Ancient World History (Grade 6) Social Studies APEX Learning Packet Weeks 5-6 (May 4 – May 15)
Ancient World History (Grade 6)

Packet Directions for Students

Students should complete the following sections of the APEX MS World History course.

WEEK 5 – 11.1 Postclassical China
11.1.1 Overview: Postclassical China
11.1.5 Quiz: Postclassical China
Take a quiz to assess your understanding of the material.

WEEK 6 – 11.3 Feudal Japan
11.3.1 Study: Feudal Japan
11.3.5 Quiz: Feudal Japan
Take a quiz to assess your understanding of the material.

Postclassical Civilizations in Asia

The postclassical era was marked by the continued growth of complex civilizations, especially in Asia. During this time, powerful leaders in China, Central Asia, and Japan expanded their civilizations and created cultures that would have a lasting influence on the rest of the world.

In this unit, you'll study the rise and fall of the Tang and the Song dynasties in China. You'll learn how powerful leaders such as Genghis Khan and Kublai Khan expanded the Mongol Empire into the largest the world has ever seen. You'll also study the culture that developed in feudal Japan and learn about the unique style of Japanese art, literature, and drama.

WEEK 5

11.1 Lesson Overview: Postclassical China

Objectives

- Identify significant achievements of postclassical China.
- Trace the growth of Chinese trade during the postclassical era.
- Explain the influence of Chinese culture in East Asia.
**11.1 Study: Postclassical China**

*Use this study guide to answer questions about important concepts covered in this activity.*

Define the following terms. If you come across additional words you don’t know, write them in the extra blank spaces. Try to figure out what the word means by looking at its context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>calligraphy</td>
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<tr>
<td>porcelain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silk Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Song dynasty</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tang dynasty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woodblock printing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Main idea: Postclassical China grew wealthy under the Tang dynasty.

1. Three major dynasties ruled China during the classical and postclassical eras: the Han, the Sui, and the Tang. Put events from China's classical and postclassical history in order by numbering them 1 through 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Tang dynasty used its powerful military to expand China's borders, making China one of the important empires of the postclassical era.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>During the Three Kingdoms period, the Wei, Shu, and Wu kingdoms waged bloody wars and fought for power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Han dynasty ruled China for 400 years by creating a powerful and well-organized government based on the philosophy of Confucianism. The Wei kingdom united China and started the Sui dynasty. The Sui government used a standardized system of money and spread Buddhism through China.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The Tang dynasty won control of China in 618 CE and then ruled for almost 300 years. Under the guidance of leaders like Emperor Taizong and Empress Wu Zetian, China experienced a golden age. Place an X in the box to identify whether each statement best describes Emperor Taizong, Empress Wu Zetian, or both.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Emperor Taizong</th>
<th>Empress Wu Zetian</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Became emperor by killing brothers and nephews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved how government officials were selected, choosing people based on abilities rather than wealth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is considered one of the best rulers in Chinese history</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lowered taxes on the poor and improved life in cities</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Became the first woman to rule China after her husband died</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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3. The Tang dynasty was successful because it built on the policies of earlier dynasties. Briefly describe the Tang dynasty policies in each of the following areas:

   Agriculture:

   Transportation:

   Trade:

   Government:

   Defense:

4. Use the table to take notes on the cultural practices and artistic achievements of the Tang dynasty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poetry and literature</th>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Tea</th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
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Main idea: The Song dynasty continued many traditions of the Tang dynasty.

5. The Song dynasty eventually replaced the Tang dynasty. The Song had a lot in common with the Tang, but there were some differences as well. Complete the table by identifying which characteristics listed below belonged to the Tang dynasty, the Song dynasty, or both dynasties.

- Education
- Period of peace
- Small territory
- Large territory
- Science and technology
- Military power
- Government
- Confucianism
- Many religions
- Art and trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tang dynasty</th>
<th>Both dynasties</th>
<th>Song dynasty</th>
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<tbody>
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6. Use the table to take notes on the cultural achievements of the Song dynasty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art</th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gunpowder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Movable type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main idea: Rising trade helped spread Chinese influence and culture during the Tang and the Song dynasties.

7. The Silk Road was first established during the Han dynasty. By the Song dynasty, it was a thriving trade network. Answer the following questions about how trade affected China.

   a. What improvements did the Chinese make to encourage trade during the Tang and Song dynasties?

   b. What kinds of goods were traded along the Silk Road?

   c. How did trade affect China during the Tang and Song dynasties?

8. Trade allowed China to exchange goods, culture, and ideas that affected the Chinese economy and way of life. Use the table to take notes on how trade affected Chinese currency, Chinese merchants, and Chinese cities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper money</th>
<th>Merchant class</th>
<th>Cities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
9. People didn't just trade goods along the trade routes that connected China and the rest of the world. They also shared ideas and religions. The two largest religions in China — Confucianism and Daoism — spread to other parts of Asia, and Buddhism spread to China. Determine whether each statement describes Confucianism, Daoism, or Buddhism.

   a. This religion is based on the teachings of Confucius and places a high value on balance and social harmony.

   b. This religion was created by Laozi and teaches that the order and rules of the current world are unimportant.

   c. This religion came to China from India via trade routes.

   d. Followers don't believe in any specific kind of worship.

   e. Followers believe that suffering is part of life and that the only way to avoid suffering is to stop desiring things.

   f. Followers value education, moral improvement, social order, and a good government.

