



800 CE

Explore the exchange of ideas and goods that connected cultures across Eurasia to one another in the early 9th century CE.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What factors contributed to cultural exchange and unification across Eurasia in the early 9th century CE?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the unification of Western Europe under Charlemagne
- Students will learn about Islamic cultural practices and Islam's spread across Asia
- Students will learn about the contributions of the Silk Road to the movement of goods, ideas, and people
- Students will explain how cultural characteristics affect the distribution and movement of people, goods, and ideas
- Students will use questions generated about individuals to analyze why the developments they shaped are seen as highly significant
- Students will explain how changes in transportation technology affect the diffusion of ideas and cultural practices
- Students will use evidence from a text to write a historical narrative
- Students will create a timeline to sequence historical events
- Students will conduct research using print and digital sources



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core Social Studies skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

- **"Father of Europe"**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1050L
- **The Great Caliph**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1350L
- **Across to Japan**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1250L

“Father of Europe”

pp. 4–7, Expository Nonfiction

Discover how Charlemagne unified Western Europe through conquest and the spread of ideas.



RESOURCES

- Analyzing Movement Graphic Organizer

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article
- Students will explain how cultural characteristics affect the distribution and movement of people and ideas
- Students will use evidence from a text to write a historical narrative

KEY VOCABULARY

- barbarians (p. 4)** people from an alien land, culture, or group believed to be inferior, uncivilized, or violent
- feudalism (p. 6)** system of political organization in Europe from the 9th to 15th century where commoners pledged loyalty to a land-owning lord and received land and protection in exchange
- confederation (p. 7)** a union of political entities

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What factors contributed to cultural exchange and unification across Eurasia in the early 9th century CE?

Ask students to imagine what living in Europe was like in the Middle Ages. What do they think people identified with (e.g., a lord, a place, a king, an ethnic group)? Why?

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Together, review the vocabulary words and read them aloud. Then, ask students to make predictions about the topic of the text using the vocabulary words. If necessary, help students guess the topic by revealing the title of the article.

READ & DISCUSS

Read the article with a partner, and then use these prompts for discussion:

- What peoples did Charlemagne unify under one political order?
- How did Charlemagne govern his empire?
- How did Charlemagne attempt to influence the beliefs of those he had conquered?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Explain Movement

INSTRUCT: Have students make a list of cultural characteristics of Charlemagne’s empire mentioned in the article. Then, have students work in pairs to categorize these characteristics as relating to one of the following four types: political order, law, government, and education.

Next, distribute copies of the *Analyzing Movement* graphic organizer. Ask each pair to complete the organizer, using evidence from the text to support their answers.

ASSESS: Arrange small circles of three or four student pairs. Tell students that the first pair will choose one of the four types of cultural characteristics they identified and ask the rest of the group to give an example of how that characteristic affected the movement of people and ideas.

EXTEND

English Language Arts Reflect on Charlemagne’s accomplishments and how they changed life for peoples across Europe. Then, write a short diary entry from the perspective of someone living in Europe during the 9th century CE that discusses how Charlemagne changed their lives. Be sure to use details from the text in your diary entry.

Analyzing Movement

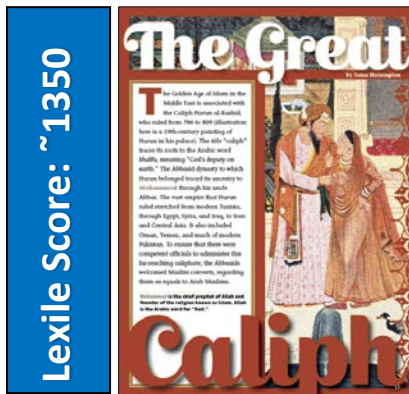
The movement of goods, people, and ideas occurs as a result of cultural exchange. These exchanges often lead to changes in people’s cultures. Think about Charlemagne’s actions related to political order, law, government, and education that resulted in cultural exchange. List his actions in the first column. In the second column, describe the resulting cultural change.

