



Big Era Five
Patterns of Interregional Unity
300-1500 CE



Landscape Teaching Unit 5.5
Calamities and Recoveries
1300-1500

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Why this unit?

There have been points in history when societies faced calamities so great there seemed no hope of recovery. But time and again, humans have proven their resilience and adaptability in the face of such challenges. This unit examines striking examples of this human capability as it focuses on a series of devastating calamities that befell large parts of Afroeurasia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the remarkable recoveries that followed.

The perceived nature of a calamity and the human response to it depend on point of view. As Ambrose Bierce said, “Calamity is of two kinds: misfortune to ourselves, and good fortune to others.” Point of view is an important element of historical understanding and is therefore another focus of this unit.

The fall of the Mongol Yuan dynasty in China at the hands of Hung Wu, the future Ming dynasty emperor, provides the historical context in which the concepts of calamity, recovery, and point of view are first introduced. This recovery for the Chinese (and calamity for the Mongols) is then linked with the outbreak and spread of infectious plague across Eurasia. The natural disasters associated with the “Little Ice Age” are also examined. This also helps set the stage for a study of differing accounts of the Black Death. A graphing activity examines the demographic patterns that mark these disasters and the beginnings of recovery.

Yet another wave of disaster descends on Eurasia as the Mongol-Turkic Timur (Tamerlane) stormed across the continent in whirlwind military campaigns. At the same time, however, the Ming recovery continued. Partially in response to Timur’s threats the Chinese admiral Zheng He led a spectacular series of naval expeditions into the Indian Ocean. Students practice their mapping skills and discover the geographic extent of these events. The Ottoman Empire, one of Timur’s many victims, made a remarkable recovery from near destruction to again threaten the remnants of the once mighty Byzantine Empire. Students are challenged to interpret an emotionally charged primary source account of the fall of Constantinople and translate it into an objective record of that event. In a culminating activity, students investigate the myriad calamities and their unforeseen effects on the recovery of Europe. In a foreshadowing of later units, students are finally asked to speculate on the possible calamities that might result from Europe’s recovery.

Unit objectives

Upon completing this unit, students will be able to:

1. Identify calamities and recoveries based on “point of view.”
2. Describe the fall of the Yuan Dynasty and the rise of the Ming Dynasty in China.
3. Predict effects of increased contact between East Asia and Europe.
4. Assess the impact of climatic change on European agriculture and population in the early fourteenth century.
5. Identify major effects of the Black Death and draw evidence from primary source documents to infer how people across Afroeurasia responded to the Black Death.

6. Use quantitative data to construct a graph that illustrates demographic change in Afroeurasia.
7. Explain the relationship between events of the period and demographic trends.
8. Assess the impact of Timur's conquests on Asia, and create a map to illustrate the geographic extent of Timur's empire.
9. Evaluate the importance of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles as both a link and a barrier between Europe and Asia.
10. Detect and evaluate bias in primary source documents.
11. Use a primary source document to construct a neutral account of the conquest/liberation of Constantinople.
12. Use historical evidence to construct a hypothesis concerning elements of Europe's recovery from the calamities of this period.

Time and materials

This unit should take 5 to 7 class periods, depending on the length of the class, the grade level/abilities of the students, and whether or not teachers choose to teach all parts of each lesson.

Materials required:

Atlases

Colored pencils

Overhead projector (optional)

Rulers and graph paper, or computers and graphing software

Authors

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The historical context

The three centuries leading up to the period that this teaching unit explores witnessed a strengthening of interconnections among peoples across Afroeurasia. The sailing ships that crossed the wide sea basins carried a greater volume and variety of goods than ever before. Caravan traffic crossed the Inner Eurasian steppes and the Sahara Desert more frequently. As trade and travel intensified, so did cultural exchanges and encounters, presenting local societies with many new opportunities. In the 1000-1300 period, China, India, and, on a smaller scale, Europe achieved remarkable population and economic growth. Buddhism, Christianity, and

Islam all attracted millions of new followers, and new Muslim states and towns appeared in Africa, Inner Eurasia, and Southeast Asia. In the early thirteenth century, the Mongols under Chinggis Khan (Genghis Khan) created the largest land empire the world had ever seen (see Landscape Teaching Unit 5.4). The Mongol conquests were terrifying, but the stabilizing of four great Mongol kingdoms, as well as other strong states in India, Egypt, West Africa, and Europe, brought about a century of fertile commercial and cultural exchange across Afroeurasia.

This era of growth and interchange came to a dramatic end in the first half of the fourteenth century, as multiple crises beset much of Afroeurasia. The greatest catastrophe was the Black Death, the great plague **pandemic** of the mid-century. It may well have been a consequence of improved trans-hemispheric interchange: the trade networks carried infectious disease microorganisms as well as commercial goods. The world historian Jerry H. Bentley has summarized the crisis of the Black Death:

Cross-cultural interactions not only served as a foundation for the age of nomadic empires but also helped bring it to an end. Frequent and regular trade over long distances facilitated the spread of diseases as well as commodities and religious faiths. The culprit during the age of nomadic empires was bubonic plague, which caused lethal epidemics in much of Eurasia and North Africa beginning about the mid-fourteenth century. Wherever it struck, bubonic plague disrupted economies and societies, and it wrecked the structures that supported long-distance trade, travel, and communication. . . . Between 1300 and 1400 C. E., the population of Europe declined about 25 percent, from an estimated 79 million to 60 million. Between 1200 and 1400, the population of China—devastated by Mongol conquests as well as bubonic plague—plunged from about 115 million to 75 million. Cross-cultural interaction did not cease altogether, but during the second half of the fourteenth century it became less regular, intense, and systematic than during the previous 300 years (Bentley 768).

Outbreaks of infectious disease continued to recur in Europe, Southwest Asia, and perhaps other regions about every two decades in the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. These echoes of the Black Death tended to get progressively weaker, but they retarded recovery of populations. Until recently, historians widely accepted the theory that the Black Death and recurring disease outbreaks may all be attributed to the particular infection known as bubonic plague. New research has brought this theory into question. No scholar has played down the horrendous mortality of the Black Death, but some have questioned the nature of the disease. Historians continue to debate this issue. (The Resources section of this teaching unit includes some of the recent literature.)



Several of the other crises of the 1300-1500 period were likely linked in one way or another to the great pandemic. These crises included:

The Little Ice Age, a period of climatic cooling that began in the late thirteenth century and has been linked to a shrinkage of farming in Europe and Inner Eurasia and to consequent outbreaks of famine. Some historians argue that famines in Europe made sick

and impoverished peasants more susceptible to infection when the Black Death hit. Other scholars, however, disagree.

The collapse of all four of the great Mongol states:

Mongol State	Time of Its Fall	Note
Ilkhanate (Kingdom) of Persia and Iraq	1335	
Yuan Dynasty of China	1368	
Chagatay khanate of Inner Eurasia	1405	
Khanate of the Golden Horde (Kipchak) in Russia and western Inner Eurasia	Late 15th century	The empire of the Golden Horde had several small successor kingdoms, some of which endured into the 19th century.

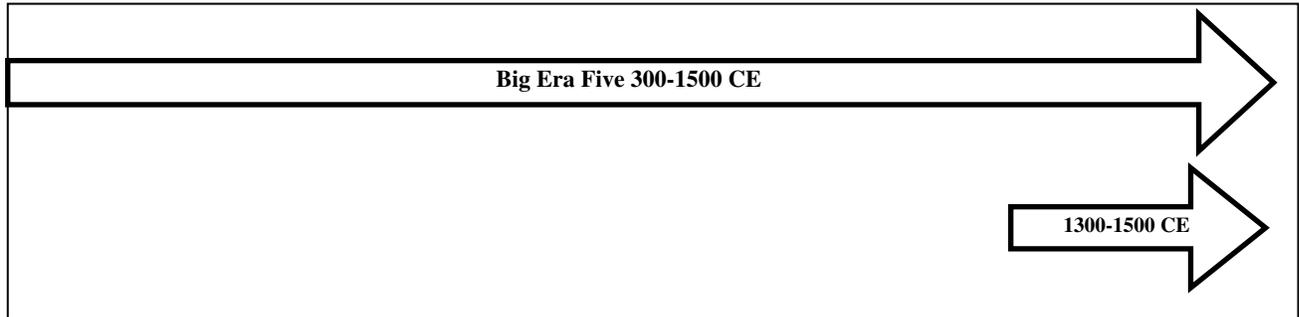
Decline or upheaval in other states that had flourished in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, notably Mali in West Africa, the Marinid kingdom in Morocco, the Mamluk sultanate in Egypt and Syria, and the Delhi sultanate in India.

Crises in Europe included the Hundred Years War, troubles in the Roman Catholic Papacy, and several major peasant rebellions.

The conquests of the Turko-Mongol leader Timur (Tamerlane. 1370-1405), which devastated large areas of Southwest Asia and India but fragmented after its founder's death.

All these crises caused suffering for millions, but they also altered the social, economic, and cultural landscape, presenting new opportunities for those who survived. In the second half of the fifteenth century, Afroeurasia's overall population began to rise again, and strong new states and empires emerged, including Ming dynasty China, Vijayanagar in India, the Ottoman empire in Southwest Asia and Europe, and, in western Europe, Spain, Portugal, France, England, and the Hapsburgh empire. Not only did trans-hemispheric trade move toward recovery, but European mariners succeeded in crossing the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, establishing permanent communication links between Afroeurasia and the Americas.

This unit in the Big Era Timeline



Lesson 1

A Brilliant Recovery

Preparation

Duplicate Student Handouts: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4. Optional: Make a transparency of Student Handout 1.3 for use on an overhead projector.

Introduction

Tell students that the period from 1300 to 1500 was a time of many calamities, or disasters. The nature of these calamities and how people responded to them is one of the big stories of this era. In the first lesson, students will define the terms calamity and recovery, then apply those definitions to the fall of the Mongol Yuan dynasty and the rise of the Ming dynasty in China.

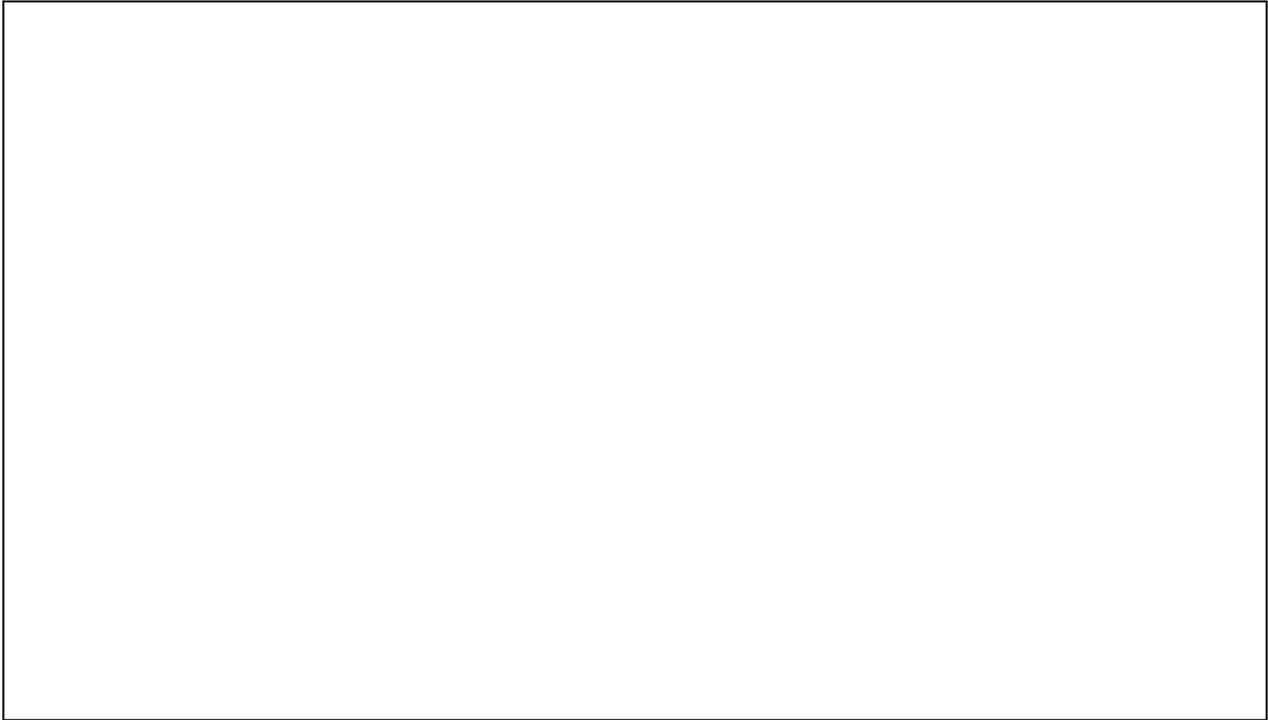
1. Ask students to formulate a working definition for the term “calamity.” Distribute Student Handout 1.1 and have students complete the activity. Allow time for students to share their pictures and stories of calamity and recovery.
2. Give students a copy of Student Handout 1.2. Ask them to look for examples of calamities and recoveries in this reading. (One option is to have students use two different colored highlighters, one to identify calamities and the other recoveries.) Tell students to enter the examples they found on Student Handout 1.3 and answer the questions that follow.
3. Discuss student answers on their graphic organizer. Discussion might include:
 - Summaries of historical events.
 - Evaluation of the severity of challenges that people in East Asia faced.
 - Explanation of reasoning used to categorize events.
 - Definition of point of view.
 - Relevance of Bierce’s quote to the situation in China in this era.
4. Explain to students that the events in China they have just discussed led to another great calamity. In the next activity, they will examine certain historical facts in order to predict what that calamity will be. Give students a copy of Student Handout 1.4 and have them make their predictions. Ask students to share their predictions, but do not reveal the subsequent calamity. Tell students that the answer will be revealed in the next lesson.

