

Postclassical Travel

Duration

One or two class sessions of approximately 40 minutes each

Resources

1. Teacher's Handout
2. Student Handout
3. Homework



Objectives of Lesson

- To identify the intellectual and cultural effects of networks of exchange in Afro-Eurasia from c. 1200 to 1450 CE
- To analyze the role of travelers and travel writing within postclassical Afro-Eurasia

College Board Objectives from the 2019–20 CED

- Topic 2.5 Cultural Consequences of Connectivity (p. 61)
- Unit 2: Learning Objective J: “Explain the intellectual and cultural effects of the various networks of exchange in Afro-Eurasia from c. 1200 to c. 1450. (p. 61)
- AP® Historical Thinking Skill 1: Developments and Processes (p. 14)
- AP® Historical Thinking Skill 4: Contextualization (p. 14)
- AP® Reasoning Process 1: Comparison (p. 15)

Student Activities

- Class discussion of the role of several key travelers and travel writers in postcolonial Afro-Eurasia
- Practice comparing intellectual and cultural effects of networks of exchange

How to Use This Lesson

The purpose of this lesson is to explore how the increasingly connected postcolonial world was described by travelers and travel writers. Cross-cultural interactions increased significantly from c. 1200 to 1450. The increased exchange of goods and ideas led to rampant curiosity about civilizations and states that appeared to be so different from one’s own. Some intrepid explorers took matters into their own hands by traveling to far off lands. As these adventurers sent back letters and writings

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about their travels, they inspired even more people to take to the road to learn about the new worlds that could be found along the emergent networks of exchange.

While this lesson includes historical information to help you cover Topic 2.5, it is really rooted around a creative assignment that asks students to engage with several of the most prominent postclassical travel writers in an imaginative way. This is an opportunity for students to realize that AP® World classes can be fun! Feel free to really lean into the creative aspects of this lesson as is appropriate for your class. You may be surprised to see just how excited your students can be about the travels of Ibn Battuta, Marco Polo, Mansa Musa, or Margery Kempe.

As part of this lesson plan, we have included some historical context for each of the travelers highlighted in the lesson's activity. We have also included a small homework assignment to help reinforce the core concepts covered in class discussions.

Historical Context for Postclassical Travelers

Ibn Battuta was one of the most widely traveled people of the 14th century. He took advantage of the relative safety of Muslim controlled trade routes to voyage from his home in northern Africa across most of the known Muslim world. Along the way of his travels, Ibn Battuta developed an expertise in Islamic law and customs. He would often serve as a kind of de facto advisor on Muslim traditions wherever he happened to land. He wrote about his stints advising the political leaders in Delhi, China, and the Maldives Islands.

Margery Kempe was an English Christian woman who traveled on a series of religious pilgrimages through the sacred sites of Europe and the Holy Land in the middle of the fifteenth century. She dictated *The Book of Margery Kempe* in order to provide a kind of spiritual guide to others who may have wanted to follow her example. Like many of the other travel writers during the time period, her text is a combination of mundane details about the difficulties of postclassical travel, poetic depictions of her spiritual experiences, and awe for the disparate places she encountered. Some historians consider *The Book of Margery Kempe* the first autobiography in the English language.

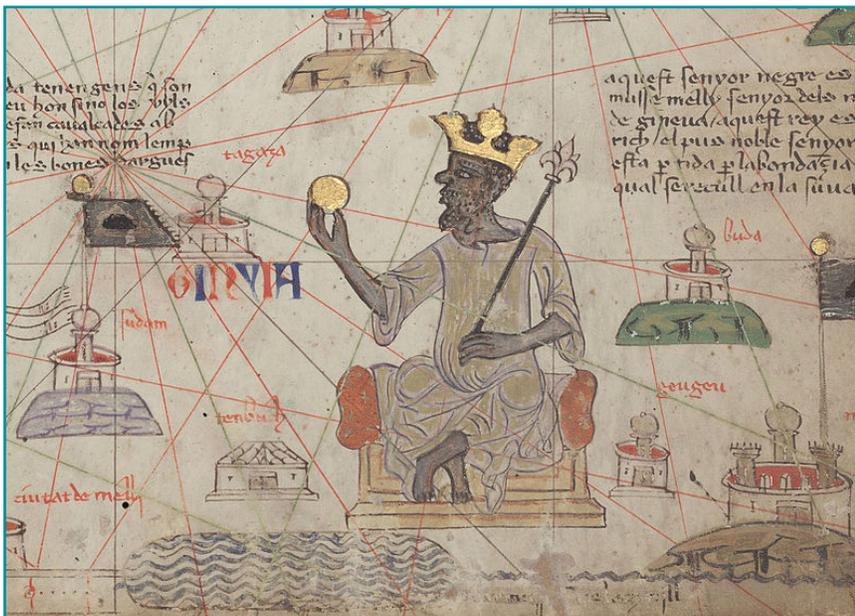
Mansa Musa ruled the Mali Empire from c. 1312 to 1337 CE. Mansa Musa rose to power during a high point for the Mali Empire. It had previously conquered the Ghana Empire and most of the surrounding cities. Many of these conquered cities have been rich in gold reserves, rendering the Mali Empire and Mansa Musa incredibly rich. Mansa Musa's most significant travel took place from 1324 to 1325 CE when he traveled from his home in Mali to Mecca as part of the hajj. His procession and entourage were far beyond anything that the postclassical

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world had ever seen. It included over 60,000 men and 12,000 slaves, many of which were charged with carrying gold and gold dust across the Sahara to his destination. He gave generously along the way, passing out gold dust at every opportunity and building mosques as he traveled. Several eyewitnesses recorded firsthand accounts of his procession and generosity.