Charlemagne’s Action	Cultural Change(s) That Occurred as a Result
Political order	
Law	
Government	
Education	

The Great Caliph

pp. 17–19, Expository Nonfiction

Dive into the Abbasid Empire and discover how it encouraged the exchange of ideas among diverse cultures.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article
- Students will use questions generated about individuals to analyze why the developments they shaped are seen as highly significant
- Students will create a timeline to sequence historical events

KEY VOCABULARY

- **caliph (p. 17)** the chief Muslim religious and civil ruler, regarded as the successor of Muhammad
- **patron (p. 18)** a person who gives financial or other support to a person, organization, cause, or activity
- **cistern (p. 19)** an underground reservoir for storing water

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What factors contributed to cultural exchange and unification across Eurasia in the early 9th century CE?

Explain to students that after the establishment of Islam as a political and religious force on the Arabian Peninsula, it quickly spread across Africa and parts of Eurasia. Have students hypothesize how Islamic rulers might have responded to the challenges of ruling a religiously diverse population as a result of this rapid expansion?

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Together, review the vocabulary words and read them aloud. Then ask students to choose two or more words from the vocabulary list and write a sentence about the Roman military under Augustus using them.

READ & DISCUSS

Read the article with a partner, and then use these prompts for discussion:

- How did the Abbasids ensure there were competent officials to administer their empire?
- How did Caliph Harun promote the exchange of ideas among cultures?
- How and why did the Abbasids promote religious tolerance?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Developments

INSTRUCT: Ask students to work in pairs to generate questions about cultural developments under Caliph Harun. Then, have each pair team up with another group and take turns asking each other their questions and answering them.

ASSESS: Have each student pick one question they were asked by another group and write a paragraph summarizing why that cultural development was highly significant.

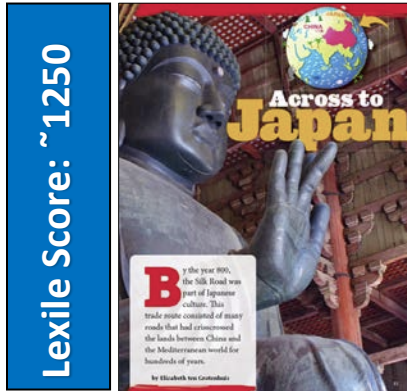
EXTEND

Social Studies Use details from the article to create a timeline of the Abbasid Dynasty under Caliph Harun, from the events leading to his being named caliph to his death.

Across to Japan

pp. 31–33, Expository Nonfiction

Explore how the Silk Road opened Japan to influences from China and beyond.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article
- Students will explain how changes in transportation technology affect the diffusion of ideas and cultural practices
- Students will conduct research using print and digital sources

KEY VOCABULARY

- **Mediterranean world (p. 31)** the areas in Europe, Africa, and Asia bordering the Mediterranean Sea
- **Silk Road (p. 32)** an ancient network of trade routes stretching from Japan to the Mediterranean Sea
- **Central Asia (p. 33)** a region of Asia from the Caspian Sea in the west to central China in the east, and from southern Russia in the north to northern India in the south

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What factors contributed to cultural exchange and unification across Eurasia in the early 9th century CE?

Ask students to explain what they know about the Silk Road and the lands it went through. Have students hypothesize ways that the Silk Road may have affected the cultures who used it.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Write the following sentences on the board. Then, ask students to decide which two words from the vocabulary list should be used to complete the sentence.

- Objects from the _____ were taken across _____ along the _____ to Japan.
- The _____ helped traders carry goods from the _____ to _____.

READ & DISCUSS

Read the article with a partner, and then use these prompts for discussion:

- What evidence is there to support the claim that Chinese culture influenced Japan?
- What evidence is there to support the claim that cultures from West and Central Asia influenced Japan?
- What can you infer about the geographic extent of the Silk Road from the details in the article?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Explain Cultural Diffusion

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that cultural diffusion occurs when ideas and practices belonging to one culture are transferred to another. Then, ask students to use details from the article to identify and explain an example of cultural diffusion of religious ideas that occurred from India and China to Japan.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to identify an example of cultural diffusion of artistic practices that spread from Central Asia to Japan.

EXTEND

Social Studies The article gives examples of cultural diffusion from parts of Asia to Japan. Use the library and internet to conduct research to identify Japanese ideas and practices that were diffused to other cultures by way of the Silk Road. Present your findings to the class.