Welcome to World History AP!

This is a college-level course that covers the history of five continents over an 800 year span. Because of the magnitude of material we cover in class, we must start learning the material in the summer. Below is a description of the summer assignment. There are two parts. Both refer to the textbook pages that follow. Both should be completed on lined pieces of paper. Follow directions carefully. Make a good first impression when you turn this in!

Part 1

Read and take notes on textbook pages 204 – 231.
- Highlight and define all bolded words in your notes.

Organize your notes into the following sections:

A. The Rise of Islam
B. Developments in Europe and the Byzantine Empire
C. Developments in Asia
D. The Rise and Fall of the Mongols

Because the AP test is detailed, you must also be detailed. For each two pages of the textbook, you should take a page of notes (1 sided). This means you should have at least 14 pages of notes (front and back), with all key terms highlighted and defined.

Part 2

Complete both steps of Part 2 on the same piece of lined paper:

I.) Answer the 4 multiple choice questions on page 248.
II.) Answer the Short Answer Question below

Short Answer Question (A, B, and C)

A) Identify and explain the reasons for the Great Christian Schism in 1054 (the schism between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church).

B) Identify and explain ONE example of how China influenced surrounding Asian states during the Tang or Song Dynasty.

C) Identify and explain TWO impacts of Mongol conquests.

This Summer Assignment will be collected on the first day of school: Wednesday, August 28th.
III. REVIEW OF HISTORY WITHIN CIVILIZATIONS,
600 C.E.—1450

This period is defined by what rises out of the collapse of the classical civilizations and by the interactions—both positive and negative—that develop between these new states. This period is one of tremendous growth in long-distance trade: the caravans of the various Silk Routes, the multi-ethnic Indian Ocean sailors, the trips across the Sahara to West Africa, and continued trade in the Mediterranean all occur from 600 to 1450 C.E. These 850 years were also defined by a long period of decentralization in Western Europe and expansion on the trading empires of the Middle East and China. Remember interaction!

A. The Rise of Islam

In the seventh century, a new faith took hold in the Middle East. This faith, called Islam, was monotheistic, like Judaism and Christianity. The followers of Islam, called Muslims, believe that Allah (God) transmitted his words to the faithful through Muhammad, whose followers began to record those words in what came to be called the Qur’an, or “recitation” (also spelled Koran). Muslims believe that salvation is won through submission to the will of God, and that this can be accomplished by following the Five Pillars of Islam. These five pillars are

- confession of faith
- prayer five times per day
- charity to the needy
- fasting during the holy month of Ramadan
- pilgrimage to Mecca at least once during one's lifetime (if finances permit)

Islam is also guided by the concept of jihad, which means “to struggle.” This refers to both the struggle to be a better Muslim and the struggle against non-believers.

Islam shares a common history with Judaism and Christianity. It accepts Abraham, Moses, and Jesus as prophets (although it does not accept Jesus as the son of God), and holds that Muhammad was the last great prophet. Like Christians, Muslims believe that all people are equal before God and that everyone should be converted to the faith. Early on, Islam split into two groups: Shia and Sunni. The split occurred over a disagreement about who should succeed Muhammad as the leader of the faith.

Islam Takes Hold

Growing up in the city of Mecca in the Arabian desert (present-day Saudi Arabia), Muhammad was exposed to many different beliefs, in part because Mecca lay on the trade routes between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. He was exposed to both Judaism and Christianity as a child, as well as the many polytheistic
faiths that had traditionally influenced the region. Once he began preaching the monotheistic religion of Islam, which, as stated above, shares a foundation with Judaism and Christianity, he came into conflict with the leaders of Mecca, who had both a religious and economic interest in maintaining the status quo. In other words, the leadership in Mecca wanted to maintain the polytheistic shrines that attracted pilgrims and brought wealth to the community. Persecuted and threatened with death, Muhammad and his followers fled to Medina in 622 C.E. in what is known as the hejira (which also marks year 1 on the Muslim calendar). Muhammad and his followers found support in Medina and, in 630, he returned to Mecca and destroyed the pagan shrines—except for the Ka’aba, which became a focal point of Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca.

