

282 Highly Specific Laws

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. Then answer questions 3, 4, and 5.

1. Which is a synonym for the word “maxim” in paragraph 4?

- (A) motto
- (B) leader
- (C) recipe
- (D) instruction

2. Some of Hammurabi’s laws seem _____ to the author.

- (A) brutal
- (B) reasonable
- (C) excessive
- (D) fascinating

3. How did the Mesopotamian courts compare with our justice system?
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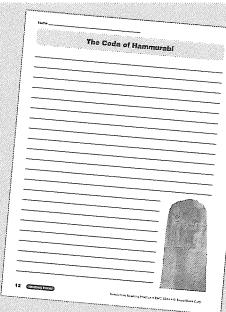
4. If a slave harmed his master in some way, what do you think the punishment was? Explain.
-
-

5. Reread paragraph 4. Do you think the law was fair? Explain.
-
-

Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

Think of a modern law that follows the maxim “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.” Tell if you think it is fair, and why.



The History of Silk

Level 1

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

Level 2 ■ ■

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

Caravanserais Along the Silk Road

The Silk Road was actually a network of trade routes followed by both merchants carrying goods from Europe, Persia, and India to Central Asia, and the East Chinese. These routes were usually marked by oases in which groups called caravanserais provided shelter, food, and water to weary travelers.

Regions from the Road:

Traveling the Silk Road could be dangerous. The desert was hot and sandy, with sudden sandstorms played out against the mountains that could be very treacherous. There were huge sand dunes that sometimes covered great stretches of land. Caravanserais dotted the land and inns where travelers could stay were built from stone. They could sleep in a room or a courtyard overlooking a garden or a city square during their journey at night.

A caravan would be accompanied with help, such as porters who would carry goods from one place to another, guides to cities, and drivers who would provide horses for merchants, who served as their guides. Some horsemen provided their own mounts, while others rode on camels or muleback. Caravanserais were located along a day's journey at each station. These stations were located within a day's journey of each other. This arrangement accommodated every 20 to 30 miles (32 to 48 km) of travel.

A Place to Exchange Culture:

Along the Silk Road there was also a place to learn. These inns exchanged goods and pack animals, but they also exchanged culture with all the merchant travelers who came through. Merchants learned places for people of different cultures to exchange about art, cities, literature, music, and religion. Over hundreds of years, travel along the Silk Road allowed cultures, language, and religions to influence one another.

Wanted to know
**Caravanserais
Along the Silk
Road**

commemorative
network
commmons
respite
grueling
plugged
roughs
cortages
furnished
diverse
influence

Artist's reconstruction of a caravanserai in Central Asia.

Artist's reconstruction of a caravanserai in Central Asia.

Illustration by Barbara Kroll; photo © iStockphoto.com

20 The History of Silk Road

Narrative Reading for 4th and 5th Grade

The History of Silk Road

Level 3

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

How Silk Changed History

Fill in the track by the current status: ✓

How Silk Changed History

Who Invented Silk?

Silk is one of the oldest fabrics there is. It is made from protein that comes from silkworms when they make their cocoons. The process of spinning silk is very difficult because it is so thin, moist, sticky, and stretchy. Chinese artisans were the first to invent the silk industry. A Chinese ruler named Emperor Wu of Han believed that silk was the key to imperial power. Court officials used silk to reward people who did well. Emperor Wu's general, Ban Chao, believed that silk was the key to maintaining trade routes. He wanted to remain China's subject. He believed that anyone who threatened their methods of farming would be defeated.

The Silk Road Got Out

Because the Chinese did not invent silk, on display with us to neighboring countries, many central cities got rich from growing wealthy and became familiar with the product. Silk was very popular in the West. Roman emperors liked what came from China. They called it a "silk road." It was a very long road that traveled through Central Asia, Russia, and Europe to the Far East. Romans grew so much silk that they started buying it from the Far East.

What Is Silk?

When you look at a piece of silk, you will notice that it is a woven fabric made up of many threads. These threads are usually made from silkworms who deal in art, entertainment, cloth, tools, guitars, musical instruments, silk, beds, and wine.

Over the Centuries, Different Areas Would Have Learned to Be Better at Making Silk

Over the centuries, different areas would have learned to be better at making silk. Some regions of the world were more successful than others. Some regions of the world were more successful than others. In the Far East, for example, the Chinese were the best at making silk. They had a secret formula. Testing various蚕品种 (silkworms) to see which ones produced the best silk. Sea serpents eat across the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, resulting in the best silk.

