
Dynasties of Medieval China

Goals & Objectives

Students will learn about five dynasties of medieval China, namely: the Sui, the Tang, the Song, the Yuan and the Ming. Students will identify the reasons for the rise, height and fall of each dynasty, explain major accomplishments, and describe how the Chinese belief systems of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism influenced the policies of each dynasty. Students will compare and contrast the important elements of the five dynasties.

California State Content Standard

7.3 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the civilizations of China in the Middle Ages.

7.3.1 Describe the reunification of China under the Tang Dynasty and reasons for the spread of Buddhism in Tang China, Korea, and Japan.

7.3.2 Describe agricultural, technological, and commercial developments during the Tang and Sung periods.

7.3.4 Understand the importance of both overland trade and maritime expeditions between China and other civilizations in the Mongol Ascendancy and Ming Dynasty.

7.3.6 Describe the development of the imperial state and the scholar-official class.

Vocabulary

The key terms for this lesson will be discussed and explained in the pre-reading activity at the beginning of the lesson, and will be used in the foldable students create to engage with the textbook chapter. The key terms will be: *warlord, economy, reform, monastery, tribe, steppe, terror, treason, census, novel, barbarian, civil-service exam, public works.*

Lesson Introduction

The teacher will hand out and read the following passage from Emperor Taizong (of the Tang Dynasty) on the importance of establishing relatives to rule effectively:

The country is huge and the responsibility for it is heavy. A huge country cannot be evenly governed by the emperor alone; the responsibility is too great for one man. Thus, the emperor should entreat relatives to guard the outlying prefectures. Whether the country is at peace or in danger, they cooperate; whether the country is thriving or declining, they work together



with one heart. Both distant and close relations are supported and employed; encroachment and rebellion are prevented.

Students will turn to their partners and think-pair-share what this passage means (specifically, what is the importance of family in a dynasty?) The teacher will call on groups of students to share their responses.

Content Delivery

The teacher will direct students to open their textbooks to the chapter, *China in the Middle Ages*. The teacher will pre-read the chapter with the class by having students read each heading and sub-heading. As they read the headings, the teacher will activate prior knowledge and set the context for learning the new material by asking students what they already know about each topic and what they expect to learn from the text based on the title of each section.

The teacher will divide the class into groups of three or four and assign each group one dynasty on which to become an expert (the Sui, the Tang, the Song, the Yuan or the Ming). Students in each group will be directed to read the section in the textbook that is about their assigned dynasty.

Student Engagement

As they read, students will complete a four-door foldable on their assigned dynasty. The topics on the foldable will be: *Rise and Rule, Accomplishments, Belief Systems, and Difficulties and Decline*. Each section of the foldable should include a minimum of four ideas/statements/facts and an illustration/graph/symbol. On the back of each section of the foldable, students must list the key terms bolded in the text, define them and draw a picture or synonym for each.

After the reading and foldable have been completed, students will change groups so that each group has a representative from all five dynasties. Students in the new group will present the information they learned about their dynasty (and showcase their foldable) while the other group members complete a graphic organizer (mind map) with the information they learn about all five dynasties.

Lesson Closure

The teacher will hang large Venn Diagrams around the room with all possible pairings of dynasties. Students will go up to at least two posters and contribute a similarity and/or difference between the dynasties.



Assessment (Formative and Summative)

Formative – As students are working on their foldables, the teacher will check on individual students to assess the quality of the information they are writing. If students are not demonstrating understanding, the teacher will ask questions, scaffold the reading process and guide students to relevant sections in the text. The teacher will also informally evaluate the responses on the Venn Diagram to check for understanding.

Summative – The teacher will assess and score the completed foldables for accuracy and quality of writing.

Accommodations for English Learners, Striving Readers and Students with Special Needs

The teacher will provide additional vocabulary support for English Learners, striving readers and students with special needs, including a list of more common, but difficult terms with definitions and images. Depending on the student's needs, modified readings may be provided. The teacher will also provide these students with a partially complete foldable to give them a more comprehensive example of the task before them.