Across Medieval Asia

Trace how ideas, trade, and power crossed borders.

SS24.8.4 "Compare and contrast the cultural, economic, geographic, and political structures of the civilizations of medieval Asia, including China, India, Japan, and Korea. 4a Explain China's influence on other civilizations in Asia..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two examples of an idea moving between societies, circle two differences between societies, and number one cause and its effect. Use your marks to compare how these societies changed.

A Journey Across Borders

1. Imagine a traveler moving from China's inland farms to Korea's peninsula and Japan's islands. In medieval China, powerful dynasties governed through officials chosen partly by exams on Confucian teachings. Chinese writing and government practices reached neighboring Korea, where rulers also used exams to select some officials. Japan borrowed Chinese characters and Buddhism, but developed its own kana writing. Because the sea separated Japan from the mainland, Japanese rulers could adopt foreign ideas without being ruled by China. Korea's land connection made exchanges with China more frequent.

2. A merchant traveling west from China could meet Buddhist monks along busy trade routes. Buddhism began in India, then spread to China, Korea, and Japan, changing as people blended it with local traditions. In India, Hindu traditions emphasized dharma, or duties, while Jain teachers stressed nonviolence toward living things. In the late 1400s, Sikhism arose in Punjab, where its teachers taught devotion to one God and rejected caste-based inequality. Unlike China's large dynastic states, medieval India was often divided among competing kingdoms and sultanates, even as merchants crossed their borders.

3. In the 1200s, Mongol armies conquered much of Asia, including China, where their leaders founded the Yuan dynasty. Mongol rule linked distant markets across Eurasia, helping merchants and ideas travel, but warfare destroyed communities, and Yuan rulers gave Mongols higher social standing than many Chinese subjects. Across the sea, Mongol attacks on Japan failed. Japan's own military order had grown earlier: Minamoto no Yoritomo established a shogunate in the late 1100s. A shogun held military power, while regional lords relied on samurai warriors. Unlike Yuan China, Japan kept its own rulers.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Korea and Japan each use ideas from China? Explain one geographic difference that affected their contact with China.

2. How did religious life in India change over time, and how did one religion from India change as it spread east?

3. Compare one economic effect and one social effect of Mongol rule in Asia.

4. How was political power under Japan's shogunate different from political power in medieval China?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence exhibit label for three imagined objects: a Chinese scholar's brush, an Indian trader's travel bag, and a Japanese samurai's helmet. Link each object to a different feature of its society, then explain one connection among regions.

ANSWER KEY

Across Medieval Asia

GRADE 8 · SS24.8.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two examples of an idea moving between societies, circle two differences between societies, and number one cause and its effect. Use your marks to compare how these societies changed. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Korea and Japan each use ideas from China? Explain one geographic difference that affected their contact with China.	**Korea used Chinese writing and exams; Japan adopted Chinese characters and Buddhism but developed kana. Korea's land connection allowed more frequent exchanges, while the sea separated Japan from China.**
2	How did religious life in India change over time, and how did one religion from India change as it spread east?	**India had Hindu and Jain traditions, and Sikhism arose in Punjab in the late 1400s. Buddhism began in India and spread east, where people blended it with local traditions.**
3	Compare one economic effect and one social effect of Mongol rule in Asia.	**Mongol rule linked distant markets and helped merchants travel. In Yuan China, Mongols held higher social standing than many Chinese subjects.**
4	How was political power under Japan's shogunate different from political power in medieval China?	**In the shogunate established by Minamoto no Yoritomo, a shogun held military power and lords relied on samurai. Chinese dynasties governed through officials chosen partly by exams.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The brush recalls China's exam-selected officials and their study of Confucian teachings. The trader's bag stands for routes that carried Buddhist ideas out of India. The helmet represents Japan's samurai, who served regional lords under a shogun's military rule. Together, the objects show how ideas crossed borders while political systems differed.

Accept other accurate comparisons supported by the passage. For the exhibit label, look for four sentences, a distinct feature linked to each object, and a connection between regions.