10. Trade brought China into contact with its neighbors in Asia. Briefly describe how the Chinese influenced each of the following regions during the Tang and the Song dynasties.

    Korea:

    Vietnam:

    Japan:
Postclassical China grew wealthy under the Tang dynasty.

For much of what's now known as the classical era, the Han dynasty ruled China. But after that dynasty fell, China swung between times of stability and times of unrest. By about 600 CE, China was entering a new period, now known as the postclassical era. The first dynasty of that time was the Sui dynasty, which remained in power for only 37 years. The Sui were followed by the Tang dynasty, which would lead China through a period of growth and influence.

The Han dynasty was a classical era dynasty that ruled China from 206 BCE to 220 CE. Its leaders claimed power from the Qin dynasty, which had united China but ruled for only 15 years. The Han created a powerful and well-organized government. They borrowed many of the Qin's most successful policies but also got rid of the least popular ones. For example, the Han abandoned Legalism, which was a policy that called for the use of harsh punishments. Instead, the Han based their policies on Confucianism. Confucianism is a belief system that emphasizes the values of obedience and order.

The Han dynasty ruled China for over 400 years. During that time, Han leaders expanded China's borders, established trade with other cultures, and developed complex artwork and technology.

After the Han dynasty collapsed in 220 CE, a time known as the Three Kingdoms period began. During this period, three kingdoms — the Wei, Shu, and Wu — ruled different parts of China.

For decades, these kingdoms fought bloody wars for power. And the dynasties that did rise to power faced constant rebellion. China remained divided until 581 CE.

The Sui dynasty unites China under its rule.
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In 581 CE, the Wei kingdom united China and started a new dynasty: the Sui dynasty. Once again, one emperor ruled all of China.
The Sui government was well organized. It used a standard system of money and encouraged the spread of Buddhism throughout the empire. The Sui also worked to improve farming methods, which helped the empire produce enough food to feed its growing population.

Under the rule of the Sui dynasty, much of the famous Grand Canal was completed. The Grand Canal is still the longest man-made waterway on Earth, connecting Chinese cities for over 1,000 miles.

618 – 907 CE

The Tang dynasty expands China's borders.

After ruling for less than 40 years, the Sui dynasty was replaced by the Tang dynasty in 618 CE. The Tang dynasty was ruled by a powerful military family that used its armies to expand China's borders farther than ever before.

Under Tang rule, China entered a period of growth. The population swelled to about 80 million people. Between 618 and 907 CE, the Tang made China one of the most important empires of the postclassical era.

Tang Dynasty Rulers

In 618 CE, the Tang dynasty won control of China. This dynasty ruled for almost 300 years. Under Tang rule, China experienced a golden age of remarkable growth and development. It became the greatest power in Asia and had some of the largest cities in the world.

The Tang dynasty grew strong partly because it had such effective leaders — including Emperor Taizong and Empress Wu Zetian.

Emperor Taizong (pictured, right) became the second emperor of the Tang dynasty by killing his brothers and nephews. Despite his violent start, Taizong is still considered one of the best rulers in Chinese history.

Taizong ruled for 23 years. During that time, he expanded China's borders and created a highly organized government. Taizong surrounded himself with intelligent people to help him rule. People at the time considered him a reasonable ruler who helped the poor. He valued the arts and even wrote his own poems and books. He also allowed people to practice religions of their choice.
Empress Wu Zetian (pictured, left) was born to a wealthy family. At a young age, she joined the court of Emperor Taizong. While at the capital, she studied history and politics. After Taizong's death, Wu Zetian became the wife of the next emperor, Kao Tsung. He was often sick, however, and Wu Zetian took over running the empire. After Kao Tsung's death, Wu Zetian officially became ruler — the first woman to rule China.

Wu Zetian earned a reputation as a feared but effective ruler. She created a secret police force to spy on her enemies. She improved how government officials were selected, choosing people based on their abilities rather than their rank or wealth. Wu Zetian's actions strengthened the dynasty and improved the government. She also lowered taxes on the poor and paid for construction projects to improve life in cities.

**Tang Dynasty Policies**

During the Tang dynasty, leaders supported research in agriculture, which led to major improvements in China's ability to grow food. Advancements in flood control and irrigation helped farmers get the right amount of water for their farms. Farmers also created terraces, or flat areas on hillsides, to expand the amount of land that could be used to grow crops. At the same time, new types of crops, such as rice from Vietnam, helped increase the amount of food that could be produced. These advancements strengthened the economy and supported population growth.

The Tang improved on earlier dynasties' methods of building ships. They built new and different types of ships for overseas trade and military conquest. They also constructed canals to connect major waterways. Tang leaders also built and improved roads to encourage trade and communication with other cultures.

During the Tang dynasty, an important trade route known as the Silk Road became very successful. This route connected China with other parts of the world. Tang traders traveled along the Silk Road exchanging Chinese silks and porcelain for goods from India, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. The Tang also exchanged goods along overseas trade routes. Their technologically advanced boats and navigation tools allowed them to sail half a world away to exchange goods.

Tang leaders surrounded themselves with qualified, educated people to help run the empire. In order to get a job in the government, people had to pass difficult exams, called civil service exams. Civil service exams were based on the teachings of Confucianism. The exams tested people not only on their ability to manage the government but also on their knowledge of literature and poetry.

