

Model Lesson for Using *The Indian Ocean in World History*

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Overview:

This web project provides information on various types of human interactions in the Indian Ocean throughout the eras of world history. The site is intended primarily for use by middle and high school teachers and students in connection with surveys of world history, geography and cultures that are required by nearly every state's academic standards in social studies. Like other maritime zones (the Atlantic World, the Pacific Rim), the Indian Ocean is a relatively new topic in world history survey courses, reflecting recent developments in world history scholarship. Approaches to the history survey that emphasize a series of discrete civilizations used to omit this huge and historically important region almost entirely.

This online resource can be used throughout the survey course, both for illuminating an important zone of interaction over millennia, and for providing students with opportunities to explore various types of primary source material, and to engage in guided analysis of these sources. The guided skills lessons provided for the different types of primary sources involve interrogating data and working with historical evidence.

Exploring the Site

The Indian Ocean in World History is a complete instructional resource that includes content and support materials. The heart of the website is a set of maps, reachable by clicking MAPS on the toolbar. These are physical geography maps based on National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) satellite imaging of earth. They show the Indian Ocean and surrounding land and bodies of water, and feature content overlays that represent seven major historical periods, or "eras" in world history: Prehistoric, ancient, classical, medieval, first global, industrial and imperial, and the twentieth century. The era titles were chosen for simplicity and familiarity in typical world history curricula.

The main content of each map is in three parts. First, skills lessons consisting of questions to ask for investigating each type of primary source are located by clicking on each icon on the map key, in the lower left-hand corner of each era's map. Clicking the icon brings up a text box with a definition and a set of questions to ask about each type of object represented by the icon, followed by brief explanations. These lessons can be read at any time by clicking the icons on the map key positioned on the left side of the map. These lessons are modeled on the resource for investigating primary sources called *World History Sources* ("Unpacking Evidence" and "You Be the Historian") at the George Mason University Center for History and New Media at <http://chnm.gmu.edu/worldhistorysources/index.html>.

Second, icons of each type shown in the key are distributed in various locations on the map, representing important historical examples of primary sources from the era (technologies, documents, places, trade goods, geographic features, travelers, objects, and routes). Placing the cursor on the icon brings up a identification label. A second click on the icon brings up a pop-up textbox describing the primary source. Under the title in each textbox are image icons; when clicked, the image opens in the upper left-hand corner of the screen. After viewing the first image, close it and open the second image.

Third, there is a timeline for each era map under the navigation tabs for the maps, at the bottom of the screen. If your browser does not show the timeline, scroll down to view it. The

lines are scaled differently for each era, and red dots represent important events in world history during that time period. An identification label appears when the cursor passes over the dot. The timeline is intended as an anchor for the content on the site, not as a comprehensive chronological resource.

Using the Site in the Classroom

Teachers can use the site throughout the one- or two-year world history survey, as well as in geographic and cultural studies of the Indian Ocean, South- and Southeast Asia, East Africa, and Australia. Depending on whether the course is organized chronologically, thematically or geographically, it provides a resource on the role of the Indian Ocean and the countries on its rim.

A downloadable background reading is found under LEARNING TOOLS, entitled “Historical Overview: Continuity and Change in the Indian Ocean.” This reading is divided into sections with page breaks, including a physical description of the Indian Ocean, a brief section on historical thinking about oceans, and historical overviews of each era, corresponding to the maps. These reading sections are separated by page breaks for convenient use throughout the survey course. [NOTE: At the beginning of the world history or world geography survey course, it is also helpful to introduce leading ideas about world geography and history, which can be accomplished using the *World History for Us All* online curriculum lesson on Big Geography at <http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu/dev/getting_started.htm#land> .]

Teachers can assign students to explore different eras, or they can assign a group of students to explore the icons of one specific type. They may assign individuals to explore one type, or one of each. Answers to the skill questions can be recorded on one of the two note-taking handouts available with this lesson guide in MS Word for download . Make copies for group or individual use.

Graphic organizers for exploring the site are provided as charts in two different formats, which can be downloaded as word processor files to allow typing directly into the charts. The first is for exploring one specific type of icon within an era or across eras. For example, a student might collect information on travelers within an era, or compare travelers in more than one era. The numbers in the top row correspond to questions in the skills lesson (there are spaces for only 4 questions. The second format is for sampling different types of icons in an era, and each cell contains a question from the skills lesson. The most useful format will depend on the teacher’s specific goals. Since this is a collective learning or jigsaw exercise, a method of sharing information will be implemented after the research phase, which may be done on classroom computers, in a lab, or as homework for students with Internet access at home. Responses may be shared in panels, group or individual presentations.

