Routes of Change

Trace how contact between regions spreads and changes ideas.

MWH.C.1.2.A "Explain different ways in which societies interact across regions (e.g., trade, exploration, colonization) resulting in cultural diffusion (e.g., the Silk Road, Trans-Saharan exchange, Black Death)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline ways regions connect, circle what moves between them, and put a star beside a sentence showing how people respond to a new idea.

What Traveled Along the Routes?

1. Imagine a traveler stopping at an oasis in Central Asia during the 700s. Silk Road routes linked China, Central Asia, and lands farther west through many short journeys, not one continuous trip. Merchants carried silk and other goods, but people also shared beliefs and skills. Buddhist monks and travelers brought Buddhism from India into Central Asia and China, where communities translated texts and shaped new forms of practice. Centuries later, the networks that moved people and goods could also move pathogens. In the 1300s, trade and travel helped the plague spread across Eurasia.

2. Across the Sahara, camel caravans connected North Africa with West African cities. Traders exchanged goods such as salt and gold, often stopping at busy markets along the way. Muslim merchants and scholars also traveled these routes. Through trade, teaching, and contact with rulers, Islam spread into parts of West Africa. In Timbuktu, scholars studied and copied books in Arabic, linking the city to a wider world of learning. Local communities did not simply copy everything they encountered. They blended some new practices with older traditions, showing that cultural diffusion can change an idea as well as move it.

3. Not all contact took place between equal partners. In 1510, Portuguese forces captured Goa, a port on India's west coast, and made it a base for trade in the Indian Ocean. Ships brought merchants and goods, while missionaries promoted Christianity under Portuguese colonial rule. Some people in Goa adopted Christianity, and Portuguese words entered local languages; others resisted conversion or kept existing beliefs. Unlike a caravan stop, a conquered port gave outsiders political power to push change. These cases show why explaining diffusion requires two steps: identify how regions connected, then trace what moved and how people responded.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Silk Road travel help move both a belief and a disease across regions?

2. How did contact across the Sahara spread Islam and connect Timbuktu to other places?

3. How did Portuguese control of Goa affect the spread of cultural practices there?

4. Compare trade across the Sahara with Portuguese colonization in Goa. How did each kind of contact shape cultural change?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a plausible contact between two regions not named in the passage. In four sentences, explain how they connect through trade, exploration, or colonization, describe one cultural practice that moves, and show how people in the receiving region adopt, adapt, or resist it.

Routes of Change

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline ways regions connect, circle what moves between them, and put a star beside a sentence showing how people respond to a new idea. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Silk Road travel help move both a belief and a disease across regions?	**Monks and travelers brought Buddhism from India into Central Asia and China. Centuries later, trade and travel helped the plague spread across Eurasia.**
2	How did contact across the Sahara spread Islam and connect Timbuktu to other places?	**Merchants and scholars carried Islam through trade and teaching. Scholars in Timbuktu studied and copied Arabic books, linking the city to a wider world of learning.**
3	How did Portuguese control of Goa affect the spread of cultural practices there?	**Control of the port gave the Portuguese power to support missionaries. Some people adopted Christianity, and Portuguese words entered local languages, while others resisted conversion.**
4	Compare trade across the Sahara with Portuguese colonization in Goa. How did each kind of contact shape cultural change?	**Saharan trade brought merchants and scholars into contact with West African communities, where some new practices blended with older ones. In Goa, Portuguese political control gave outsiders more power to promote Christianity, though some people resisted.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Sailors from an island region begin trading with a coastal kingdom across the sea. The sailors introduce a way of preserving fish with smoke. Families in the kingdom try the method but use their own local spices. Trade carries the technique across regions, while local choices change how it is practiced.

For Part 3, accept plausible invented contacts that identify a means of connection, a cultural practice that moves, and a response in the receiving region. The response should have four sentences and use regions not named in the passage.