

Teawares: An Examination of the Silk Road

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| **Introduction**  |
| Seemingly ordinary, daily objects are often born from complex histories. This lesson may be best used at the introduction of a unit on the Silk Road. Students will learn the overview of what the silk road is and a large scope understanding of its long-lasting impacts. This lesson uses Japanese teawares as an entry point to examine how the exchange or good and culture occurred along the Silk Road, spreading far past East Asian areas.  |
| **Indiana Standards Connections:** 7.H.4 Describe the importance of the Silk Road on the histories of Europe, Africa, and Asia. (E) 7.H.8 Describe the dynastic cycle and the cultural and technological contributions of major Chinese dynasties (Zhou, Qin, Han, Tang, Song, and Ming). (E) ● Examples: Zhou - established Feudalism leading to Warring States Period, Mandate of Heaven, start of Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism; Qin - “China”, Terracotta Army, Great Wall; Han - Silk Road starts, paper & compass, merit-based jobs; Tang - gunpowder, woodblock printing, clocks & porcelain; Song - paper money, moveable type; Ming - international trade/isolation, porcelain arts.  | **Compelling Question(s):** How did goods spread along the silk road?How did the Silk Road impact China?How did different cultures individualize goods gained through trade?What are the lasting impacts of the Silk Road on civilizations today? |
| **Lesson Objectives:** Students will be able to:* Understand how the Silk Road make international exchange possible
* Give real life examples of good that were impacted by cultural exchange via the Silk Road
* Understand artistic expressions of different communities, as well as movement of goods, people and religious ideas
* Analyze artifacts from the Silk Road such as photographs and eyewitness accounts
* Identify the lasting impact of the Silk Road civilizations today in the modern world
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| **Materials**  |
| 1. Ted Ed: The Silk Road—Connecting the Ancient World Through Trade <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vn3e37VWc0k>
2. Copies of silk road map: Smarthistory – The Silk Roads
3. Images and information on Japanese teaware from Windows the World Project: https://w2w.indiana.edu/explore-collections/teawares.html
4. Information of the spread of tea along the Silk Road: <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/content/cultural-selection-diffusion-tea-and-tea-culture-along-silk-roads> (this highlights the spread of tea from China to Japan. Then how tea spread across the rest of the Silk Road as the Eastern and Western road connected)
5. Interactive Silk Road: https://www.intofarlands.com/silkroad/delhi
6. Teawares from around the World:

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| Place | Time Period | Image |
| India | 1800s |  |
| Germany (with heavy Japanese influences) | 1700s |  |
| Denmark(Chinese blue-and-white ware were copied in Europe from the 16th century, with the faience blue-and-white technique called alla porcelana. Soon after the first experiments to reproduce the material of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain were made with Medici porcelain.) | 1700s |  |
| China | 14-1500s |  |
| Persia | 1800s | Mid 19th Century Persian Tea Set of 5 | Chairish |
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| **Activities** 1. **Intro activity**: ask students look around at their belongings—do they have any items that were made outside the United States? Have them call out the places their goods were manufactured.
2. Ask students to hypothesize why they could buy these goods made in other places? What might be the purpose? Ask students how these goods are transported (trains, planes, trucks, ideas through technology, etc.)
3. **Lesson:** Explain to students that they are part of a long history of trade. We are going to learn about trading that began hundreds of years ago!
4. Watch the Ted ed video on the Silk Road. It may be good to stop periodically to explain things more in depth to your students or help them realize how massive of a project this was. Help them to see how different historical events were making this trade road possible.
5. Have students pair up and discuss facts from the video. It may be helpful for groups to write down their answers on the whiteboard, or on sticky notes. Have them put their sticky notes around the room. Have students go around the room and choose a new sticky note. Ask them questions for understanding, allow them to use the sticky notes to help them.

