

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 24 Word Count: 2,351

Book Summary

During the 1200s, horsemen from Asia called the Mongols established the largest land empire ever created. These brutal conquerors expanded their empire by leveling entire cities, massacring the people who dwelled in them. The warrior largely responsible for their success was Genghis Khan, who became the Universal Ruler of all of the Mongol tribes and created a unified nation. How did Genghis Khan become such a powerful leader and what became of his empire after his death? Photographs, maps, and illustrations support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask and answer questions

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of asking and answering questions to understand text
- Identify author's purpose
- Recognize adjectives used in text
- Recognize and use synonyms

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*The Mongol Empire* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Dictionaries and thesauruses
- **KWLS, author's purpose, adjectives, synonyms worksheets**
- **Discussion cards**



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

• Content words:

Story critical: *alliances* (n.), *dynasty* (n.), *empire* (n.), *fragmenting* (v.), *havoc* (n.), *nomadic* (adj.)

Enrichment: *annual* (adj.), *archaeologist* (n.), *bastion* (n.), *feuding* (n.), *isolated* (adj.), *plundered* (v.), *proclaimed* (v.), *relentless* (adj.), *ruthless* (adj.), *tribute* (n.), *vassal states* (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Write the names *Genghis Khan* and the *Mongol Empire* on the board. Ask students to tell what they may already know about the leader and his armies.

- Create a KWLS chart on the board and hand out the [KWLS worksheet](#). Review or explain that the *K* stands for knowledge we know, the *W* stands for information we want to know, the *L* stands for the knowledge we learned, and the *S* stands for what we still want to know about the topic. As various topics are discussed, fill in the first column (*K*) on the board with information students know about the topic. Have students complete the same section of their KWLS chart.
- Ask students what they would like to know about the Mongol Empire. Have them fill in the second section (*W*) of their chart. Write their questions on the class chart.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name). Point out the glossary and index, and ask volunteers to explain the use of each.

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Ask and answer questions**

- Discuss with students how having prior knowledge about the topic, and asking and answering questions while reading, can help readers understand and remember the information in a book.
- Direct students to the table of contents. Remind them that the table of contents provides an overview of the information in a book and how it is organized. After previewing the table of contents, use it to model asking questions.
Think-aloud: I can use the table of contents to think of questions I would like to have answered about the Mongol Empire. For example, section one is titled "Brutal Conquerors from Asia." This makes me wonder what the Mongols did that was so brutal. I also wonder if Genghis Khan was a Mongol from Asia. I'll have to read the book to find out. I'll write these questions on the chart.
- Have students look at the other section titles. Have them write any questions they have based on the covers and table of contents in the *W* section of their KWLS chart.
- Have students preview the rest of the book, looking at illustrations, maps, and photos. Invite students to read through the glossary and index. Have them add any additional questions they might have on their KWLS chart. Invite students to share their questions aloud. Write shared questions on the class chart.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Identify author's purpose**

- **Introduce and model the skill:** Write the following terms on the board: *to inform*, *to entertain*, *to persuade*. Invite students to define the terms in their own words. Define each of the terms as necessary (*to inform* means to give someone information about something; *to entertain* means to amuse someone; *to persuade* means to try to make someone think the same way you do). Encourage students to give examples of times they might have said something to inform, entertain, or persuade. Point out that writers often have one of these three purposes for writing.
- Create a three-column chart on the board, with the labels *To Entertain*, *To Inform*, and *To Persuade* at the top of each column. Introduce and explain the [author's purpose worksheet](#). Have students read the book to identify and record different examples in the book that illustrate these purposes. Instruct them to place a check mark in one of the three boxes each time they come across evidence that supports one of the purposes.
- **Think-aloud:** *To understand and remember new information in a book, I can look at how an author is stating things to see what his or her purpose may be. I can decide if the author's focus is to inform, to entertain, or to persuade. I know that good readers do this, so I'm going to identify the author's purpose as I read the book.*

Introduce the Vocabulary

- As students preview the book, ask them to talk about what they see in the photographs, maps, and illustrations. Reinforce the vocabulary words they will encounter in the text.
- Explain to students that sometimes they will not find any context clues that define an unfamiliar word. Model how students can use the glossary or a dictionary to locate a word's meaning. Have a volunteer read the definition for *nomadic* in the glossary. Have students follow along on page 5 as you read the sentence in which the word *nomadic* is found to confirm the meaning of the word.
- Write the word *nomadic* on the board. List examples of other groups of people who might be considered nomadic (Native Americans of long ago, homeless people of today, and so on). Talk about why people might be *nomadic* and what may happen in their lives as a result.
- Have students locate other content vocabulary words in the glossary and text. Read and discuss their definitions as a class. Point out that not all content vocabulary words are defined in the glossary (such as *subdue*, *plundered*, and *relentless*). Have students locate those words in the dictionary and text. As time permits, have them repeat the exercise with other words of their choice.