Under the Tang dynasty, China experienced a period of peace. Fighting between different Chinese states stopped almost completely. Tang leaders also made peace with groups living near their borders, and Chinese influence spread farther than it ever had before. The Tang emperor gave the dynasty's military leaders a lot of power. But by granting them that power, the emperor lost some of his or her own. This power structure would eventually weaken the dynasty.
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Tang Dynasty Achievements

Though the Tang made many advancements in agriculture, transportation, and government, they are best known for their cultural achievements. The Tang dynasty ruled during a period of remarkable creativity. Great art and literature were created, and cultural practices — like the drinking of tea — developed.

A golden age of writing took place during the Tang dynasty. Poetry in particular became a highly sophisticated art form. Government leaders were expected to memorize and write poetry, and poetry contests were popular. Tang poet Li Bai, for example, wrote close to 1,000 poems about friendship, nature, and other romantic topics. Wang Wei was a famous poet and painter who focused on nature. Over 400 of Wang Wei's poems survived and are still considered important today. Writers also created short stories, romances, and other types of texts that became the basis for later Chinese works of literature. And some Tang writers created works on history, science, geography, and other topics.

New technologies and styles of pottery came about during the Tang dynasty. Tang artisans created detailed works of clay and porcelain. At the same time, paintings of landscapes and scenes of daily life became more popular. Artists also created painted sculptures of people and animals.

Another important art form that developed under Tang rule was calligraphy. Calligraphy is a form of decorative handwriting. All scholars, writers, and government officials were expected to write using calligraphy. The Tang also developed woodblock printing as a way to reprint works of art or writing. Using this method, pieces of wood were carefully carved, covered with ink, and pressed against paper or cloth.

Many people still drink tea according to traditions begun during the Tang dynasty. During the Tang dynasty, tea became popular across China. The Chinese considered it sophisticated to drink tea; some authors even wrote poems and books about tea. The growing popularity of tea came partly from the religion of Buddhism. Buddhists believed that drinking tea brought health and peace. Tea ceremonies with specially made pottery, bowls, and utensils became a standard part of Chinese life.

Comparing the Tang and the Song Dynasties

The Song dynasty continued many traditions of the Tang dynasty.

It’s the nature of human societies to change. They may grow, become wealthy, or even weaken. And, eventually, all human societies come to an end. Despite almost 300 years of success, the Tang dynasty eventually weakened and a new dynasty rose in its place: the Song dynasty. The Song had a lot in common with the Tang, but there were some differences as well.
The Tang dynasty ruled a lot more territory than the Song, and the Tang created a strong military to help manage that land. Under the Tang dynasty, people practiced many religions, including Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism.

The Song dynasty focused less on military action than the Tang did. Therefore, the Song controlled less territory. The Song still controlled a large population, however, partly due to successful agricultural practices. While the Tang dynasty allowed the Chinese to practice many religions, under Song rule, Confucianism became the official religion of the empire.

Both the Tang and the Song dynasties valued education and the arts. During their rule, China made great technological advancements and produced highly sophisticated artwork. Emperors from both dynasties also opened many new schools. Both the Tang and the Song dynasties had very organized governments. If people wanted to become officials in the government, they had to take civil service exams.

**Song Dynasty Achievements**

During the Song dynasty, the Chinese were some of the most advanced people in the world. Marco Polo, who traveled to China from Italy in the 1200s, was amazed by what he saw there. The Chinese had achieved cultural and technological feats that wouldn't be seen in Europe for many years.

The people of the Song dynasty continued the artistic traditions of the Tang dynasty. They appreciated and created works of fine art. The Song were especially known for their large-scale landscape paintings, which were done mostly in black ink. The paintings gave an impression of humans as a small part of the natural world.

The Song also improved earlier methods of producing porcelain. They created kilns that could fire tens of thousands of objects and began to manufacture porcelain in a highly organized way. Most of the porcelain produced at this time was thin and delicate. It was usually white or gray, and was decorated with uncolored carved designs.

Gunpowder was invented — probably by accident — during the Tang dynasty. However, the Song dynasty was the first empire in the world to put it to wide-scale use. The Song military used gunpowder to make bombs that would spray their enemies with broken bits of metal. The Song also created the first version of the modern gun. Their version was made with gunpowder, a tube, and a sharp, stick-like object.
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The Chinese developed ways of printing large quantities — called mass printing — at least 400 years before Europeans did. One new printing technology was movable type — which was carved writing that could be rearranged to easily create print copies. Movable type allowed printers to make books quickly and cheaply. As a result, more books were available and more people could afford to buy them.

The Song were skilled sailors. They improved on earlier shipbuilding technologies and constructed ships that could go long distances more quickly. Song ships ranged in size, with larger ships capable of holding hundreds of people. Sailors moved the ships through water using oars or sails, or a combination of both. The ships were made of wood and iron and were very strong. They also had large compartments that could hold goods. To reach distant locations as far away as Egypt, the Song made improvements to the compass. This technology made sailing long distances to specific locations much easier.

Trade in Postclassical China
*Rising trade helped spread Chinese influence and culture during the Tang and the Song dynasties.*

The Silk Road was first established during the Han dynasty, in about 100 BCE. By the Song dynasty, the Silk Road was a thriving trade network that connected different parts of the world like never before.