How was the quality of life in China changed as goods were traded?Where did the Silk Road begin? Where did it end?Why do people trade goods and services?Allow students to share any other facts they deem importantHighlight the separation between the eastern and western ends of the silk road and how they eventually formed one road. 1. Transition the students to prepare to examine the silk road through a specific good. Pass out the maps—highlight the eastern segment of roads that we will focus on first.
2. Show the images of Tea wares from Japan. Ask students what they notice. Using the information found from UNESCO explain the spread of tea between China and Japan.
* Show how tea then spread across the rest of the Silk Road: Tea's popularity expanded beyond China and Mongolia, reaching the Indian Subcontinent, Anatolia, the Iranian Plateau, Europe, and North Africa
* Today, tea drinking customs and traditions continue to be diverse along the Silk Roads and across the world, reflecting the adaptability and allure of this ancient beverage.
1. Once a good is spread, it is changed and shaped by the area it where it exists. Tea is a fantastic example of this! Transition to showing students the different designs of teawares from across the globe. Explain that these examples are after tea has been spread to these countries for 100s of years—this is when we start to see differentiation.
2. You could set different stations up around the room, having students map each of the sites on their map. As students travel around the room, have students examine the different teawares, comparing and contrasting them. Highlight the relationship between Delft pottery and Ming pottery. Show the similarities.
3. If having students move around the room feels too intense for your classroom. This interactive Silk Road map may be a good compromise: https://www.intofarlands.com/silkroad/delhi
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| **Assessment Suggestions**  The assessment for this lesson will be the students' map of the Silk Road, along with their comparisons of the different tea wares.  |
| **Extensions** You could have students create their own Silk Road map with a different good that was widely traded across the road (animals, fabrics, religion, silk, etc.)This mapping of the Silk Road station activity could become robust. Collecting images of artifacts from each of the major cities, students could identify what goods were traded from these cities. Here is a link to a helpful lesson guide that has handouts for this type of activity: <https://carolinaasiacenter.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/8684/2017/04/Silk-Road-Lesson-Middle-High-School-Complete-Set.pdf>Students could explore this site and research a specific stop on the Silk Road: <https://www.intofarlands.com/silkroad/delhi> |

 Activity Possibilities

Some of the best opportunities for education are *integrative*—meaning that students are able to make connections across disciplines to reinforce the knowledge that they are developing. For example, they may be learning about Renaissance Italy in World Studies at the same time that they read Dante’s *Inferno* in English class while also studying Botticelli in Art. Feel free to combine and adapt some of the ideas across disciplines and standards to best suit your particular context. You can also collaborate with other teachers at your school or supplement the resources provided by contacting your librarian.

**Note: The following ideas are meant to give general guidance for teachers to include artifacts and other material culture in their classrooms. They are not meant to be treated as comprehensive activities or lessons that are one-size-fits-all for any classroom. They should be personalized to best fit the needs of a teacher’s individual context in accordance with prior student learning, student abilities, available resources, and any curriculum.**

**Art**

**Visual Arts – Responding:**

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| Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic workEnduring Understanding: Individual aesthetic and empathetic awareness developed throughout engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments. Essential Question(s): How is design aesthetics influenced by different cultures? How does cultural spread impact art?  |
| VA:Re7.1.1a | *Select and describe works of art that illustrate daily life experiences.* |
| Grade 8 VA:Re7.1.8 | *Explain how a person’s aesthetic choices are influenced by culture and/or environment and impact the visual image that one conveys to others.* |
| Grade 7 VA:Re7.1.7 | *Explain how the method of display, the location, and the experience of an artwork influence how it is perceived and valued.* |

*Art comes out of many different contexts. Sometimes it is a necessity and everyday objects like maps and quilts become art artifacts. Teach the students the cultural contexts of the Silk Road and the way tea was traded along this path. Show the way porcelain designs in China are then used in pottery in Denmark and Holland. How do many different cultural forces collide to create a piece of art?*

**Economics**

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| **GE.4.2** | *Explain how specialization promotes international trade and how international trade increases total world output.* |
| **E.2.1** | *Define supply and demand and explain the causes of the Law of Supply and the Law of Demand.*  |
| **GE.4.4** | *Use the concepts of absolute advantage and comparative advantage to determine why a country may choose to produce a particular commodity rather than another.*  |
| **GE.4.6** | Evaluate the effects of trade agreements among nations and barriers to trade.  |

*Consider the ways that the Silk Road changed the production of goods and services. How does trade impact financial systems? How does trade impact cost and status of living? Have students examine how the closing of the Silk Road impacted trade.*

*Discuss with your class how the Silk Road made goods more widespread and cheaper to produce.*