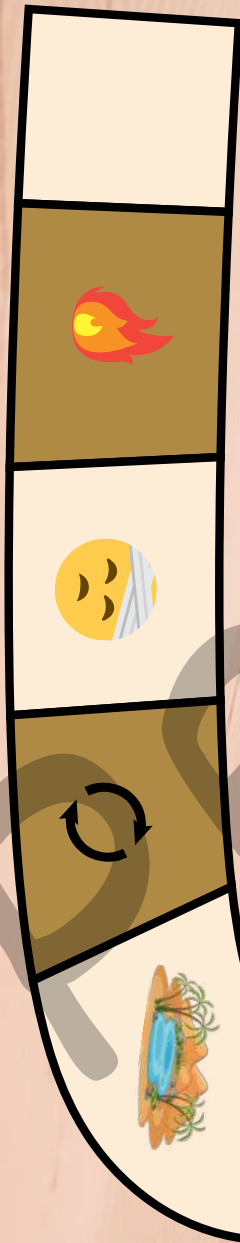
*Tip- cut out the water and gold in horizontal strips for less cutting. Each has 10 water and 1 gold.



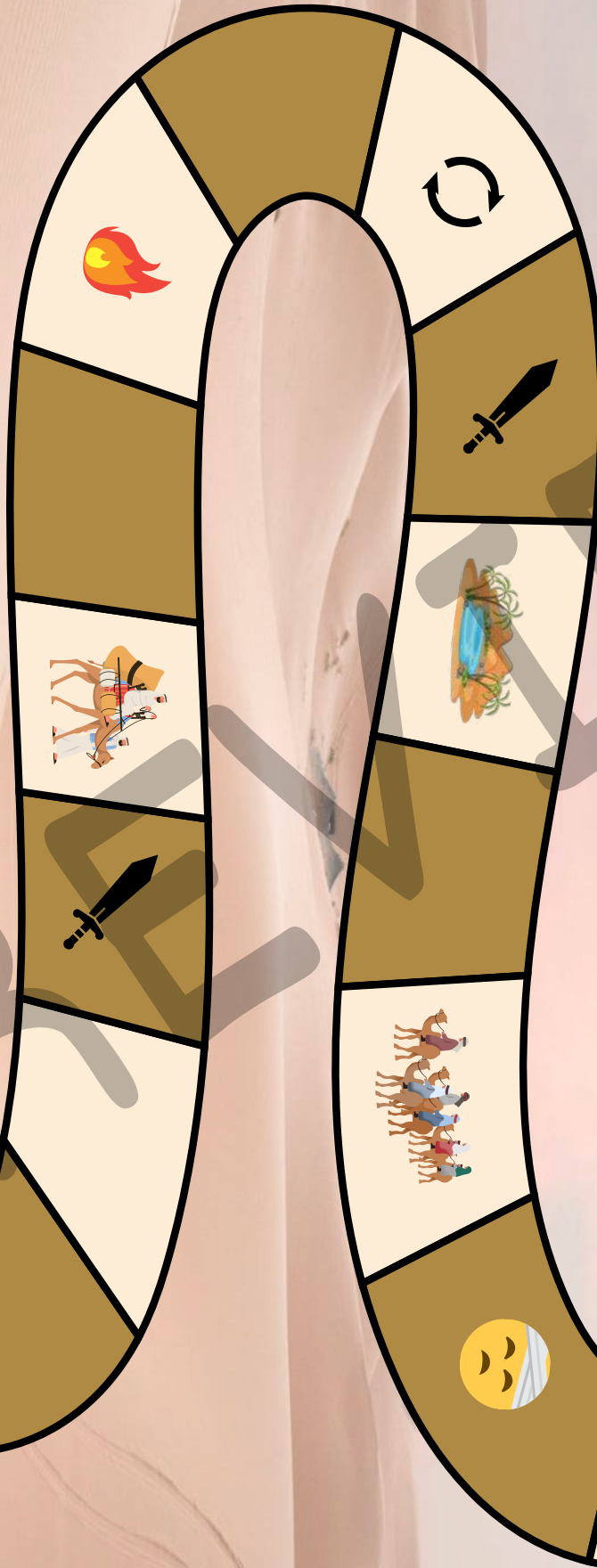
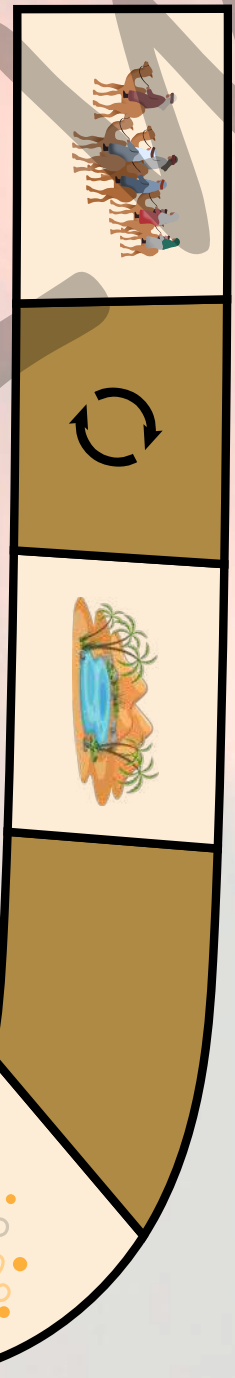
Extra pieces:



**YOU REACHED
TIMBUKTU**



**START YOUR
CARAVAN HERE**



The Rise of Feudal Europe

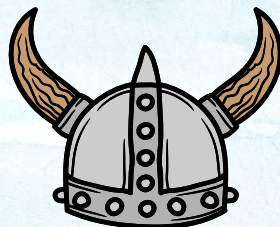
In unit 3, you learned that Japan developed a feudal system in which powerful lords, skilled warriors, and farmers each had important roles in society. But did you know that **feudalism** first developed centuries earlier in Europe? In this unit, we'll explore how and why this system began, what daily life was like during the Middle Ages, and how it shaped European history for nearly 500 years.

Imagine living in a world where there were no police officers, no national army, and no government strong enough to protect your town. If enemies attacked, you and your neighbors would have to depend on a local leader for safety. This was the reality for many people living in western Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. During this time of uncertainty, a new system called feudalism began to develop. It would shape European society for nearly 500 years.

When the Western Roman Empire fell in **476 CE**, Europe entered a time of great change. For centuries, Rome had ruled much of western Europe with a strong government, a professional army, and an extensive network of roads. Roman soldiers protected the empire's borders, merchants traded goods across long distances, and Roman laws helped maintain order. When the empire collapsed, however, much of western Europe was left without a strong central government to unite and protect its people.

Without an emperor to maintain order, the western empire broke into many small kingdoms ruled by local leaders. Roads and bridges gradually fell into disrepair, making travel more difficult. **Trade slowed** as merchants feared being robbed while traveling from town to town. Many cities shrank as people moved into the countryside, where they hoped to grow enough food to survive. During this period, most people rarely traveled farther than a few miles from the village where they were born.

Life became even more dangerous as new groups invaded western Europe. Beginning in the late 700s, the **Vikings** sailed from Scandinavia in fast, shallow ships that allowed them to travel along rivers as well as across the sea. They raided villages, monasteries, and trading towns, often taking valuable treasures before quickly sailing away. From the east came the **Magyars**, skilled horsemen who attacked settlements across central Europe. In the south, **Muslim armies and pirates** (including the **Moors**) controlled much of the Mediterranean Sea and sometimes raided coastal towns. These repeated invasions made it difficult for kings to keep their people safe.



Keep the Kingdom Alive Game

A Medieval Feudalism & Manorialism Simulation

Objective:

Can you keep your medieval kingdom alive? Who will have the strongest kingdom?