Today, we can find goods from all over the world online or even in stores close by. But 2,000 years ago, people on trade routes encountered people, goods, and ideas they may have never seen or heard of before. During the Tang and the Song dynasties, trade was both expanding borders and bringing cultures closer together. The Chinese improved roads and built canals and barges to better move goods on rivers. These improvements allowed an unending stream of goods and ideas to travel back and forth between China and civilizations in India, Persia, and Europe.

At sea, Chinese ships brought goods to India, the Middle East, and as far away as Egypt. Chinese traders were able to navigate the open seas because China developed the most accurate compasses of the time period. The Chinese were also skilled sailors.

Imagine walking through a marketplace along the Silk Road, or at a port in southern India during this period. You jingle your copper coins in your pocket and run your fingers through smooth, Chinese silks and over beautiful handmade paper. You might pick up a porcelain teapot to admire the details and decorations on its fine surface. The air would be full of the aromas of tea, exotic spices, peppers, oranges, and grapes. You might actually hear clanging as people test iron tools, or loud pops as they demonstrate the quality of their gunpowder.

You might also hear many different languages as people try to sell or buy goods for the best prices. Maybe you strike up a conversation with one of the merchants. You learn about their culture. You discuss politics and religion. You learn about new or favorite technologies.

You see, trade routes during the postclassical era weren't just about buying new things. They were also about exchanging new ideas. Some of these ideas would change the world everywhere they went.

Because of their success with trade, the Tang and the Song dynasties made China the wealthiest empire on Earth at the time. It was a time of great growth, exchange, and wealth for the Chinese people.
The Economic Impact of Trade

Trade allowed China to exchange its goods, culture, and ideas with people thousands of miles away. And what the Chinese received in return affected both their economy and their way of life.

The Song dynasty was the first in the world to create paper money — maybe because it was also the first to create paper and woodblock printing. Before paper money, the Chinese had used copper coins for their currency. But when trade became so successful, merchants struggled to carry the heavy piles of coins they needed. In response, the Song government created paper notes. The government put special stamps and characters on the notes to prevent people from making fake copies.

Over the years, the use of paper money would spread from China to other cultures along trade routes. As China's wealth grew during the Song dynasty, life improved for almost everyone in the empire. But merchants' lives may have improved most of all. As trade increased, merchants became organized and created partnerships and groups that could arrange sales and set prices. Because so many people wanted to sell or purchase goods without having to travel to distant places, the merchants played an important role and grew wealthy because of it.

The population of China doubled between the Tang and the Song dynasties. Trade improved agriculture by bringing the Chinese things like drought-resistant rice and improved irrigation techniques. These improvements allowed the empire to support a larger population.

Cities in China were crowded, lively places. For example, two capitals of the Song dynasty were home to about 1 million people each. During that same period in Europe, London was a small town of only 15,000 people.

The Spiritual Impact of Trade

People didn't just trade goods along the routes that connected China with the rest of the world. They also shared ideas and religions. As trade between regions increased, new religions spread into different parts of the world. The two largest religions in China — Confucianism and Daoism — spread into other parts of Asia. And Buddhism — which began in India — spread into China.

Confucianism is a religion based on the teachings of Confucius, who lived in China around 500 BCE. Confucianism places value on balance and social harmony. Confucians believe that human beings are basically good and that people can teach and improve themselves. Confucians value education, moral improvement, social order, and a good government.

During the Tang and the Song dynasties, Confucianism was very influential. Although Buddhism grew in popularity, Confucian ideas still shaped people's views on society and government. In addition, the Tang and the Song governments spread Confucian ideas across the lands they controlled and into places like Korea and Vietnam.
Around 600 BCE, a Chinese man named Laozi created the religion of Daoism. Daoism teaches that the order and rules of the current world are unimportant. Daoists celebrate nature and believe that people should act in ways that make them happy. Daoism considers the natural world to be a source of love, and requires no specific worship.

Daoism remained popular during the Tang and the Song dynasties. People in China blended Daoism with Buddhism, worshipping Daoist gods while practicing Buddhism. Daoism spread into other parts of Asia as well.

Buddhism is a religion that came to China from India. Buddhists believe that suffering is part of life and that suffering comes from a desire for material goods or things. Buddhists believe that the only way to avoid suffering is to stop desiring things. To achieve this goal, Buddhists focus on doing good deeds for others, and thinking positively and deeply.

When trade routes opened between China and India, Indian merchants brought their religion to the Chinese. At first, Buddhism wasn't popular among the Chinese. But during the Tang dynasty, its popularity grew. By the Song dynasty, Buddhism had become a major religion in China.

**China's Influence**

Trade brought China into contact with its neighbors in Asia. The Tang and the Song governments worked to increase China's strength in Korea and Japan, and the Tang directly ruled over Vietnam. Contact with China would have a major influence on these regions during the postclassical era.

The Korean peninsula was conquered by the Tang dynasty in the 600s CE. Although they stayed in power there for only 10 years, the Tang made a lasting impression on Korean culture. The dynasty established a government based on Confucianism — where social order and responsible leadership were important. The Tang dynasty also spread the Buddhist religion. And until Koreans developed their own system of writing, they wrote in Chinese.
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Difficult waters separated Japan and China. Perhaps because of this, Japan was never conquered by China. However, it still felt China's influence. The Japanese based their organized government on Chinese Confucian ideals. They also adopted Buddhism and developed their own tradition known as Zen Buddhism.