From Mecca, Islam spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula and beyond. The tenets of Islam came to be officially practiced in Arab culture, similar to the way the tenets of Christianity were practiced in the Roman and Byzantine Empires. Lands where Islam was practiced were known as “Dar al Islam,” or House of Islam. As Islam spread rapidly through the Middle East and Africa and toward Europe, Christian leaders became increasingly alarmed. More on that later.

The Empire Grows as the Religion Splits
When Muhammad died unexpectedly in 632, Abu Bakr, one of his first followers in Mecca, became caliph, the head of state, military commander, chief judge, and religious leader. You can think of the caliph as a sort of emperor and religious leader wrapped up in one person. He ruled an empire, but he also made pronouncements on religious doctrine. In other words, the Islamic empire was what’s known as a theocracy, a government ruled by immediate divine guidance or by officials who are regarded as being divinely guided. Because it was ruled by a caliph, the theocratic Islamic Empire was referred to as a caliphate. Islam would eventually branch out beyond the boundaries of the Islamic Empire and therefore exist independently as a religion, but in these early years, the growth of Islam was inextricably linked to the growth of this empire.

As time went on, the caliphs began to behave more like hereditary rulers, like those in a monarchy, except that there was no clear line of succession. The lack of clear succession caused a great deal of trouble down the road. The first four caliphs were Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali. The last of the four, Ali, was assassinated and was succeeded by his son, Hasan. But under pressure from a prominent family in Mecca, Hasan relinquished his title, making way for the establishment of the Umayyad Dynasty. This dynasty would enlarge the Islamic Empire dramatically, but it would also intensify conflict with the Byzantine and Persian Empires for almost a century.

During the Umayyad Dynasty, the capital was moved to Damascus, in modern-day Syria, although Mecca remained the spiritual center of the Islamic world. Also during the Umayyad reign, Arabic became the official language of the government; gold and silver coins became the standard monetary unit; and conquered subjects were “encouraged” to convert to Islam in order to establish a common faith throughout the empire. Those who chose not to convert were forced to pay a tax.
As noted above, the Islamic Empire grew enormously under the Umayyads, expanding as far as northern Africa and Spain, where they ruled the southern Iberian peninsula (modern-day Spain and Portugal) from the city of Córdoba. Numerous times during the early eighth century, the Umayyads attacked the Byzantine capital of Constantinople but failed to capture the city. That didn’t stop them from going elsewhere, and in 732 C.E., the Islamic Empire began to make a move on Europe by way of the Iberian Peninsula. At the time, Muslims held most of the Iberian peninsula and southern parts of Italy, while Christians dominated all the regions to the north. Charles Martel (686–741 C.E.), a Frankish leader, stopped the Muslim advance in its tracks as Muslim armies tried to advance toward Paris, so the Islamic Empire never flourished in Europe beyond parts of Spain and southern Italy. (More on the Franks and their activities a little later in the chapter.)

Despite the success of the Umayyad Dynasty (the Dome of the Rock was built on Temple Mount in Jerusalem during this time, and Córdoba was one of the richest and most sophisticated cities in Europe), problems with succession started to emerge. As was mentioned earlier in the chapter, after the death of Muhammad the Muslims split into two camps, Shiite and Sunni. Shiite (Shia) Islam holds that Muhammad’s son-in-law, Ali, was the rightful heir to the empire based on Muhammad’s comments to Ali. Sunni, in contrast, though they hold Ali in high esteem, do not believe that he and his hereditary line are the chosen successors; rather, they contend that the leaders of the empire should be drawn from a broad base of the people. This split in Islam remains to this day.

As the Shia began to assert themselves more dramatically, the Umayyad Dynasty went into decline and ultimately demised. In a battle for control of the empire against the forces of Abu al-Abbas (a descendant of Muhammad’s uncle who was supported by the descendents of Ali, the Shia, and the Mawali—non-Arab Muslims), the Umayyad Empire was defeated (punctuated by the slaughter of some members of the family). It was replaced by the Abbasid Dynasty around 750 in all areas except Spain.

