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| Name: |  | Date: |  |

## Purpose

In this simulation, you will learn how the Silk Roads connected Afro-Eurasian societies through the exchange of goods. The Silk Roads represented one of the first steps toward globalization, economically and culturally tying together communities from different continents and regions. By actively participating as merchants in the Silk Roads simulation, you will witness firsthand how goods and services were moved across regions and discover why individuals took financial and personal risks in order to make a profit. You will also discover how the Silk Roads affected communities, production and distribution of luxury goods, and led to an increase in networks of exchange across Afro-Eurasia.

## Process

In this activity, you will take part in three rounds of a simulation that should help you better understand the Silk Road and the impact it had on the communities of Afro-Eurasia.

You are going to act like merchants on the Silk Road. Over the course of three rounds, you will engage in trade with different regions to get a better sense of what it was like to be a part of this new, global system. The ultimate goal is for you to try to collect the most technologies, beliefs, and goods that originated outside of your home region.

Before you are assigned a region or goods to trade, your teacher will give you a quick overview of the trading zones and regions that will be involved in the simulation, as well as a preview of the different types of goods that each region has. Make sure to pay attention to this part—you will eventually be trying to trade for goods that other regions have so it’s good to preview what you might be trying to trade for. Once you’ve previewed, get into your regional groups.

*Round 1—Trade with Close Neighbors (Trade Within Your Zone)*

1. Your teacher will hand out the relevant Regional Guide Card #1 to each group.
2. Take a few minutes to read through the instructions on the card.
3. You can only trade with your close neighbor in your home region but think about diversifying what you have so that your basic needs are met.
4. The Disease Card must be openly traded. For example, “If you need this item so badly then you also have to take the Disease Card along with it.”
5. After a few minutes of trading, discuss the questions on your Guide Card #1.
6. Once you’ve finished discussing in your small group, have a class discussion about the following questions:

* Do you have everything you need to survive?
* Do you have “extras” or luxury goods?

*Round 2—Expanding Trade (Trade With Nearest Zone)*

1. In this round, you can trade with the home region that’s closest to your own home region. For example:
   * Students in Trade Zone One (Byzantium and Arabia) can now trade with Trade Zone Two (Persia and India).
   * Students in Trade Zone Two can now trade with both Trade Zone One and Trade Zone Three (Central Asia and China).
   * Trade Zone Three can now trade with Trade Zone Two.
   * You can also continue to trade within your home region. For example, Byzantium and Arabia can continue to trade with each other.
   * You are *only* allowed to trade with regions that are *directly* connected to your home region.
2. You have about five minutes for this round of trading, and remember to try to get rid of your disease card if you can.
3. Your teacher will hand out the Regional Guide Card #2 to each group. Read the information and discuss the questions on the card.
4. After you’ve discussed the questions on the card with your group, your teacher might ask you to respond to the following questions:

* Do you have everything you need to survive?
* Do you have “extras” or luxury goods?
* Was trading difficult? Did you have trouble with communication?
* Was it expensive or cheap? Have you been trading one for one, or trying to work out better deals?
* Did you encounter new challenges?
* How did empires both help and hinder trading?

*Round 3—Multi-Regional Trade Using Intermediaries (Relay-Race Mode)*

1. For this round, trade has expanded, and you can now trade with regions that are further away, but you *cannot* leave your own trade zone. You will have to use intermediaries to help you trade (for example, the next-door groups can help with groups that are farther away).
2. This type of relay-race trading will help you understand how this exchange network operated, as it was rare for any merchant to travel the entire Silk Road.
3. You will have approximately five to ten minutes to trade.
4. Once time is up, return to your home region and separate your cards on the table.
5. Count the number of items on your table that did *not* originate from your home region and write down this number.
6. Your teacher will hand out the Regional Guide Card #3 to each group.
7. Take approximately five minutes to adjust your totals based on the directions in the card, and also to discuss the questions on the card.
8. After your group has adjusted your totals, share your final point totals with the other groups to see how everyone fared.
9. Once all groups have shared their final point totals, discuss some or all of these questions as a class:

* What mistakes did you make as a merchant? What information didn’t you know or remember?
* Do you now have everything you need to survive?
* Do you have “extras” or luxury goods?
* What region began with the obvious advantage? Why? How well did they do in the simulation and why?
* What region began with the obvious disadvantages? Why? How well did they do in the simulation and why?
* What region had the geographic advantage?
* Why would it be an advantage to have religions outside of your home region? How would religions and beliefs actually have been transferred between regions?
* What was the most difficult part of trading?
* Where and when were trade goods the cheapest? Where and when were trade goods the most expensive?
* What new challenges did you encounter as the trading network expanded?
* What was the purpose of passing the Disease Cards with each exchange?
* What new things did you learn about your region?