Ports and Palaces

Trade and power in India and China, 1000 to 1500

AWH.C.11.1 "Explain the significance of Indian and Chinese civilizations from 1000-1500 (e.g., the expansion of Islam into India, Delhi Sultanate) and political, economic, and cultural aspects of Indo-Persian culture."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details about trade linking China and India, circle two details about how Delhi governed, and number two examples of Indo-Persian cultural exchange to trace why these connections mattered.

A Port, a Court, and a Wider World

1. In 1420, a merchant in Calicut, a port on India's southwest coast, could find Chinese porcelain beside Indian pepper. Chinese workshops produced porcelain for overseas buyers, while Indian merchants helped move pepper across the Indian Ocean. Under the Ming dynasty, Chinese ships led by Zheng He visited Calicut in the early 1400s. These voyages strengthened diplomatic ties and displayed China's naval reach, but they did not make Calicut a Chinese possession. Calicut was not ruled by the Delhi Sultanate either. Its coastal trade shows that Indian cities could prosper through ocean networks beyond the control of northern rulers.

2. Far to the north, the Delhi Sultanate, founded in 1206, grew from conquests by Turkic Muslim leaders and lasted until 1526. Its rulers governed a changing territory, not all of India. They used Persian in court records and relied on officials and tax revenue to administer lands and support armies. Persian-speaking migrants and local Indian scholars worked in this political world. Islam also spread through merchants, Sufi teachers, and communities formed over time, not only through conquest. The sultanate mattered because it connected parts of India to wider Islamic networks while reshaping how power was organized in the north.

3. Long before Zheng He's voyages, Song and Yuan China's expanding maritime trade had helped carry ceramics into Indian Ocean markets. In Delhi, Indo-Persian culture grew from contact between Persianate court traditions and Indian people, languages, and craft skills. The poet Amir Khusrau wrote in Persian and also composed verses in Hindavi, a language of northern India. At Delhi's Qutb complex, builders used local craftsmanship to create Islamic-style structures with inscriptions. These works did not erase Indian traditions. They show how trade, government, and artistic exchange gave both civilizations influence beyond any one ruler's borders.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why were Chinese porcelain and Zheng He's visits to Calicut significant for both China and India?

2. How did Persian court records and tax revenue help the Delhi Sultanate exercise political power?

3. Why would it be inaccurate to say that Islam spread into India only through conquest?

4. How do Amir Khusrau's writing and the Qutb complex show the significance of Indo-Persian culture?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 95 word museum label for an imagined merchant's travel journal dated 1420, with entries from Calicut and Delhi. Explain why Chinese porcelain in Calicut and Persian court records in Delhi belong in one exhibit, making a political, an economic, and a cultural connection while making clear that Delhi did not govern Calicut.

ANSWER KEY

Ports and Palaces

HIGH SCHOOL · AWH.C.11.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details about trade linking China and India, circle two details about how Delhi governed, and number two examples of Indo-Persian cultural exchange to trace why these connections mattered. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why were Chinese porcelain and Zheng He's visits to Calicut significant for both China and India?	**Porcelain trade connected Chinese producers with Indian Ocean buyers and helped Calicut prosper. Zheng He's visits strengthened diplomatic ties and displayed China's naval reach without placing Calicut under Chinese rule.**
2	How did Persian court records and tax revenue help the Delhi Sultanate exercise political power?	**Persian records helped officials administer lands, while tax revenue supported the government and its armies.**
3	Why would it be inaccurate to say that Islam spread into India only through conquest?	**Turkic Muslim conquests played a role, but merchants, Sufi teachers, and communities formed over time also helped Islam spread.**
4	How do Amir Khusrau's writing and the Qutb complex show the significance of Indo-Persian culture?	**Khusrau's Persian and Hindavi verses and the Qutb complex's combination of local craftsmanship with Islamic-style structures show cultural exchange rather than the replacement of Indian traditions.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

This imagined 1420 journal places Calicut and Delhi in one connected world, not under one government. Chinese porcelain at Calicut reveals how ocean trade carried Chinese goods to Indian buyers. Ming visits also show China's interest in overseas ties. Delhi's rulers did not govern Calicut, but they used Persian records and taxes to organize power in northern India. A merchant's note about Persian at court would show how Indo-Persian culture linked Indian officials and scholars to traditions from beyond India, while local languages and skills still shaped their work.

Accept other passage-supported explanations of political, economic, and cultural significance. For the museum label, check the word count and require a clear distinction between Calicut's trade connections and Delhi's political authority.