**The Abbasid Dynasty: Another Golden Age to Remember**

The Abbasid Dynasty reigned from 750 to 1258, that is, until the Islamic Empire was defeated by the Mongols (more on them later). Throughout this time, like all major empires, the Abbasids had many ups and downs, but they oversaw a golden age beginning in the early- to mid-ninth century, during which the arts and sciences flourished. The Abbasids built a magnificent capital at Baghdad (modern-day Iraq), which became one of the great cultural centers of the world.

Like most of the other ancient civilizations we’ve discussed so far, the Islamic Empire was built around trade. The merchants introduced the unique idea of credit to the empire’s trade mechanisms to free them of the burden—and the danger—of carrying coins. Necessarily, they also developed a system of itemized receipts and bills, innovations that were later used in Europe and elsewhere.
An Abbasid army had the good fortune to defeat a T'ang Chinese army (more on them in a few pages) during the Battle of the Talus River in 751 C.E. This fight for control of Silk Road trading posts in central Asia is relatively unimportant (the Muslims won) except for the fact that the Chinese POWs were carrying paper money. Once the Abbasids figured out how to make paper, they could continue one of their most important activities, building libraries and universities and stocking them with scholarship from all over the known world. The location of the Muslims at the crossroads of Europe and Asia allowed them to monopolize trade routes. The cosmopolitan cities of the Islamic caliphs thrived on trade, international scholars, and expansion, both military and cultural.

Despite the hostility between the European and Islamic worlds, the Islamic Empire is credited with playing a significant role in preserving Western culture. (Recall that the Byzantines did this too.) In contrast to European civilizations during the Middle Ages, which were often decentralized and reluctant to embrace the teachings of "pagan" authors from antiquity, the Arabs kept the Western heritage of the region alive. For example, when the Muslims encountered the classic writings of ancient Athens and Rome, including those of Plato and Aristotle, they translated them into Arabic. Later, when Muslims and Christians battled for control of the Levant (present-day Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and points north and south) during the European Crusades, Europe found its own history among the other treasures preserved in Arabic libraries and museums. This again demonstrates how the interaction between two peoples (even when violent) can lead to trade and cultural exchange.

The Muslims, like the Romans, were often tolerant of the local customs of the areas they conquered—although Christians and Jews were often persecuted in the Levant. That's not to say that the Islamic Empire didn't make every effort to convert the people it conquered (remember the tax we mentioned)? The point is that though it was a theocracy, the Islamic Empire's more flexible approach contributed to its rapid growth. The Sufis, Islamic mystics, were effective missionaries. They stressed a personal relationship with Allah, in contrast to other religions that emphasized a particular form of ritual. As you might guess, this made Islam highly adaptable to many different circumstances. By allowing, and even encouraging, followers to practice their own ways to revere Allah, and by tolerating others who placed Allah in the framework of other beliefs, the Sufis succeeded in converting large numbers of people to Islam.
Women and Islam: For Better, for Worse

In Arabia, women traditionally did not have property rights or inheritance rights; rather, women were essentially viewed as property themselves—of men. If a man divorced a woman, for example, he would keep her dowry (the money and property from her father that she brought with her into the marriage). This widespread—really, institutionalized—low status for women eventually led to a culture in which baby girls were seen as less valuable than baby boys. Tragically this often translated into female infanticide, the killing of an unwanted baby girl. (This gender bias was, by the way, common in many patriarchal societies.)

The Qur'an, the sacred book of Islam, established between 651 and 652 C.E., changed much of this. Although women remained subservient to men and under their direction and control, they began to be treated with more dignity, had some legal rights, and were considered equal before Allah. If a man divorced his wife, he would have to return her dowry to her. More important, infanticide was strictly forbidden. Women gained considerable influence within the home—and in early Islamic society, women sometimes had influence outside it. Khadija, Muhammad's first wife, had been a successful businesswoman, for example.