Your goal is to balance the needs of your kingdom by managing Food, Gold, Knights, Loyalty, and Castle Strength. Every year brings new challenges, and every decision has consequences. If one important part of your kingdom fails, the entire kingdom could collapse!

Setup:

1. Pass out one Resource Card to each player. You'll notice you all start with the same resources (5 food, 2 knights, 4 loyalty, 2 castle strength, and 3 gold).
2. Shuffle the Event Cards and place them face down in a pile.
3. Place the Action Reference Card face up where everyone can see it.

How to Play:

Step 1: Draw an Event Card

- Read the card aloud and follow the instructions. Some events may reward your kingdom, while others may cause you to lose resources. Add resources or cross them off your Kingdom Resource Card as you go.

Step 2: Choose ONE Kingdom Action

- After resolving the event, you must choose one action from the Action Reference Card to help strengthen your kingdom. Record your actions on your Kingdom Resource Card.

Step 3: Advance to the Next Year

After you've completed these actions, if your kingdom has survived (hasn't run out of any resources), you survive another year and begin the next round (repeat or pass to the next player).

Your kingdom immediately loses if any of these happen:

- 🍷 Food reaches 0 (your people starve).
- ⚔️ Knights reach 0 (your kingdom cannot defend itself).
- 🤝 Loyalty reaches 0 (your nobles rebel against the king).
- 🏰 Castle Strength reaches 0 (your defenses collapse).

Winning the Game: After all Event Cards have been played, if you have at least 1 resource remaining in every category, your kingdom survives! If multiple players survive, add up your remaining resources (1 point each). The player with the highest total wins (strongest kingdom).

Think About It: After the game, discuss these questions:

- Which resource was the hardest to manage?
- Why did kings depend on nobles and knights?
- How did feudalism and manorialism work together to keep your kingdom running?

Medieval Eating

Instructions: Choose from one or both of the options below to eat like a farmer on a manor.

Pottage

Pottage was the everyday meal for most peasants. It was basically a thick soup or stew that changed depending on what vegetables were available.

Modern Version-

- 2 potatoes
 - 2 carrots
 - 2 celery stalks
 - 1 onion
 - 4 cups chicken or vegetable broth
 - 1 cup cooked barley (or rice if easier)
 - Salt
 - Pepper
 - Thyme
- Simmer about 30 minutes.



Farmer's Lunch

Peasants or farmers would often wrap their lunch in cloth and tie it with twine, maybe even carrying it in a woven basket. Gather the items below and pack your lunch.

- bread (brown bread was most common)
- cheese
- apple or pear (depending on the season)
- hard-boiled egg (if the family kept chickens)
- raw vegetables (carrots, onions)
- honey or butter (you can even make your own honey-butter)



Reflection Questions:

1. Why do you think meat was uncommon?
2. Why do you think every family grew vegetables?
3. Why do you think recipes changed based on seasons?
4. How do you think farmer's lunches compared to what nobles ate?
5. Why do you think bread was the staple of most meals?

Medieval Spotlight: Charlemagne

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 CE, Europe was divided into many small kingdoms. There was no single ruler powerful enough to unite much of western Europe. That changed during the late 700s when a Frankish king named **Charlemagne (742–814 CE)** came to power.

Charlemagne became king of the **Franks** in 768 CE. Through a series of military campaigns, he expanded his kingdom until it stretched across much of what is now **France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, northern Italy, and parts of Austria**. His empire became the largest in western Europe since the fall of Rome.

Charlemagne believed education was important. He encouraged schools to be opened in monasteries and churches so more priests and government officials could learn to read and write. He invited scholars from across Europe to his court to preserve books, improve learning, and copy important writings from ancient Greece and Rome. This period of renewed learning is often called the **Carolingian Renaissance**.

Charlemagne also worked closely with the Catholic Church. On **Christmas Day in 800 CE**, **Pope Leo III** crowned him "**Emperor of the Romans**." This event symbolized the close partnership between the Church and political leaders during the Middle Ages. The pope recognized Charlemagne's authority, while Charlemagne promised to protect and support the Church.

