## Preparation

* Download the [WHP Writing Rubric](https://www.oerproject.com/OER-Materials/OER-Media/PDFs/Teacher-Resources/WHP-Writing-Rubric)

## Purpose

In this activity, you’ll continue to get familiar with elements of good writing by digging into the Analysis and Evidence row of the WHP Writing Rubric. You’ll analyze a sample student essay, which will help you become more familiar with the specific expectations for WHP writing, as well as help you become a more skilled writer in general.

## Process

1. This activity will be similar to the one you did in Unit 2, when you analyzed the article “Cultural Consequences of Connectivity” to look for claim and focus. This time, you’ll look for analysis and evidence in a student essay that was written in response to the prompt, “Develop an argument that analyzes the growth of networks of exchange after c. 1200 CE.”
2. Before starting your analysis, take out the WHP Writing Rubric and review the Analysis and Evidence row with your class.
3. Once you’ve reviewed these criteria, your teacher will probably put you into pairs or small groups to work collaboratively on the Writing – Analysis and Evidence Part 1 worksheet.
4. Before you begin evaluating the analysis and evidence in the essay, identify the major claim (thesis) in the essay. While the thesis is not the focus of this activity, it’s difficult to assess the rest of the essay without being aware of the major claim, since everything in the essay should support it.
5. Now that you’ve found the major claim, review the essay, paying close attention to important elements of analysis and evidence. This includes the use of source material, the analysis of that material, and the connection between sources and the paper’s major claim.
6. Annotate the essay according to the worksheet directions, provide a grade (advanced, proficient, developing, or emerging), and comment about how well this student did on analysis and evidence in their writing.
7. Be prepared to share your answers with the class!

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**Directions:** First, circle the major claim in the paper. Then, look for source material (quotes and citations) and underline the analysis of the source material, and highlight text that connects sources to the thesis/major claim. Finally, give the essay a score (advanced, proficient, developing, or emerging) for “Analysis and Evidence” and provide some written comments that justify the score.

**Essay prompt:** Develop an argument that analyzes the growth of networks of exchange after c. 1200 CE.

Beginning around 130 BCE and continuing into the 15th century, the Silk Road played a vital role in making a more interconnected world. Another trade route that can be likened to the Silk Road was the Indian Ocean trade route, which developed circa 300 BCE and did not begin to diminish until the 16th century after European empires were established in the Americas. Like any other moment in history, these networks did not stay as they were for long. After the year 1200 CE, these networks of exchange experienced setbacks and challenges, but they ultimately managed to flourish as merchants and travelers reconfigured their methods in such a way that allowed for efficiency and an even more interconnected system through which goods, innovations, and ideologies were exchanged.

The spread of a deadly disease forced usage of the networks of exchange to falter. Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, a wealthy Florentine businessman, historian, and politician, described the state of Florence in the year 1348 as the Black Plague ravaged the city: he discusses severe inflation surrounding essential goods like food and cloth and how “None of the guilds in Florence was working. All the shops were shut, taverns closed; only the apothecaries and the churches remained open. If you went outside, you found almost no one” (Doc. 5). Artisans who had previously taken part in trading along the Silk Road were now preoccupied with handling the dead or selling the dead’s goods off to bidders. Trade was pushed to the back of people’s minds with this disease afoot, causing the networks of exchange to falter for a period after the year 1200.

Difficult and demanding methods of trade and travel provoked merchants and travelers to utilize other systems. As noted by Abu Yahya Zakariya’ ibn Muhammad al-Qazwini, an Arab physician, astronomer, and geographer, to travel along to Silk Road from Sijilmasa—a city in modern-day Morroco—to Sudan, travelers had to “cross over thirsty deserts with scorching winds and water so rotten it resembles ordinary water only in that it is liquid. Thus they travel with much suffering until they reach the place which separates them from the owners of the gold” (Doc. 2). Francis Balducci Pegolotti, a merchant who traveled extensively in the early to mid-14th century, mentions in Document 3 that when traveling from Gintarchan to Sara traveling by water was much cheaper.

While systems of exchange that utilized sea travel were often more efficient, land travel along the Silk Roads was still an impressive system that changed the way the world interacted. The famous Venetian explorer and merchant, Marco Polo, recounts from his travels along the Silk Road to Mongol-controlled Asia that “To this city also are brought articles of greater cost and rarity, and in greater abundance of all kinds, than to any other city in the world. For people of every description, and from every region, bring things” (Doc. 1). The Silk Roads brought people from different communities from all over Afro-Eurasia together in the spirit of commerce.

The Indian Ocean trade route allowed for an increase of goods traded across networks of exchange. For example, Abd-al-Razzāq Samarqandī, a Persian historian and Islamic scholar who wrote about fifteenth-century merchants and trade in the Indian Ocean, writes enthusiastically about how people travel to this port from countries all around the world and how “They bring those rare and precious articles which the sun, the moon, and the rains have combined to bring to perfection, and which are capable of being transported by sea” (Doc. 7). The tone of this document is easily compared to those of 2 and 3, in which the narrators described their tiresome journeys across long arid deserts. Travels along the Indian Ocean trade routes empowered tradesmen to travel with more ease and more space to carry larger amounts of goods.

Networks of exchange underwent setbacks, but they still managed to flourish and grow as merchants and travelers reconfigured their methods in such a way that allowed for efficiency and an even more interconnected system. Societies across the globe remain interconnected—now more than ever—by modern-day networks that use cargo ships, trucks, and airplanes powered by global communication and data networks. But there are also times when even these modern systems experience setbacks and challenges, such as during times of war or natural disasters, as the Silk Roads and Indian Ocean networks did during the Black Death.

**Score:**

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**Comment:**

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