New Silk Strengths Popped Up

The Silk Road played a major role in the development of culture and politics in Central Asia. To make successful deals, merchants had to learn languages and customs of the people they transacted. As they journeyed along the Silk Road, they learned knowledge of, for example, Chinese papermaking techniques, great works of literature, and years of Chinese history. Silk influenced many cultures, and silk influenced those cultures, and influenced one another.

Perhaps Chinese silk influenced the Persians, who had only simple fabrics to start with, including religious leaders, any single person you can name, including religious leaders,

Writers In History
How Silk Changed History

fiber
textile
exclusive
prerogative
decreed
diplomatic
envoys
council
dicts
designated
motivation
catalyst
extensively

The History of Silk 20

Spartacus Educational Project - 1997

The Many of Silk 20

Assemble the Unit

Reproduce and distribute one copy for each student:

- Visual Literacy page: The Silk Road, page 21
 - Level 1, 2, or 3 Reading Selection and Reading Comprehension page and the corresponding Words to Know list
 - Graphic Organizer of your choosing, provided on pages 180–186
 - Writing Form: Traveling the Silk Road, page 22

Introduce the Topic

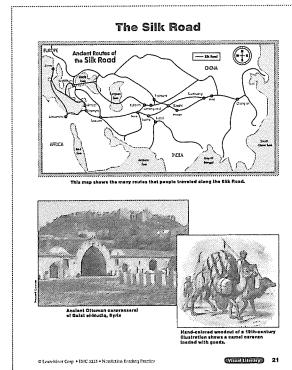
Read aloud and discuss the captions and photos on the Visual Literacy page titled “The Silk Road.” Explain that the Silk Road was not just one route, but a network of them. Over hundreds of years, beginning about 2,000 years ago, merchants traveled these routes to obtain precious Chinese silk and other trade goods.

Read and Respond

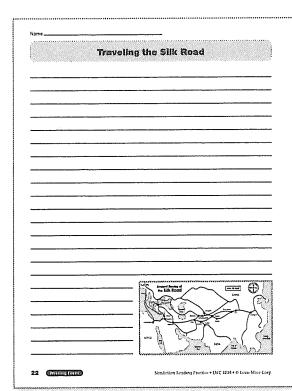
Form leveled groups and review the Words to Know lists with each group of students. Instruct each group to read their selection individually, in pairs, or as a group. Have students complete the Reading Comprehension page for their selection.

Write About the Topic

Read aloud the leveled writing prompt for each group. Tell students to use the Graphic Organizer to plan their writing. Direct students to use their Writing Form to respond to their prompt.