Lesson 1

Student Handout 1.1

Calamity and Recovery

In the box below, make a sketch of a calamity. Write a caption for your illustration.



Think of a situation in which someone (you or someone you have heard of) has recovered from a calamity. On the lines below, describe the calamity. Then tell about the recovery.

Lesson 1***Student Handout 1.2*****A Brilliant Recovery**

Cheers filled the air as Zhu Yuan-zhang crossed the grand courtyard of Beijing's Forbidden City—the emperor's palace—and slowly climbed the long flight of palace steps. At the top, he paused and looked out over the city and the throng of his supporters gathered there. The reality of his hard-won victory had still not sunk in. The year was 1368 and the hated Mongols were gone. Once again China belonged to the Chinese, and Zhu Yuan-zhang was the reason why.

Zhu was born a peasant. His family had farmed for generations. But under Mongol rule, China had little use for farmers, so life was hard—very hard. When the Mongols first swept into northern China a century earlier, they wanted nothing more than to rob China of its great wealth. Because they were nomadic horsemen, the Mongols viewed China's huge network of prosperous farms as a waste of good grazing and hunting land. By the millions, farmers were driven from their lands and their farms left untended. Reservoirs and irrigation systems fell into disrepair. As farms disappeared, famine swept the land, but the Mongol rulers of the Yuan Dynasty seemed little concerned for the sufferings of the Chinese people.

During the Yuan dynasty, high government officials were all Mongols or foreigners. Translators were needed, since the Mongols refused to learn Chinese. Ethnic Chinese had little voice in their government.

Trade was important to the Mongol emperors. Skilled Chinese craftsmen were forced to produce large quantities of porcelain, silks, and other goods that could be sold along the Silk Road and the vast web of trade routes the Mongols created across Eurasia. The craftsmen were paid little, while the Mongols profited greatly from the trade.

Kublai Khan (1261-1295), a fairly enlightened Mongol ruler, tried to encourage agriculture and trade. But the series of less competent emperors that followed him did much damage to China's economy. They and their flatterers lived lavishly, all the while taxing the Chinese populace in order to pay for their extravagant lifestyles. In time, this led to inflation, and the paper money of the empire became completely worthless. By the early 1300's, conditions were so bad on the farm that young Zhu was compelled to leave his starving family and become a Buddhist monk, begging for food at the side of the road.

Then nature added to China's misery. The Huang (Yellow) River changed course, flooding huge expanses of remaining farmland. Zhu's family perished in the resulting famine. Epidemic disease, perhaps bubonic plague, also broke out, killing Chinese and Mongols alike. Along with most other Chinese, Zhu concluded that the Yuan Dynasty had lost the Mandate of Heaven, that is, the divine right to rule China.

Across China, people began to rise up against their Mongol overlords. Zhu led the rebels. A wise scholar advised him that he would succeed if he followed three rules: build strong city walls, gather as much grain in storage as possible, and be slow to assume titles. Zhu followed the wise man's advice and now, nearly twenty years later, stood victorious atop the steps of the emperor's palace.

With the Mongols gone, it was finally time for Zhu to assume a title. He proclaimed himself, "Ming Hung Wu," Emperor of China. "Ming" meant "brilliant" or "bright" and "Hung Wu," was a traditional dynastic name meaning "Vast Army." The new emperor intended to make China a bright light that would shine for all the world to see. He wrote to the kings and emperors of distant lands announcing his rise to power.

"Heaven, wearied of their [the Mongols] misgovernment and debauchery, thought fit to turn their fate to ruin... When the nation began to arouse itself, We, as a simple peasant...conceived the patriotic idea to save the people... We have established peace in the Empire, and restored the old boundaries of Zhongguo [The Middle Kingdom—China]. We were selected by Our people to occupy the Imperial throne of Zhongguo under the dynastic title of the 'the Great Ming.' We cannot but let the world know Our intention to maintain peace within the four seas..."

With great energy, Ming Hung Wu set out to rebuild China according to its agricultural traditions. He encouraged millions of farmers to move their families north to reclaim abandoned farmland and rebuild the irrigation systems neglected during Mongol rule. Scholarship and philosophy were revived and the civil service examination system reintroduced to ensure that government officials had good qualifications. The new emperor focused his efforts on agriculture and on trade within China. He did not value trade with other lands, which had been so important to the Mongols.

Ming Hung Wu thus took the Mandate of Heaven very seriously and worked hard to make sure his government truly served the interests of the Chinese people. China was on the road to recovery!

Sources for Student Handout 1.2

East Asian History Sourcebook: Chu Yuan-Chang: Manifesto of Accession as First Ming Emperor, 1372 C.E.

© 2000 Paul Halsall

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/eastasia/1372mingmanf.html>

Leon Poon

History of China, The Imperial Era: III

<http://www-chaos.umd.edu/history/imperial3.html>

Washington State University

World Civilizations

<http://www.wsu.edu/~dee>

© 1996 Richard Hooker

China, Mongols, and the Ming Dynasty

© 2000 Frank E. Smitha

<http://www.fsmitha.com/h3/h12china.htm>

Lesson 1***Student Handout 1.3*****Calamity and Recovery****The Mongols and the Rise of the Ming Dynasty**

Use the reading from Student Handout 1.2 to identify examples of both calamities and recoveries that took place in East Asia during the fourteenth century. Enter the examples you find in the graphic organizer below. Then answer the questions on the back of this paper.

Calamities	Recoveries
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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_____	_____
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Accounts of historical events often reflect a particular point of view. The point of view is the perspective from which the account was written. Sometimes accounts of the same event written by different authors will contain significant differences because their point of view is different. For example, a description of the American Revolution found in an American textbook tends to be somewhat different from a description of the same event in a British textbook.

1. What point of view is expressed in Student Handout 1.2?

2. For whom would the rise of the Ming Dynasty be considered a calamity?

“Calamity is of two kinds: misfortune to ourselves, and good fortune to others.”

Ambrose Bierce, American author

Lesson 1***Student Handout 1.4***

Item # _____

Name _____

Date _____ Per _____

Dateline 14th Century

Compare the circumstances in Europe with those in the Mongol Empire and China in the fourteenth century.

Europe	Mongol Empire and China
<p>The Crusades, a 200-year-long series of wars between Christians and Muslims, have just ended. Muslim forces regained control of the “Holy Land,” but the Mongols then conquered the Abbasid-Seljuk Empire in 1258.</p> <p>One result of the Crusades is that Europeans have become much more interested in products from the East.</p> <p>Trade and travel between East and West increase.</p> <p>European doctors have little understanding of the causes of infectious disease.</p>	<p>The Mongols have conquered much of Eurasia, building an empire that stretches from China to the borders of Eastern Europe.</p> <p>The Mongols are dependent on trade. They encourage trade and travel throughout their empire. Roads and trade routes are maintained and protected.</p> <p>Many of the most highly valued trade goods are produced in China. This includes porcelain and silks.</p> <p>Bubonic plague breaks out in Central Asia and China.</p>

The circumstances described in the two boxes above resulted in a completely unexpected event that brought great change to Europe. Consider the circumstances carefully. Decide what this unexpected event might have been. Identify the event and explain your thinking on the lines below.

Lesson 2

Double Trouble

Preparation

Duplicate Student Handouts: 2.1-2.8. Rulers and graph paper or computers and graphing software are needed for this lesson.

Introduction

Explain to students that the calamities studied in the previous lesson were mostly of human origin. But the period also saw more than its share of natural disasters. This lesson begins with a modern-day example of a possible natural disaster in the making.

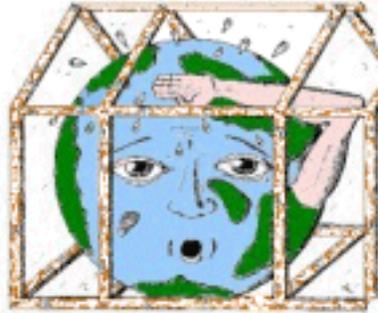
1. Tell students that a frequent hot topic in the media is the issue of global warming. Prepare students for the reading in Student Handout 2.1 by having them share their background knowledge of the topic. Distribute copies and allow time for students to read silently. Use the questions at the bottom of the reading to initiate a discussion of the issue. Use the last discussion question to make a transition to the reading in Student Handout 2.2.
2. Explain to students that the years 1300 to 1500 were part of an extended period of global cooling. Distribute copies of Student Handout 2.2 and allow time for students to read silently. Again, use the questions at the bottom of the reading to guide discussion of this natural disaster/calamity and its consequences. Before beginning the next activity, emphasize the point that the famines which resulted from the change in weather patterns may have left populations in a weakened condition and vulnerable to infectious disease. Also, remind students of the predictions they made in the previous lesson in the activity in Student Handout 1.4.
3. Inform students that this lesson is titled “Double Trouble” because of the conjunction of the Little Ice Age and the pandemic of the Black Death, perhaps a widespread epidemic, or pandemic, of the bubonic plague, which hit Afroeurasia in this period. In this activity, students will study four contemporary accounts of how people responded to the horrors of the plague.
4. Distributing students as evenly as possible, assign groups the four readings from Student Handouts 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6. Also, give each student a copy of Student Handout 2.7. Instruct students to record effects of the plague and ways in which people across Afroeurasia responded to it.
5. Reorganize students into groups of four with each group member having information from a different reading. Each group then works cooperatively to share information so that all members are able to complete the four outside sections of the graphic organizer. Finally, review with students the concept of a generalization. Then have them compose a

generalization about the effects of the plague and/or people's responses to it to go in the center of their graphic organizers in Student Handout 2.7.

6. Explain to students that the chain of calamities studied thus far in this unit, along with the earlier Crusades, had very real and disastrous consequences that can be seen very clearly by looking at a graph of population change during this period. In this next activity, students will be asked both to create such a graph and to interpret the patterns it reveals, connecting patterns in population change to events.
7. Distribute the materials needed for students to create their graphs. The graph-making portion of this activity is designed to give students practice in reading to perform a task. If this aspect of the activity is to be retained, do not go over the directions, but instead ask students to read the directions carefully. Then provide an opportunity for students to ask questions. Once all questions have been answered, instruct students to complete their graphs.
8. Have students carefully read the boxed information at the top of the second page and hold a brief discussion to ensure that they clearly understand. (A review of the Crusades might be necessary here, depending on how recently students have dealt with this earlier event.) Give students the option of using the graph to answer either the five short-answer questions or the single essay question. Have students complete the assignment. (Option: Make an overhead transparency of one or more student graphs to guide discussion of the answers.)