Islamic society was still a man's world, however. Men were permitted to have as many as four wives as long as they were able to support them and treated them equally. Women, on the other hand, had to be faithful to one man—in part because in this society land was passed through the males, and the identity of a boy's father couldn't be disputed. Legally, women were treated unequally; a woman's testimony in court, for example, was given only half the weight of a man's. Restrictions for women even included what they wore: Women sometimes had to be veiled in public—although this custom began in Mesopotamia and Persia, Islamic society adopted and adapted it.
Over time, Islamic society became more structured and more patriarchal. A woman's primary duty was singular: to be loyal to and care for her husband and family. Within that structure, however, women were highly protected, and in some ways more respected, under the Qur'an than they previously had been.

Decline of the Islamic Caliphates: Internal Rivalries and Mongol Invasions

The Islamic Empire regularly endured internal struggles and civil war, often arising from differences between the Sunni and Shia sects, and from ethnic differences between diverse groups in the rapidly expanding Muslim world. Numerous rival factions and powers developed, and although none of these threatened Islam, they did destabilize the central authority at Baghdad and cut tax revenues. The final blows came when Turkish warrior slaves revolted and established a new capital at Samarra in central Iraq, while other groups carved out pieces of the empire. There was a new Shia dynasty in northern Iran and constant threats from the Seljuk Turks, a nomadic Sunni group. Like the Romans before them, weakened by internal problems, the Abasids also had external foes: the Persians, Europeans, and Byzantines.

However, it would be the Islamic Empire's most distant enemy, the Mongols, who would defeat it. During the crusades, in 1258, the Mongols overran the Islamic Empire and destroyed Baghdad, thereby signaling the end of the Abbasid Dynasty. Its people would flee to Egypt, where they remained intact but powerless. Eventually, the Ottoman Turks would reunite Egypt, Syria, and Arabia in a new Islamic state, which would last until 1918.

B. Developments in Europe and the Byzantine Empire

Developments in Europe and points east became quite complicated during the Middle Ages, which is the period after the fall of Rome and before the Renaissance. As you might recall from the last chapter, the Roman Empire, and eventually Christianity, was divided into two factions that split, reconnected, then split again. Ultimately, the eastern Roman Empire, centered in Constantinople, became the highly centralized government known as the Byzantine Empire; in the west, on the other hand, the empire collapsed entirely, although the Christian religion retained a strong foothold. The important point to remember about all of this is that even though both segments of the empire followed Christianity, they practiced different forms of the religion; moreover, their populations competed for supremacy.
Note the Change: As the Empire Turns
They meet. They flirt for a long time, and then marry and settle in Rome. Things get tough, so they take a short break from each other, but get back together in Constantinople where they build a new house. After a time they separate from each other geographically, but remain married by religion. Eventually, they get a divorce and follow their own religious paths. Will they ever be able to rekindle the romance?

The history of the Roman Empire reads a lot like a bad soap opera. Recall that the Roman Empire united the entire Mediterranean for centuries. However, it became too unwieldy to govern as a whole, so in 286 C.E., the empire was split into an eastern half and a western half, in what were hoped to be more manageable administrative regions. Then, in 313, Constantine converted to Christianity and made the religion legal in the empire. By the end of his reign, in the year 330, Constantine reunited the empire in Constantinople. It was still the Roman Empire, but it wasn’t centered in Rome. The empire split again in 395, while the western half of the empire was sliced and diced by incoming barbarian tribes and disintegrated as a political unit in 476, at which time the eastern half became known as the Byzantine Empire. Almost 400 years later, in 800, the Pope attempted to revive the Western Empire by crowning Charlemagne “Emperor of the Romans.” His empire continued to consider itself Roman throughout the Middle Ages. The Byzantines continued on as before in the east. So again there were two empires, but still one religion. That, however, was to change as well some two hundred years later when, in 1054, Christianity split, for both theological and political reasons, into two subgroups: Roman Catholicism and Christian Orthodoxy.

As you review the events in this region, the important points to remember are

- the Byzantine Empire was a lot more centralized and organized than the Western empire
- both practiced Christianity, though not in the same way

The Byzantine Empire: The Brief Details
The Byzantine Empire was distinct from the Roman Empire. It used the Greek language; its architecture had distinctive domes; its culture in general had more in common with Eastern cultures like those of Persia; and its brand of Christianity became a separate branch known as Orthodox Christianity.