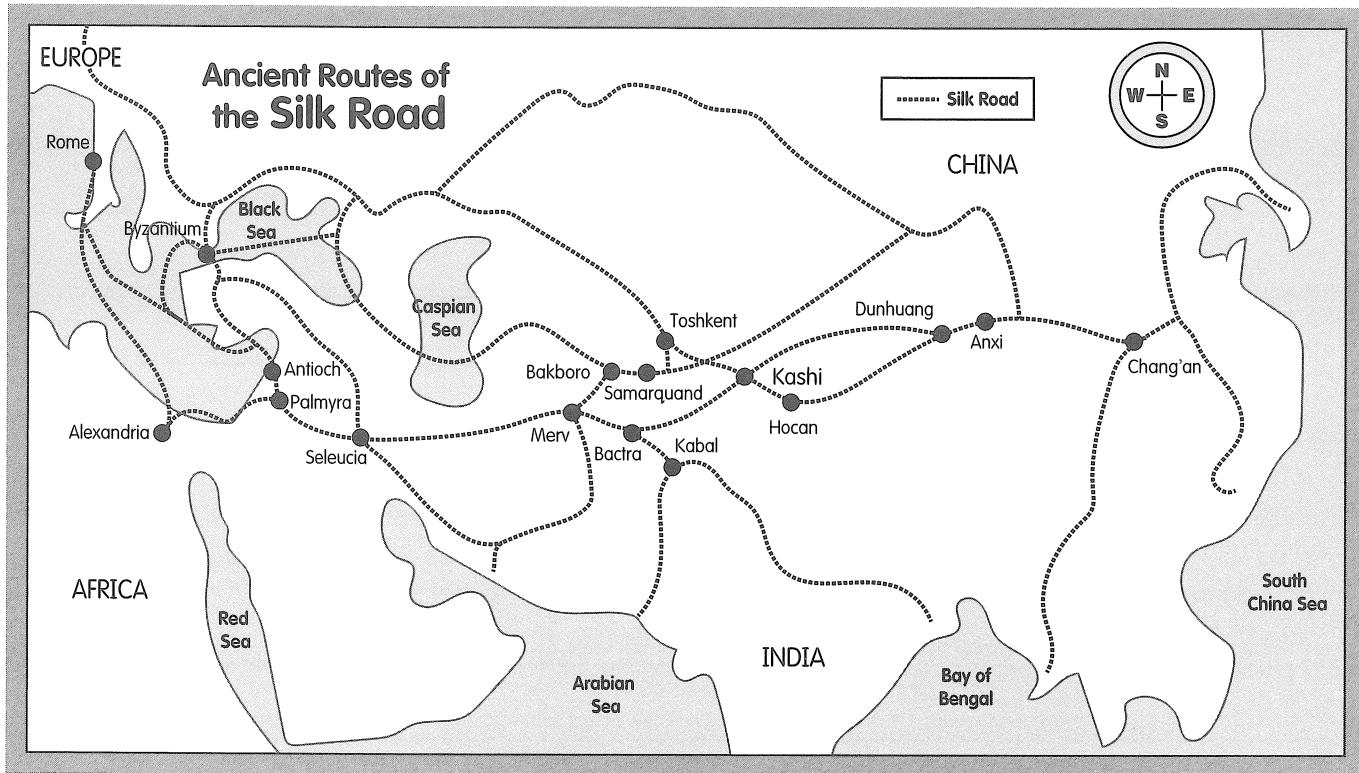


Visual Literacy



Writing Form

The Silk Road



This map shows the many routes that people traveled along the Silk Road.

Bernard Gagnon

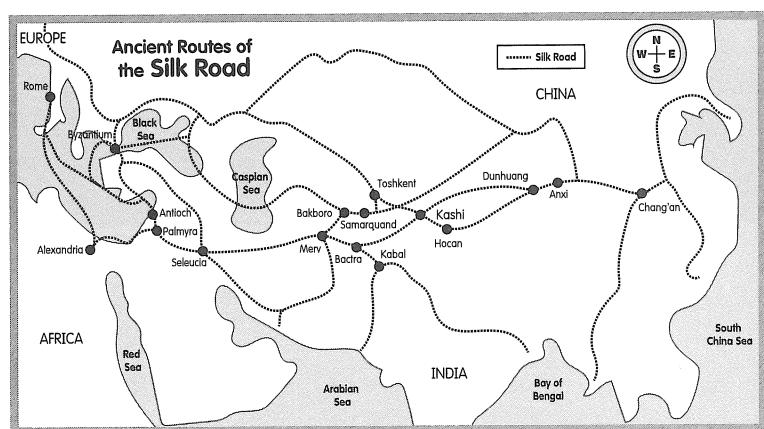


Ancient Ottoman caravanserai of Qalat el-Mudiq, Syria



Hand-colored woodcut of a 19th-century illustration shows a camel caravan loaded with goods.

Traveling the Silk Road



Words to Know

The Silk Road's Place in History

fiber

silkworms

luxurious

status

officials

textile

yaks

trudged

merchants

caravans

Words to Know

Caravanserais Along the Silk Road

caravanserais

network

caravans

respite

grueling

plagued

troughs

cargoes

furnished

diverse

influence

Words to Know

How Silk Changed History

fiber

textile

exclusive

prestige

decreed

diplomatic

envoys

exotic

edicts

designated

motivation

catalyst

extensively

The History of Silk ■

The History of Silk ■■

The History of Silk ■■■



The Silk Road's Place in History

A Precious Product

Silk fiber is thin, but very strong. Silkworms make it as they build their cocoons. The ancient Chinese figured this out thousands of years ago. They invented a way to weave a soft, smooth cloth from the fiber. The fabric was light, beautiful, strong—and silky! It was so luxurious that Chinese royals decided to keep it for themselves. Artisans made silk drapes, banners, and other fancy items to show off their rulers' status and power. Officials ordered that silk-making techniques must not leave China. Laws even made it illegal to teach foreigners how to make silk. The penalty for breaking the law was death.