Integrating the resource into the survey course

A suggested method for using the site is to incorporate it into the study of each era, returning to it several times during the year’s course. The background reading “Historical Overview: Continuity and Change in the Indian Ocean” is designed to support that approach. If the course begins with a study of the physical earth, the introduction to that reading is a useful addition to study of the oceans and the concept of oceanic history. The other segments of the background reading can be implemented in conjunction with the class’ study of a historical era or a unit of study that features several culture regions or societies. For example, a unit might combine the major River Valley Civilizations (the Ancient Era map); Greece, Rome, India, and

Han China (the Classical Era map). The corresponding section of the Historical Overview can be assigned or read in class just prior to students' exploration of the era. Students then explore the icon content as individuals or groups, as the teacher chooses to assign the task (sampling all icon types, or giving small groups one type each). As they explore, they should be looking for specific historical examples and evidence of the general trends mentioned in the reading section. For example, the reading mentions improvements in transportation and communication during the Industrial and Imperial Era, and the map includes specific sites where railroads were built, telegraph lines laid, and new types of ships were used for trade and warfare. As an example of historical evidence across eras, the Ancient, Classical, and Medieval Era maps include important food and industrial crops that were transferred from their origins to other lands, and eventually became global cash crops. A student or group might compare navigation technology across eras, or ship construction, or track the changing destinations and manufacturing sites of trade goods such as cotton textiles, silk, tea, and ceramics across eras. Creative teachers and students will find many other ways to study and analyze the historical material on this site.

Lists of Goals and Objectives

The web-based learning experience will provide an overview of major periods of activity in the Indian Ocean from pre-history to the early nineteenth century.

The web site's goals are:

1. to define the Indian Ocean region geographically
2. to relate the dimensions of time and space in a world region that transcends the idea of a single culture or civilization
3. to evaluate the region's world historical role as a zone of interaction
4. to provide an overview of important types of interactions and activities of the region through textual descriptions that can be explored from a visual interface.
5. to examine specific types of evidence concerning the interactions among various actors in and beyond the Indian Ocean, such as:
 - evidence of travel and the ability to return and make repeat voyages (maps, pilot charts, etc.)
 - evidence of diplomatic and commercial relations (treaties, financial transactions, emissaries' accounts, etc.)
 - evidence of exchanges and modifications of technologies used in or transferred through exchanges in the Indian Ocean
 - evidence of trade and descriptions of important trade goods
 - evidence of artistic exchanges.

Exploring this web site creates a memorable picture of the region and its importance over time, and also builds historical thinking skills such as analyzing primary sources, comparing common phenomena, identifying continuity and change.

Learning objectives for the user include the following:

The student will:

- locate the Indian Ocean and describe its physical characteristics
- list important port cities and societies that bordered on the Indian Ocean over time
- list goods imported and exported from the Indian Ocean region and explain their significance for the exporters and importers or their customers
- describe means of transport and travel in the region
- list important technologies that facilitated travel by sea in the Indian Ocean and explain their significance
- compare trade in the Indian Ocean among eras in world history in terms of technologies of travel, major participants in the trade, goods traded both short and long distances
- identify travelers (both known individuals and unknown or groups) in the Indian Ocean, describe the historical evidence of their travel that we have access to today
- list known travelers who wrote accounts of their journeys or had them recorded, cite the dates of their travel and trace their routes.
- analyze travel accounts in terms of the characteristics of the traveler, their motivation for travel and for writing about their travels, and the way in which they describe the lands visited. Assess the veracity of their accounts, and describe the impact of their travel.
- describe artifacts that represent the artistic and commercial production of lands in the Indian Ocean, and analyse some aspects of their style and technology of manufacture, their value in world trade, and the influences that can be seen in these pieces.
- assess what was known about the Indian Ocean in various regions and describe groups who shared in that knowledge, and the means of transmitting that knowledge
- identify instances of continuity and change in the Indian Ocean within and across eras.