Compared with what was going on at the height of the Roman Empire, much of Europe at the time was fragmented into small feudal kingdoms with limited power and fewer cultural and intellectual advancements. The Byzantine Empire, like the Islamic Empire to the south, was significantly different. The Byzantine emperors ruled by absolute authority, especially over the economy, whose industries, such as silk production (a trade learned from China), they monopolized. The Byzantines also used coined money, the value of which remained remarkably stable, making it a very desirable currency for business.

Under Justinian, who reigned from 527 to 565, the former glory and unity of the Roman Empire was somewhat restored in Constantinople. The region flourished in trade and the arts. Christian Constantinople and Islamic Baghdad rivaled each
other for cultural supremacy. The Justinianic period is perhaps most remembered for three things: (1) the Justinianic Code, a codification of Roman law that kept ancient Roman legal principles alive (in the West these went unused for a time), and (2) the flourishing of the arts and sciences, evident in the construction of major buildings and churches, most notably Hagia Sophia, an enormous cathedral that still stands today (but now as a museum and former mosque). Finally, and most importantly, Justinian is known for his ambitious plan to reconquer the lost provinces of the western half of the Roman Empire. His plans went smoothly when his armies reconquered Africa from the Vandals, but intense siege warfare against the Ostrogoths in Italy that lasted 20 years halted Justinian’s plans for further conquests. By the end of his reign, his empire was indeed larger, but at the cost of destroying what remained of Roman infrastructure in Italy, as well as bankrupting his coffers and exhausting the sources of his soldiers.

In contrast to the Roman Catholic emperors of the West, who regarded the Pope as the leader of the See of Rome, the Byzantine emperors nominated their own Patriarchs of the See of Constantinople. For centuries the two churches managed to tolerate each other while they butted heads for primacy over the whole of the Christian flock, but in time the differences, both political and religious, became too great. They disagreed over the sacrament of communion, whether priests should be allowed to marry, and the use of local languages in church. They were even at odds regarding the nature of God, specifically God as a trinity, and they disagreed over the placement of icons during worship. In 1054 C.E., unable to reconcile their differences, the Pope excommunicated the patriarch of Constantinople, who did the same to the Pope. From that point forward, the Church of Constantinople (otherwise known as Eastern Orthodoxy) influenced the East and Roman Catholicism influenced the West. Keep this schism in mind as you review the Crusades, Christian Europe’s war with the Islamic world; the Byzantine Empire is right in the middle!

Contrast Them: Religion and State in Roman Catholicism and Christian Orthodoxy
Remember that we said the secular empire was more centralized in the East (Byzantine Empire) than in the West (Roman Empire) during the Middle Ages? Interestingly, the reverse was true in terms of their religions. Christianity as practiced by Catholics was very centralized, with power stemming from Rome and services held in the Roman (Latin) form. In the East, Orthodox Christianity was more localized. Russian churches, for example, conducted services in their own language. In this sense local customs merged with Christian practices in the Orthodox Church.

A great deal of the evolution of these religious factions in these two empires centered on control. For stability, either the heads of the church or the heads of the state needed to be in control. During the Middle Ages, the West centralized power in the church, thereby decentralizing political power. Essentially this meant that the existing political leadership was blessed by the church, hence often under the control of the church as well, at least in the early centuries of the Middle Ages. In the East, the situation was the exact opposite: Political emperors were in control of both politics and the church, and while church practices were localized, political authority was not. The point to remember here is that in the early centuries of the Middle Ages, the East was more of a secular empire with an official church religion; the West was more of a religious empire with subservient political units.
Impact of Orthodoxy on Russia: Feast in the East

In the ninth century, the Slavic peoples of southeastern Europe and Russia were converted to Christianity by St. Cyril, an Orthodox Christian who used the Greek alphabet to create a Slavic alphabet known as the Cyrillic alphabet, which to this day is used in Russia and other parts of the region. Most of these areas were not part of the Byzantine Empire itself, but were influenced by it. When Vladimir, a Russian prince from Kiev, abandoned the traditional pagan religion and converted to Christianity, he also considered Islam, Judaism, and Roman Catholicism. Rumor has it that he chose Christian Orthodoxy because it had no restrictions about when or what he could and could not eat.

