

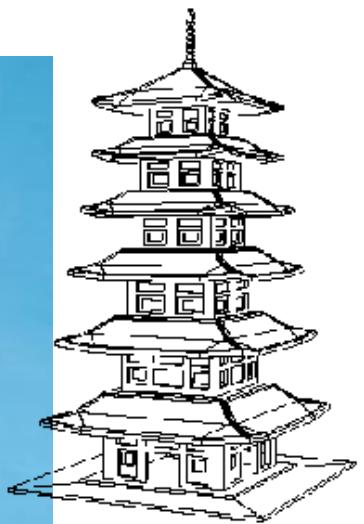
JAPAN



Japan in 1500 was still largely feudal with a decentralized system of government. Japan was supposedly ruled by an Emperor, which was hereditary (meaning passed down father to son). However, the emperor was controlled by a much more powerful Shogun. The Shogun was the leader of the samurai and military. The Shogun would use the emperor to control Japan's population.

The 1500s were marked by warfare as attempts are made to fully unify the nation, which was achieved towards the end of that century. In the 1600's, Japan ended all contact and trade with foreigners and became an isolated land. Religion in Japan was dominated by both Shinto and Buddhism.

STRUCTURE— HORYU-JI PAGODA



MING CHINA



The Ming Dynasty in China created one of the most powerful nations in the world at the time. The goods it provided for the Silk Road, such as silk, porcelain, and spices from the East Indies, drove world trade patterns for centuries if not millennia and made China one of the wealthiest and most powerful nations on the planet. Their accomplishments include the invention of gunpowder, paper money, and silk.

Early in the dynasty, they encouraged open trade and famously sent out massive fleets under Admiral Zheng He. Later in the dynasty, however, they pulled back from this. Fearing foreign influence and the disorder of the international system, China moved to a policy of isolationism and severely restricted trade access. When Portuguese ships began to arrive, the Chinese allowed for trade, but only in a very restricted and controlled manner. Religion in China was heavily influenced by

Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism.

The leader of China was an emperor. The emperor lived in the Forbidden City. It was called this because common people were not allowed in. Emperors would pass on rule to their sons. However, every so often an emperor was overthrown and a new family (such as the Ming, Qin, Shang, etc) would take control. This was known as the Dynastic Cycle.

STRUCTURE—GREAT WALL



THE AZTEC EMPIRE

The Aztec Empire dominated the central part of modern-day Mexico from the 1300s until their conquest by the Spanish in 1520. They shared many of the same Mesoamerican cultural traits as the Mayans, who preceded them by hundreds of years further to the south. Although the Aztec were very advanced in some ways, with such accomplishments as mathematics and astronomy, they lacked such critical technologies as iron tools.



The Aztec were ruled by a king known as the Tlatoani. The Tlatoani ruled a large empire that had subjugated many different Native American groups, who paid tribute to the Aztecs. The Spanish under conquistador Hernan Cortez were able to exploit this and turn many of the native groups against the Aztec, ultimately conquering them.

The Aztecs had trade networks with other Native American groups prior to European contact. The Aztec did not participate themselves in the Triangle of Trade, but the goods the Spanish gained upon conquering them provided a major component of the Triangle Trade. The Aztec practiced a native, polytheistic religion that is famous for its bloodletting and human sacrifice.

STRUCTURE—AZTEC PYRAMID



THE INCA EMPIRE



The Inca Empire was founded in the 1200s and lasted until conquered by the Spanish in the 1530s. The term “Inca” refers also to the ruler of this state, which encompassed many different people. The Inca Empire had its base of power in the Andes Mountains, some of the largest mountains in the world, making them one of the few major world empires to be located in a large mountain range. The Empire largely corresponded to modern-day Peru.

The bulk of the Inca Empire was conquered by Francisco Pizarro in the 1530s. The Inca did not participate themselves in the Triangle Trade, but the goods the Spanish gained upon conquering them provided a major component of the Triangle Trade. The Inca practiced a native, polytheistic religion.

Accomplishments of the Inca include mathematics, geometry, engineering, and the development of cocoa or chocolate.