Sources, References and Further Reading

A list of scholarly sources used to prepare this site, as well as a list of other web-based lessons and resources is found in the Learning Tools section of the site. A bibliography and list of image credits is also located in the Learning Tools section. Site Credits list the developers, programmers, contributing writers, and reviewers.

Graphic Organizers for Exploring the Site

Appended to this lesson on the following pages are the note-taking graphic organizers mentioned above under “Using the Site in the Classroom,” and they can also be downloaded as a separate word processing file on the “Learning Tools” section of the site, shown as an “open book” icon, like the one for downloading this model lesson.

MAP KEY ICON TYPE:				
Names of items on the map ↓	Questions to ask about the type of source [see map key icons] (<u>Directions:</u> <i>write answers in boxes below parallel with the name of the object under each icon of that type on the map of the Indian Ocean</i>)			
	#5	#6	#7	#8

OBJECTS	What is it?
	How was the object made? What skills were necessary to create the object? Was it unique or "mass-produced"?
	What was the object used for?
	Who made, owned, and used the object?
	When was it made, sold, or buried? (OPTIONAL) Where is it now and how did it get there?
DOCUMENTS AND MAPS	What kind of document or map is it?
	Who created the document or map?
	For what purpose was the document or map created?
	What effect or impact do you think this document or map had in its time or afterwards?

TRAVELERS	Who is the author of the travel account?
	What kinds of interests motivated the traveler and the author of the travel account?
	What form does the travel account take?
	What topics does the author find it worthwhile to discuss?
	What influence has the travel account had during its own and later times?
GOODS	What is it?
	How is this good or commodity produced for sale Can it be sold without processing?
	What is it used for? Was the good or commodity used in the manufacture of something else, or was it an end product to be consumed?
	Was the good or commodity a necessity or a luxury

TECHNOLOGIES	What does the technology help people to do?
	For what purpose was the technology used?
	What effect did it have on people who learned how to use it?
PLACES	Where is the place located?
	Why was the place important?
	Was it a natural place or a man-made place?
	What groups controlled or protected the place?
ROUTES	What important places does the route link?
	What geographic features does the route cross?
	What goods and people passed over this route?

GEOGRAPHY	Did this feature pose a challenge or make passage easy?
	Was the geographic feature a constant annual or seasonal event, or was it an obstacle that could only be crossed at certain times in the year?

DOCUMENTS

DEFINITION:

A document is a piece of writing that provides information or that acts as a record of events. It is also an object that contains information, something on which images or symbols are found. A document gives evidence about something in the past.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT DOCUMENTS:

What kind of document or map is it?

Documents are created for a purpose that can be understood from the information or message it contains. Documents may be formal, such as a treaty between two rulers, a contract between two merchants, a certificate of marriage or birth, or an order from a military leader. Documents may also be informal, such as a grocery list, a note to a friend, or even a doodle. Either way, documents are records of past thoughts, ideas, and events. Determine what kind of document it is. Maps are also a type of document.

Who created the document or map?

To understand the message of the document, we have to have a good idea who produced it. The author of a document may be known by name or completely unknown. It may be an anonymous, ordinary person or someone who is well known to historians or the general public. In some cases the writer of a document may wish to remain unknown (for example, if he or she is criticizing someone). In the case of an important order or proclamation, it is important to know that the person who issued it was an authority. Even if the exact person who produced the document is not known, it may be possible to figure out what type of person (male, female, rich, poor), or what the occupation of the person was (merchant, priest, officer, king, judge, scholar).

For what purpose was the document or map created?

Every document has a purpose. A map is designed to describe a place or draw a picture of a region, to locate something in space, or to give directions. A law is written to let people know what they have to do or not to do. Business people or diplomats write contracts and treaties to make sure their agreement is not forgotten, and that one side of the agreement will not change it. Certificates give public information about a person or something they are permitted to do. A certificate tells that a couple is married, or a person got a diploma, or a doctor is allowed to practice medicine. Doodles and grocery lists are not very important, but they can tell a lot about how people live.

What effect or impact do you think this document or map had in its time or afterwards?

A document might start a war or end a war. A law can change the way people live and work. A document issued by an official of the government can cause people to flee their homes or grant certain people an advantage. For example, birth and marriage certificates allow people to have legal privileges. A map is a document that may lead to buried treasure, or help someone find an address in a city. Maps can also spark people's imagination about parts of the world that are near or far. Maps from long ago can tell us what people knew about the world at that time, or how a battle took place, or how large an empire was, or where an ancient city was located. It may require a lot of imagination to figure out why a document was important. Historians also look for other records to find out how the document affected people. They may have written complaints or praise about it in other sources. Similar documents may also be found that can be compared to a specific historical document.