Set the Purpose

- Have students think about what they already know about the Mongol Empire as they read the book to find answers to their questions, and write what they learned in the *L* section of their KWLS chart.

During Reading


Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 8. Remind them to look for information about the Mongol Empire that will answer questions on their KWLS chart. Encourage students who finish early to go back and reread.
- When students have finished reading, have them circle any questions on their KWLS chart that were answered and write any new questions that were generated.
- Model answering a question and filling in the third section (*L*) of the KWLS chart.
Think-aloud: I wanted to know what the Mongols did that was so brutal and if Genghis Khan was a Mongol from Asia. I found out that the Mongols were ferocious horsemen who expanded their empire by leveling entire cities and massacring the people who lived there. I learned that Genghis, named Temujin, was born in 1162 and lived on the harsh Asian steppes. His father was a minor leader who was murdered by members of another Mongol tribe. I wonder what motivated Genghis Khan and his Mongol army to destroy so much of what they saw. I will write this question on my chart.
- Have students write answers to the questions they circled in the *L* section of their KWLS chart. Invite them to share the information they learned and the questions they generated as they read the book. Record shared responses on the class KWLS chart.
- Discuss the recent story events and ask students what information they recorded on their author's purpose worksheet. Ask volunteers to give examples of what they recorded. Write the examples on the chart on the board as students share (to *inform*: teaches about the Mongol Empire, tells about their brutality under Genghis Khan, and so on).
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 11. Have them write answers they found while reading in the *L* section of their KWLS chart and additional questions they raised in the *W* section. Invite them to share the information they learned and the questions they generated as they read pages 9 through 11. Write shared responses on the class KWLS chart.
- Discuss the recent story events and ask students what information they recorded on their author's purpose worksheet. Ask volunteers to give examples of what they recorded.

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

The Mongol Empire

- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to look for and write answers to their KWLS chart questions, as well as to look for important events to record. Encourage them to add new questions they might have to their chart as they read.

 Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- **Think-aloud:** *I wanted to know what motivated Genghis Khan to destroy so much of what he saw. I read that wealth was what Genghis wanted most. If he could get it without a fight, the city would be left unharmed. The Mongols offered cities the option to surrender; if they did, the army would take what it wanted but leave the people and their buildings standing. I'd like to know more about how wealthy the Mongolian Empire became. I will write this in the S column of my chart.*
- Ask students to share questions they added to their KWLS chart while reading, and ask them what questions were answered (or not answered) in the text. Have students write answers they found while reading in the L column of their KWLS worksheet.
- Reinforce that asking questions before and during reading, and looking for the answers while reading, keeps readers interested in the topic. It also encourages them to keep reading to find answers to their questions and helps them understand and enjoy what they have read.
- Point out to students that all of their questions may not have been answered in this text. Brainstorm other sources they might use to locate additional information to answer their questions. Invite students to fill in the final section (S) of their worksheet with information they would still like to know about the Mongolian Empire.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- Ask students to explain or show how identifying the author's purpose helped them understand and remember different parts of the book. Review the three different purposes from the chart on the board (to inform, to entertain, to persuade). Ask volunteers to share what they recorded on their own author's purpose worksheet. Add examples to the board as students offer/share them.
- Ask students if they were informed by the facts given in *The Mongol Empire*. Ask them to read examples of places in the text where they were informed (*By 1227, when Genghis Khan turned 65, the Mongols had established an empire; the Mongols were unbeatable because they were the most highly trained and highly disciplined soldiers the world had seen for a thousand years; and so on*).
- Ask students if they were persuaded by this story. Ask them to tell the information that was shared to persuade (the author discusses the possible influence of the Mongols, points out that the Mongol Empire brought peace across Asia and the Middle East, poses the possibility of Mongol Peace setting the stage for the Renaissance, and so on).
- **Check for understanding:** Ask students to think of a book they've read recently that taught them something (science book, biography, etc.). Ask them to think of something they've read that was funny, scary, silly, or mysterious (comics, fiction books). Ask students for an example of something they've read that attempted to get them to believe or do something (an advertisement or poster). Write students' responses on the board under the appropriate category.

- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned about the rise and fall of the Mongol Empire. In the late 1100s, the Mongol tribes were separate and fought among each other. When Genghis became khan, he unified the tribes, and they went on to conquer and build an enormous empire. After his death, the Mongols began to lose their unity and became completely fragmented by 1294. These less powerful bastions of Mongol power were all overthrown, one by one. Now that you know this information, how do you feel about the expression “united we stand, divided we fall”? Can you think of other instances in which this old adage might ring true?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Adjectives

- Review or explain that *adjectives* are words that describe nouns or pronouns. An adjective tells *which one, how many, or what kind*. Point out that this book is rich in descriptive language, and adjectives are plentiful.
- Write the following sentences on the board. Ask students to count the number of adjectives in each sentence.
Few episodes in history have been as astonishing as the conquests of the Mongols.
He was ruthless in defeating his enemies.
He built up an army and trained it to be a disciplined war machine.
- Have individual students come to the board and circle the adjective(s) in each sentence (*few, astonishing, ruthless, disciplined, and war*). Then have them underline the noun that each adjective describes (*episodes, he, and machine*). Discuss how the last sentence contains two different adjectives that describe one noun (*disciplined* and *war* both describe *machine*).
- Explain that an adjective doesn’t always precede the noun or pronoun it modifies, as seen in the second sentence.
- Point to the circled adjectives from the first sentence (*few* and *astonishing*). Ask students to determine whether the adjectives are telling which one, how many, or what kind (*few* describes how many; *astonishing* describes what kind). Repeat the exercise with the other two sentences.
- ✍ Have students use the inside back cover of their book to write *adjective* along with the definition of the term (a word describing a noun or pronoun that tells which one, how many, or what kind) to help them remember the terminology.
- ✍ **Check for understanding:** Give students highlighters and have them work in pairs to reread section three, “Genghis Khan.” Have them highlight all of the adjectives they find. Discuss the results as a group, identifying the noun that each adjective describes and whether the adjective tells which one, how many, or what kind.
- **Independent practice:** introduce, explain, and have students [complete-the-adjectives worksheet](#). Discuss the answers as a group once everyone has finished.

Word Work: Synonyms

- Write the word *useful* on the board. Ask students to suggest a word that means almost the same thing (*beneficial, handy, helpful*). Review or explain that a word that means the same or almost the same as another word is called a *synonym*.
- Ask students to explain why the use of synonyms is important in writing (they help to describe something in text, they make the writing more interesting and varied, etc.).
- Write the following sentence from page 8 on the board: *In 1215, after ferocious battles that left countless Chinese dead, the Mongols entered the Jin capital, Zhongdu.* Circle the word *ferocious*. Ask students to use the context clues in the sentence and picture clues on the page to suggest a word that means the same or almost the same as *ferocious*. Write these words on the board.

- Using a synonym suggested by students, ask what the differences might be between a *ferocious* battle and a (synonym suggested by students) battle. Ask them to explain how the word *ferocious* allows readers to get a more accurate or vivid description of the battle than a simpler synonym would provide. Point out that not all synonyms are the most appropriate word in a sentence, so writers need to think carefully about which word best expresses the thought.
- Show students a thesaurus. Model how to locate synonyms for the word *ferocious* in the thesaurus. Write the synonyms on the board. Remind students to look for the root or base word if they cannot find the word they're looking for in the thesaurus.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following sentence from page 8 on the board: *They plundered it and left it a smoking ruin.* Circle the word *plundered*. Ask students to use the context clues in the sentence and picture clues on the page to suggest a word that means the same or almost the same as *plundered*. Write these words on the board.
- Give pairs of students a thesaurus. Ask them to locate synonyms for the word *plundered* and write them on a separate piece of paper. Then have them choose one of the synonyms and use it to write a sentence on the paper. As time allows, provide additional practice using a thesaurus.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [synonyms worksheet](#). If time allows, check their responses.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, provide an area or small bulletin board in the room for students to write comments they have about the book. Encourage them to read each other's comments and look for similarities and differences.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students also take home their completed KWLS chart and explain what each column means, as well as sharing about the information they wrote on the chart.

Extend the Reading

Informational Writing Connection

Provide print and Internet sources for students to further research Chu Yuan-chang's revolt against the Mongols and the Yuan Dynasty, and the resulting Ming Dynasty. Have them read to find out information such as: where on a map China can be found, if there is present-day recognition of the Mongolian khanate in China, how many people died during the revolution, if Chu Yuan-chang's army was revered for defeating the Mongols, and any other interesting information they find. Have them write a report based on their findings and share in a roundtable discussion.

Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on informational writing.

Social Studies Connection

Supply each student with a copy of the world map. Explain how current-day country names and borders are different than they were in the 1200s. Discuss why this happens. Then have students locate and mark on their maps the current-day locations for the lands mentioned in the book. Allow time for students to discuss what they have learned. Hang one large poster map in the classroom with agreed-upon labels and locations for all of the battles and conquests of the Mongols.

Skill Review

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently ask relevant questions about a topic prior to and during reading; locate answers to their questions and write them on a worksheet
- thoughtfully analyze the author's purpose during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify and use synonyms during discussion and on a worksheet; understand how to use a thesaurus to locate synonyms for words
- recognize adjectives used in the text during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- **Book Quiz**
- **Retelling Rubric**