

The Silk Road Activity: Part I Map Analysis

Directions: Complete the following questions based on the maps. Please use complete sentences.
A * symbol indicates a critical thinking question.

Labeling Cities

1. Using the Reference map as a guide, please label the following cities on the student maps: Venice, Rome, Istanbul, Antioch, Delhi, Tehran, Xi'an, Cherchen, Dunhuang, Beijing.
2. Use the Reference map and draw two possible routes that a traveler on the silk road might take from Venice to Xi'an. You can either copy the routes directly from the reference maps or create your own but pay attention to the **physical features**.
3. Examine the routes you drew and list two reasons that the journey from Venice to Xi'an would be challenging.
4. Despite the challenges, list and explain two reasons that would explain why people would be willing to travel on the Silk Road?*

The Silk Road Activity: Part II Reading and Questions

Directions: Complete the questions that follow the Silk Road reading based on the reading below. Please use complete sentences. A * symbol indicates a critical thinking question.

The Silk Road

The Silk Road was not actually a road. It was not paved. It was not even a single route.

The Silk Road was a name given to any route that led across China to Rome. It was a 4000-mile trip. At one end was China. At the other end was Rome.

Each had something the other wanted. Rome had gold and silver and precious gems. China had silk and spices and ivory.

Ideas also traveled along the Silk Road, ideas that affected everyone.

The Romans were not surprised to hear of another great civilization hidden over the mountains. They had been looking for “the Silk People” for a long time.

The Romans discovered pieces of silk from some of the people they conquered. Silk quickly became popular in Rome. But it was scarce. The Romans wanted more silk. But they did not know who was making this wonderful material.

The Romans tried to find the traders as they came into the towns and villages. But the traders hid from the Roman soldiers. They knew they had nothing to tell them. They did not know who was making the silk. They only traded for the silk. They traveled a short way along the silk road and traded with the people they found.

In frustration, the Romans sent out parties of soldiers to follow the Silk Road, and find the source, the people who were making the silk. Most of the soldiers never returned. Those who did reported they could not find a way through the desert. They had to turn back.

It was incredibly dangerous to travel along the Silk Road. You faced desolate white-hot sand dunes in the desert, forbidding mountains, brutal winds, and poisonous snakes. There was one nice section, called the Gansu Corridor, a relatively fertile strip that ran along the base of one of the mountains. To reach this strip, you had to

cross the desert or the mountains. And of course, there were always bandits and pirates.

Even the traders did not make the whole trip. They worked in relays. Each trader would go a certain distance, exchange their goods for other goods, and hopefully return. The next would move along the road, trade, and hopefully return. There were three main routes, and all were dangerous.

- Northern Route – Westward to Black Sea
- Central Route – Westward to Persia, Mediterranean Sea, Rome
- Southern Route – Westward to Iran, India

The Silk Road took caravans to the farthest extent of the Han Empire. Sections of the Great Wall were built along the northern side of the Gansu Corridor to try and prevent bandits from the north from harming the trade.

Over the centuries, the Silk Road developed a civilization of its own. Where possible, the Silk Road became lined with huge temples and booming cities. It became far easier to travel the road. But it was never easy. There were still vast stretches of [deserts and mountains](#) to cross, with no city or water in sight.

(Source: <http://china.mrdonn.org/silkroad.html>)

The Silk Road Reading Questions

1. True or False: The Silk Road was a single route that connected Rome and China. If you believe the answer is false, then explain why it is false.
2. How many miles was the journey from Rome to China along the silk road?
3. List 3 products that Rome had which China wanted?

4. List 3 products which China had that Rome wanted?
5. What nickname did the Romans give to the Chinese?
6. Why would the traders the Romans tried to find be unable to help them locate the source of silk production?
7. Examine your maps, what desert were the Roman soldiers, sent to find the source of the silk trade, likely unable to travel through? *
8. List four obstacles that made travel across the Silk Road dangerous.
9. True or False: Most traders did not travel the whole Silk Road, instead travelling in teams who relayed their goods along points of the Silk Road. If you believe the answer is false, then explain why it is false.
10. List the three main routes of the Silk Road.
11. Why were sections of the Great Wall built along the northern side of the Gansu Corridor?

12. What ethnic group might those “bandits” have been a part of? (Hint: They would eventually establish one of the greatest land based Empires in World History)*

13. According to the last paragraph, over time, huge temples and booming cities eventually lined the Silk Road. Why would this be a logical development?*

14. Besides trade goods, list 2 or 3 cultural traditions and/or religions that probably would have been passed onto new civilizations along the Silk Road?*

15. Describe a situation in today’s world in which pre-knowledge about the cultural traditions and/or religions of a foreign group could help a business person?*