TECHNOLOGIES

DEFINITION

Technology is the development and application of tools, machines, and methods for manufacturing and producing things. Technologies are ways of doing work or overcoming challenges. Sometimes they are very simple, such as picking up a rock or stick to smash something. Other technologies involve complex machines like animated robots or airplanes that carry hundreds of people. Technologies can involve ways to do things or ways to make things.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT TECHNOLOGIES

What does the technology help people to do? Does it help people to move goods, as in transportation? Does it help them to manufacture a product or create a product for sale?

For example, the wheel is a technology that helped transport articles more quickly and easily than dragging or pushing them. Riding and controlling a horse is also a technology that developed over a long period of time, including saddles, bridles, stirrups, and breeding fast horses. Another example is iron. Lots of iron ore (rock) is found in the earth, but people could not use it until they learned how to make a fire that was super-hot and could burn for a long time. Writing is also a technology involving a way of making marks on a surface that can be understood by someone else.

For what purpose was the technology used?

Technologies may serve various purposes. Writing can be used to keep records for a government, or to share poetry. Iron may be used to make tools that feed people or kill people. Knowledge of how to perform on a musical instrument or to cure someone through surgery are both technologies with different purposes.

What effect did it have on people who used it?

Sometimes new technologies create very big changes in the societies that use them. Farming changed human life in many ways. The invention of the wheel provided better transportation. The automobile changed human life in many ways—from what people wear to where they live and work, and it also caused air pollution, for example. New types of transport meant people could travel where they had never gone before. Think of how airplanes changed life. Being able to ride a horse or breed a camel had a big effect, too. What if people could create technology to control the weather, or even to predict it exactly? Communication technologies have changed from drums and smoke signals to cell phones and instant messaging over many years. Technologies applied to many areas of life were important throughout history.

PLACES

DEFINITION

A place is a specific location on earth. It has qualities, or characteristics that we can describe. When we know where a place is located, we may begin to associate physical and human characteristics with that location. These characteristics help us to determine what you may find at that location. For example, a city is a built-up place where large numbers of people live and work. A city has homes, businesses, and places where people learn, worship, and enjoy themselves. Cities have governments to make decisions, and they must have sources of water. In contrast, a rural place may be used to grow food. A fortified place is used to defend against attack. Some places remained important for many centuries because they were located on travel routes, or had religious meaning, or contained something people want or need.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT THE PLACE

Where is the place located?

List facts about the city's location, such as its name, its latitude and longitude, what continent and country it is in, and what climate zone it is in, and what bodies of water and landforms are nearby.

Why was the place important?

Was it a geographic feature or space used or passed over by people? Was it an economic center, political center, military post, port city, or manufacturing center? If the place is a city, what type of city was it? A capital city is a center of government, or the residence of an emperor or other ruler, so its main role would be political. A trading city's main role is to be a marketplace, where goods and money are exchanged, so its main role would be economic. Some cities were founded as military outposts defending against invasion, or a place where troops are stationed to control an area. Port cities are places where there are natural or man-made harbors that receive goods by water, or stopping places along a river. Cities where traveling merchants rest along land routes include caravan cities, or places where trade routes cross. Cities with nearby natural resources and skilled workers or artisans may become industrial, or manufacturing cities, and usually specialized in certain types of products - like textiles, ceramics, glass, or metal fabrication. Some industrial cities manufacture many products.

Was the place natural or man-made?

Capital cities are often founded by a ruler or a government when it comes to power. The origins of some cities lie so far back in time that no one knows who founded them. Some famous cities are associated with a legend, such as the legend of Romulus and Remus, twin brothers who founded Rome, or the legend of the eagle, the serpent and the cactus that showed where Mexico City was to be founded. Cities can begin with a single voyage and go on to be famous ports, or they can begin with discovery of a resource, and grow to become manufacturing centers. Transportation often determines where cities grow up, such as railroad towns and river crossings. Holy cities are the site of a religious story told and retold, and they are places of pilgrimage, or religious journeys where people come to remember and worship. Some of the oldest cities on earth are sites for pilgrimage.