The Tang dynasty ruled Vietnam for hundreds of years. The Tang created a government in Vietnam based on Confucian ideas — focusing on social order and responsible leadership. They also spread Daoism and Buddhism. In addition, people in Vietnam adopted Chinese farming methods. And while the Vietnamese developed their own styles of art and music, the Chinese influence can be seen there as well. When the Tang fell to the Song dynasty, leaders in Vietnam fought and won their independence in 938 CE.
1. Which phrase best completes the diagram?

- A. Developed movable type
- B. Conquered parts of Africa
- C. Shut down the Silk Road
- D. Adopted Japanese writing

2. During the postclassical era, China was the first to:

- A. capture every Japanese island.
- B. create poetry and literature.
- C. use paper money for trade.
- D. practice the Buddhist religion.
3. The growth of Chinese trade during the postclassical era led to:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Japanese culture replacing many Chinese traditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Chinese merchants becoming very wealthy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>religion playing a smaller part of life in China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>traders becoming more powerful than emperors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Which advancement *most* helped increase trade during the postclassical era?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>More complex religions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>More accurate compasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>More sophisticated calligraphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>More delicate pottery</td>
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5. Which statement *best* completes the diagram?

**Cause**

The Tang dynasty conquered Korea.

**Effect**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Korea developed a new way to practice Daoism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Korea's government became based on Confucianism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Koreans were forced to give up their Buddhist beliefs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>Korean officials became the most powerful Tang leaders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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WEEK 6

11.3: Feudal Japan

Objectives
- Describe the Japanese feudal system.
- Identify significant achievements of the Japanese civilizations between 1000 and 1600 CE.
- Explain the religious traditions that developed in Japan.

11.3.1 Study: Feudal Japan

Use this study guide to answer questions about important concepts covered in this activity.

Define the following terms. If you come across additional words you don’t know, write them in the extra blank spaces. Try to figure out what the word means by looking at its context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>daimyo</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main idea: Japan’s location and geography influenced the way civilization developed there.

1. People first settled on the islands of Japan in prehistoric times. Briefly explain how each geographic feature affected Japan’s early development.

   **Mainland Asia:**

   **Mountains:**

   **Coastal plains:**

   **Ocean:**

2. The first civilizations emerged in Japan during the classical era. Determine whether each statement about the development of Japanese culture during the classical era is true or false.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Yamato people came from China to conquer Japan.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan’s first ruler probably lived in the 400s.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empress Suiko was the first of eight women to be empress of Japan.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Japanese were forced to stop practicing Shinto.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confucianism formed the basis of Japanese society for thousands of years.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Shotoku wrote a constitution that encouraged people to be Buddhists.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The beliefs and traditions of Buddhism and Shinto mixed over time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Three main belief systems helped shape Japanese culture during the classical era. Place an X in the box to identify whether each description refers to Buddhism, Shinto, or Confucianism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Buddhism</th>
<th>Shinto</th>
<th>Confucianism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Created by Siddhartha Gautama in India</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on the teachings of the Chinese scholar Confucius</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches that people must perform their roles and not be selfish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches that each object, animal, or force of nature has a spirit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the native religion of Japan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches that desire leads to suffering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraged a strict hierarchy that became a part of Japanese culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main idea: During the postclassical era, Japan established a system of feudalism.

4. Historians refer to the years between 794 and 1185 as the Heian period in Japanese history. Use the table to take notes on how the Japanese government, military, and economy changed during this period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. In 1192, Minamoto no Yoritomo declared himself shogun. This marked the beginning of the feudal era in Japan. What is feudalism? What impact did feudalism have on Japanese society?

6. Match the name of each class in feudal Japan with its description. Then in the margin, rank the classes from highest (emperor) to lowest (traders).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shogun</td>
<td>Wealthy landowners and ruling lords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daimyo</td>
<td>Worked in the fields; some owned the land they worked on, while others rented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samurai</td>
<td>Traded goods in markets; were considered the least important since they didn't make goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emperor</td>
<td>Most respected person in feudal Japan but had no real power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peasants</td>
<td>Lord of the landowners; a powerful military leader who ruled in the name of the emperor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftspeople</td>
<td>Made goods; were viewed as less important than peasants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traders</td>
<td>Professional warriors; served the daimyo and followed the Bushido code</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Feudalism defined Japanese life by the 1600s. Put events from the development of Japanese feudalism in order by numbering them 1 through 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The shogun and emperor shared power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tokugawa Ieyasu became shogun and brought about peace, trade, and literacy. The Tokugawa period was the height of the feudal system in Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Mongol Empire conquered China and unsuccessfully tried to invade Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Power shifted to the daimyo, and the center of power moved from Kyoto to castle towns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Oda Nobunaga united Japan under his rule. He and his successor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, increased the structure of the Japanese feudal system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Main idea:** The Japanese developed a unique culture with distinctive styles of art, literature, and drama.

8. What impact did China have on Japanese cultural traditions?

9. Write a brief description of each of the following Japanese art forms.
   - **Shodo:**
   - **Painting:**
   - **Ikebana:**
   - **Gardening:**
   - **Tea ceremony:**

10. Over the centuries, the Japanese changed the art forms they borrowed from China. How did Japanese literature change during the feudal era?