The dominance of Christian Orthodoxy in this region is significant because while western Europe followed one cultural path, eastern Europe followed another, and this had a tremendous impact on the development of Russia. The Russian Orthodox Church was aligned with Byzantine but not Roman traditions. So, when the Roman church reformed later (discussed in Chapter 7), the Russian and Greek churches did not. As a result of this and the Mongol invasion (coming up soon), Russia became culturally different from the other great powers of Europe, which grew out of the Catholic tradition.

Meanwhile Out West: The Franks versus the Muslims

The best place to begin a discussion of political developments in western Europe in the Middle Ages is with the Franks. After the classical Roman Empire fell apart, due in part to invasions from Germanic tribes, these tribes settled throughout western Europe. Most of the tribes converted to Christianity relatively quickly, though politically they continued to run their own shows. That meant they came into regular conflict with each other, and they formed alliances and expanded, sometimes enough to be considered kingdoms. The most significant of these early kingdoms was the Franks.

The Franks were a Germanic tribe that united under the leadership of King Clovis in the late fifth century. He built a rather large empire that stretched from present-day Germany through Belgium and into France. He converted to Christianity and established his capital in Paris. After he died, his empire was divided among his sons, after which it declined in influence.

Nevertheless, the empire did help the various peoples of western Europe solidify under a common culture, which made it easier for them to unify against Muslim invasions, which in the eighth century took over parts of Spain and Italy. Charles Martel (remember we mentioned him at the beginning of the chapter?) led the revolt against the advancing Muslim armies and in 732 defeated them at the Battle of Tours, not far from Paris. Again, interaction through conflict.
Martel then used his position as a political and military leader under the declining Frankish Merovingian Dynasty to put his sons forth as successors, thus founding the Carolingian Dynasty ("Carolus" is Latin for Charles). Martel had worked during his tenure to reunite the region under his control, and when his son Pepin the Short (there were several Pepins in Frankish history) ascended to the throne in 752 C.E., Charles chose to have his succession certified by the pope, a significant step that sent the clear signal that an empire’s legitimacy rested on the Rome’s approval.

Charlemagne: The Empire Strikes Back

In the centuries following the breakup of the Roman Empire, no true empire existed in western Europe. The Franks had built a large kingdom, but it could hardly be considered an empire by historical standards. It would be Pepin's son, Charles (747–814 C.E.), who would revitalize the concept of the empire in western Europe. Like his father, Charles was crowned by the pope in 800 and became known as Charlemagne ("Charles the Great").
The empire Charlemagne built would come to be called the Holy Roman Empire upon the coronation of Otto the Great in 962. It's important to point out that this empire had little in common with the original Roman Empire, other than the fact that power was once again centralized and Rome began to think of itself as a world center again. The size of the Holy Roman Empire, in comparison to its namesake, was relatively small. It included northern Italy, Germany, Belgium, and France. Nevertheless, it marked the beginning of western European ambition in terms of empire-building, especially among those in the church.

Under Charlemagne, a strong focus was placed on the arts and education, but not surprisingly with a much more religious bent—much of this effort centered in the monasteries under the direction of the church. Although Charlemagne was very powerful, his rule was not absolute. Society was structured around feudalism (more on feudalism shortly). Charlemagne had overall control of the empire, but the local lords held power over the local territories, answering to Charlemagne only on an as-needed basis. Because Charlemagne did not levy taxes, he failed to build a strong and united empire. After his death and the death of his son Louis, the empire was divided among Charlemagne's three grandsons according to the Treaty of Verdun in 843.

The Vikings: Raiders from the North
During this time, western Europe continued to be attacked by powerful invaders, notably the Vikings from Scandinavia and the Magyars from Hungary. Although the Vikings were not the only raiders, they were perhaps the most successful. Beginning around 800 C.E., they used their highly maneuverable, multi-oared boats to raid well beyond their borders—on the open seas, up and down the North Atlantic coast, and along the inland rivers.