Over time, cities grow or fall into ruin, depending on whether they serve a purpose for those who would live there or use the city's services. There are modern cities that seem to grow out of the ground in a few years or a century, and ancient cities that have existed for a few thousand years.

Who used or built the place, and when?

People may use or occupy a place over a long period, such as a cave dwelling, a fortress, or a water source. Some cities have been built in layers in the same place over time. Others were abandoned when routes or trade conditions changed.

What groups controlled or protected the place?

Control of important places on earth has often been a source of conflict. Narrow passages, places rich in resources, or safe places for defense have been fought over by different groups. If the place is a harbor or a city, it has important qualities that make people want to live and trade there, like a good place for ships to stop, or a source of water. Asking questions about the characteristics of a place gives clues to its importance in history.

If the place is a city, what type of city is it?

Emperors often built capital cities full of grand architecture and government offices. Some cities were built to house soldiers and army bases to control and protect the countryside. A trading post or city has important markets and lies on trade routes, or near resources.

Some places are important for what they tell about the past, so people try to protect them. We may learn much from a site where early human remains, tools or settlements are found. We may work to preserve archaeological sites, places of great beauty or places with religious meaning.

TRADE GOODS

DEFINITION

Trade goods, or things that people exchange are often called commodities by economists. A commodity is an item that is bought and sold, or something people find useful. Commodities are often raw materials, or things that are produced in quantity. The word comes from Latin *commodus* meaning "useful." Some examples of commodities are: pencils, cans of soup, spices, lumber for building, lightbulbs. Can you think of some commodities that you use?

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT A TRADE GOOD

What is it?

Many trade goods are natural resources. As in the traditional guessing game, the first thing to ask about a trade item is whether its origin is animal, vegetable, or mineral. Does it grow or appear in the wild where it is collected for sale? Is it grown on a farm or plantation? Is it hunted in forests or raised on a ranch? Is it mined underground or taken out of the sea? Human beings use a remarkable list of materials that have been discovered to be useful over time. These resources are found in many places.

How is this commodity produced for sale? Can it be sold without processing?

Natural resources may be harvested and sold in their natural state. Others must be dried or processed with chemicals to preserve them, or purified at their origin so that buyers do not transport goods with a lot of wasted weight. Resources may be processed with the use of energy to pound or grind it. They may be soaked in water, heated, or mixed with other substances before they are sold.

What is it used for? Was the commodity used in the manufacture of something else, or was it an end product to be consumed?

Natural resources and processed or manufactured goods must be useful or they would not be traded. Human cultures (ways of life) developed technologies that used local resources to make homes, clothing, tools, and beautiful things. Contact with other groups introduced them to new items and ideas that could be exchanged for local products. Over time, trade goods were brought from increasingly distant places.

A food item might be consumed directly, like rice, or used, like spices, to flavor other foods, or to preserve them. Animal products like leather and fur are processed into items of clothing, shoes, or bags. Trade goods may have different uses in different places; an item used just for beauty or taste in one place might be an important part of a ritual, or might be used as a medicine in another place. Woods are used to make ships and furniture. Minerals like metals are imported and manufactured by shaping or combining with other metals. Metals are mixed with other chemicals to make medicines, dyes, glazes, glass, paints and many other things. Substances in plants are also used to make many, many things.

Was the commodity a necessity or a luxury?

This is a difficult question to answer, and there may be different answers in different locations. A type of food or spice that is very common in one place may be a necessity, but if it is rare or expensive in another place, it becomes a luxury somewhere else. Pepper is a good example of this. It was very common in Southeast Asia, but very rare in medieval Europe. On the other hand, medicines, even if they are very expensive or rare, are necessary if a person is ill. Salt is a necessity for a healthy body. That is why people for whom salt is scarce (rare) were even willing to trade gold for salt.

When you want to buy something, your parents might ask if you really need it, or if you just want it very much. People do not always agree on whether certain trade goods are necessities or luxuries. The

concept also changes over time. For example, sugar used to be an expensive luxury, but now most people consider it an ordinary necessity in the kitchen that is fairly inexpensive. Furs are a necessity in very cold climates, but a luxury where survival doesn't depend on them for warmth.

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

DEFINITION

Geographic features shown on maps are natural phenomena (occurrences) and landforms that affected human history, trade and travel in some way. These occurrences take place occasionally, annually, or because of their location. Some were obstacles or challenges, and others advantages for movement of people and things.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Did this feature pose a challenge or make passage easy?