After Charlemagne died in 814 CE, his empire was divided among his grandsons and gradually broke apart. Even so, his influence continued for centuries. His efforts to unite western Europe, strengthen education, and support Christianity helped shape medieval Europe. Because of his lasting impact, Charlemagne is often remembered as the "**Father of Europe**."

CHARLEMAGNE'S REPORT CARD

After reading the text and watching the video, how would you rate Charlemagne? Color in the stars below.

LEADERSHIP	☆☆☆☆☆
MILITARY SUCCESS	☆☆☆☆☆
EDUCATION	☆☆☆☆☆
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH	☆☆☆☆☆
LASTING LEGACY	☆☆☆☆☆
OVERALL GRADE (A, B, C, D, F):	
WHY?	

VIDEO



Statue of Charlemagne and his guards at Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, France

HISTORY SPOTLIGHT: THE BLACK DEATH

Between 1347 and 1351, a deadly disease called the Black Death, also known as the bubonic plague, spread across Europe. Historians believe the disease traveled along trade routes from Asia, carried by fleas that lived on rats aboard merchant ships. As ships arrived in busy port cities, the disease spread quickly from town to town.

At the time, people did not understand how diseases spread. There were no antibiotics or modern hospitals, and doctors knew very little about germs or infection. As a result, the plague moved rapidly through crowded medieval cities. It is estimated that one-third to one-half of Europe's population died during the outbreak, making it one of the deadliest pandemics in human history.

The Black Death changed medieval society in many ways. With so many people dying, there were fewer workers to farm the land and make goods. Labor became more valuable, and many peasants were able to earn higher wages or move to better jobs. Over time, this weakened the feudal system, which had depended on large numbers of peasants working the land.

The plague also changed how people viewed medicine, religion, and government. Many communities began searching for better ways to prevent disease, while others questioned long-held beliefs about why illnesses occurred. Although the Black Death caused great suffering, it also helped bring about changes that contributed to the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of a new era in European history.

Did you know? 💡

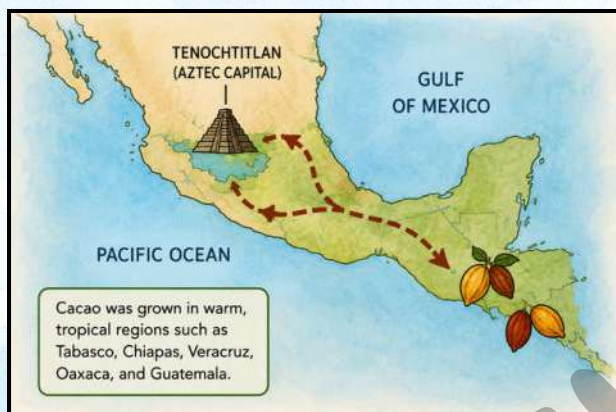
The famous beaked plague doctor mask became popular during later plague outbreaks in the 1600s, nearly 300 years after the Black Death first swept across Europe. Doctors filled the beak with herbs and flowers because they believed sweet-smelling air could protect them from disease. Today, the mask has become a symbol of the plague and medieval Europe.



AZTEC CHOCOLATE TASTING

Today, chocolate is one of the world's favorite treats, but to the Aztec, cacao beans were much more than just food. The beans from the cacao tree were so valuable that they were sometimes used as money to buy everyday items in the marketplace.

The Aztec also made a bitter drink called xocolatl from ground cacao beans mixed with water, spices, and sometimes chili peppers. Unlike the sweet hot chocolate we enjoy today, this drink contained no sugar and had a rich, strong flavor. It was often enjoyed by nobles, warriors, and special guests during important ceremonies.



The Aztec could not grow cacao trees around Tenochtitlan because the climate was too cool. Instead, cacao beans traveled hundreds of miles through trade routes from the tropical lowlands of southern Mexico and Central America. Cacao was grown in warm, humid regions such as Tabasco, Chiapas, Veracruz, Oaxaca, and Guatemala. Because cacao was difficult to obtain, the beans became extremely valuable.