Marco Polo was a Venetian merchant who travelled throughout Asia along the Silk Roads from 1271 to 1295. His book, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, introduced Europe to the Eastern world by describing the Mongol Empire, China, India, Japan, and Persia. Marco Polo's most notable position was his time spent serving as the ambassador of Kublai Khan for 17 years. During this time, he traveled extensively on behalf of the Mongol Empire. Marco Polo's writings are broadly credited for exposing Europeans to cultural innovations, principles, and inventions from Asia. For example, his book was the first Western text to describe Asian use of gunpowder or paper money.



Detail from the Catalan Atlas showing Mansa Musa holding a gold coin.

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Postclassical Travel

Overview

This is a great opportunity to allow your students to be creative (even in an AP® class!). Depending on how much time you have, there are options for expanding the project from the basic framework given.

Estimated class time

One to two 40-minute class periods

Instructions

1. Students or groups will be assigned one of four postclassical travelers.

*Note: To save class time, you should assign them homework to research their traveler before the day the class is starting this activity.

Ibn Battuta
Marco Polo
Margary Kempe
Mansa Musa

2. Students/groups will follow the instructions to create a promotional package for a travel show featuring their traveler. Students can use the example provided as a guide or make their own creative products as long as they still follow the requirements.
3. Students can present their shows in a variety of ways:
 - “Pitch” their movie to the class, with the class or the teacher deciding which show will get “greenlit”
 - Post their projects around the room and allow students to visit each in a gallery walk style
 - Jigsaw into new groups where each traveler is represented and then share and discuss their projects
4. Optional SAQ writing assessment:
 - A. Identify ONE impact of travelers on states between 1200 and 1450.
 - B. Explain ONE way that states encouraged travelers between 1200 and 1450.
 - C. Explain ONE difference in motivation among two travelers between 1200 and 1450.

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Postclassical Travel

Instructions

You are the production team on a new show featuring the travels of _____.

You must create a promotional package that includes:

- A show title and tagline
- Artwork to promote the show on social media
- 6–10 episodes, each with:
 - An episode title
 - A brief description of what occurs in the episode

**Make sure you cover the entire scope of their travels, instead of 6 episodes all focusing on one event.*

Opportunities to expand the project

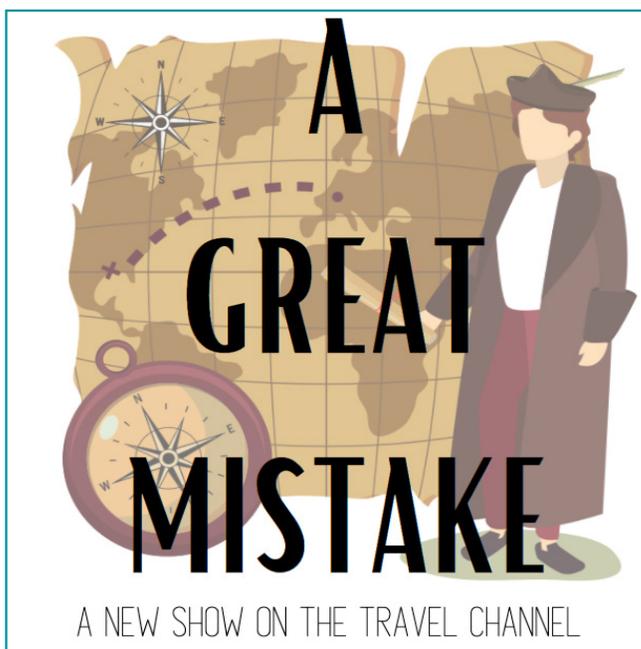
**Note: Depending on your students technology, these options could be filmed and created in advance or written and performed in class.*

- Create a trailer for the season (1–3 minutes)
- Create one segment (3–5 minutes) or an entire episode (5–10 minutes)

Example: Christopher Columbus

A Great Mistake

Three ships. Two continents. One great mistake.



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Episode	Title	Synopsis
1	"The King and Queen"	Chris is desperate. He wants in on the spice trade but can't find anyone to sponsor his journey. Could a meeting with the King and Queen of Spain change his fate?
2	"Open Ocean"	Armed with support from Spain, three ships set out into the unknown. Chris struggles to motivate his sailors as his search for the Indies reaches a breaking point.
3	"India?"	Land! Chris and his men finally step foot on the beach. They are met with an interesting group of people who are not exactly what they seem...
4	"America"	Chris's suspicions were correct. He is the first white man to set foot on a whole new world. From his new base in Haiti, he explores the islands, gathering goods and captives to bring back to Spain.
5	"Homecoming"	News of the voyage spreads like wildfire across Europe. Chris is now a household name. But he's not done. He wants to return to the mysterious lands and see what more they have to offer.
6	"Conquest"	Spanish power in the New World grows as Chris hunts for gold. The indigenous people are caught in between their love for their homeland and these increasingly brutal new arrivals.

Postclassical Travel

Use the image below to answer all parts of the question that follows.



The image depicts Marco Polo during his 17 years serving as an ambassador for the Mongol Empire. In this image, he is depicted wearing traditional Mongol and holding Mongol weaponry.

- a) Identify ONE way in which the depiction of the traveler in the image reflects the cultural effects of global interconnectivity in the postclassical world.
- b) Explain ONE way in which the depiction of the traveler in the image reflects the scientific and technological effects of global interconnectivity in the postclassical world.
- c) Explain ONE significant way in which Europe's relationship with Asia changed in the fourteenth century, compared with the relationship depicted in the image.

Write or type your response in this area.