High mountains, vast deserts, rocky coastlines and river rapids present obstacles to travel, trade and communication. Smooth, flowing rivers, welcoming harbors, and level, fruitful plains, valleys, and mountain passes facilitate-or ease-communication and travel. On the sea, currents and steady, predictable winds were essential to maritime travel in the age of sailing ships. Hurricanes, typhoons-and their opposite-periods of no wind, meant the ruin of ships and their crews, and the loss of cargo. Over long periods of history, people gained knowledge of the topography (landforms) and climate (weather) between their home countries and the places they wanted to visit for trade or settlement. This information was recorded on maps (see documents) and charts, and passed down by sea captains and pilots as closely guarded trade secrets. They developed instruments such as the compass, the astrolabe, and the sextant, and later the Global Positioning System (GPS) to determine their location and course to different destinations. Some pilots recorded the information on how to navigate from one place to another, making it available to others, and to historians.

Was the geographic feature a constant annual or seasonal event, or a one-time event? Was it an obstacle that could only be crossed at certain times in the year?

Topographical features like mountains and coastlines remain the same over a long period, so when they are placed accurately on maps, navigators can rely on locating them. Weather in certain seasons, or sudden, extreme weather events, however, can make geographic features easy or impossible to pass through. For example, a river may only be navigable during its flood stage, while it is too shallow for ships during the dry season. It may be too dangerous during the flood, and only passable in the months between the rains. A mountain pass is impassable during the blizzards of winter, but welcoming in summer. Harbors may only be deep enough during high tides in some places. Wind patterns on the oceans vary from season to season, being still in some months, and too rough in others. Though mariners might be able to rely on trade winds, a sudden tempest, typhoon, or hurricane can ruin a voyage. Knowing which end of the season is stormiest is lifesaving information for merchants and sailors, and means safety or loss for their cargoes. Knowing the challenges faced by seafaring peoples made it possible to establish regular contact and exchange over vast distances of land and water possible over the centuries and millennia of human history.

ROUTES

DEFINITION

A route is a directional path used by migrants, invaders, ships or vehicles on land or sea.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT ROUTES

What important places does the route link?

Trace the start and end of the route. Routes are two-way streets, but they may be criss-crossed with other routes, and places where they meet may be especially important, if they are harbors or market towns.

How long do you think it might have taken to travel from one end to the other during the time it was used?

Migrations may take a long time, while invasions may be carried out in a short time. Trade routes may be traveled in a shorter or longer time with different forms of transportation. Did waves of migrants follow this route, or just one group? Do you think people traveled over the whole length of the route, or did goods pass from hand to hand in relays?

What geographic features does the route cross?

Identify topographical features such as mountains, valleys, rivers, waterfalls, and deserts or coastlines along the route. Notice also those features that the route seems to bypass. One of the most famous loops in a trade route is on the Silk Road from China to Central Asia where the route travels north and south to get around the Taklimakan Desert. To cross it may have meant death to the travelers.

What kinds of topographical features present a barrier to travel, and what features make travel easier?

Another reason for the direction of trade routes may be the existence of certain products, or imperial roads. On the seas, other factors like ocean currents and winds might determine sea routes. Rivers may be too shallow in places for boats or have roaring rapids at other places.

What goods and people passed over this route?

Migrants may have used a route over many eras of history. The same is true of some invasion routes. Trade routes are most important to merchants, but they have been used by many other kinds of travelers. Religious pilgrims may travel alone or in large groups using caravan routes, and merchants may also make use of military or imperial roads. Migrants and missionaries may spread new religions, languages and ideas as they moved along these routes. Adventurers like Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta expanded the horizons of people in their societies through their travel, but they did not create new routes. Sea routes were developed over time by increasing knowledge of winds, currents and available ports on the seacoast, as well as places where desirable goods could be found.

TRAVELERS

DEFINITION

Travelers are people who make journeys. They may also be migrants, or people on the move. Some of them are only known through traces that archaeologists or even geneticists uncover. Many travelers, however, have written records of their journeys that are preserved in the form of diaries, books, oral accounts, and pictures. They are important sources for historians because they give detailed information about a specific place and time. They are a form of eyewitness account, but they cannot just be taken at face value, because in the end, the account may tell more about the traveler than the place described. It is important to know about the traveler, the purpose of the journey, and the recorded account itself. As a reader, you also play a part, bringing your own ways of viewing the world to the reading.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT TRAVELERS

Who is the traveler?