The word "chocolate" is believed to come from an Aztec word, reminding us that one of our favorite treats has roots in the ancient civilizations of the Americas.

Supplies:

- 85-90% dark chocolate or 100% baking chocolate
- 60-70% dark chocolate
- milk chocolate

Instructions: starting with the 85-90% dark chocolate and working your way down, taste the chocolate and fill out the chart below.

Sample	Sweetness (1-5)	Bitterness (1-5)	Creaminess (1-5)	Would an Aztec have recognized this as chocolate?
85-90%				
60-70%				
Milk				



1. Which chocolate do you think was most similar to what the Aztec would have tasted?
2. Why were cacao beans considered so valuable?
3. Why do you think Europeans began adding sugar?
4. Which sample was your favorite?

The Inca: Masters of the Mountains

Around A.D. 1438, a powerful civilization called the **Inca** began expanding across the Andes Mountains of South America. At its greatest size, the Inca Empire stretched for more than 2,500 miles along the western coast of South America, making it the **largest empire in the Americas**. It included parts of present-day Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, and Colombia. The capital city, **Cuzco** (Cusco), served as the political and religious center of the empire.

Life in the Andes Mountains was not easy. Much of the land was steep, rocky, and difficult to farm. To solve this problem, the Inca built **terraces**, or wide, flat steps carved into the mountainsides. These terraces prevented soil from washing away and created more space to grow crops such as potatoes, corn (maize), quinoa, and beans. They also built canals and irrigation systems to carry water to their fields.

The Inca became famous for their incredible engineering. They built more than **25,000 miles of roads** that connected villages, cities, and mountain passes throughout the empire. Rope bridges made from woven grasses stretched across deep valleys and rushing rivers, allowing people to travel where ordinary bridges could not be built. Special runners called **chasquis** carried messages and small packages across the empire by running from one relay station to the next. Thanks to this system, news could travel hundreds of miles in just a few days.

The Inca did not have a written language like the Maya. Instead, they used a system of knotted strings called a **quipu** to keep records. Different colors, knot patterns, and string lengths represented numbers and information about taxes, crops, supplies, and population. Special officials were trained to read and create quipus, helping the government manage its vast empire.

The emperor, known as the **Sapa Inca**, was considered both the political leader and a descendant of the sun god, **Inti**. Below him were nobles, government officials, soldiers, artisans, farmers, and laborers. Most people farmed the land or cared for llamas and alpacas, which provided wool for clothing and served as pack animals for carrying goods across the mountains.

Religion was an important part of Inca life. The Inca believed in many gods, with Inti, the sun god, being one of the most important. Temples and festivals honored the gods throughout the year. Like many ancient civilizations, the Inca believed the gods helped provide good harvests and protected their people.



Peruvian girl in traditional costume in Cuzco

Engineering Spotlight: Machu Picchu



What is Machu Picchu?

- Built around 1450
- High in Andes Mountains
- Located in Peru
- Probably royal estate
- Maybe religious center?
- No one knows for sure



Did you know?

- ✓ 8,000 feet above sea level
- ✓ Rediscovered for the outside world in 1911 by Hiram Bingham (though local people already knew it was there)
- ✓ Over 200 buildings
- ✓ New Seven Wonders of the World
- ✓ Stones fit without mortar

Engineering Marvel

The Inca were incredible engineers. Without modern tools or machines, they cut and shaped massive stones so precisely that they fit together without mortar (cement). The stones were so tightly joined that not even a knife blade can fit between many of them. This design allowed the walls to flex during earthquakes instead of collapsing.

They also built hundreds of stone terraces and an advanced drainage system to control rainwater and prevent erosion. More than 500 years later, many of these engineering achievements are still standing today.



Renaissance Art, Science, and Innovation

The Renaissance was much more than a time of beautiful paintings and sculptures. It was an age of creativity, curiosity, and discovery. Artists, architects, inventors, and scientists began looking at the world in new ways. Instead of simply copying older styles, they carefully observed people and nature, experimented with new techniques, and searched for better ways to understand the world around them.

