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Chapter 1: Early Singapore and its Connections

In early Singapore, Singapore was known as Temasek.
It was believed to have been founded by Sang Nila Utama from Sumatra.

Kingdoms / Power that controlled Singapore

Kingdom / Power	Time Period	Role in Singapore
Srivijaya	c. 7th–13th century	Controlled regional trade; Singapore (Temasek) was under its influence
Majapahit	13th–14th century	Powerful Javanese empire; caused instability and possible attacks
Kingdom of Singapura (Temasek)	14th century	Local trading settlement; rose as a port
Sultanate of Malacca	15th century	Became a stronger port; replaced Singapore's importance
Sultanate of Johor	16th–18th century	Singapore became a small settlement under Johor's control
British	From 1819	Start of modern Singapore

How Did Early Singapore Rise? (14th Century)

Strategic Location

- Convenient stopover ports where ships could resupply with food, water, and repairs
- Collection centres for goods exchanged between traders from different regions (Singapore as an entrepot meant traders from the Middle East, India, and China did not have to travel long distances to each other's countries to trade)

Fall of Kingdom of Srivijaya

- Srivijaya was a dominant maritime kingdom from the 7th to 13th century before declining in the 14th century due to a shift of trade routes from the Sunda Straits to the Straits of Melaka (shorter journey)
- Temasek is located along the Straits of Melaka

Monsoon Winds

- Temasek experienced monsoons at different times of the year, enabling traders to sail from their home ports to Asia and vice versa

- Temasek was a convenient location for traders to wait for monsoon wind patterns to change

Why Did Early Singapore Decline? (15th Century)

Decline of Temasek

Before the 5th ruler of Temasek (Prince Parameswara) came to power, Temasek was a vassal of the King of Siam (Thailand today). As Parameswara took power through violent means, the Siamese armies attacked Temasek to avenge the death of their ruler. Parameswara then fled Temasek and founded Melaka, while Temasek was destroyed by the Siamese attack and returned to being a vassal of Siam.

- Attack on Temasek by the Siamese destroyed Temasek, leading to its decline as a trading port
- Rise of Melaka – Melaka became the main port of call for the Chinese Navy as Melaka had pledged loyalty to the Ming emperor

As Temasek declined, it was eventually given up by the Siamese to Melaka and came under the control of Melaka in the 15th century.

In simple terms:

- **Temasek was under Siam (Thailand today).**
- Prince **Parameswara** took power violently → Siamese armies attacked Temasek to avenge their ruler.
- Temasek was **destroyed** and became a vassal of Siam again.
- Parameswara fled and founded **Melaka**, which rose as a new powerful trading port.
- **Key idea:** Temasek lost importance, Melaka became the main port (especially for the Chinese Navy, since Melaka pledged loyalty to the Ming emperor).

Temasek under the Johor-Riau Sultanate

In 1511, the Portuguese conquered Melaka, leading to its ruler fleeing to Johor to establish the Johor-Riau Sultanate, which Singapore was part of. Singapore continued its role as a trading port and did not lose its trade connections.

The Emergence of Europeans in SEA

In the 16th century, the Europeans arrived in SEA for the spice trade. To attain their goal of building a monopoly in the region, they required control over ports and sea routes. During this time, the Portuguese and the Dutch engaged in fierce conflict over the region and considered building a fortress in Singapore to protect their trading merchants. This rivalry ended in 1641 when the Dutch gained control over Melaka and became the dominant European power in the Malay Archipelago.

Timeline of Temasek & Melaka

- **Before 1400s** → Temasek declines after the Siamese attack; Parameswara flees and finds **Melaka**.
- **1400s** → Temasek later comes under the **Johor–Riau Sultanate** after Melaka rises.
- **1511** → Portuguese conquest of **Melaka** (Afonso de Albuquerque); Sultan Mahmud Shah flees to Johor.
- **16th century** → Europeans (Portuguese & Dutch) compete fiercely for spice trade dominance.
- **1641** → Dutch defeat Portuguese, take control of **Melaka**, becoming the dominant European power in the Malay Archipelago.

And that was everything explained from the 14th century to the 16th century.

The timeline below summarizes the rise and fall of Temasek.

Timeline of Temasek (Rise → Fall)

- **7th–13th century:**
 - The **Srivijaya Kingdom** dominates maritime trade in Southeast Asia.
 - Temasek is relatively minor during this period.
- **14th century (Rise of Temasek):**
 - The **decline of Srivijaya** shifts trade routes from the Sunda Straits to the Straits of Melaka.
 - Temasek's **strategic location** makes it a convenient stopover for ships to resupply and trade.
 - Traders from **China, India, and the Middle East** use Temasek as an **entrepot**.
 - Seasonal **monsoon winds** make Temasek a natural waiting point for merchants.
- **Late 14th century (Parameswara's rule):**
 - Prince **Parameswara** seizes power in Temasek.
 - Temasek became a **vassal of Siam** (Thailand).
 - Parameswara's violent rise angers Siam → **Siamese armies attack Temasek**.
 - Temasek is **destroyed**; Parameswara flees.
- **Early 1400s (Rise of Melaka):**
 - Parameswara founded **Melaka**, which quickly grew into a major trading hub.
 - Temasek loses importance as Melaka pledges loyalty to the **Ming emperor** and gains Chinese support.
- **15th century:**
 - Temasek comes under **Melaka's control** after its decline.
- **1511 (Portuguese conquest of Melaka):**
 - Portuguese forces capture Melaka.
 - Sultan Mahmud Shah flees and establishes the **Johor-Riau Sultanate**, which includes Temasek.
- **16th century (European rivalry):**
 - Portuguese and Dutch compete for control of Southeast Asian trade routes.

- Temasek remains part of Johor-Riau but is overshadowed by Melaka.
- **1641 (Dutch dominance):**
 - The Dutch defeat the Portuguese and take control of Melaka.
 - The Dutch became the dominant European power in the Malay Archipelago.