

World History: Afro-Eurasian Trade & The Silk Road



Use the matching sheet ID when checking answers.

Part A: Multiple Choice. Analyze the economic and cultural dynamics of medieval trans-Eurasian trade routes.

1. Beyond physical trade commodities like silk, porcelain, and spices, what was arguably the MOST consequential historical impact of the Silk Road networks?

Answer: B. Cultural diffusion: the cross-continental transmission of ideas, scientific technologies (papermaking, compass), and world religions

Caravans carried scholars, monks, and diplomats alongside merchants, spreading transformative technologies (paper, gunpowder, compass) and major religions (Buddhism, Islam, Christianity).

2. Why did merchants on the overland Silk Road typically travel in large caravans and trade through intermediary relay cities rather than one single merchant traveling all 4,000 miles?

Answer: B. Caravans provided armed mutual protection against bandits across harsh terrain like the Taklamakan Desert

Extreme geographic hazards (mountain passes, waterless deserts) and highway bandits made collective caravan travel and relay trading at Caravanserais essential for merchant survival.

3. Which technological transfer originating in Han/Tang China revolutionized recordkeeping, governance, and scholarship when it reached the Islamic world and Europe via the Silk Road?

Answer: A. Cellulose papermaking

Papermaking technology spread from China to Samarkand in the 8th century, rapidly transforming the House of Wisdom in Baghdad and later replacing expensive parchment across Europe.

Part B: Trade Exchange Flow Chart. Categorize which commodities and innovations originated in the East (East Asia) vs West/South (Mediterranean & South Asia).

Sort these items: Mulberry silk textiles, fine porcelain pottery, and cast iron plows; Roman blown glassware, olive oil, wool tapestries, and gold coins; Woodblock printing and magnetic navigation compasses; Indian cotton textiles, black pepper, cinnamon, and frankincense resins; Cultivated tea leaves and dried medicinal rhubarb roots; Arabian war horses, alfalfa fodder, and mathematical algebra treatises

Originated in East Asia (China)	Originated in West / South Asia & Mediterranean
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