There are many types of travelers, both male and female. Some are people on the move, or migrants, looking for new lands to settle. Some are people curious to see the world. They might be explorers and adventurers blazing their own path, or tourists traveling on well-traveled roads. Some are business people, or merchants trying to make money. Travelers in the service of government include military leaders or soldiers, and diplomats sent as ambassadors with a purpose. Religious travelers include pilgrims visiting holy places, missionaries wishing to spread their religion, or people on a spiritual journey in search of knowledge. Migrants sometimes left accounts of their journeys as refugees, people seeking opportunity in a new land, or as exiles from their homes. Sometimes travel accounts were written by captives or enslaved persons.

There are many ways to describe a traveler. The traveler could be male or female, young or old, rich or poor, well educated or unschooled, from a big city or a small village. These characteristics help you as a reader to see through the traveler's eyes. Think about how the identity of the traveler might affect the way he or she describes the places and people witnessed on the journey.

What interests motivated the traveler?

What was the purpose of the journey? Was the traveler on a mission for someone else, or for personal reasons? This would influence the kinds of places and people encountered on the journey. A refugee would not be likely to pay a visit to a foreign palace, but a diplomat would be sent for that purpose. A merchant would visit markets, while a pilgrim would go to holy places. A soldier marching with an army might not have much contact with anyone outside the army camp, but a merchant or pilgrim would. Think about how the purpose of travel might affect what the travelers saw, and what the traveler thought about the people and places described.

Did the traveler write an account of the journey?

It is important to know whether the traveler wrote the account, or whether someone else wrote it based on the traveler's notes, on a book, or while sitting with the traveler years after the journey took place. For example, Marco Polo's Travels was written in prison with the help of another person. Ibn Battuta had literary help from a professional writer, at the request of the ruler of his country.

Some travel accounts are diaries or logs of places and events on the journey, or personal letters. Some take the form of official reports (think of Louis and Clark's report to the U.S. government). Travel accounts have been written as entertaining books or articles, and even as semi-fictional or fictional works (think of Homer's Odyssey or Swift's Gulliver's Travels). Some travel accounts are quoted in historical

works written after the actual account had been lost. If a traveler left an account of the journey there are lots of important questions to ask about the account. For example:

Who was the writer's audience? Did the traveler write a diplomatic account for government officials, a newspaper account for interested readers, or a merchant for other business people? Did the writer want to inform, excite, or impress the audience, or did the traveler want others to follow on the journey? Or was the travel account just a personal journal or a series of letters sent home to family members? What topics does the author find it worthwhile to describe?

What a traveler writes depends on the purpose of the journey and the form of the travel account. A merchant will include information on markets, products and ways of doing business. A diplomat describes the rulers of the country and the government. A pilgrim describes spiritual and other experiences. All of these travelers might add information about food, customs, the appearance of the land and people, and curious sights. What one traveler sees, the other might miss or ignore. Some travelers write about things they never saw at all, just to make it more interesting. You the reader must decide to believe it or not.

What you learned about the traveler could help you to understand the traveler's opinions about other people and places. A villager visiting the city for the first time might express wonder at the buildings. A sophisticated traveler born in a great city might look down on people living in the countryside. A person from an advanced society that has just conquered a weaker group would express different opinions than a migrant visiting an advanced society. Belonging to a certain religion may affect the traveler's view of people in different places following the same religion, or those of a different faith. There are many possibilities. Some travelers have fallen in love with the places they visit, while others find a great dislike and can hardly wait to get home.

What influence did the travel account have during its own and later times?

An article in the newspaper's "Travel" section might cause the reader to jump up and book a flight and hotel. An explorer's account of people wearing golden jewelry might cause a gold rush, or inspire a military conquest. A scientist's travel account might influence people to take action to conserve nature, or pass a law against killing animals, or it might cause a company to order an expedition to drill for oil or minerals. A diplomat's report might encourage a mission to sign a treaty, or to declare war. Some travel accounts have been lost and later found, or passed unnoticed until generations later, when they became records for historians writing about the past. Travel accounts from long ago and faraway can offer people living today a close-up glimpse of a society that has long since disappeared. Travelers who went on long journeys and described them carefully open up whole worlds to the reader.

