TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU

SEVENTH GRADE: The Middle Ages to the Exploration of the Americas

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After the fall of the Roman Empire the spread of new ideas based on science and reason across Eurasia established the basis of what would become the modern nations that we know today. It bridges the ancient and modern worlds, covering over a thousand years of history.

Europe formed from the remnants of the western Roman Empire. North Africa and the Middle East prospered under the spread of Islamic rule. Civilizations clashed and combined in the newly discovered Americas. Powers around the globe expanded their trading networks along with their knowledge of the world. Two of the major themes include the solidification, expansion, and power of Christian and Muslim doctrine and influence, and the development of technology and scientific knowledge to enable long-distance travel, trade, and communications. Another theme is the growth of a worldview based on reason—in opposition to religious influence but parallel to the advance of scientific knowledge—which led to the European Enlightenment and global cultural exchange.

This period of history not only sets the stage for modern world history, but it also provides context for the settlement of the American colonies and the founding of the United States.

ADDITIONAL LINKS

- World Digital Library
- World History Lesson Plans
- Medieval History newsletter (March 2013)
- World History & Cultures newsletter (September 2009)
- Browse by Topic: World History & Cultures
- World Treasures: Beginnings

A new and correct map of the world : laid down according to the newest observations & discoveries in several different projections including the trade winds, monsoons, variation of the compass, and illustrated with a coelestial planisphere, the various systems of Ptolomy, Copernicus, and Tycho Brahe together with ye apearancies of the planets &c. / [1702]

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

With the shift in 7th-grade teaching from geography to World History and Geography, teachers are in great need of resources to cover the additional material. Therefore, this primary source set is geared towards the 7th grade Social Studies curriculum standards. The curricular units, such as “Africa, 400 A.D./C.E.-1500s” and “The Middle Ages in Western Europe” are here in the subheadings, about one to two per page, and follow the order in the standards groupings. Seventh grade teachers can use this set throughout the year as they cover different civilizations and events.

Several of the following primary sources are parts of online exhibitions that would make good secondary source reading assignments for students, due to the explanatory narrative and development of world history themes.
EAST ASIA, 400-1500s CE

One Million Small Wooden Pagodas and Dharani Prayers [770 C.E.]

Gemji Monogatari
a.k.a. Eiribon Genji Monogatari
(Tale of Genji)
[1654; see also this version]

Itsukushima Shinto Shrine, Japan [1908]

Ronin, or masterless Samurai, fending off arrows [1869]

Shinto funeral ornaments [1878]

Folk Dances of Japan [c.1600-1650]

Map of China [c.1368-1644]

Asian Reading Room

Atlas de la Chine [1790]

Outline Map of Japan [1687]
EAST ASIA, 400-1500s CE

|Da Ming yu di tu| 大明與地图| Atlas of the Ming Empire [c.1547 and 1559]

The history of Genghizcan the Great, first emperor of the ancient Moguls and Tartars; in four books [1722]

Inscribed stones, the reputed writings of Confucius. Temple of Confucius, Peking, China [1902]

Camel train from Mongolia via Nankow Pass, coming through the Great Wall of China [1902]

Hall of Supreme Harmony - main hall in the Forbidden City, Beijing, China, where the emperor met his ministers each morning; includes inscription in Chinese language characters in right margin [c.1860-1900]
The ecclesiastical history of Eusebius Pamphilus: Bishop of Caesarea, in Palestine. [1833] see pp. 426 and following for parts about Constantine; see also these excerpts from Eusebius’ Life of Constantine.
**Ethiopian Gospels** [around 1300 CE—1350 CE]

**The Psalm of David, Ge'ez Manuscript Psalter** [c. 15th or 16th century]

**Guinea propia, nec non Nigritiae vel Terrarum maxima pars...** [1743]

**Muslim distribution: Islamic countries** [2002]

**Agra, Taj Mahal** [c. 1890–1900]

**Panel of Illumination, Qur'anic verses** [9th century]

**Letter of Süleyman the Magnificent to Francis I, King of France, Istanbul, 1536** [1536]
West Africa 400-1500s CE

Predominant tribe in the area: Ghana [c.1966]

This map shows the trip to Mecca made in A.D. 1324 by the fabulously wealthy king Mansa Musa... [1375]

African Peoples’ Encounters With Others

Three Texts from Timbuktu [c.1913]

Great Trading Routes of the Sahara [1890]

Map of the Barbury, the Nigrita, and Guinea [c.1718]
Middle Ages in Western Europe: 400s-1500s CE

- Map of the Far East and adjacent Pacific [1290s]
- Denier [c.812-814]. For excerpts from Einhard’s Life of Charlemagne, click here.
- Mount Hermon and vicinity, Hasbeya, The Shihab Castle, Late medieval incorporating Crusader remains [c.1920-1933]
- Medieval book collector sitting at desk, reading [1494]
- Quai vert, Bruges, Belgium [c. 1890 -1900]
- Einsiedeln, schoolhouse and monastery, Lake Lucerne, Switzerland [c.1890-1900]
- William the Conqueror, main character of the Bayeux Tapestry
  - Bayeux Tapestry

Magna Carta: Muse & Mentor (Exhibition)

Joan of Arc [1851]
EARLY MODERN EUROPE: 1400-1700 CE

The Gutenberg Bible [1455]

Das Zeitalter der Reformation [18—-]

Reproduction of page from notebook of Leonardo da Vinci showing giant crossbow [between 1894 and 1904 (reproduction)]

The muscles of the left leg, seen from the front, and the bones and muscles of the right leg seen in right profile, and between them, a patella. Drawing by Michelangelo Buonarroti, ca. 1515-1520.