The Vikings got a bad reputation for raiding the Catholic monasteries, but don't blame the Vikings. Raiding was a normal consequence of the pressures on a growing society and the need for resources. The monasteries held much wealth and food, so they were natural targets. Raiding was just one aspect of Norse economy. The Vikings were also merchants and fishermen and developed some of the earliest commercial fisheries in northern Europe. These activities, along with the raids, led to settlements as diverse as Newfoundland, Canada around 1000 C.E., inland Russia, and northern France. The Vikings even got as far south as Constantinople, raiding it at least three times. In France, the Vikings were known as Normans (or northerners), the most famous of whom is William, who conquered Anglo-Saxon England in 1066.

Remarkably, however, in spite of their various victories, the Vikings, too, were converted to Christianity. This continued in a pattern of invading tribes assimilating to a common civilization in western Europe because of religion, not political power. Catholicism became institutionalized at every level of life. By the middle of the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church had become the most powerful institution in western Europe and one of the most powerful institutions in the world.
European Feudalism: Land Divided

Feudalism, the name of the European social, economic, and political system of the Middle Ages, had a strict hierarchy. At the top was a king, who had power over an entire territory called his kingdom. Beneath him were the nobles, who in exchange for military service and loyalty to the king were granted power over sections of the kingdom. The nobles, in turn, divided their lands into smaller sections under the control of lesser lords called vassals. The vassals could also split their lands into smaller pieces and give custody of them to subordinate vassals, who could divide their lands into even smaller pieces in the custody of even more subordinate vassals, and so on. Below the vassals were peasants, who worked the land. For this system to work, everyone had to fulfill obligations to others at different levels in the hierarchy: to serve in the military, produce food, or serve those who were at a higher level. If, say, you were a lesser-lord, you were obliged to your lord, and you were obliged to your vassals as well.

The estates that were granted to the vassals were called fiefs, and these later became known as manors. The lord and the peasants lived on the manor. The peasants worked the land on behalf of the lord, and in exchange the lord gave the peasants protection and a place to live. Many of the manors were remarkably self-sufficient. Everything that was needed to live was produced on them. Food was harvested, clothing and shoes were made, and so on. Advances made in the science of agriculture during this time helped the manors to succeed. One such advance, called the three-field system, centered on the rotation of three fields: one for the fall harvest, one for the spring harvest, and one non-seeded fallow harvest (the latter allowing the land to replenish its nutrients). In this way, manors were able to accumulate food surpluses and build on the success. Lords directed what was called the “Great Clearing,” the clearing of huge areas of forest for the creation of more farmland.

Compare Them: Ancient Civilizations and Those of the Middle Ages

You have no doubt noticed that European civilizations during the Middle Ages evolved in much the same way as the Mediterranean, Indus, and Shang civilizations a couple of thousand years earlier, and for the same reason: Agricultural surpluses enabled the early civilizations to build cities, which then made it possible to form complicated institutions and promote the arts and sciences.

In western Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire, the practice of feudalism caused life to be centered on small, self-sustaining communities that didn’t initially generate much of a surplus. But as they subsequently built up storehouses of food and supplies, and as people came into greater contact with each other, they were freed to pursue other endeavors (at the discretion of their overseer, of course). As a result, we begin to see the emergence of craftpeople, individuals skilled in highly specialized ways. Towns and cities, too, began to grow, and, eventually the Middle Ages came to an end.
The lord, as noted, owed his allegiance to the king but only had direct contact with him when the king called upon the lord to provide a service. Otherwise, the lord was in charge of his own manor—his own life. And though the various siefs were, in theory, self-sustaining, and the lords all behelden to the same ruler, conflicts erupted between feudal lords on a regular basis (this is where the term feud comes from). The etiquette of these disputes and rules of engagement was highly refined and flowed from the code of chivalry, an honor system that strongly condemned betrayal and promoted mutual respect. Most of the lords (and knights, who were also considered part of the nobility) followed the code of chivalry.

The feudal system, like most of the civilizations we've discussed so far, was male-dominated. Land equaled power, and only males could inherit land, so women were pretty much powerless. Specifically, when a lord died under the feudal system his land and title passed down via primogeniture, to his eldest son. Even noblewomen had few rights, though they were socially elevated (and have come to be romanticized in literature). Women could inherit a sief, but they could not rule it. Furthermore, women's education was limited to domestic skills. As usual in most early societies, noblewomen were admired and valued primarily for their "feminine" traits—their beauty or compassion—but were regarded essentially as property to be protected or displayed.