One of the biggest changes during the Renaissance was the way artists created their work. During the Middle Ages, paintings often appeared flat, and people were not always shown in realistic proportions. Renaissance artists studied the human body and practiced drawing from real life. They also developed a technique called **perspective**, which made objects appear closer or farther away and gave paintings the illusion of depth. This made scenes look much more lifelike than ever before.

Renaissance artists also paid close attention to light, shadows, facial expressions, and movement. Their goal was to show people and nature as accurately as possible. Many artists studied anatomy by observing muscles and bones so they could create more realistic paintings and sculptures. This careful observation reflected the Renaissance belief that learning about the natural world could lead to greater knowledge and understanding.

One of the greatest Renaissance artists was **Leonardo da Vinci**. Leonardo was much more than a painter—he was also an inventor, engineer, scientist, and mathematician. His famous painting, the **Mona Lisa**, is admired for its realistic details and mysterious smile. He also painted **The Last Supper**, one of the most well-known religious paintings in history. Leonardo filled notebooks with sketches of flying machines, bridges, weapons, and inventions that were far ahead of his time. Although many of his ideas were never built, they showed his endless curiosity about how the world worked.

Another famous artist was **Michelangelo**, who was known for both sculpture and painting. He carved the magnificent **statue of David** from a single block of marble and painted the breathtaking **ceiling of the Sistine Chapel** in Rome. Michelangelo believed the human body reflected beauty and strength, and his artwork demonstrated an incredible understanding of anatomy and movement.

The painter **Raphael** became famous for his graceful paintings and balanced compositions. One of his best-known works, **The School of Athens**, brings together great thinkers from ancient Greece, including Plato and Aristotle, to celebrate learning and human knowledge. The painting perfectly captures the Renaissance admiration for classical ideas and education.

Renaissance architecture also reflected a renewed interest in ancient Greece and Rome. Architects designed buildings with large domes, rounded arches, tall columns, and

RENAISSANCE MASTERPIECES GALLERY WALK

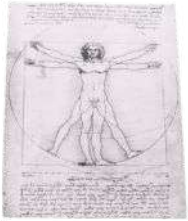
Use the larger images to answer the questions.



Title:

Artist:

1. What is the first thing you notice about this artwork?
2. Why do you think painting a ceiling like this would have been difficult?
3. How does this artwork combine religion with Renaissance ideas about beauty and the human body?



Title:

Artist:

1. What do you think the artist was trying to learn about the human body?
2. How does this drawing connect art with science?
3. What Renaissance idea does this artwork best represent? (humanism, curiosity, observation) Explain.



Title:

Artist:

1. What details show that the artist has carefully studied the human body?
2. What qualities do you think this sculpture is meant to represent? (strength, courage, confidence, determination)
3. Why do you think this sculpture became the symbol of the Renaissance?

HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) is often called the greatest writer in the English language. During the late Renaissance, he wrote at least **37 plays** and more than **150 poems**, many of which are still read and performed over 400 years later.

Shakespeare wrote **comedies**, **tragedies**, and **historical plays** that explored timeless themes such as love, friendship, jealousy, ambition, courage, and forgiveness. Some of his most famous works include *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Shakespeare's influence extends far beyond literature. He helped shape the English language by creating or popularizing hundreds of words and phrases that people still use today. Expressions like "**break the ice**," "**wild-goose chase**," "**heart of gold**," and "**all that glitters is not gold**" all became famous through his writing.

Today, Shakespeare's plays are performed in theaters around the world, translated into dozens of languages, and adapted into movies, television shows, and even musicals. His stories continue to remind us that although times have changed, many human emotions and experiences remain the same.

For a funny interpretation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* & *Romeo & Juliet* in Gen Z language, watch [these videos](#).