11. The Japanese created unique forms of theater like noh and kabuki. Describe these two forms of theater. How are they different from one another?
Ancient World History (Grade 6)

11.3.1 Study: Feudal Japan

Feudal Japan

*Japan's location and geography influenced the way civilization developed there*

People first settled on the islands of Japan in prehistoric times. Their way of life developed around the unique geography of the islands. For example, the Jomon people (11,000 to 300 BCE) and later the Yayoi people (900 BCE to 250 CE) fished from the seas that surround Japan and gathered salt to preserve food. They used materials from the mountains — including stone and some metals — to make tools. They also built their homes of wood from Japan's many forests.

Although Japan is made up of islands, it is close to mainland Asia. People often traveled back and forth between the mainland and Japan, and Japan was heavily influenced by Asian people and ideas. The greatest influence was China, one of the world's oldest and most powerful empires. The Japanese borrowed Chinese ideas about government, religion, writing, and art.

Korea was also a major influence. The Korean peninsula is closer to Japan than China is, and people could travel more easily between the two places. People from Korea brought metalworking and farming techniques to Japan.

Mountains make up about 75 percent of Japan's landmass. The mountains contain very little coal, iron, and other natural resources. Still, people were able to gather stone and some metals to use for tools and buildings. Mountains are also difficult to build farms and settlements on. While the mountains do contain flat land, most of the flat land is at high elevations, where it is quite cold. Early farmers adapted to these challenges by learning to grow rice that resisted the cold.
In Japan, the plains along the coast are one of the few places people can grow crops. The Yayoi people were probably the first to grow rice, the most important Japanese food. Rice requires a lot of water to grow, but Japan has plenty of yearly rainfall and many fast-moving rivers that flow from the mountains.

Everyone in Japan lives within 70 miles of the sea. With this easy access to water, the Japanese people became skilled at sailing early in their history. Traders relied on boats to travel between Japan's 4,000 islands, and people in general depended on fish for much of their food. Because the sea was a natural barrier, outsiders did not successfully invade Japan until 1945.

**The Development of Japanese Culture**

The first civilizations emerged in Japan during the classical era. By the 400s BCE, the Japanese had united under a single government and had developed a unique religion called Shinto.

But Japan had plenty of outside influences as well. During the classical era, China introduced the Japanese to the religion of Buddhism and to the system of philosophy called Confucianism. Both Buddhism and Confucianism had lasting influences on Japanese culture.

The first people to form a true Japanese civilization were the Yamato. In fact, Yamato is another word for Japan. At first, Yamato society consisted of small territories ruled by chiefs, called chiefdoms. Over time, rulers' territories grew larger and became kingdoms. In these kingdoms, powerful family groups, known as clans, ruled. They competed with clans from other kingdoms for power and land.

According to legend, the first emperor to rule over the different kingdoms of Japan came to power in the 1600s BCE. But in reality, the first person to actually unite the Yamato people under one empire probably lived in the 400s, or about 1,600 years ago.

During the 500s, the chief of the Soga clan grew powerful enough to control who ruled Japan. In about 593, he made a woman named Suiko empress of the island. Empress Suiko was the first of eight women to take on the role of empress in Japan.

Empress Suiko and her nephew Prince Shotoku would end up ruling Japan during an interesting time in history. Settlers from nearby China had started bringing new ideas and traditions to Japan, including Buddhism, a religion that originated in India, and Confucianism, a moral and political way of thinking that originated in China.

Empress Suiko and Prince Shotoku welcomed these new ideas and traditions. In fact, the prince wrote a 17-article constitution that encouraged his people to follow the teachings of Buddhism. The constitution also organized people into strict classes and ranks according to the ideas of Confucianism. Prince Shotoku also adopted the Chinese calendar, built numerous Buddhist temples, and sent students to China to study Buddhism and Confucianism.
Ancient World History (Grade 6)

But not everybody loved these new ideas or Prince Shotoku's actions. The Nakatomi clan, for example, tried to defend the native Japanese religion of Shinto, and over time, they were able to destroy Prince Shotoku's clan, the Soga. Yet, despite the efforts of the Nakatomi clan and others, Buddhism and Confucianism spread across Japan.

Confucianism formed the basis of Japanese society for thousands of years. It made society so orderly, in fact, that even the Nakatomi eventually supported it. Meanwhile, the beliefs and traditions of Buddhism and Shinto mixed over time. For example, the Japanese started to believe that Shinto gods protected the Buddha in heaven. The meshing of Buddhism and Shinto created a unique culture that defined Japan during the classical era and beyond.

Three Guiding Belief Systems

Three main belief systems helped shape Japanese culture during the classical era: Buddhism, Shinto, and Confucianism. Shinto developed in ancient Japan, while Buddhism and Confucianism began in other parts of Asia.

Long ago, in what is now India, a prince named Siddhartha Gautama gave up his life of wealth. He found enlightenment through the act of meditating. He then taught his followers that desire (the desire for money, for example) leads to suffering. Therefore, he said, people should focus on ending their desire. Siddhartha Gautama was later called the Buddha.

Buddhism spread eastward from India to China and finally to Japan in the 500s CE. Two types of Buddhism developed in Japan: Pure Land Buddhism and Zen Buddhism. Pure Land Buddhists worship the Buddha as a god. Zen Buddhists are less religious; they see the Buddha as a teacher, not a god.

The Japanese native religion is Shinto, which developed in ancient times. Shinto is a form of animism. Animism is the belief that each object, animal, or force of nature has a spirit. For example, followers of Shinto treat old, beautiful, or important features of nature – including rivers and trees – as gods. A popular saying is that Japan has 8 million gods and goddesses. Some stand out as especially important, such as the sun goddess, Amaterasu. Stories from Shinto mythology influenced Japanese art, literature, and culture.

