

Hands-on History

World History ACTIVITIES



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Overview of Activities

The Byzantine and Muslim Empires (*lesson on pages 11–15*)

Students will compete as Europe, the Far East, and the Middle East to create the most influential society, as shown by accumulating trade goods, wealth, and knowledge. Initially, the game gives Europe and the Far East a significant advantage, but each time these societies pass through the Byzantine and Muslim Empires of the Middle East, they pay with silver coins or with ideas. Eventually, due to their status as a trade hub, the Middle East becomes the dominant society of the time. Through cooperative group projects and interaction with neighboring societies, students will learn how trade influenced the spread of ideas and will gain an overview of the cultures and achievements of the Byzantine and Muslim Empires. This activity shows a snapshot of the three included societies and allows students to preview the cultures and geography they will later be studying in depth. You will measure student learning through evaluation of small-group activities, discussion, and a short quiz. This activity includes cross-curricular connections in writing, art, and math.

Civilizations of Africa (*lesson on pages 29–32*)

After performing African folk tales as reader's theater plays and analyzing these plays for cultural significance, students will work as groups to match the performed folk tales to the cultures that created them. This activity will help students distinguish between the cultures of West, East, and South Africa while giving them an overview of Africa in the medieval period. Students will also learn how archaeologists study oral traditions and mythologies to learn about ancient cultures. This activity uses historically real folk tales, encourages content-area writing, and allows differentiation based on learning types. You will measure student learning through discussion and a short end-of-activity quiz.

The Ancient Americas (*lesson on pages 45–49*)

In this primarily individual activity, students will race to recreate a city of the Mayas, Aztecs, Incas, or Anasazi. Through completing a series of small tasks—during which students will learn about each society's culture—students will earn puzzle pieces that combine to create pictures of major cities built by the societies (Machu Picchu, Tenochtitlan, Tikal, or a pueblo). After earning all the puzzle pieces, students will interact with the map of their ancient cities in order to answer a series of map-based questions. Finally, all the students who worked on each civilization will discuss their answers and create a presentation, which they will give to the rest of the class. As tasks include hands-on projects as well as research and thinking skills, this activity allows students to use a variety of learning styles. You will evaluate student learning by assessing packets created during the activity, during discussion, and through a short end-of-activity quiz.

Civilizations of Asia (*lesson on pages 78–83*)

On three successive days, students will split into groups and complete tasks representing religion, government, and mythology. After each day, students will enter the information they find on a cardboard wheel, with the three types of tasks able to spin independently of each other. Once students have completed their tasks and have entered their information on the wheel, they will try to spin the dials on the wheel to match the correct information with India, China,

Overview of Activities *(cont.)*

Civilizations of Asia *(lesson on pages 78–83) (cont.)*

and Japan, earning a classroom reward if they are correct. This activity promotes animated discussion and learning through discourse. You will measure student learning through discussion and an end-of-activity quiz.

Europe in the Middle Ages *(lesson on pages 111–117)*

Students will work in small groups, each representing a feudal society, and will compete to be the first to build a castle. Groups will need to perform tasks that represent gathering the needed resources and expertise but will, at the same time, need to run their feudal cities. While the goal is to complete the castles, groups should not neglect the day-to-day workings of their societies, or they may (not) live to regret it. This game is fast-paced and fun, encouraging students to make quick decisions and act efficiently in order to beat other societies. As such, you will want to have a firm grasp of the rules before starting. You will measure student learning through discussion, observation, and a reflection quiz. This activity also includes content-area writing assignments and primary source materials.

Renaissance and Reformation *(lesson on pages 141–144)*

Working in small groups, students will role-play museum curators who are trying to match listed artifacts with the correct Renaissance country of origin. As information about each country's culture is provided in stages, students will revise their views of history based on changing information. After recreating works of art using the techniques of the chosen artworks, each group will present its country to the class and will place all the created artworks in its country's display in your classroom Renaissance Museum. Students will gain an overview of Renaissance history and culture and will also explore the difficulties in piecing together the past from incomplete information. As many of their initial artwork/country pairings will be wrong, students will learn the changing nature of history and the need for historical revision as new information comes to light. This activity uses primary source materials and incorporates art activities. Student learning will be measured through discussion, evaluation of activity sheets, and through a short quiz.

A Century of Turmoil: 1940–2001 *(lesson on pages 176–179)*

In this activity, students will explore online oral histories that describe some of the twentieth century's most difficult events, focusing on those that affected the United States. Specifically, students will compare the attitudes surrounding World War II, the Holocaust, and Pearl Harbor with the testimonies of September 11, 2001 survivors. Please be aware that this can be an emotionally difficult activity, and you will want to assign mature students to the 9/11 and Holocaust histories.

Depending on your technology resources, you can ask students to complete the activity individually, in small groups, or perform the research as a teacher-guided lesson by attaching a projector to one computer. Alternately (with older classes), you can have students complete the research portion of the activity as homework. In an optional extension, students may gather their own oral histories and present them to the class.