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.1



Global Warming

Of all the environmental problems we face today, global warming may have the greatest power to cause catastrophic changes. In the last 100 years, the average temperature of the earth has risen by about 1°F. And the four warmest years of the twentieth century all happened during the 1990's. Scientists are not sure what is causing this warming. An increase in heat from the sun may be one cause. The earth has gone through many natural cycles of warming and cooling in the past. But scientists are also concerned that humans are helping to make the earth warmer. Some human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, release carbon dioxide and other "greenhouse gasses" into the atmosphere. These gasses trap heat energy from the sun and keep it from escaping back into space. The effect is similar to what happens to a car parked in the sun. The car will heat up because the windows let in sunlight, but keep heat trapped inside.

Although a 1°F. rise in temperature may not seem like much, small changes in the earth's overall temperature can result in significant climatic changes over many areas of the world. These changes can have dramatic, sometimes calamitous consequences. For example, some scientists believe that melting glaciers and sea ice have caused a 6 to 8 inch rise in sea level over the last 100 years. If this rise continues, flooding will eventually affect many towns and cities located along the coasts. Changes in rainfall patterns may cause some land to become too dry or too wet for farming on it to continue. Some plant and animal species, unable to adapt to changes in their habitat, may die off, altering the ecology of many places. People may encounter new health problems resulting from the changing environment. Areas that become warmer and wetter, for example, will likely see an increase in tropical diseases such as malaria. Scientists also believe that in some places the added heat may produce larger and more frequent storms, including hurricanes.

The forces that determine weather and climate are extremely complex, so it is difficult to predict what changes will actually take place and where or when they might occur. But scientists all over the world are studying weather patterns to learn more so that people might be better prepared to adapt to whatever changes take place.

Discussion Questions

1. What is global warming?
2. List 5 possible effects of global warming.
3. What do you think people or nations could do to prevent the negative effects of global warming?
4. What do you think might happen if global temperatures dropped over a prolonged period of time?

Sources for Student Handout 2.1

Environmental Protection Agency

<http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming/kids/gw.html>

NASA Earth Observatory

<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Library/GlobalWarming/warming>

Atmospheric Radiation Measurement (ARM) Program, Department of Education

<http://education.arm.gov/>

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.2

[Hwww.hort.wisc.edu/](http://www.hort.wisc.edu/)



The Little Ice Age

Sometimes the course of human history can be profoundly affected by natural changes in the environment. Such was the case when the northern hemisphere experienced a long cool period known today as “The Little Ice Age.” During most of the Middle Ages, Europe’s climate was relatively mild. In spite of the frequent wars, occasional food shortages, and other hazards of the time, the population slowly grew. By 1300 there were about 79 million people in Europe. But then things changed. Even before 1300, the global climate had begun to cool. Summers became cooler and wetter, and autumn storms came earlier and were more violent. Longer, colder winters followed. With shorter growing seasons, some farmlands in northern areas had to be abandoned. Norse settlements were especially hard hit. The same was true in high elevations, where mountain glaciers began to advance toward villages and farms. Some warm-weather crops could no longer survive the increasingly harsh conditions and harvests began to fail. Prices for food rose accordingly. In desperation, people resorted to gathering wild foods from the forests. Sometimes even that was not enough. The relatively large population combined with the shortage of food resulted in famine and starvation. Those who survived the worst years of famine nearly all weakened from malnutrition. This may left them especially vulnerable to infectious disease. On the other hand, some scholars have argued that disease microorganisms may have had difficulty infecting badly malnourished people because those pathogens may have lacked access to enough nutrients in the human body to survive.

Discussion Questions

1. List 5 negative effects of the Little Ice Age.
2. If there was a period of prolonged global cooling today, what might people or nations do to address negative effects?

Sources for Student Handout 2.2

Jerry H. Bentley and Herbert F. Ziegler, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003).

http://www2.sunysuffolk.edu/mandias/lia/little_ice_age.html

Scott A. Mandia, Suffolk County Community College

Lesson 2***Student Handout 2.3*****Ibn Khaldun:
An Altered World**

“At the present time—that is, at the end of the eighth century [A.H., which is the fourteenth century C. E.]—the situation in the Maghrib [North Africa], as we can observe, has taken a turn and changed entirely. The Berbers, the original population of the Maghrib, have been replaced by an influx of Arabs (that began in) the fifth [eleventh] century. The Arabs outnumbered and overpowered the Berbers, stripped them of most of their lands, and (also) obtained a share of those that remained in their possession. This was the situation until, in the middle of the eighth [fourteenth] century, civilization both in the East and the West was visited by a destructive plague which devastated nations and caused populations to vanish. It swallowed up many of the good things of civilization and wiped them out. It overtook the dynasties at the time of their senility, when they had reached the limit of their duration. It lessened their power and curtailed their influence. It weakened their authority. Their situation approached the point of annihilation and dissolution. Civilization decreased with the decrease of mankind. Cities and buildings were laid waste, roads and way signs were obliterated, settlements and mansions became empty, dynasties and tribes grew weak. The entire inhabited world changed. The East, it seems, was similarly visited, though in accordance with and in proportion to (the East’s more affluent) civilization. It was as if the voice of existence in the world had called out for oblivion and restriction, and the world had responded to its call. God inherits the earth and whomever is upon it. When there is a general change of conditions, it is as if the entire creation had changed and the whole world been altered, as if it were a new and repeated creation, a world brought into existence anew. . . .”

From Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, 2nd ed., 3 vols., trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1967), 1:64-65.

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.4

The Catastrophe of the 14th Century

Ibn Battuta is celebrated as the greatest traveler of medieval times. A native Moroccan, he journeyed to Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Persia, Iraq, East Africa, Anatolia, Russia, India, and China. In this excerpt from *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta*, Ross E. Dunn describes Ibn Battuta's brush with the greatest catastrophe of the fourteenth century.

“While Ibn Battuta was enjoying the company of the *‘ulama* [scholars] of Aleppo [in Syria] in June 1348, travelers reaching the city from the south reported that a virulent disease had been raging at Gaza on the Egyptian frontier and that more than a thousand people had been dying from it every day. Buboes, or inflamed swellings, appeared in the groin, armpits, or neck of the afflicted, and this irruption was typically accompanied by nausea, pain in the head, stomach, and limbs, insomnia, and delirium. If a victim began to spit blood and experience pneumonic symptoms, he usually died within hours.

Amid rumors of this lethal darkness advancing into Syria, Ibn Battuta decided to return south. He got as far as the town of Homs when he suddenly found himself engulfed in the epidemic, 300 people dying the day he arrived there. Continuing on to Damascus, he reached the great oasis in July to find that the plague had already struck. The death toll had risen to 2,000 a day, the population was reeling in shock, and the mundane routines of the city had come to a halt.

The people fasted for three successive days, the last of which was a Thursday. At the end of this period, the *amirs* [commanders], *sharifs* [descendants of the Prophet Muhammad], *qadis* [judges], doctors of the Law, and all other classes of people in their several degrees, assembled in the Great mosque, until it was filled to overflowing with them, and spent Thursday night there in prayers and liturgies and supplications. Then, after performing the dawn prayer..., they all went out together on foot carrying Korans in their hands—the *amirs* too barefooted. The entire population of the city joined in the exodus, male and female, small and large, the Jews went out with their book of the law and the Christians with their Gospel, their women and children with them; the whole concourse of them in tears and humble supplications, imploring the favor of God through His Books and His Prophets.

At the same time Ibn Battuta had been sailing westward from China to his expectant reunion with the Islamic heartland, so the Black Death, the greatest pandemic disaster since the sixth century, was making its terrible way across the Central Asian grasslands to the shores of the Black Sea. Plague was endemic among ground-burrowing rodent populations of the Inner Asian steppe. It was transmitted from animals to humans by the bite of a common species of flea. Hatching and living in the fur of plague-afflicted rats, infected fleas found their way to sacks of grain and other foodstuffs or to clothing. The plague appears to have started among pastoral folk

of East Central Asia, spreading outward from there along the trade routes both southwest and west, beginning about 1331. Lurking among the merchandise in commercial wagon trains or the storerooms of caravansaries, fleas carried the bacillus *Yersinia pestis* to the blood streams of humans. . . . As the pestilence broke out in one oasis or *khan* after another, survivors hurried onto the next place along the trail, thereby unwittingly carrying the disease throughout the commercial network of the steppe. The same Mongol law and order that made possible a century of intense human interchange between China and the Atlantic coast now quickened the progress of the plague bacillus across Eurasia.

In the calamitous year of 1348 ships of death coursed westward throughout the Mediterranean basin, inflicting their grim lading on one port after another. From the ports, mule trains and camel caravans transmitted the disease to the interior regions of Europe, northern Africa, and the Middle East. . . . By the end of 1350, when the first assault of the disease was playing itself out, Europe may have lost as much as one-third of its population. Mortality rates in the Islamic lands were probably comparable.”

From Ross E. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.5

The Florentine Chronicle

Marchione di Coppo Stefani was born in Florence in 1336. He wrote the Florentine Chronicle in the 1370s and 1380s. It includes a section titled “Concerning A Mortality In The City Of Florence In Which Many People Died.”

“In the year of the Lord 1348 there was a very great pestilence in the city and district of Florence. It was of such a fury and so tempestuous that in houses in which it took hold previously healthy servants who took care of the ill died of the same illness. Almost none of the ill survived past the fourth day. Neither physicians nor medicines were effective. Whether because these illnesses were previously unknown or because physicians had not previously studied them, there seemed to be no cure. There was such a fear that no one seemed to know what to do. When it took hold in a house it often happened that no one remained who had not died. And it was not just that men and women died, but even sentient animals died. Dogs, cats, chickens, oxen, donkeys sheep showed the same symptoms and died of the same disease. And almost none, or very few, who showed these symptoms, were cured. The symptoms were the following: a bubo in the groin, where the thigh meets the trunk; or a small swelling under the armpit; sudden fever; spitting blood and saliva (and no one who spit blood survived it). It was such a frightful thing that when it got into a house, as was said, no one remained. Frightened people abandoned the house and fled to another. Those in town fled to villages. Physicians could not be found because they had died like the others. And those who could be found wanted vast sums in hand before they entered the house. And when they did enter, they checked the pulse with face turned away. They inspected the urine from a distance and with something odoriferous under their nose. Child abandoned the father, husband the wife, wife the husband, one brother the other, one sister the other. In all the city there was nothing to do but to carry the dead to a burial. And those who died had neither confessor nor other sacraments. And many died with no one looking after them. And many died of hunger because when someone took to bed sick, another in the house, terrified, said to him: “I’m going for the doctor.” Calmly walking out the door, the other left and did not return again. Abandoned by people, without food, but accompanied by fever, they weakened. There were many who pleaded with their relatives not to abandon them when night fell. But [the relatives] said to the sick person, “So that during the night you did not have to awaken those who serve you and who work hard day and night, take some sweetmeats, wine or water. They are here on the bedstead by your head; here are some blankets.” And when the sick person had fallen asleep, they left and did not return. If it happened that he was strengthened by the food during the night he might be alive and strong enough to get to the window. If the street was not a major one, he might stand there a half hour before anyone came by. And if someone did pass by, and if he was strong enough that he could be heard when he called out to them, sometimes there might be a response and sometimes not, but there was no help. No one, or few, wished to enter a house where anyone was sick, nor did they even want to deal with those healthy people who came out of a sick person’s house. And they said to them: “He is stupefied, do not speak to him!” saying further: “He has it because there is a bubo in his

house.” They call the swelling a bubo. Many died unseen. So they remained in their beds until they stank. And the neighbors, if there were any, having smelled the stench, placed them in a shroud and sent them for burial. The house remained open and yet there was no one daring enough to touch anything because it seemed that things remained poisoned and that whoever used them picked up the illness.