Silk Travels West

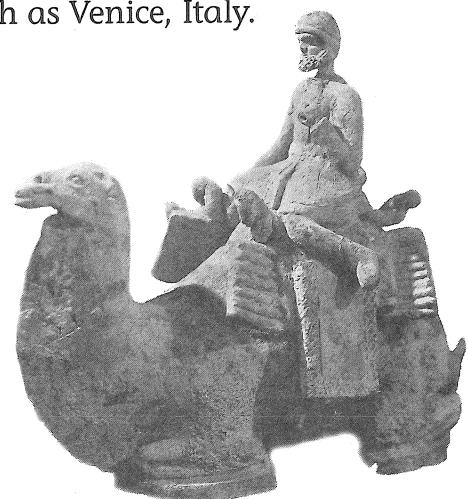
Yet, China's neighbors soon found out that silk existed. Chinese leaders sent gifts of silk to leaders of other lands. Little by little, the word spread west. By about 100 BC, people of the Roman Empire (present-day Italy and surrounding areas) knew about silk. The luxury textile's popularity grew in Europe. This was one of the main reasons tradesmen charted a network of trade routes between Europe and China. Yet, traders carried many other goods, too, from different countries along the routes. These included animal hides, wool items, cotton cloth, fruits, grains, and vegetables. They also transported jewels, spices, tools, artworks, gold, and silver.

Why Is It Called "The Silk Road"?

A German geologist and traveler, Baron von Richthofen, named the trade routes "The Silk Road" in the mid-1800s. The name makes it sound like a road in a fairy tale. But, there were many roads, not just one. Traders could choose among routes that crossed Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Far East. There were sea routes, too. Ships carried cargo from China and Southeast Asia across the Indian Ocean to Africa, India, and the Near East. Some merchants also crossed the Mediterranean to reach European seaports such as Venice, Italy.

Animals on the Silk Road

Silk Road traders depended on animals. Most merchants traveled on camels and horses, but donkeys, mules, oxen, and yaks also trudged along the trade routes, carrying riders and pulling carts. Camels were most popular because each one could carry about 500 pounds of goods. Also, a camel can go without water for two weeks, and its wide feet keep it from sinking into desert sands. To protect themselves from thieves, merchants usually traveled in groups called caravans. In a caravan, fifty or more camels might travel in a line. Ropes connected each camel's tail to the head of the next camel in line.



Terra-cotta sculpture of a man on a camel, 4th c. – 6th c. Northern Wei Dynasty, Chinese art

The Silk Road's Place in History

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. Then answer questions 3, 4, and 5.

1. Which two words are synonyms?
 - (A) fiber, thin
 - (B) luxurious, fancy
 - (C) textile, network
 - (D) routes, merchants

 2. As a result of the luxury textile's popularity, _____.
 - (A) silk was not highly valued for trade
 - (B) a network of trade routes was established
 - (C) the Roman Empire was established
 - (D) China stopped leaders of other lands from having silk

 3. Can you infer how and why “the word” about silk “spread west”?
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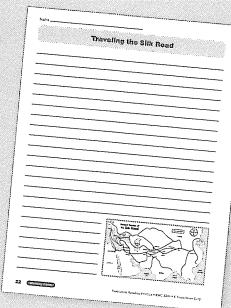
4. What might Chinese traders have wanted in exchange for their silk cloth?
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-

5. Summarize why camels were the most popular kind of animal on the Silk Road.
-
-

Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

Do you think the world would be the same today if silk had not been discovered? Explain your opinion.



Caravanserais Along the Silk Road

The Silk Road was actually a network of trade routes between China and Europe. Merchants carrying Chinese silk and other goods followed routes that crossed Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Far East. Many traders traveled on camels in groups called caravans. In a caravan, fifty or more camels might travel in a line.

Respite from the Road

Traveling the Silk Road could be grueling. Warring soldiers, bandits, and harsh weather such as sandstorms plagued the caravans. Caravanserais eased the way for weary tradesmen. These were huge guest houses that welcomed traveling merchants.