The Byzantine and Muslim Empires

Overview

Students will compete as Europe, the Far East, and the Middle East to create the most influential society, as shown by accumulating trade goods, wealth, and knowledge. Initially, Europe and the Far East have a significant advantage, but each time these groups pass through the Byzantine and Muslim Empires of the Middle East, they pay with silver coins or with ideas. Eventually, due to its status as a trade hub, the Middle East becomes the dominant society of the time. Through cooperative group projects and interaction with neighboring societies students will learn how trade influenced the spread of ideas and will gain an overview of the cultures and achievements of the Byzantine and Muslim Empires. This activity shows a snapshot of the three societies and allows students to preview the cultures and geography they will later be studying in depth.



Camel chain in China
Source: Clipart.com

You will measure student learning through evaluation of small-group activities, discussion, and a short quiz. This activity includes cross-curricular connections in writing, art, and math.

Objectives

- Students will understand how geography affects the transmission of culture. (NCSS)
- Students will learn an overview of the dominant societies of the period A.D. 300–1000, focusing especially on the Byzantine and Muslim Empires.

Materials

- copies of reproducibles (pages 16–28) as described on page 12
- textbooks, encyclopedias, the Internet, or other research materials
- craft materials (cardboard, tape, glue, pens, construction paper, straws, etc.)
- 8 small bars of soap
- something to carve soap
- 3 oranges
- cloves (to poke into oranges)
- 5 plastic or Styrofoam cups
- dice

The Byzantine and Muslim Empires *(cont.)*

Preparation

Total preparation time should be about 30 minutes.

1. Make an information packet for each group containing the following:
 - **Europe**—*Society Information: Europe* (page 18); *Rules of Trade* (page 17); *Trade Goods: Europe* (page 21); *Ideas: Europe* (page 24); 30 silver coins (page 16)
 - **The Middle East**—*Society Information: The Middle East* (page 19); *Rules of Trade* (page 17); *Trade Goods: The Middle East* (page 22); *Ideas: The Middle East* (page 25)
 - **The Far East**—*Society Information: The Far East* (page 20); *Rules of Trade* (page 17); *Trade Goods: The Far East* (page 23); *Ideas: The Far East* (page 26); 5 silver coins (page 16)
2. Organize a craft table with all the materials listed on page 11.
3. Photocopy and cut out an additional 40 silver coins (page 16). (Laminating silver coins would allow you to re-use them in future years.)
4. Make an overhead of the *Habits of Mind Discussion* (page 28).
5. Make a class set of the *Byzantine and Muslim Empires Quiz* (page 27).

Directions

1. After reading the *Read-Aloud Directions* (pages 13–14), place students in three groups representing Europe, the Far East, and the Middle East. Organize groups in the room geographically such that Europe is opposite the Far East, with the Middle East in the middle. Allow students time to look over their information packets.
2. Begin the activity. Groups will compete to fill the requirements of the *Society Information* sheets, with the first group to do so winning the game. First, they will create ideas and trade goods. Then, they will trade according to the rules on their *Rules of Trade* sheet.
3. Initially, it looks like Europe or the Far East has a major advantage over the Middle East, but as the game progresses, the Middle East should dominate. If other societies get close to winning (i.e., Europe), set them back with one of the *Barbarian Invasions* (page 15). Help students understand that these barbarian invasions are historically accurate.
4. Once the Middle East group fills the requirements of its *Society Information* sheet, close the activity with the *Habits of Mind Discussion* and the *Byzantine and Muslim Empires Quiz*.

Things to Consider

1. Penalize groups for any off-task behavior by taking silver coins or by asking them to “forget” one of their ideas.

The Byzantine and Muslim Empires *(cont.)*

Things to Consider *(cont.)*

2. While the game is heavily weighted in favor of the Middle East, it is still possible for another group to win. Guard against this with barbarian invasions and by ensuring the Middle East has its fair share of strong students. However, if another group wins, you can use this to discuss the role of chance in history.
3. One advantageous and historically accurate strategy that works well for the Middle Eastern society is to buy trade goods from China and resell them for a profit to the Europeans (and vice versa). You may want to hint at this strategy.
4. Students will need to be able to read and comprehend directions. With a younger class, you might want to spend additional time previewing the directions, especially the rules of trade.
5. War is generally a bad idea, though it is one that students are likely to try. Notice that the Middle East has Greek Fire, a weapon made from petroleum, and in the game using this allows them to add five to their defensive dice roll.

Read-Aloud Directions

Remember the ancient world, where everything was easy and societies generally had the common decency to exist only one at a time? First Mesopotamia, then Egypt, then Greece, then Rome. Sure there was a little overlap. (Remember that Antony and Cleopatra thing?) But, the societies of the ancient world generally behaved like a series of kings in one country, with one springing up to fill the space left by another.

But, eventually things got a little messed up. All of a sudden, everybody wanted a piece of history at the same time. Rome was still holding on, China and the Far East were everybody's favorite department store, and the Middle East was stuck in, well, the middle.

Today, you are going to split into these three societies and compete for influence in the changing world. You will be competing to gather wealth, trade goods, and ideas. The first group to fill the requirements for each of these three things will win the game. Trading is the most complex part of the game, so let's look at that now:

- Trade is generally good for both the buyer and the seller. It is also the only way to get the trade goods you need in order to win the game. (The goods you create yourself don't count as trade goods—they are only for selling.)
- You may only travel with one item of trade goods at a time, so you will have to make many trips.