At every church, or at most of them, they dug deep trenches, down to the waterline, wide and deep, depending on how large the parish was. And those who were responsible for the dead carried them on their backs in the night in which they died and threw them into the ditch, or else they paid a high price to those who would do it for them. The next morning, if there were many [bodies] in the trench, they covered them over with dirt. And then more bodies were put on top of them, with a little more dirt over those; they put layer on layer just like one puts layers of cheese in a lasagna.

The beccamorti [literally vultures] who provided their service, were paid such a high price that many were enriched by it. Many died from [carrying away the dead] , some rich, some after earning just a little, but high prices continued. Servants, or those who took care of the ill, charged from one to three florins per day and the cost of things grew. The things that the sick ate, sweetmeats and sugar, seemed priceless. . . . Finding wax was miraculous. A pound of wax would have gone up more than a florin if there had not been a stop put [by the communal government] to the vain ostentation that the Florentines always make [over funerals]. Thus it was ordered that no more than two large candles could be carried [in any funeral]. Churches had no more than a single bier which usually was not sufficient. Spice dealers and beccamorti sold biers, burial palls, and cushions at very high prices. Dressing in expensive woolen cloth as is customary in [mourning] the dead, that is in a long cloak, with mantle and veil that used to cost women three florins climbed in price to thirty florins and would have climbed to 100 florins had the custom of dressing in expensive cloth not been changed. The rich dressed in modest wools, those not rich sewed [clothes] in linen. Benches on which the dead were placed cost like the heavens and still the benches were only a hundredth of those needed. Priests were not able to ring bells as they would have liked. Concerning that [the government] issued ordinances discouraging the sounding of bells, sale of burial benches, and limiting expenses. They could not sound bells, sell benches, nor cry out announcements because the sick hated to hear of this and it discouraged the healthy as well. Priests and friars went [to serve] the rich in great multitudes and they were paid such high prices that they all got rich. And therefore [the authorities] ordered that one could not have more than a prescribed number [of clerics] of the local parish church. And the prescribed number of friars was six. . . . This [pestilence] was a matter of such great discouragement and fear that men gathered together in order to take some comfort in dining together. And each evening one of them provided dinner to ten companions and the next evening they planned to eat with one of the others. And sometimes if they planned to eat with a certain one he had no meal prepared because he was sick. Or if the host had made dinner for the ten, two or three were missing. Some fled to villas, others to villages in order to get a change of air. Where there had been no [pestilence], there they carried it; if it was already there, they caused it to increase. None of the guilds in Florence was working. All the shops were shut, taverns closed; only the apothecaries and the churches remained open. If you went outside, you found almost no one... This mortality enriched apothecaries, doctors, poultry vendors, beccamorti, and

greengrocers who sold of poultices of mallow, nettles, mercury and other herbs necessary to draw off the infirmity. And it was those who made these poultices who made a lot of money. . . .

This pestilence began in March, as was said, and ended in September 1348. And people began to return to look after their houses and possessions. And there were so many houses full of goods without a master that it was stupefying. Then those who would inherit these goods began to appear. And such it was that those who had nothing found themselves rich with what did not seem to be theirs and they were unseemly because of it. Women and men began to dress ostentatiously.

From Stefani, Marchione di Coppo. *Cronaca fiorentina. Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, Vol. 30, Niccolo Rodolico, ed. Citta di Castello: 1903-13. Quoted in Duane Osheim, "Plagues and Public Health in Renaissance Europe," The Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, University of Virginia. <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/osheim/marchione.html>

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.6

The Decameron

The Italian writer Giovanni Boccaccio lived through the plague as it ravaged the city of Florence in 1348. The experience inspired him to write *The Decameron*, a story of three women and seven men who escaped the disease by fleeing to a villa outside the city. In his introduction to the fictional portion of his book, Boccaccio gives a graphic description of the effects of the epidemic on his city.

The Signs of Impending Death

“The symptoms were not the same as in the East, where a gush of blood from the nose was the plain sign of inevitable death; but it began both in men and women with certain swellings in the groin or under the armpit. They grew to the size of a small apple or an egg, more or less, and were vulgarly called tumors. In a short space of time these tumors spread from the two parts named all over the body. Soon after this the symptoms changed and black or purple spots appeared on the arms or thighs or any other part of the body, sometimes a few large ones, sometimes many little ones. These spots were a certain sign of death, just as the original tumor had been and still remained.

No doctor’s advice, no medicine could overcome or alleviate this disease, An enormous number of ignorant men and women set up as doctors in addition to those who were trained. Either the disease was such that no treatment was possible or the doctors were so ignorant that they did not know what caused it, and consequently could not administer the proper remedy. In any case very few recovered; most people died within about three days of the appearance of the tumors described above, most of them without any fever or other symptoms.

The violence of this disease was such that the sick communicated it to the healthy who came near them, just as a fire catches anything dry or oily near it. And it even went further. To speak to or go near the sick brought infection and a common death to the living; and moreover, to touch the clothes or anything else the sick had touched or worn gave the disease to the person touching.”

Varying Reactions to Disaster

“Such fear and fanciful notions took possession of the living that almost all of them adopted the same cruel policy, which was entirely to avoid the sick and everything belonging to them. By so doing, each one thought he would secure his own safety.

Some thought that moderate living and the avoidance of all superfluity would preserve them from the epidemic. They formed small communities, living entirely separate from everybody

else. They shut themselves up in houses where there were no sick, eating the finest food and drinking the best wine very temperately, avoiding all excess, allowing no news or discussion of death and sickness, and passing the time in music and suchlike pleasures. Others thought just the opposite. They thought the sure cure for the plague was to drink and be merry, to go about singing and amusing themselves, satisfying every appetite they could, laughing and jesting at what happened. They put their words into practice, spent day and night going from tavern to tavern, drinking immoderately, or went into other people's houses, doing only those things which pleased them. This they could easily do because everyone felt doomed and had abandoned his property, so that most houses became common property and any stranger who went in made use of them as if he had owned them. And with all this bestial behavior, they avoided the sick as much as possible.

In this suffering and misery of our city, the authority of human and divine laws almost disappeared, for, like other men, the ministers and the executors of the laws were all dead or sick or shut up with their families, so that no duties were carried out. Every man was therefore able to do as he pleased.

Many others adopted a course of life midway between the two just described. They did not restrict their victuals so much as the former, nor allow themselves to be drunken and dissolute like the latter, but satisfied their appetites moderately. They did not shut themselves up, but went about, carrying flowers or scented herbs or perfumes in their hands, in the belief that it was an excellent thing to comfort the brain with such odors; for the whole air was infected with the smell of dead bodies, Of sick persons and medicines.

Others again held a still more cruel opinion, which they thought would keep them safe. They said that the only medicine against the plague-stricken was to go right away from them. Men and women, convinced of this and caring about nothing but themselves, abandoned their own city, their own houses, their dwellings, their relatives, their property, and went abroad or at least to the country round Florence, as if God's wrath in punishing men's wickedness with this plague would not follow them but strike only those who remained within the walls of the city, or as if they thought nobody in the city would remain alive and that its last hour had come."

The Breakdown of Social Order

"One citizen avoided another, hardly any neighbor troubled about others, relatives never or hardly ever visited each other. Moreover, such terror was struck into the hearts of men and women by this calamity, that brother abandoned brother, and the uncle his nephew, and the sister her brother, and very often the wife her husband. What is even worse and nearly incredible is that fathers and mothers refused to see and tend their children, as if they had not been theirs.

Thus, a multitude of sick men and women were left without any care, except from the charity of friends (but these were few), or the greed, of servants, though not many of these could be had even for high wages, Moreover, most of them were coarse-minded men and women, who did

little more than bring the sick what they asked for or watch over them when they were dying. And very often these servants lost their lives and their earnings.

Mass Burials

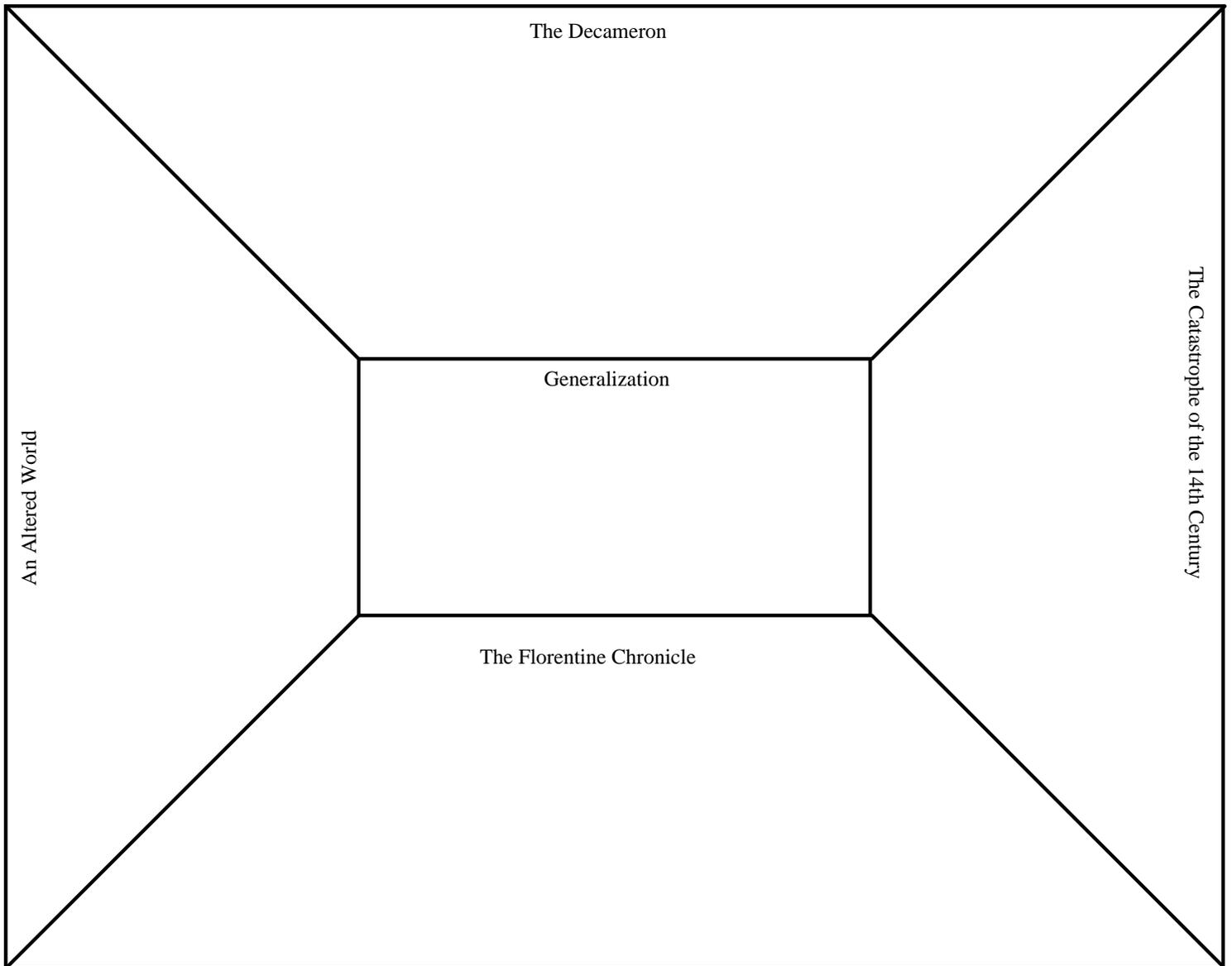
“The plight of the lower and most of the middle classes was even more pitiful to behold. Most of them remained in their houses, either through poverty or in hopes of safety, and fell sick by thousands. Since they received no care and attention, almost all of them died. Many ended their lives in the streets both at night and during the day; and many others who died in their houses were only known to be dead because the neighbors smelled their decaying bodies. Dead bodies filled every corner. Most of them were treated in the same manner by the survivors, who were more concerned to get rid of their rotting bodies than moved by charity towards the dead. With the aid of porters, if they could get them, they carried the bodies out of the houses and laid them at the door; where every morning quantities of the dead might be seen. They then were laid on biers or, as these were often lacking, on tables.