People in Japan practiced Shinto long before Buddhism reached the islands. Even afterward, Shinto traditions continued to exist as Buddhism grew in popularity. Many Japanese people practiced both religions. They accepted Buddhist teachings but continued to worship Shinto gods.

The Chinese philosopher Confucius taught that people should work together to create a stable society. To do so, Confucius believed people must perform their roles in society and avoid being selfish. Farmers and others in the lower classes should work to support the upper classes, such as rulers. Also, the upper classes should protect the lower classes.

Confucianism encouraged a strict hierarchy, which became part of Japanese culture. For example, when two Japanese people greet each other, they bow. However, a lower-level person like a worker bows more deeply than a higher-level person, such as her boss.
Characteristics of Feudal Japan

During the postclassical era, Japan established a system of feudalism.

Japan experienced a time of peace and growth during the postclassical era. Historians refer to the years between 794 and 1185 CE as the Heian period in Japanese history. *Heian* means "peace" in Japanese. During the Heian period, the government, social structure, and economy changed in ways that shaped Japan's future.

Japan's government had been ruled by an emperor since the 400s CE. But over time, Japanese emperors lost some of their power, and wealthy families — or clans — won positions of power in the government. Those clans made decisions in the name of the emperor.

Starting in the 800s, the powerful Fujiwara clan married into the emperor's family and took control of the Japanese government. But other clans started to envy the Fujiwara, and by the late 1100s, several powerful clans were competing for control of Japan. The emperor, meanwhile, had little real power.

As Japan's emperor lost power, wealthy landowners hired soldiers to protect their lands. These professional warriors were called samurai. Wealthy families built powerful armies, competing with one another for control of land. During the 1100s, the samurai of different clans started to fight one another for power. One clan, the Minamoto, defeated many of its enemies and set up its own government separate from the emperor. This military government was called a shogunate, which was ruled by a shogun.

During the postclassical era, Japan's economy was controlled by wealthy landowners, known as daimyo. Daimyo owned huge areas of land that often included entire villages. Common people lived on these lands and farmed them but had to give the daimyo much of what they grew. Japan's most important crop was rice. For the daimyo, the amount of rice they collected was a direct measure of their wealth. They were ranked on how much rice they could collect from their lands.

In 1192, the leader of the Minamoto clan, Minamoto no Yoritomo, declared himself shogun. This marked the beginning of the feudal era in Japanese history. A unique system of feudalism developed in Japan during this time.

Japanese feudalism was based on a strict class system that was heavily influenced by Confucianism. The Japanese class system separated people based on their jobs. The classes were ranked according to their importance to society, rather than their wealth or power.
Ancient World History (Grade 6)

The emperor and his court (his family and supporters) were the most respected people in feudal Japan. However, the emperor’s power was only for show. The shogun and the daimyo had the real power; they alone commanded the Japanese armies. The emperor could make laws and titles (like shogun) official, but he had no way to make people follow his orders.

The shogun was the lord of the powerful landowners, the daimyo. He was a powerful military leader who ruled in the name of the emperor. He also had power to make people follow the laws and control the government.

Daimyo were wealthy landowners and ruling lords. Samurai served the daimyo, and so did smaller landowners called retainers, who gave the daimyo a portion of rice grown on their land each year.

Samurai made up the warrior class. They served the daimyo and the emperor. Their job, other than defense, was to collect taxes from peasants. The samurai carried two swords to remind the peasants that their power was based on force. However, they also followed the Bushido code: rules of honor, loyalty, and bravery they were expected to live by and die for.

Peasants made up four-fifths of the population in feudal Japan. Peasants worked the fields. Some "owned" the land they worked, although they had to give a portion of their rice to the local ruler. Other peasants were renters who worked for richer peasants. Often, peasants were not allowed to leave their land without special permission. In time, strict rules were created that stopped peasants from leaving their land at all.

Craftspeople made goods, including clothing, furniture, tools, and weapons. Because craftspeople made goods, the Japanese saw them as more respectable than traders. However, their goods were not as important as food, so they were still ranked lower than peasants.

Traders sold goods in markets in Japanese cities and towns. Many traders were wealthy, but because they did not make the goods they sold, they were considered the least important class in feudal Japanese society.

Japanese Feudal History

Japanese feudalism first appeared in the late 1100s and developed over time. By the 1600s, the start of the Tokugawa period, feudalism defined life in Japan.

Late 1100s – 1500s The Japanese develop independently from mainland Asia.

For the first several hundred years feudalism existed in Japan, the shogun and the emperor shared power. However, the daimyo, or land owning lords, held more and more power over time. As a result, the center of power moved from the emperor’s city of Kyoto to the daimyo’s castle towns.

In the 1200s, the Mongol Empire conquered much of Asia, including all of China. The Mongols tried to invade Japan twice, but both times powerful storms destroyed their ships. Their failure allowed the Japanese government to continue developing in a unique way, separate from the rest of Asia.
During the 1500s, powerful daimyo fought for control over Japan. By 1582, the daimyo Oda Nobunaga had defeated rivals, taken over Kyoto, and united most of Japan. He and the ruler who followed him, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, shaped feudalism into its most successful form.

