

Mongols in China

Purpose

Students will explain how Mongol rulers of China extended the Empire and both adapted to and changed Chinese culture.

Materials

For the teacher: wall map of Asia

For each student: copy of Black Line Master (BLM) *Beijing Before and After*, pencil, writing paper, piece of stiff cardboard approximately 16" × 24", scraps of cardboard, construction paper, tape, glue, scissors, markers

Activity

A. Fierce Warriors

1. Pull down the wall map of Asia and point out the locations of China and Mongolia.
2. Explain to students that Mongolia was home to fierce, nomadic warriors who were extremely skillful on horseback, and that two of their most famous leaders were Chinngis Khan and his grandson Kublai Khan.
3. Describe how Chinngis Khan organized the Mongols into an efficient army and brilliantly and ruthlessly conquered armies much larger than his with his fierce horsemen.
4. Using the map, elaborate on how the Mongolian empire once included most of Asia, including present-day Korea, China, Vietnam, Iran, Iraq, Russia, and the Ukraine, as well as all of central Asia.

B. Mongols in China

1. Explain to students how, under Chinngis Khan, the Mongols began taking over northern China and that they later took over the entire country, under Kublai Khan.
2. Say to students: "The Mongols originally conquered China in order to take their riches and resources, but they changed their approach under Kublai Khan."
3. Tell students that Kublai Khan moved his capital from Mongolia to Beijing and started a new Chinese dynasty, the Yuan, with himself as emperor.

(continued)

connecting across the curriculum



Mathematics

Have students research the amount of land controlled by Mongols 25 years before Chinngis Khan's birth, and again for every 25 years until 200 years after Kublai Khan's death. Have them plot the data on a line graph to demonstrate changes in the size of the Mongol Empire over time.

EXTENDING THE ACTIVITY



Have students find pictures of modern Beijing and list the similarities and differences between how it looks now and how it looked during the period of Mongol rule. Ask students: "How far back does most of Beijing's current architecture date?"

Standards Links 7.1.8, 7.1.10

Activity (continued)

C. The Yuan Dynasty

1. Describe the palace of Kublai Khan and elaborate on how it used architecture from many of the different cultures the Mongols had conquered. Describe how he also initiated public works projects in Beijing.
2. Explain that, early on, the Mongols restricted Chinese culture, but as time passed they became more lenient.
3. Tell students that the Mongols in China were more influenced by the Chinese than the Chinese were influenced by them.
4. Explain that eventually, after years of famine and disease and weakening leadership, the Chinese took back their land from the Mongols, ended the Yuan Dynasty and founded the Ming Dynasty.

D. Beijing Before and After

1. Give each student a copy of the BLM *Beijing Before and After* and a pencil.
2. Instruct students to complete part A of the BLM.
3. After students complete part A of the BLM, review their answers as a class.
4. Give each student a cardboard square, extra cardboard, construction paper, tape, glue, scissors, and markers.
5. Divide the class into three groups and assign each group one of the following topics: 100 years before Kublai Khan arrived in Beijing, during Kublai Khan's reign in Beijing, and 100 years after Kublai Khan's death.
6. Instruct students to make their models individually according to which topical group they have been assigned to.
7. Compare and contrast students' models.

Questions for Review

Basic Concepts and Processes

During part A, ask students:

-  Why would being good horsemen help the Mongols conquer other lands?
-  What would be similar in modern times to being good horsemen in the time of the Mongol empire?

While discussing part B, ask students:

-  What may have happened differently if the Mongols had forced the Chinese to adopt their customs and way of life?
-  How might the Mongols in Mongolia have felt about their leaders who had moved to China and adopted Chinese traditions?

Name: _____

Part A

Directions: Research how the Mongols changed Beijing under the leadership of Kublai Khan, then answer the questions below.

1. Why did Kublai Khan's palace use ideas from many different cultures? _____

2. How did Kublai Khan's palace reflect his Mongol heritage? _____

3. What happened to Kublai Khan's palace after he died? _____

4. How do you think the Chinese people in Beijing felt when Kublai Khan moved his capital there? _____

5. Why didn't the Mongols destroy Beijing? _____

Part B

Use the materials you have been provided to make a model of Beijing, either 100 years before Kublai Khan arrived, during Kublai Khan's rule, or about 100 years after Kublai Khan died, depending upon which group you have been assigned to. Use the large piece of stiff cardboard as a base, and build the model on top of it.

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Beijing Before and After

Teacher Directions

Give each student a copy of the BLM *Beijing Before and After* and a pencil. Read the directions on part A of the BLM aloud, and answer any student questions. After students complete part A of the BLM, review their answers.

Give each student a cardboard square, extra cardboard, construction paper, tape, glue, scissors, and markers. Divide the class into three groups, and assign each group one of the following topics: 100 years before Kublai Khan arrived in Beijing, during Kublai Khan's reign in Beijing, and 100 years after Kublai Khan's death. Read the directions for part B of the BLM aloud. Instruct students to make their models individually according to which topical group they have been assigned to.

Compare and contrast students' models.

Answer Key

Part A

Any reasonable answer similar to the following:

1. Because Mongols had conquered a vast area and encountered many cultures *or* because he was open to borrowing good ideas from other cultures.
2. It had an area for Mongols to put tents *or* it had a playing and riding field for horses.
3. The rulers of the Ming Dynasty eventually tore it down and rebuilt their own "Forbidden City."
4. Answers will vary.
5. They needed it intact for transportation and communication with the capital *or* they wanted it to look good because it became their capital.

Part B

Students should have completed a reasonably accurate model according to the topical group they were assigned to.