Such was the multitude of corpses brought to the churches every day and almost every hour that there was not enough consecrated ground to give them burial, especially since they wanted to bury each person in the family grave, according to the old custom. Although the cemeteries were full they were forced to dig huge trenches, where they buried the bodies by hundreds. Here they stowed them away like bales in the hold of a ship and covered them with a little earth, until the whole trench was full.”

From Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, vol. 1, trans. Richard Aldington (New York: Book League of America, 1930), quoted in “The Black Death, 1348,” EyeWitness to History, www.ibiscom.com (2001).

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.7



Lesson 2***Student Handout 2.8*****Graphing Calamities and Recoveries**

A line graph is a useful tool for understanding change over time. Follow the directions below to construct a graph that illustrates population changes from 1000 C.E. to 1500 C.E. in Europe, China, North Africa, and Southwest Asia (the Middle East.)

1. Draw the graph:

Measure and mark six evenly spaced points along the X-axis to display the years. Along the bottom of the X-axis, label each point with its year.

Measure and mark 13 evenly spaced points along the Y-axis to display the population from 0 to 130 (million) in intervals of 10. Label each point or every other point.

2. Label the graph:

Label the X-axis “Years.”

Label the Y-axis “Estimated Population in Millions”

3. Make a key for the data:

Select a different color to represent each of the four regions.

Below the X-axis, draw a sample colored line for each region and label the line with the name of the region.

4. Graph the data:

Use the table below to plot the data on your graph.

Connect each region’s data points to finish the graph.

Title your finished graph.

Estimated Population in Millions

	Europe	China	SW Asia	N. Africa
1000	30	56	33	9
1100	35	83	28	8
1200	49	124	27	8
1300	70	83	21	8
1400	52	70	19	8
1500	67	84	23	9

Source: David Christian, *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 344-345.

Keep in mind that the following events took place between 1000 and 1500:

- The Crusades
- The Rise of the Mongol Empire
- The Rise of the Ming Dynasty
- The Little Ice Age
- The Black Death

Also keep in mind the fact that human populations naturally tend to grow. This is because the number of births in a population normally exceeds the number of deaths. The graph clearly shows that there were times during this period of history when population declined rather than grew.

Now use your completed graph and what you have learned about calamities and recoveries in Afroeurasia to answer these questions.

1. Where did the plague strike first, Europe or China? Support your answer with evidence from the graph as well as evidence from earlier activities in this unit.
2. What historical events would explain the population trend shown for Southwest Asia? Explain the connections.
3. When did Europe's population begin to recover?
4. When did China's population begin to recover?
5. What might explain the fact that the graph for North Africa appears almost flat?

OR

Think about the events you have studied in this teaching unit and when those events occurred. Use what you have learned to match the population trends in the graph to the events that explain those trends. Use specific evidence from the unit and from the graph to support your explanation.

Lesson 3

Whirlwind

Preparation

Duplicate copies of Student Handout 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3. Option: The map will be easier for students to complete if it is enlarged and copied on large format paper. Students will also need atlases and colored pencils to complete the map.

Introduction

Explain to students that the “double trouble” of the Little Ice Age and the Black Death were not the last of this era’s crises. A disaster at the end of the century was the work of one man, a conqueror whose exploits caused historians to describe him as a “whirlwind.”

1. Begin by asking students questions such as:

What is a whirlwind?

What are the effects of a whirlwind?

What do you think a human whirlwind might be like?

What might lead historians to refer to someone as a whirlwind?

Hand out Student Handout 3.1. Have students read it either silently or together as a class with discussion. Ask students, “What impact did Timur’s conquests have on Asia?”

2. Hand out the map and Student Handout 3.2. Have students read and follow the directions to complete the map. Note to teacher: Like the graphing activity in lesson 2, this activity is intended to give students practice in reading to perform a task. Therefore, do not explain the directions further. Instead, when students have questions, refer them back to the reading and the directions as much as possible.
3. Option: Make a bulletin board display of some of the finished maps and use this display to discuss the far-reaching extent of Timur’s whirlwind conquests.

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.1

Whirlwind

Timur, the Lame Conqueror, Lord of all Asia, Scourge of God and Terror of the World!

Although he has been dead for nearly six hundred years and his empire long since gone, the name Timur continues to evoke feelings of both fear and respect in the hearts of people throughout Eurasia. The word Timur is Turkic for “iron,” an appropriate name for one who in his lifetime rose from being the chieftain of a small Turko-Mongol tribe to ruling an empire rivaling that of Alexander the Great.

During his long military career, Timur and his armies crossed Eurasia from Delhi to Moscow, from the Tien Shan Mountains of Central Asia to the Taurus Mountains of Anatolia. From 1370 until his death in 1405, Timur-the-Lame, or Tamerlane, as Europeans called him, engaged in almost constant warfare in order to extend his borders and maintain his vast territory.

Born in 1336 near Samarkand in the Mongol Chagatay Khanate, Timur was said to be tall, strongly built, and well-proportioned in spite of an injury in his twenties which left him with a slight paralysis in his right leg and arm. He always made light of his disability. Ahmad ibn Arabshah, Timur’s biographer, described the conqueror in his sixties him as:

...steadfast in mind and robust in body, brave and fearless, firm as rock. He did not care for jesting or lying; wit and trifling pleased him not; truth, even were it painful, delighted him. . . . He loved bold and valiant soldiers, by whose aid he opened the locks of terror, tore men to pieces like lions, and overturned mountains. He was faultless in strategy, constant in fortune, firm of purpose and truthful in business.

According to the fourteenth century historian Ibn-Khaldun, who met him,

This king Timur is one of the greatest and mightiest kings . . . he is highly intelligent and very perspicacious [shrewd], addicted to debate and argument about what he knows and also about what he does not know!

Timur was a man of curious contradictions. He spoke two or three languages, enjoyed having histories read to him, and supported the arts. While he sacked cities across Eurasia, he took great care to protect teachers and artisans from the carnage and to relocate them to Samarkand, where they might add to the refinement of his capital.

First and foremost, Timur was a ruthless and ambitious warrior who commanded a devoted following. Those who saw his army described it as a huge conglomeration of different peoples. Mongol nomads, settled peoples, Muslims, Christians, Turks, Arabs, and Indians all fought at the conqueror's side.

Around 1371, Timur proclaimed himself ruler of the Chagatay Khanate. Between 1381 and 1405, he and his army swept with whirlwind speed through the Hindu Kush and the Caucasus Mountains, the Persian deserts, the southern Russian steppes, Anatolia, and Syria, sacking cities along the way and slaying their inhabitants. By 1395, Timur had defeated the rival Mongol empire of the Golden Horde. After entering Afghanistan in 1398, his army descended into India, razing ransacking Delhi, the capital of the Islamic Delhi sultanate, and annihilating most of its residents.

In 1400, using war elephants acquired in India, Timur and his troops stormed through the Syrian cities of Aleppo and Damascus, burned down Baghdad, and destroyed the port city of Smyrna in Turkey. In 1402, he succeeded in defeating the Ottoman army and capturing the Ottoman sultan. In the process, Timur unwittingly saved Byzantium temporarily from Ottoman conquest.

Next, Timur made preparations for what was to be his greatest exploit, the conquest of China. In 1368, as he was beginning his rise to power, the Mongol Yuan Dynasty was overthrown and the Ming Dynasty established. Timur was determined to prove that he, not the Ming emperor, was the greatest power in Asia. The Ming government was well aware of the threat and poured resources into the defense of China's western frontiers. Nearing seventy years of age, however, Timur had become infirm and had to be carried on a litter when his army advanced toward China. In 1405, he fell ill and died.

Timur's empire collapsed quickly after his death and the invasion of China never took place. Nevertheless, his exploits had a lasting impact on interregional networks of interaction and exchange from the Mediterranean to China. Southwest Asia, which bore the brunt of Timur's aggression, was slow to recover from the political, social, and economic upheavals brought about by his whirlwind invasions. At the heart of all his conquests was his driving ambition to restore the silk roads to their earlier glory as highways of thriving trade that would enrich his empire as it had the Mongol khans. Ironically, Timur's brutal hegemony shifted the focus of trans-hemispheric commercial interaction from the traditional caravan roads of the Asian heartland to the relatively safe waters of the Indian Ocean.



<http://www.itihaas.com/medieval/delhi->

Lesson 3***Student Handout 3.2*****Mapping the Whirlwind**

Directions: Use the reading “Whirlwind” (Student Handout 3.1) and an atlas to complete this map activity.

Timur’s capital was the city of _____. This city still exists today. Use an atlas to locate the city and plot and label its location on your map. In which modern country is this city located? _____

Although he raided deep into neighboring lands, Timur’s empire was located in southwestern Asia between the Mediterranean Sea and India. Which modern countries are included within Timur’s territory?

Shade in Timur’s empire in light red (pink).

One of Timur’s greatest foes was the _____, located along his northern borders. Timur defeated their armies in a series of raids that reached as far as Moscow. Locate and label Moscow on your map. Shade the territory of this enemy in light yellow.

India was Timur’s next target. After entering Afghanistan, Timur descended on the Delhi sultanate and destroyed its capital city, _____. Plot and label this city. Also label India.

In the process of building his empire, Timur captured the important city of Damascus and burnt the city of Baghdad to the ground. Plot and label these two cities on your map.

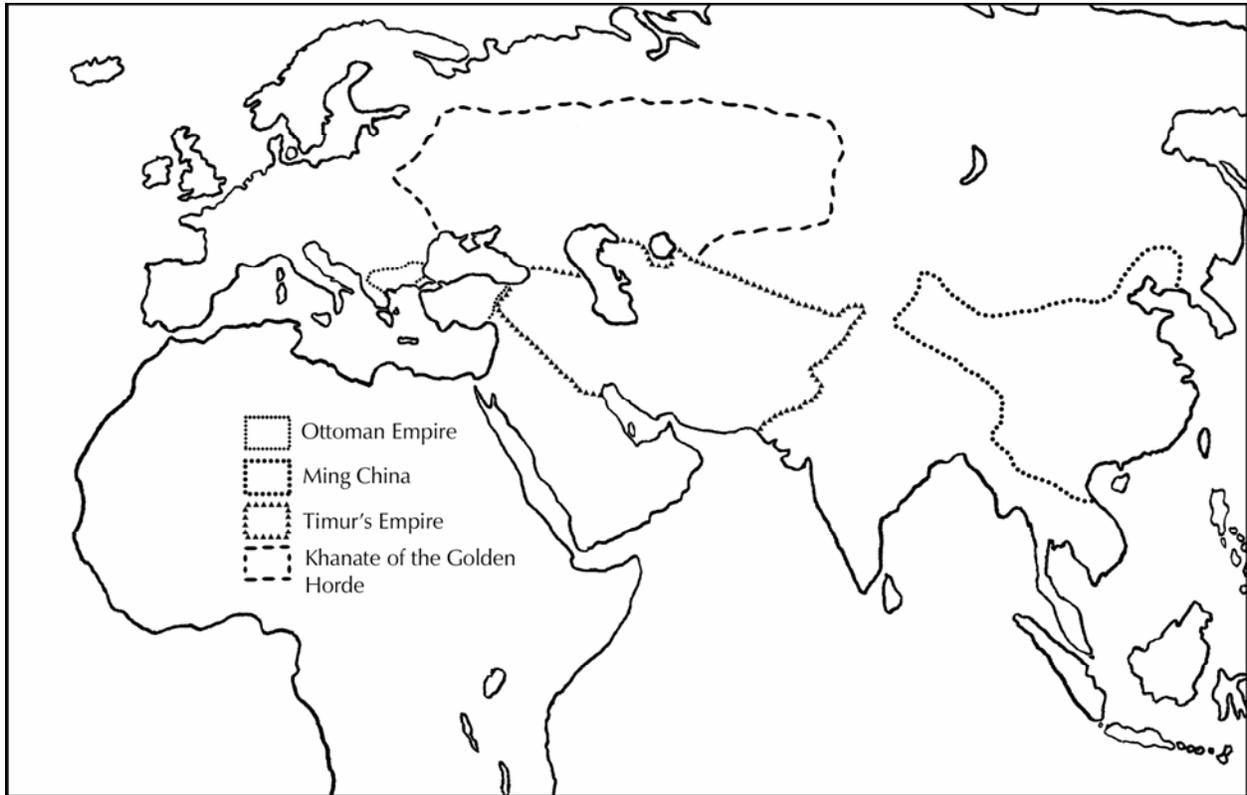
Timur also struck his neighbors to the west. In 1402 he defeated the _____ Empire and captured its ruler Bajazet I. By doing this Timur unintentionally saved the Byzantine empire, which had been besieged by the Ottoman Turks. Shade in the territory of this enemy in orange. Plot and label the Byzantine capital, Constantinople.