OBJECTS

DEFINITION

Things, or objects, from the past or from faraway places can take many forms. An object from the past may be found in an archaeological dig. Historical objects are preserved in museums or private collections. People create or use objects as tools, as food, as gifts, and as things to worship. Travelers bring home souvenirs or useful things. Diplomats often carry gifts to present to foreign leaders, and merchants bring samples of products from place to place. Soldiers are always on the lookout for new weapons or ideas about organizing and equipping armies. Mariners draw maps or diagrams to help them improve their ships or navigation. Archaeologists digging at ancient sites find objects that people used long ago, and study them using simple observation and scientific methods.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT AN OBJECT

What is it?

To help you think about an object viewed for the first time, think about how you would describe something familiar to a person who had never seen it, or how you could describe something you had lost. If you do not know what an object is, write down its characteristics: shape, size, color, decoration, and composition. Does it have moving parts, and if so, is it complete or probably only a piece of the original? Asking these questions will lead you to make a hypothesis about the object.

How was the object made? What skills were necessary to create the object? Was it unique or mass-produced?

Sometimes an object holds clues to how it was constructed. Fingerprints can be found on handmade pottery, and tool marks on wooden furniture, for example. A metal object might show hammer marks or the seams from a mold. A very regular object might have been made by a machine, and an irregular one by hand. Think of the difference between hand sewing and a line of stitches from a sewing machine. A very simple object might be made by anyone, but a fancy piece of jewelry, for example, might take years to learn how to make. A wagon might be the work of one craftsman, but an automobile is made in a factory by many people working together with machines. A hand-painted vase is not the same as an empty pickle jar.

Think about what resources were needed to create the object, and whether these ingredients are rare or common. Clay is found almost everywhere, but the resources used to make an automobile come from all over the world. What goes into making a jeweled crown, for example? If an object is decorated, the material used to make the color might be very rare or very common, and it might make a very inexpensive base material change dramatically in value.

What was the object used for?

Everything made by a person had an intended use. Historians call this its primary function. People can decide to change the use of an object, or use it for multiple purposes. A crown is a type of hat with a very different function, for example. A knife has many uses. The importance of an object is closely related to its use, but there are many ways to think about it. For example, a prince may own hundreds of robes, but they would not be as important to him as a single, hand-made wedding dress, for example, to a village woman.

Scientists studying early humans may have to look for clues to whether a broken rock was just accidentally found with a skeleton, or whether it was intentionally broken for use as a tool. To find out, they could look under a microscope to see if the edge is worn by repeated use. We can look at an object and compare it with things we know of today. A dish, a bag, or a pot is something people have made for a

long time. Clothing and furniture is easy to categorize, because it is familiar. A tool from long ago may never be understood, like a written symbol that cannot be read. People who study the past may disagree about objects, and continue to try out new ideas and find evidence to support them.

Who made, owned, and used the object?

Like the function of an object, discovering who owned it may require some detective work. Some artisans sign or stamp their work to mark the maker. A mud brick would not be signed, but there are examples of personal marks left by workers on a great construction project, as if to send a message to the future. Sometimes an object is marked with the name of an important person for whom it was made, or a blessing is added to the decoration. Documents located somewhere else can give clues about an object. The object might be associated with some document, such as a written inventory of objects in a treasury or a list written as a ship was loaded in the port, and the objects might be found centuries later on a sunken ship.

For common objects, it may only be possible to learn what type of person used the object, depending on their social class, occupation, or location. Archaeologists often study the decoration on an object to tell who owned it. For example, a pot found with a skeleton in a burial mound can give clues about the identity of the person who was buried, or at least the person's rank or ethnic group. Certain groups used distinctive patterns of pottery decoration, so graves or settlements with that type of pottery can be identified.

When was it made, sold, or buried?

Dating objects to a specific time is clear if a date is written on it, or if the object is found with something clearly dated. Sometimes an object can be dated by its style or technology. You would not find a cell phone in an ancient Egyptian tomb that had never been opened. The most difficult objects to date are the oldest ones. Archaeologists may rely on the layer of earth in which it was found, on laboratory tests that date wood found with it, or something in the object itself. If an object may be misplaced with objects from a different period. If a 19th century British ship sank with an ancient Greek statue on board, we could explain that the ship was probably carrying an art object from Greece to a European museum. There are many such mysteries in archaeology.