

Routes and Choices

How voluntary trade connected societies, with benefits and costs.

SS.6.E.3.4 "Describe the relationship among civilizations that engage in trade, including the benefits and drawbacks of voluntary trade."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two benefits of trade and circle two drawbacks. Number 1 and 2 beside two details that show how trade connected different societies.

Trading Along the Silk Roads

- ① More than 2,000 years ago, merchants in the Han Dynasty of China made silk cloth. Traders carried silk west along routes later called the Silk Roads. In Central Asian oasis cities, merchants exchanged silk for horses, jade, and other goods. These exchanges were voluntary: each trader chose to trade because the deal seemed useful. Chinese rulers wanted strong horses for armies, while buyers farther west valued silk that was difficult to make in their own regions.
- ② Trade linked communities that had different resources and skills. Caravan leaders hired guides, bought food in oasis towns, and paid taxes at some borders. Towns gained jobs and customers, and distant societies learned about new art, religions, and inventions. Buddhism traveled from India into Central Asia and China along these routes. Trade also created relationships of trust. A merchant who cheated customers could lose partners, while reliable traders could make repeated exchanges across long distances.
- ③ Voluntary trade did not help everyone in the same way. Long trips were costly and dangerous. Bandits could attack caravans, and storms or wars could close routes. Some rulers charged heavy taxes, raising the price of goods. Demand for luxury products could make wealthy merchants richer than farmers or workers. Trade routes also carried diseases as travelers moved between regions. Even with these drawbacks, many people continued trading because they could obtain goods and knowledge unavailable at home.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Why did Chinese rulers and buyers farther west choose to trade with each other?

2 Give two ways trade connected communities along the Silk Roads.

3 What is one benefit that oasis towns received from trade, and who in the towns could benefit?

4 Explain one drawback of trade and how it could affect traders or communities.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Invent two neighboring civilizations that trade voluntarily. In four sentences, explain what each civilization offers and wants, why both choose to trade, one way the trade builds a relationship, and one benefit or drawback.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two benefits of trade and circle two drawbacks. Number 1 and 2 beside two details that show how trade connected different societies. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Chinese rulers and buyers farther west choose to trade with each other?	Chinese rulers wanted strong horses, and buyers farther west wanted silk that was difficult to make in their own regions.
2	Give two ways trade connected communities along the Silk Roads.	Answers may include merchants exchanging goods, caravan leaders hiring guides and buying food in oasis towns, towns gaining customers, Buddhism traveling from India into Central Asia and China, or traders building trust through repeated exchanges.
3	What is one benefit that oasis towns received from trade, and who in the towns could benefit?	Oasis towns gained jobs and customers. Guides, food sellers, and other town workers or merchants could benefit.
4	Explain one drawback of trade and how it could affect traders or communities.	Answers may include bandits attacking caravans, storms or wars closing routes, heavy taxes raising prices, unequal wealth, or diseases spreading between regions, with an accurate effect on traders or communities.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Rivera people trade grain to the Hillan people for iron tools. Both sides choose the exchange because Rivera needs tools and Hillan needs food. Their merchants meet each season and learn each other's language, building trust. Rivera farmers benefit from stronger tools, but a drought could leave them with too little grain to trade.

Accept answers that accurately use passage details and connect a benefit or drawback to people involved in trade. For Part 3, accept varied fictional examples if they clearly show a voluntary exchange, a relationship effect, and a realistic benefit or drawback.