The conquest of _____ was Timur’s final goal. Timur was on his way to invade this rich empire when he fell ill and died. Shade this land in light green.

Shade in the key and add an appropriate title to complete your map.

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.3



Lesson 4

Historical Bias: The Fall of Constantinople

Preparation

Duplicate the primary source document in Student Handout 4.1. Download the Constantinople PowerPoint presentation if it is to be used.

Introduction

Remind students that one of Timur's victims was the growing Ottoman Turkish empire in Anatolia. In fact, Timur's defeat of the Ottoman army and capture of its sultan very nearly crushed the fledgling empire. But following Timur's death, his empire quickly crumbled and the Ottomans made a remarkably swift recovery. They soon reclaimed their lost territories and resumed their conquest of what remained of Byzantium, which by then was a poor fragment of a once mighty empire. The last important stronghold of the Byzantines was Constantinople, their fortress capital. In this lesson students will learn of Constantinople's final days through a contemporary account of its fall.

1. "Constantinople:" optional introductory PowerPoint presentation activity. Why was Constantinople a wealthy center of trade, and why was it so difficult to conquer? This presentation leads students through a brief study of Constantinople's strategic location using NASA space images. Teachers will find additional presentation notes in the notes page view of the PowerPoint presentation.

To open the "Constantinople" PowerPoint presentation, go to the World History for Us All web site (<http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu>), Big Era Five, Teaching Units for Big Era Five, Landscape Teaching Unit 5.5, Calamities and Recoveries.

Constantinople was both rich and defensible largely because of its geography. This presentation is designed to help students see the role of geography in shaping historical events. It is especially useful for classes where students have little geographic knowledge of this part of the world. Space images were used rather than maps in order to emphasize the idea that the places shown are real locations, not just abstract symbols. Following an introduction, the presentation begins with the two essential questions that students are expected to answer by the end: Why was Constantinople a wealthy center of trade, and why was it so difficult to conquer? The first image is a broad view of Afroeurasia. Students are challenged to locate Constantinople. The next slide reveals the answer by highlighting its location. Students are then asked to make observations about the location's characteristics. In the next slide, students see a closer view and asked to identify some of the major features of the region. The next three slides overlay labels showing first Europe and Southwest Asia, then the Black and Mediterranean Seas, and finally the location once again of Constantinople at the crossroads. In discussion, students should be able to conclude that, because of its location, Constantinople was able to control major overland and sea routes. Zooming in closer still, the last three slides illustrate Constantinople's strategic position astride the Bosphorus. These images highlight the defensive strength of the city's location. With water surrounding it on three sides as a sort of natural moat, and with immense fortifications on the

fourth side, Constantinople was one of the most formidable fortress cities of its time. An understanding of its location, importance, and major features will help students better understand and interpret the primary source document that is the centerpiece of this lesson.

2. Ask students to explain their understanding of the word “bias.” Through discussion, link the concept of bias to earlier discussions concerning point of view. Explain that bias is the result of point of view and must be taken into consideration when dealing with both primary and secondary sources. Tell students that historians must often separate fact from opinion to construct an objective account of an event.
3. Distribute Student Handout 4.1. Instruct students to read the document carefully and determine if the account is notably biased, and if so, which side of the conflict does the author favor?
4. After students have completed a first reading of the document, discuss the question of bias. Students should be able to state that the account is heavily biased in favor of the Byzantines. Ask students to identify examples of language that reveals this bias.
5. Explain to students that another aspect of a historian’s job is to interpret primary source accounts to decide which parts are significant enough to be included in a new retelling of the story. Tell students that in this next part of the lesson they will take on the role of a historian and create a new and more neutral interpretation of the fall of Constantinople.
6. Direct students to read Student Handout 4.1 again. This time, have them use a highlighter to mark passages they would include or paraphrase in their account of the battle for Constantinople. Remind students that the highlighted facts should be free of bias and also meet the student’s test of significance. They should only highlight what they consider the important elements of the story needed to understand the event.
7. Optional: Have students study a second account of the fall of Constantinople, such as Kritovoulos’ version of the Ottoman attack. This will give students more practice in detecting bias and will stress the importance of using multiple sources.

Lesson 4

Student Handout 4.1

The Fall of Constantinople, 1453

In his book the *Historia Turco-Byzantina*, or *History of the Byzantines and the Turks*, the Greek historian Doukas wrote an account of the Fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks:

“Just as the sun set, the call to battle rang out. The battle array was most formidable indeed! The tyrant [Sultan Mehmed] himself was on horseback on Monday evening. Exactly opposite the fallen walls he gave battle with his faithful slaves, young and all-powerful, fighting like lions, more than ten thousand of them. To the rear and on both flanks there were more than one hundred thousand fighting cavalrymen. To the south of these and as far as the harbor of the Golden Gate there were another hundred thousand troops and more. From the spot where the ruler was standing to the extremities of the palace there were another fifty thousand soldiers. The troops on the ships and at the bridge were beyond number.

The City’s defenders were deployed in the following manner: The emperor and [his general] were stationed at the fallen walls, outside the stockade in the enclosure, with about three thousand [soldiers]. The grand duke was posted at the Imperial Gate with about five hundred troops. At the sea walls and along the battlements from the Xyloporta Gate to the Horaia Gate, more than five hundred crossbowmen and archers were arrayed. Making the complete circuit from the Horaia Gate to the Golden Gate there was stationed in each bastion a single archer, crossbowman, or gunner. They spent the entire night on watch with no sleep at all.

The Turks with Mehmed rushed to the walls, carrying a great number of scaling ladders which had been constructed beforehand. Behind the lines, the tyrant, brandishing an iron mace, forced his archers to the walls by using both flattery and threats. The City’s defenders fought back bravely with all the strength they could muster.

But just as Fortune’s feats of arms were about to snatch victory from Turkish hands, from the very middle of the embattled Roman [Byzantine] troops, God removed their general, a mighty warrior of gigantic stature. He was wounded just before dawn by lead shot which went through the back of his arm, penetrating his iron breastplate. . . . Unable to relieve the pain of the wound, he cried out to the emperor, “Stand your ground bravely, and I will retire to the ship to attend to my wound. Then I will quickly return. . . .”

When the emperor beheld [his general] in retreat, he lost heart and so did his companions. Yet they continued the fight with all their strength.

The Turks gradually made their way to the walls, and, using their shields for cover, threw up their scaling ladders. Thwarted, however, by stone-throwers from above, they achieved nothing.

Their assault, therefore, was repulsed. All the Romans with the emperor held their ground against the enemy, and all their strength and purpose were exerted to prevent the Turks from entering through the fallen walls. Unbeknown to them, however, God willed that the Turks would be brought in by another way. When they saw the sallyport, to which we referred above, open, some fifty of the tyrant's renowned slaves leaped inside. They climbed to the top of the walls and zealously slew anyone they met and struck down the sentinels who discharged missiles from above. It was a sight filled with horror!

Some of the Romans and Latins who were preventing the Turks from attaching scaling ladders to the walls were cut to pieces, while others, closing their eyes, jumped from the wall and ended their lives horribly by smashing their bodies. Unimpeded, the Turks threw up the scaling ladders and ascended like soaring eagles.

The fierce Turkish warriors outnumbered the Romans twenty to one. The Romans, moreover, were not as experienced in warfare as the ordinary Turks. . . . When they looked up and saw the Turks, they fled behind the walls. . . . When the tyrant's troops witnessed the rout of the Romans, they shouted with one voice and pursued them inside, trampling upon the wretches and slaughtering them. When they reached the gate, they were unable to get through because it was blocked by the bodies of the dead and the dying. The majority entered through the breaches in the walls and they cut down all those they met.

The [Byzantine] emperor, despairing and hopeless, stood with sword and shield in hand and poignantly cried out, "Is there no one among the Christians who will take my head from me?" He was abandoned and alone. Then one of the Turks wounded him by striking him flush, and he, in turn, gave the Turk a blow. A second Turk delivered a mortal blow from behind and the emperor fell to the earth...

Some of the Azabs, that is, the tyrant's retinue who are also called Janissaries, overran the palace. Others swarmed over the Monastery of the Great Forerunner called Petra and the Monastery of Chora in which was found the icon of my Immaculate Mother of God. . . . After they seized the monastery's precious vessels, they rode off.

Then a great horde of mounted infidels charged down the street leading to the Great Church. The actions of both Turks and Romans made quite a spectacle! In the early dawn, as the Turks poured into the City and the citizens took flight, some of the fleeing Romans managed to reach their homes and rescue their children and wives. As they moved, bloodstained, across the Forum of the Bull and passed the Column of the Cross, their wives asked, "What is to become of us?" When they heard the fearful cry, "The Turks are slaughtering Romans within the City's walls," they did not believe it at first. They cursed and reviled the ill-omened messenger instead. But behind him came a second, and then a third, and all were covered with blood, and they knew that the cup of the Lord's wrath had touched their lips. Monks and nuns, therefore, and men and women, carrying their infants in their arms and abandoning their homes to anyone who wished to break in, ran to the Great Church. The thoroughfare, overflowing with people, was a sight to behold!

... In one hour's time that enormous temple was filled with men and women. There was a throng too many to count, above and below, in the courtyards and everywhere. They bolted the doors and waited, hoping to be rescued.

Pillaging, slaughtering, and taking captives on the way, the Turks reached the temple before the termination of the first hour. The gates were barred, but they broke them with axes. They entered with swords flashing and, beholding the myriad populace, each Turk caught and bound his own captive.

There was no one who resisted or who did not surrender himself like a sheep. Who can recount the calamity of that time and place? Who can describe the wailing and the cries of the babes, the mothers' tearful screams and the fathers' lamentations? . . . The abductors, the avengers of God, were in a great hurry. Within one hour they had bound everyone, the male captives with cords and the women with their own veils. The infinite chains of captives who like herds of kine [cattle] and flocks of sheep poured out of the temple and the temple sanctuary made an extraordinary spectacle! They wept and wailed and there was none to show them mercy.

What became of the temple treasures? What shall I say and how shall I say it? My tongue is stuck fast in my larynx. I am unable to draw breath through my sealed mouth. In that same hour the dogs hacked the holy icons to pieces, removing the ornaments. As for the chains, candelabra, holy altar coverings, and lamps, some they destroyed and the rest they seized. All the precious and sacred vessels of the holy sacristy, fashioned from gold and silver and other valuable materials, they collected in an instant, leaving the temple desolate and naked; absolutely nothing was left behind.

When the Romans saw that the Turks were already inside the City, they emitted the anguished cry of woe and threw themselves off the wall. The strength and might of the Romans were exhausted.

When the Turks in the ships saw their comrades inside the City, they knew that the City had fallen. They quickly threw up scaling ladders and climbed over the wall; then they broke down the gates and all rushed inside.

All the Romans had dispersed. Some were captured before they could reach their homes. Others, on reaching their homes, found them robbed of children, wife, and belongings. Before they had time to groan and wail, their hands were bound behind them. Still others, on reaching their homes and finding their wives and children already abducted, were themselves bound and fettered with their closest friends and their wives. The old men and women who were unable to leave their houses, either because of infirmity or old age, were slaughtered mercilessly. The newborn infants were flung into the squares.

