From Rivals to Routes

Trace how reunification shaped Han China

SS24.7.13b "Trace the reunification of China from the Warring States period and the Qin Dynasty which led to China's Golden Age under the Han Dynasty."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the Warring States, Qin, and Han periods in order. Underline changes in who ruled, and circle policies that helped connect China's regions.

How China Came Together

1. Imagine a merchant trying to carry grain across northern China during the Warring States period. Several rival states fought for land and power, and each state set its own rules. Armies could block roads, while different coins and measures made trade harder. The rulers of Qin built a powerful army and defeated the other major states by 221 BCE. Qin's ruler took the title Qin Shi Huang, or First Emperor. For the first time in centuries, one government ruled the lands that had been divided among the warring states.

2. Winning battles did not automatically make these lands work as one country. Qin Shi Huang placed officials over districts rather than letting former rival rulers govern them. His government standardized writing, coins, weights, and measures, so orders and goods could move across former borders more easily. It also built and linked roads. Yet Qin leaders demanded heavy labor and punished many people harshly. After the First Emperor died, rebellions shook the dynasty. Qin rule collapsed in 206 BCE, less than two decades after unification.

3. After years of fighting, Liu Bang became the first Han emperor in 202 BCE. Han leaders kept a central government and many Qin systems, including shared standards, but reduced some harsh laws. Over time, Han rulers promoted Confucian learning and supported officials who helped run the empire. Han armies secured and expanded borders, while trade along routes later called the Silk Roads connected China with distant regions. More stable rule and easier exchange helped ideas, goods, and skills spread. These achievements made the Han era known as a golden age.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Qin rule change the political situation of the Warring States period?

2. Why did Qin standardize coins and measures after its victories?

3. After Qin rule collapsed, what did Han leaders keep, and what did they change?

4. How did the shift from divided states to Han rule help create a golden age?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label for an imagined Han trader's travel journal. Trace the Warring States, Qin reunification, and Han rule in order, and explain how those changes affected the trader's work.

From Rivals to Routes

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number the Warring States, Qin, and Han periods in order. Underline changes in who ruled, and circle policies that helped connect China's regions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Qin rule change the political situation of the Warring States period?	**Qin defeated the rival states by 221 BCE and brought their lands under one government.**
2	Why did Qin standardize coins and measures after its victories?	**Shared coins and measures made it easier to exchange goods across former state borders.**
3	After Qin rule collapsed, what did Han leaders keep, and what did they change?	**They kept a central government and shared standards but reduced some harsh laws.**
4	How did the shift from divided states to Han rule help create a golden age?	**Reunification created shared systems that the Han kept. More stable rule and easier exchange helped trade, learning, goods, and ideas spread.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

This imagined journal belonged to a Han trader who heard stories of rival states fighting over roads. Qin conquest ended those rival governments, and shared coins and measures made exchange across former borders easier. When Qin rule collapsed, Han rulers kept shared standards and a central government while easing some harsh laws. Under Han rule, trade along the Silk Roads connected China with distant regions, giving traders more places to exchange goods.

Accept accurate cause-and-effect explanations that trace the periods in order. For the museum label, the journal may be imagined, but its historical claims should match the passage.