Caravanserais dotted the Silk Road from Turkey to China. At a caravanserai, traders were safe from harm. There, they could enjoy tasty meals, rest, and ready themselves to journey on.

A caravanserai was surrounded with high, strong walls. The one entrance was tall and wide enough for a loaded pack animal to enter. Along the inside of the walls were guest rooms for merchants, their servants, and their goods. Some guest houses provided stables for animals. Others had open central courtyards where pack animals—horses, camels, yaks, oxen, and elephants—drank from stone water troughs.

Caravanserais were located within a day's journey of each other. This allowed merchants (with their precious cargoes of silk and other trade goods) to avoid spending nights exposed to the Silk Road's perils. In many regions, there was usually a caravanserai every 20 to 25 miles (about 30 to 40 kilometers).

A Place to Exchange Cultural Ideas

A caravanserai provided more than a safe place to rest. There, traders could exchange goods and pack animals, buy local products, and socialize with other merchant travelers. Thus, the caravanserais furnished places for people of diverse cultures to share knowledge about arts, crafts, literature, science, and technologies. Over hundreds of years, trade along the Silk Road allowed cultures, languages, and religions to influence one another.



**Ancient Ottoman caravanserai
of Qalat el-Mudiq, Syria**

Bernard Gagnon

Caravanserais Along the Silk Road

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. Then answer questions 3, 4, and 5.

1. Which is a synonym for the word “respite” (in the first heading)?
 - A hotel
 - B meal
 - C break
 - D journey

 2. The writer thinks caravanserais were MOST important because they provided _____.
 - A places of safety
 - B stables for animals
 - C silk and other goods
 - D places to share ideas

 3. What facts would you select to show that a caravanserai was an enjoyable place to stay?
-
-

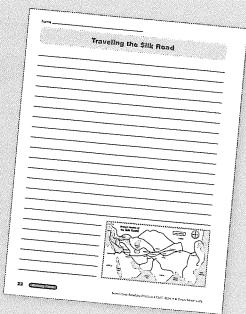
4. What inference can you make about why a community would build a caravanserai?
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-

5. What conclusion can you draw about the Silk Road’s role in spreading religions?
-
-

Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

Imagine you are a merchant on the Silk Road. Tell what it would be like to finally reach a caravanserai after a day on the road.



How Silk Changed History

Who Invented Silk?

Silk is a thin, yet extremely strong, fiber. It is made from protein that silkworms produce when they make their cocoons. Thousands of years ago, ancient Chinese artisans began weaving silk fiber into a soft, smooth fabric. A precious textile, silk was at first reserved for exclusive use by the Chinese imperial court. Court artisans used it to create drapes and banners that displayed royal prestige. Chinese officials decreed that silk-making methods must remain China's secret. Rulers ordered that anyone who revealed these methods to foreigners would be put to death.

The Silky Secret Gets Out

However, the existence of silk did not remain a secret. On diplomatic visits to neighboring rulers, Chinese envoys carried gifts of silk. By the first century BC, the Romans had become familiar with this exotic luxury item. It soon grew wildly popular in the West. Western rulers issued edicts that controlled silk prices. As in China, silk was designated a solely royal fabric. Trading for silk was a principal motivation for merchants who searched for routes from Europe to the Far East.

While silk was probably the earliest catalyst for trade route creation, traders carried a wide range of goods. These included animal hides, wool items, cotton cloth, fruits, grains, and vegetables. Merchants also dealt in artworks, metalworks, precious stones, religious objects, spices, tools, and wine.

Over the centuries, different main routes developed. Later they came to be known as "The Silk Road," but the word "Road" should have been plural. Tradesmen traveling east or west could choose among routes that crossed many regions of Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Far East. In addition, sailors discovered sea routes. Trading vessels carried goods from China and Southeast Asia across the Indian Ocean to Africa, India, and the Near East. Sea routes even reached Venice, Italy, by crossing the Mediterranean.

How Silk Brought People Together

The Silk Road played an important role in bringing diverse cultures and peoples into contact. To make successful deals, merchants had to learn the languages and customs of the countries they traversed. As they journeyed along the Silk Road, people shared knowledge about arts, crafts, literature, science, and technologies. For example, Chinese paper-making techniques spread worldwide. Over hundreds of years, cultures, languages, and religions influenced one another. Perhaps Chinese silk influenced history more extensively than any single famous person you can name, excluding religious leaders.