To keep their power secure, Nobunaga and Hideyoshi took away the peasants' weapons and forbade them from fighting or even leaving their land. They also forbade people in one class from joining other classes.

Hideyoshi ranked the importance of landowners based on how much rice they produced. The landowners' peasants farmed the rice, which they gave to the landowners as a tax payment. Meanwhile, the samurai protected the peasants and the landowners.

In 1603, the emperor granted the title of shogun to Tokugawa Ieyasu. Ieyasu followed Hideyoshi's example and strengthened Japanese feudalism. He made the relationships between different groups more formal and strengthened the power of the shogun. The Tokugawa period was a time of widespread peace, trade, and literacy.

This period was also the height of the feudal system in Japan, which was united under the leadership of a powerful shogun. Under the shogun, the daimyo managed lands and used samurai to collect taxes and keep order. Peasants grew rice and gave much of their crops to the daimyo. This strict system kept the Tokugawa shogunate in power for 286 years.

Japanese Art Forms

The Japanese developed a unique culture with distinctive styles of art, literature, and drama.

The Chinese had a big influence on early Japanese culture, particularly its art. Many Japanese art forms are also closely tied to the branches of Chinese Buddhism that became popular in Japan. Today, Chinese influence can still be seen in many Japanese cultural traditions, including shodo (calligraphy), painting, ikebana (flower arranging), gardening, and tea ceremonies.

Shodo is calligraphy: the writing of Japanese characters using a brush and ink. Early Japanese Buddhists believed that writing sutras (wise sayings) helped a person gain wisdom. Later, shodo became a form of artistic expression: Each brushstroke shows the artist's feelings. Today, shodo is required in Japanese elementary schools. Artists can even specialize in shodo at some Japanese universities.

Chinese painting inspired Japanese painting. Both focused on landscapes and simple human forms and faces. They used few colors and had clear, graceful lines. After the 800s, Japanese artists began to paint scenes of everyday life, often by showing buildings with no roofs so people could see inside. Centuries later, after the 1400s, monochromatic (one-color) painting became popular.
Ancient World History (Grade 6)

Ikebana, or flower arranging, started in the 600s. It was inspired by the Buddhist tradition of offering flowers to the dead. The Japanese made the practice an art form. The goal of ikebana was to bring a part of nature indoors. However, instead of just planting flowers, artists tried to symbolize all of nature in a single, beautiful arrangement.

The original Japanese gardens were inspired by a Chinese way of life called Daoism. Daoists believed in a balance of forces. To represent this idea, Japanese gardens might show a balance of land and water. The gardens also gave Buddhists a place to meditate by surrounding them with the simple pleasures of nature.

The Japanese tea ceremony involves preparing and presenting tea in a very specific way. The ceremony is performed in the same way every time it is completed, giving it the feel of a performance. This practice originated in the 800s and was heavily influenced by Buddhist traditions.

Japanese Literature and Theater

Over the centuries, the Japanese changed the art forms they borrowed from China, making them their own. The Japanese also developed their own unique styles of art — including literature such as the novel and haiku, and theater like noh and kabuki.

In the 1000s, a Japanese noblewoman named Murasaki Shikibu was the first person in Japan to write a work of literature in prose. Prose is any work of literature that is not poetry. Before then, the Japanese believed that poetry was the only true form of literature. Shikibu's story, The Tale of Genji, is a romance about a fictional prince. Many historians consider it the first novel ever written.

Poetry was both influential and popular in Japan throughout its history. One of the most famous Japanese poets, Matsuo Basho, wrote haiku: sets of three phrases that try to capture a single moment or feeling. Basho was a nobleman in the 1600s who gave up his life in the city to wander Japan.

Noh is a type of theater from the 1300s that tells a well-known story from Japanese legend. Each performance focuses on the main character's strong emotions. To show these emotions, the lead actor wears a mask and strikes dramatic poses, following careful choreography. At the same time, musicians chant and play the drums and flute.

A similar type of performance, kabuki, emerged in the 1600s. Kabuki has more complicated sets and stories. Instead of masks, colored makeup indicates the characters' emotions and personalities. Kabuki performances go on all day, although the audience is given breaks.
11.3.5 Quiz: Feudal Japan

1. The Japanese feudal system was most influenced by which belief system?
   
   A. Shinto
   
   B. Daoism
   
   C. Confucianism
   
   D. Buddhism

2. What role did emperors play in the Japanese feudal system?
   
   A. They received the most respect but did not have armies.
   
   B. They had the most real power but could not make laws.
   
   C. They were religious leaders but did not have any political power.
   
   D. They were protected by samurai but only in exchange for rice.

3. What was one of Japan's major achievements?
   
   A. Creating some of the earliest works of prose literature
   
   B. Building a social system that did not allow violence
   
   C. Uniting all of Japan under the rule of one daimyo
   
   D. Giving peasants the right to vote for their leaders
4. Which phrase best completes the diagram?

A. Conquered China and Korea
B. Invented gunpowder weapons
C. Set up a democratic government
D. Developed new Buddhist traditions

5. How did Prince Shotoku influence the development of Buddhism in Japan?

A. He mixed Buddhism with Japanese Shinto beliefs for the first time.
B. He wrote a constitution asking Japanese people to practice Buddhism.
C. He forced all Chinese and Korean Buddhists to leave Japan.
D. He stopped the spread of Buddhism by defeating the Nakatomi clan.