All these events took place between the first hour of the day and the eighth hour [6 a.m. to 2 p.m.]. Setting aside his suspicions and fears, the tyrant made his entry into the City. . .

Proceeding to the Great Church [Hagia Sophia], he dismounted from his horse and went inside. He marveled at the sight.

Alas, the calamity! Alack, the horrendous deed! Woe is me! What has befallen us? Oh! Oh! What have we witnessed? An infidel Turk, standing on the holy altar in whose foundation the relics of Apostles and Martyrs have been deposited! . . . Because of our sins the temple [Hagia Sophia]... has been renamed and has become the House of Muhammad. Just is Thy judgment, O Lord.

From Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks*, trans. Harry J. Magoulias (Detroit: Wayne State University Press 1975), 231-235.

Lesson 5

Europe Recovers

Preparation

Duplicate Student Handouts 5.1-5.4.

Introduction

Tell students that in spite of the multiple calamities suffered by Europeans during this period, a timely conjunction of circumstances and events fueled a dramatic recovery toward the end of the era. In this lesson students will use graphic organizers to investigate how many factors combined to make this remarkable recovery possible.

1. Divide students into groups of three. Distribute Student Handout 5.1 to all students. Give each group one set of the three graphic organizers.
2. Explain to students that each member of the group will complete one of the three graphic organizers. Have them carefully read the directions that explain the graphic organizer they have been assigned. Answer any general questions and then have students complete their organizers.
3. As groups of students complete their organizers, direct them to begin working together to complete the “Putting It All Together” portion of the assignment. This will require them to share and compare what they have learned and concluded so far and then to combine their information to make further inferences and predictions.
4. When all groups have completed their tasks, discuss the graphic organizers and the first two “Putting It All Together” questions. You may want to highlight key points of the discussion by recording them on the board or overhead.
5. Conclude the lesson by discussing the final question. Since this question asks students to make predictions about later eras, discuss student ideas without revealing the answers.

Lesson 5***Student Handout 5.1*****Europe Recovers****Graphic Organizer 1:**

The pace of change in Europe accelerated greatly from 1300 to 1500. Some of the events and facts associated with this acceleration are listed in Student Handout 5.2. Consider these facts and events carefully and then fill in the center of the graphic organizer with your ideas about how life in Europe might have changed as a result.

Graphic Organizer 2:

As you know, feudalism was the political system that organized life during most of the Middle Ages. The facts and events described in Student Handout 5.3 resulted in important changes to this system which altered the way of life for many people. Read carefully and think about the facts and events listed. Fill in the center of the graphic organizer with your ideas about the possible results of these new changes in political systems and ways of life.

Graphic Organizer 3:

The facts and events described in Student Handout 5.4 motivated Europeans to begin trying to do some new things that were never considered by Europeans of the Middle Ages. Read carefully and think about the facts and events listed. Fill in the center of the graphic organizer with your ideas about what these circumstances might have motivated Europeans to do.

Putting it all together:

Look carefully at the three completed graphic organizers. Use them to answer these questions:

What events or facts do two or more of the three graphic organizers have in common?

Summarize these commonalities below:

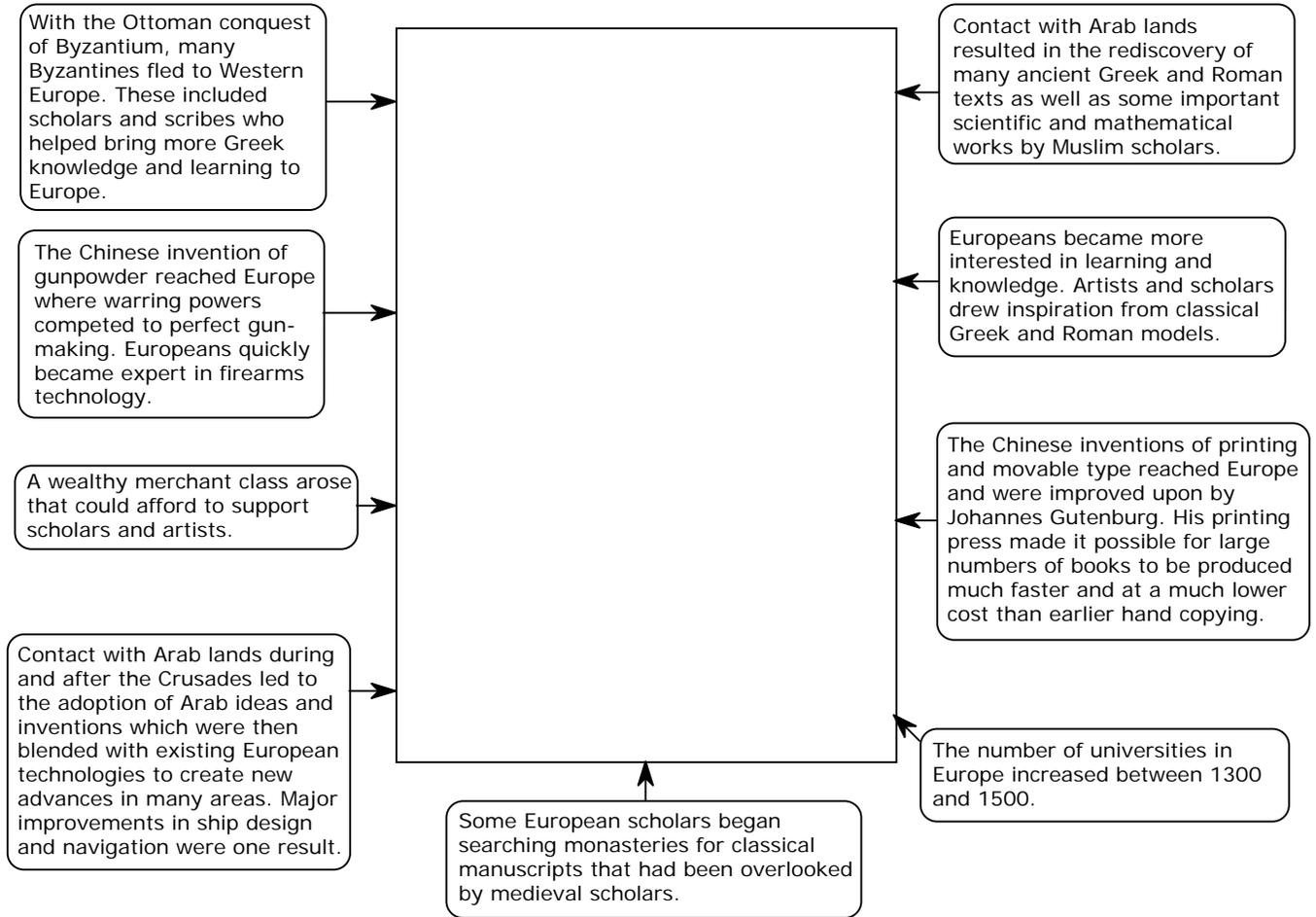
The three graphic organizers combined tell the story of Europe’s recovery after the many calamities of the fourteenth century. What do you think were the main reasons Europe was able to recover?

Use the three graphic organizers and their shared elements to think about what might have happened after 1500. What predictions can you make about possible changes and events that might take place as a result of Europe’s recovery?