Macbeth



Romeo & Juliet

Did you know? 💡

- Many modern movies, books, and musicals are based on Shakespeare's stories. Popular adaptations include *The Lion King* (inspired by *Hamlet*), *10 Things I Hate About You* (based on *The Taming of the Shrew*), and *West Side Story* (inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*).
- Nobody knows Shakespeare's exact birthday.
- He was also an actor and part owner of a theater company later known as the "King's Men".
- Many of his plays were first performed in the famous Globe Theater in London.
- More than 2,000 words are believed to have first appeared in Shakespeare's writing or popularized by him including "lonely", "bedroom", "fashionable", "critic", and "majestic".



REFORMATION

TERMINOLOGY MATCH UP

Directions: Match the term to the definition.

TERMS

1. ____ Protestant Reformation
2. ____ Martin Luther
3. ____ indulgence
4. ____ 95 Theses
5. ____ Protestant
6. ____ John Calvin
7. ____ predestination
8. ____ Henry VIII
9. ____ Act of Supremacy
10. ____ Anglican Church

DEFINITIONS

- A. A document passed in England that declared the king, rather than the pope, as the head of the Church of England.
- B. The religious movement that began in the 1500s and led to the creation of Protestant churches.
- C. A German monk who challenged the sale of indulgences and sparked the Protestant Reformation.
- D. A person who belongs to one of the Christian churches that separated from the Catholic Church during the Reformation.
- E. A church established in England after King Henry VIII broke away from the Catholic Church.
- F. A French reformer whose teachings spread throughout Europe and included the idea of predestination.
- G. The belief that God already knows who will be saved.
- H. A list of 95 arguments written by Martin Luther criticizing certain practices of the Catholic Church.
- I. A document issued by the Catholic Church that reduced the amount of time a person was believed to spend in purgatory.
- J. The King of England who separated from the Catholic Church and created the Church of England.



Guess the Scientist

Instructions: Choose the correct scientist from the name bank below. Some are used more than once.

Copernicus



Bacon



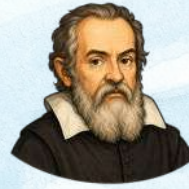
Newton



Kepler



Galileo



Descartes



1. I discovered the sun, not the earth, was the center of the solar system.

2. I explained gravity.

3. I encouraged scientists to collect evidence.

4. I improved the telescope and discovered 4 large moons orbiting Jupiter.

5. I discovered planets travel around the sun in elliptical paths instead of perfect circles.

6. I wrote the Three Laws of Motion.

7. I encouraged people to question ideas and use logic and reason to solve problems.

8. I famously said, "I think therefore I am."

9. I helped make astronomy more accurate by using mathematics to describe how planets move.

10. My ideas were controversial because they challenged the belief that Earth was the center of the universe.

From the Enlightenment to America

Many Enlightenment philosophers influenced the ideas of the United States' Founding Fathers. Leaders such as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and others, studied their writings and used many of their ideas when creating the **Declaration of Independence**, the **United States Constitution**, and the **Bill of Rights**.

Instructions: Draw a line from the Enlightenment Philosopher to the American document or government principle it inspired.

John Locke

Voltaire

Rousseau

Montesquieu

Bill of Rights- First Amendment (Freedom of Speech & Religion)

Declaration of Independence ("Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness")

Three Branches of Government in the Constitution

"We the People" Preamble to the Constitution

Which Enlightenment idea do you think had the greatest impact on the United States? Explain.

Instructions: Match the idea to the U.S. document and the Philosopher. Circle the correct answers.

1. People are born with natural rights.

A. Constitution

B. Declaration of Independence

A. John Locke

B. Voltaire

2. "Governments should be divided into separate branches."

A. Constitution

B. Bill of Rights

A. Rousseau

B. Montesquieu

3. "Government receives its power from the people."

A. Preamble to the Constitution

B. Declaration of Independence

A. Rousseau

B. Montesquieu

4. "People should have freedom of speech."

A. Bill of Rights

B. Articles of Confederation

A. John Locke

B. Voltaire