A new and correct map of the world: laid down according to the newest observations & discoveries in several different projections including the trade winds, monsoons, variation of the compass... [1702]

Compound microscope as rendered by artist in Descartes "La Dioptrique" [1637, detail]

Reproduction of rough sketch by Isaac Newton showing a reflecting telescope and its components [1959-1977 (reproduction), detail]

Montesquieu to George Washington, April 25, 1785, in French, with Translation and Copy [1785].

Ninety-Five Theses [1517, detail; see translation here]
Civilizations of the Americas: 400s-1500s CE

- Native Americans—National Archives
- 1492: An Ongoing Voyage
- Exploring the Early Americas

Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley [1848]

Canadian Indian [1732]

In the Land of the Sioux [c.1905]

Scene of ancient Mayan Indian monument in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico [1844]

Monument of the Ancient Mayan Race, Quiriguá, Guatemala [c.400-1890]

Huitzilopochtli, the Principal Aztec God [c.1585]
THE AGE OF EXPLORATION: 1400s–1700s CE

Concerning Discovered Islands: Letter of Christopher Columbus, to Whom Our Age is Greatly Indebted, Concerning Islands Recently Discovered in the Indian Ocean [1493; p. 5 shown at right]. For an English edition of this letter, see A Letter of Christopher Columbus. For excerpts from Columbus’s journal, click here.

Evangelium Sanctum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, In Arabic, Rome: Typographia Medicea, 1590

World Map in [Donnus Nicolaus Germanus] Cosmographia, Claudii Ptolemaeus, Ulm, 1482. [scroll to 3rd picture]

Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptolomacii traditionem et Americi Vespucii aliorumque lustrationes, [1507] See lesson plan built around this primary source.
CITATIONS: The Middle Ages to the Exploration of the Americas

Teachers: Providing these primary source replicas without source clues may enhance the inquiry experience for students. This list of citations is supplied for reference purposes to you and your students. We have followed the Chicago Manual of Style format, one of the formats recommended by the Library of Congress, for each entry below, minus the access date. The access date for each of these entries is 11/12/14.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Godson, W. *A new and correct map of the world*: laid down according to the newest observations & discoveries in several different projections including the trade winds, monsoons, variation of the compass, and illustrated with a coelestial planisphere, the various systems of Ptolomy, Copernicus, and Tycho Brahe together with ye apearances of the planets &c. / . Map. London: George Willdey, [1702]. From Library of Congress, Geography and Map. http://www.loc.gov/item/2006629779/

EAST ASIA: 400-1500s CE


CITATIONS CONTINUED

EAST ASIA: 400-1500s CE


Petis de la Croix, Francois. “The history of Genghiscan the Great, first emperor of the antient Moguls and Tartars; in four books: containing his life, advancement and conquests; with a short history of his successors to the present time; the manners, customs and laws of the antient Moguls and Tartars; and the late geography of the vast countries of Mogolistan, Turquestan, Capschac, Yagurestan, and the Eastern and Western Tartary. Collected from several Oriental authors, and European travellers; whose names, with an abridgment of their lives, are added to this book. By the late M. Petis


“Hall of Supreme Harmony - main hall in the Forbidden City, Beijing, China, where the emperor met his ministers each morning; includes inscription in Chinese language characters in right margin.” Graphite drawing. [1860-1990]. From Library of Congress, Drawings (Documentary). http://www.loc.gov/item/2004673469/.

BYZANTINE EMPIRE: 400-1500s CE


SOUTH WEST ASIA AND NORTH AMERICA: 400-1500s CE


*Panel of Illumination, Qur'anic verses*. Manuscript. [9th century]. From Library of Congress, *African and Middle East Division / Global Gateway: Selections of Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Calligraphy*. [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?intldl/ascsbib:@field%28DOCID+@lit%28ascs000140%29%29](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?intldl/ascsbib:@field%28DOCID+@lit%28ascs000140%29%29).


WEST AFRICA: 400-1500s CE.


MIDDLE AGES IN WESTERN EUROPE: 400s-1500s CE


EARLY MODERN EUROPE: 1400-1700S CE


CITATIONS CONTINUED...

EARLY MODERN EUROPE: 1400-1700s CE

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CIVILIZATIONS OF THE AMERICAS: 400s-1500s CE


“Scene of ancient Mayan Indian monument in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico.” Engraving. [1844]. From Library of Congress, Photo, Print, Drawing. [https://www.loc.gov/item/2005678017/](https://www.loc.gov/item/2005678017/)


THE AGE OF EXPLORATION: 1400s-1700s CE