Lesson 5

Student Handout 5.2

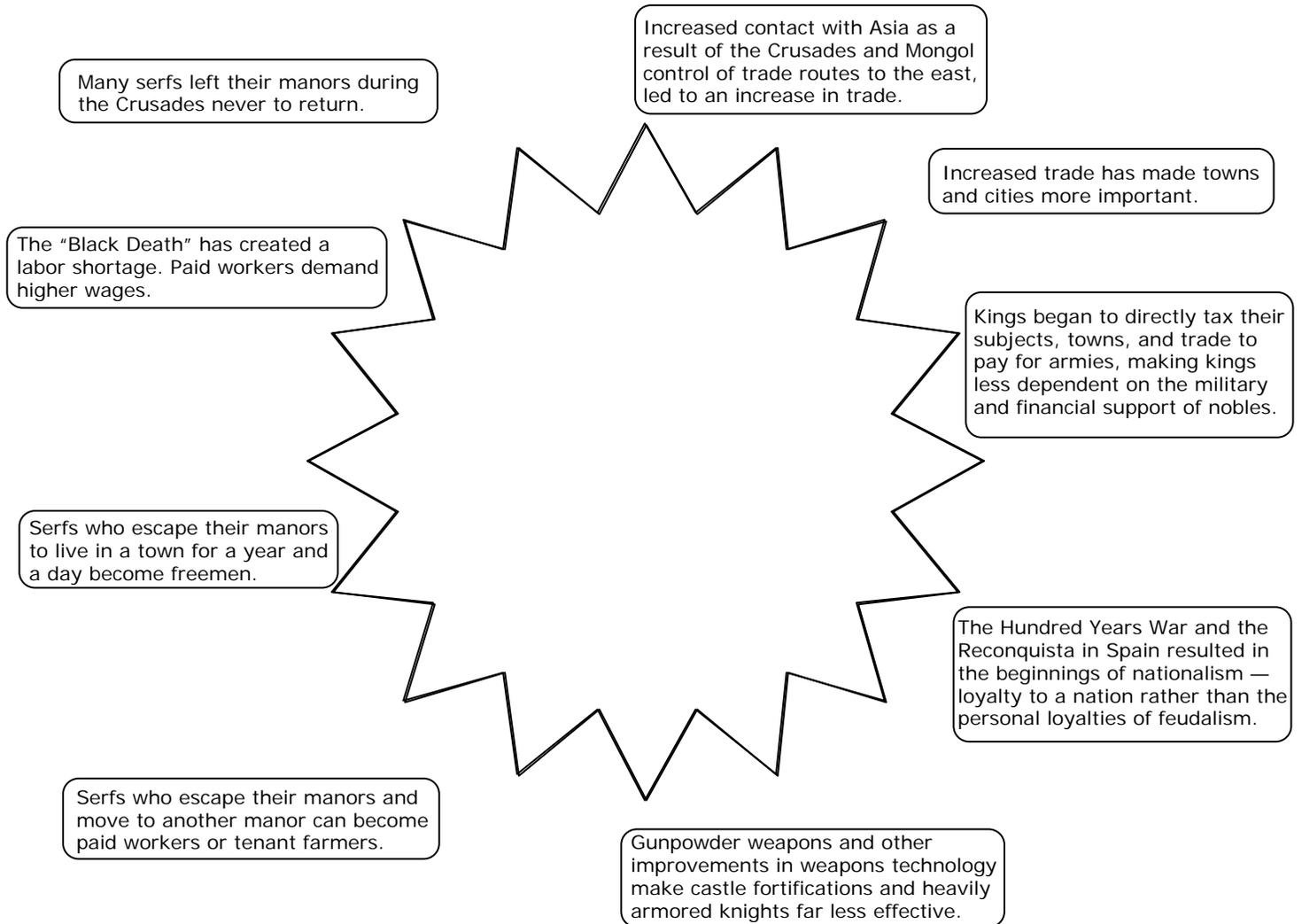
Change in Europe 1



Lesson 5

Student Handout 5.3

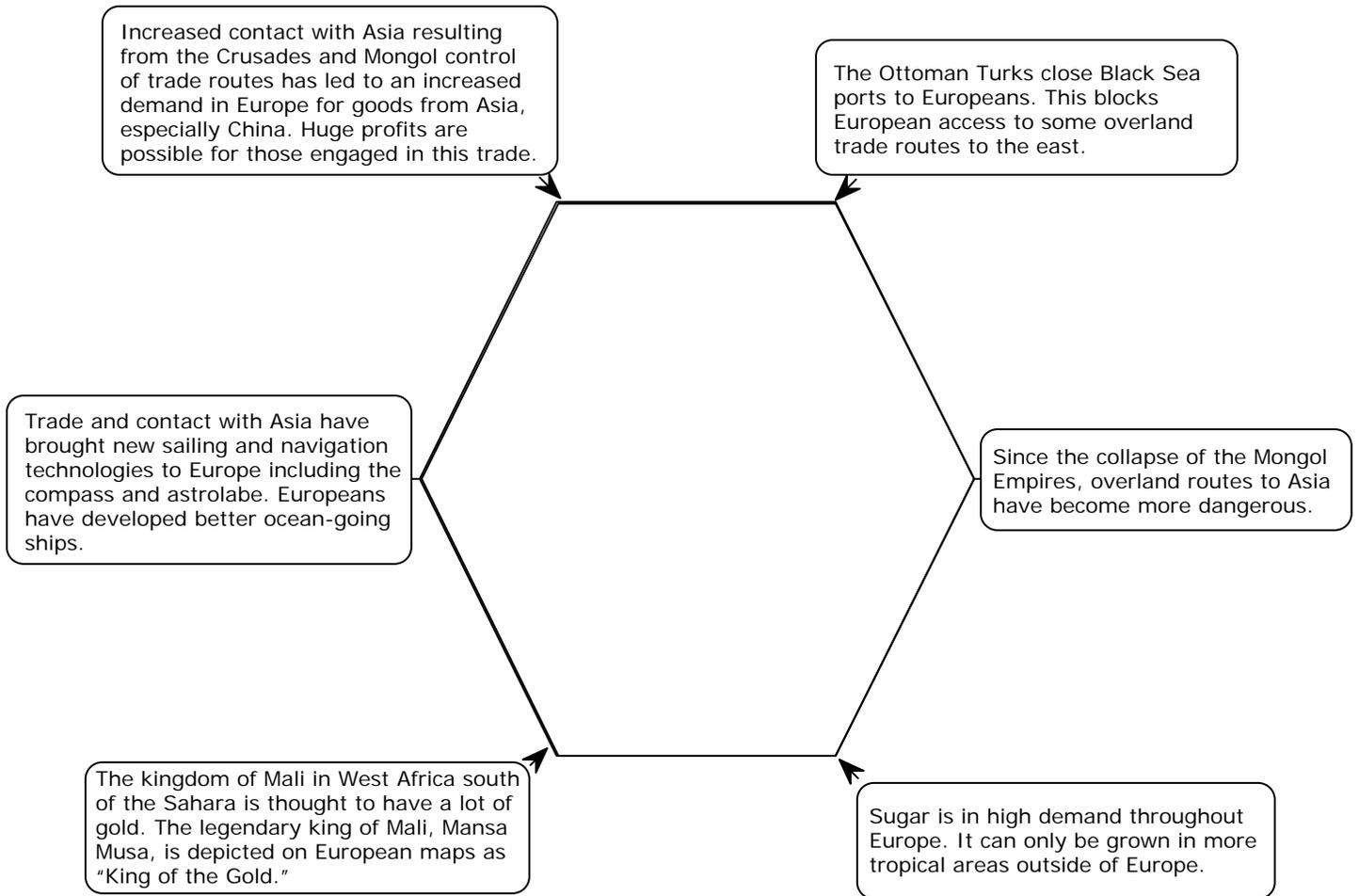
Change in Europe 2



Lesson 5

Student Handout 5.4

Change in Europe 3



Assessment

Students will answer two of the following four questions:

Explain the importance of understanding point of view, detecting bias, and assessing significance when interpreting historical accounts. Use examples from this unit to support your answer.

Use specific examples from this unit to explain what Ambrose Bierce meant when he said, “Calamity is of two kinds: misfortune to ourselves, and good fortune to others.”

Describe one calamity of the fourteenth and/or fifteenth century and explain its impact on the societies affected.

Describe one recovery of the fourteenth and/or fifteenth century and explain how that recovery was achieved.

This unit and the Three Essential Questions

 <p>HUMANS & the ENVIRONMENT</p>	<p>The populations of Europe, North Africa, and Southwest Asia may have declined 25 percent or more as a result of the Black Death and infectious disease outbreaks that followed. Except for the epidemics of Afroeurasian diseases that afflicted American Indians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, no pandemic that we know of ever reached the dimensions of the Black Death. Why haven't pandemics like this occurred more often? Why don't they occur all the time? How might you compare the Black Death with the AIDS pandemic in terms of causes, treatments, and social responses?</p>
 <p>HUMANS & other HUMANS</p>	<p>Write a short story or script about the experience of a family in Christian Europe during a year of famine in the first half of the fourteenth century. How might the family have responded to famine, especially if family members suffered or died from it? How might famine have changed the life of this family? If a famine hit most of the United States today, what effects might it have on family life?</p>
 <p>HUMANS & IDEAS</p>	<p>In the fourteenth century, both Christians and Muslims had ideas of how one might avoid getting plague. These ideas included 1) Keep up morale by reading entertaining love stories or humorous tales; 2) Do not flee, for people should await the fate God has in store; 3) Whip yourself because your pain may pay the price of sin; 4) Cover windows with waxed cloth; 5) Do not bathe, for this opens the pores to air; 6) Spend time in smoky and stinking places; 7) Break up the air inside your home by ringing bells; 8) Wash your hands and face often with vinegar and water. What do you think might be the rationales for these measures? Which ones, if any, might you use today if you were threatened by an epidemic? Why would some of the ideas make more sense to people living in the fourteenth century than today?</p>

This unit and the Seven Key Themes

This unit emphasizes:

Key Theme 1: Populations in Motion

Key Theme 3: Uses and Abuses of Power

Key Theme 7: Science, Technology, and the Environment

This unit and the Standards in Historical Thinking

Historical Thinking Standard 1: Chronological Thinking

The student is able to (F) reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration in which historical developments have unfolded, and apply them to explain historical continuity and change.

Historical Thinking Standard 2: Historical Comprehension

The student is able to (A) identify the author or source of the historical document or narrative and assess its credibility.

Historical Thinking Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation

The student is able to (C) analyze cause-and-effect relationships bearing in mind multiple causation including (a) the importance of the individual in history; (b) the influence of ideas, human interests, and beliefs; and (c) the role of chance, the accidental and the irrational.

Historical Thinking Standard 4: Historical Research Capabilities

The student is able to (C) interrogate historical data by uncovering the social, political, and economic context in which it was created; testing the data source for its credibility, authority, authenticity, internal consistency and completeness; and detecting and evaluating bias, distortion, and propaganda by omission, suppression, or invention of facts.

Historical Thinking Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

The student is able to (A) identify issues and problems in the past and analyze the interests, values, perspectives, and points of view of those involved in the situation.

Historical Thinking Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

The student is able to (C) Identify relevant historical antecedents and differentiate from those that are inappropriate and irrelevant to contemporary issues.

Resources

Resources for teachers

Bentley, Jerry H. and Herbert F. Ziegler. *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2003.

Cohn, Sam K. *The Black Death Transformed: Disease and Culture in Early Renaissance Europe*. Arnold, 2002. Questions conventional theories about the cause of the Black Death.

Deaux, George. *The Black Death*. New York: Weybright and Talley, 1969. Abundant excerpts from primary source documents.

Dols, Michael. *The Black Death in the Middle East*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1977.

Dunn, Ross E. *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

Fagan, Brian M. *The Little Ice Age: How Climate Made History, 1300-1850*. New York: Basic Books. 2000.

“Global Warming.” NASA Earth Observatory.
<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Library/GlobalWarming>

Gottfried, Robert S. *The Black Death: Natural and Human Disaster in Medieval Europe*. New York: Free Press, 1983.

Grove, Jean M. *Little Ice Ages: Ancient & Modern*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2003.

Herlihy, David. *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1997. A brief, readable interpretation based on three lectures.

Horrox, Rosemary, *The Black Death*. Manchester Medieval Sources. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994

Manz, Beatrice Forbes. *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

McNeill, William H. *Plagues and peoples*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1976.

Orent, Wendy. *Plague : The Mysterious Past and Terrifying Future of the World's Most Dangerous Disease*. New York: Free Press, 2004.

Wills, Christopher. *Yellow Fever, Black Goddess: The Coevolution of People and Plagues*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1996.

Resources for students

Biel, Timothy Levi. *The Black Death*. San Diego, CA: Lucent Books, 1989. Good short reading for younger students and less able readers.

“The Black Death, 1347-1350. Insecta Inspecta World. <http://www.insecta-inspecta.com/insecta-inspecta>.

Chapman, Anne. *Coping with Catastrophe: The Black Death of the 14th Century*. Los Angeles: National Center for History in the Schools (UCLA), 1998. A document-based teaching unit for middle or high school students.

Giblin, James Cross. *When plague strikes: the Black Death, smallpox, AIDS*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995. Vivid and readable; for high school age students.

“Global Warming.” Environmental Protection Agency. <http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming/kids/gw.html>

Tuchman, Barbara. *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century*. New York: Knopf, 1978. A gripping narrative by the celebrated popular historian.

Wepman, Dennis. *Tamerlane (World Leaders Past and Present)*. Langhorne, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987.

“Global Warming.” Atmospheric Radiation Measurement Program (ARM). U.S. Department of Energy. <http://www.arm.gov/docs/education/globwarm/affectgwarm.html>.

Correlations to National and State Standards and to Textbooks

National Standards for World History

Era Five: Intensified Hemispheric Interactions. Standard 5A: The student understands the consequences of the Black Death and the recurring plague pandemic in the 14th century; Standard 5B: The student understands transformations in Europe following the economic and demographic crises of the 14th century; Standard 5C. The student understands major political developments in Asia in the aftermath of the collapse of Mongol rule and the plague pandemic. Standard 7: The student is able to account for the growth, decline, and recovery of the overall population of Eurasia and analyze ways in which large demographic swings might have affected economic, social, and cultural life in various regions.

California: History-Social Science Content Standard

Grade Seven, 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; 7.6.7: Map the spread of the bubonic plague from Central Asia to China, the Middle East, and Europe and describe its impact on global population.

New York: Social Studies Resource Guide with Core Curriculum

Unit Three: Global Interactions (1200-1650), B. The rise and fall of the Mongols and their impact on Eurasia. C.3. Ibn Battuta. E. Social, economic, and political impacts of the plague on Eurasia and Africa

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies

113.33 World History Studies. (C7A) The student is expected to analyze examples of major empires of the world such as the Aztec, British, Chinese, French, Japanese, Mongol, and Ottoman empires. 113.34 World Geography Studies, (C2) History. The student understands how people, places, and environments have changed over time and the effects of these changes on history. (C3) Geography. The student understands how physical processes shape patterns in the physical environment (lithosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere, and biosphere), including how Earth-Sun relationships affect physical processes and patterns on Earth's surface.

Virginia History and Social Science Standards of Learning

World History and Geography to 1500 AD. Era IV: Regional Interactions, 1000-1500 A.D. WHI.12 The students will demonstrate knowledge of social, economic, and political changes and cultural achievements in the late medieval period by b) by explaining conflicts among Eurasian powers, including the crusades, the Mongol conquests, and the fall of Constantinople, c) identifying patterns of crisis and recovery related to the Black Death.

World history textbooks

Across the Centuries (Houghton Mifflin). Chapter 7: Three Empires. Lesson 1: The Mongols. Chapter 12: The Renaissance. Lesson 1: Europe at the End of the Middle Ages

World History: Patterns of Interaction (McDougal Littell). Chapter 12, 1: The Mongol Conquests. Chapter 14, 4: A Century of Turmoil. Chapter 18, 1: The Ottomans Build a Vast Empire.

Glencoe World History (Glencoe/McGraw-Hill). Chapter 8: The Asian World, 400-1500, 2: The Mongols and China.

Human Heritage: A World History (Glencoe). Chapter 23 The Eastern Slavs, 3: The Mongol Conquest.

Conceptual links to other teaching units

The first five Landscape Teaching Units in this Big Era focused on developments in Afroeurasia, where a large majority of the world's population lived. Teaching Unit 5.6 explores developments in the Americas between about 300 and 1500 C. E. In those centuries the peoples of the Americas and of Afroeurasia had no sustained contacts with one another. In investigating the Americas, including the emergence of several large-scale complex societies, teachers and students are encouraged to compare developments there with those in Afroeurasia. For example, what sort of basic technologies did North and South American peoples use to build agricultural economies, cities, and trade networks compared to the technologies available in Afroeurasia?