STRUCTURE—MACHU PICCHU



THE MUGHAL EMPIRE



The Mughal Empire was a complex mix of people and religions in modern-day India. It was dominated by the Mughals, Muslim invaders who had conquered large parts of India in the first part of the 1500s. The Mughal's policies towards the Hindus ranged from very tolerant, such as under their greatest emperor Akbar, to more repressive under some other leaders.

One of the most famous buildings in the world, the Taj Mahal, was built by the Mughals. Other Mughal accomplishments include a powerful military, religious toleration, and great architecture. The Mughal Empire played an important role in the trade routes of Asia, providing spices and other goods into both the Silk Road as well as the Red Sea/Indian Ocean Trade.

STRUCTURE—THE TAJ MAHAL



THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE



The Ottoman Empire was one of the largest and most powerful empires in the world at this time, stretching from the Balkan Peninsula in south-eastern Europe through Turkey into the Middle East. The capitol was the old Roman city of Constantinople, which was renamed Istanbul when the Byzantine Empire was overthrown. The Ottomans derived their power from their advanced military, which included the early adoption of gunpowder, as well as its control of the western end of the Silk Road and trade between the Mediterranean and the Black Seas.

Almost all goods from Asia had to pass through the Ottoman Empire on the way to Europe. Their control of the passage between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea also ensured that they had an impact on European trade.

The Ottoman Empire was ruled by a Sultan. The Sultan had total control over the empire. Powerful ones include Mehmed I, who reconquered much land they had lost and the most famous Suleiman the Magnificent. Suleiman completely restructured the legal system, creating a new modern system of laws. As far as religion, the Ottomans practiced Sunni Islam.

STRUCTURE— SULEIMAN'S MOSQUE



THE SONGHAI EMPIRE



The Songhai was the last of three major empires to occupy northwest Africa. The Songhai Empire was preceded by the empires of Ghana and Mali. All three of these empires drew their power from the same source: the Trans-Saharan Salt-Gold Trade. Perched on the edge of the Sahara desert along the Niger River, the Songhai controlled the very lucrative Trans-Saharan Trade Route.

Its capitol was the city of Gao, where the Songhai king was located. The most powerful king of the Songhai was Askia Mohammad. Under the rule of Askia Mohammad, the Songhai reached great heights in learning and culture. Their accomplishments include mathematics, great schools, and learning. The city of Timbuktu became famous throughout the world as a center of learning and advanced thought.

The Songhai predominately practiced Islam, though some areas retained indigenous local religions.

STRUCTURE—THE TOMB OF ASKIA



WORLD EMPIRES IN 1500

Despite being labeled as the end of the “Dark Ages”, the world in 1500 featured many powerful, advanced empires. The civilizations were located around the world and built great monuments that still stand today. They also interacted with each other along trade routes – sharing knowledge, technology, and goods.

DIRECTIONS

Your group will be assigned one of these major world empires and be given a fact sheet about them. Your group will then have 3 responsibilities:

1. Build a model of your empire’s great monument. Using paper, markers, scissors, and straws create a small version of your empire’s building project. It does not need to be a scale model that looks exactly like the real work, but should represent the monument well and resemble it physically. There should be at least **2 “builders”** working on this.
2. The second part of your project is for **a researcher & writer** to create a speech that describes your empire to the rest of the world. Your speech should directed toward people who know nothing about your empire but who you want to impress with your empire’s strength and achievements. You should include:
 - Where is your empire located?
 - Who rules your empire?
 - What are the dominant religions in your empire?
 - What are your empire’s great accomplishments?
 - What trade routes does your empire use?
3. Lastly, you will need an **ambassador** to present your monument and give your speech to the rest of the class. It should be a 2-3 minute overview of your empire in which your goal is to impress the other empires of the world with your achievements.



RUBRIC

| | EXCELLENT (10 PTS.) | GOOD (7 PTS.) | NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (5 PTS.) |
|--------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| BUILDING | | | |
| SPEECH | | | |
| PRESENTATION | | | |
| COOPERATION | | | |
| TOTAL GRADE | <hr/> | | |