Peasants (called serfs) in the feudal social system, whether male or female, had few rights. As manorial life evolved, an increasing number of peasants became tied to the land quite literally: They couldn't leave the manor without permission from their lord. Peasants were not quite slaves, but not free either. Ironically, however, it was this "imprisonment" on the land that led to the serfs becoming highly skilled workers. In short, they learned how to do whatever it took to make the manor self-sufficient.

Contrast Them: Feudal Europe and the Islamic Empire

Remember the Abbasid Dynasty? It flowered in the Islamic world at the same time that feudalism was taking root in western Europe. Islamic merchants were trading with the world while European lords were governing their manors. Baghdad became a center of learning and art in the Islamic Empire, whereas small, secluded monasteries became centers of learning in the early Holy Roman Empire. In summary, it can be said that in the early Middle Ages, educated Europeans became very provincial, while educated Arabs became more worldly.

As many of the serfs became skilled in trades other than farming, and Europe slowly but surely started trading with the rest of the world, some of these skilled craftspeople began to earn extra income. Over time, this elevation in the status of craftspeople chipped away at the rigid social stratification of the manor system. When banking began in Europe, towns and cities started to gain momentum. The result was the emergence of a "middle class" made up of urban craftsmen and merchants. The success of this new middle class lured more people into towns in the hopes of making more money or learning new skills. By the eleventh century, western Europe was re-engaging with the world.
Height of the Middle Ages: Trading and Crusading

Trade Routes of the Hanseatic League (Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries)

Given the new importance of trade, towns with wealthy merchants arose near the once all-powerful manors. Towns were chartered on lands controlled by feudal lords (the charters gave the townspeople certain rights), and within the towns, the middle-class merchants, or burgheurs, became politically powerful. Like their manorial predecessors, the towns had a great deal of independence within the empire but were intrinsically more interdependent than the self-sufficient manors of the feudal system. Eventually, towns formed alliances, not unlike a city-state structure. One of the most significant alliances, the Hanseatic League, had an economic basis; established in 1358, it controlled trade throughout much of northern Europe. One effect of the interdependence of the towns was to initiate a drive toward nationhood; another was to increase social mobility and flexibility among the classes.

Among the greatest artistic achievements of the Middle Ages was its architecture, specifically its cathedrals. In the early Middle Ages, churches were built in the bulky Romanesque style; later architectural advancements led to what came to be called the Gothic style. Gothic cathedrals were designed to draw worshippers closer to God. To achieve this, architects of the day used “flying buttresses,” which gave support for tall windows and vaulted ceilings. Over time, the cathedral became more than a place of worship; it became an art form and
an arena for art. The church sponsored artists to adorn the inside of cathedrals with paintings and sculpture. Music, too, such as Gregorian chants, became an intrinsic part of ceremonies.

European contact with the Muslim world during the Crusades (military campaigns undertaken by European Christians of the eleventh through the fourteenth centuries to take over the Holy Land and convert Muslims and other non-Christians to Christianity) and over the trade routes helped spur new thought and broadened the perspective of these previously insular people (more on the Crusades in Section IV of this chapter). In time, people began to question organized religion (citing “reason”), which of course the church found threatening. This process of reasoning gave rise to heresies, religious practices or beliefs that do not conform to the traditional church doctrine. Sometimes what became defined as heresies were simply older beliefs that did not adapt to more mainstream changes in religious thought. In what may seem ironic today, many heretics wanted a return to the simpler ways of early Christianity; they rejected how worldly and wealthy the church had become.

Doubts about the supremacy of religious dogma continued to emerge until the beginning of the thirteenth century, when Pope Innocent III issued strict decrees on church doctrine. Under Innocent III, perceived heretics and Jews were frequently persecuted, and a fourth, ultimately unsuccessful crusade was attempted. During this crusade, which seemed motivated by greed, the Crusaders conquered—and sacked—the already Christian Constantinople, and declared a Latin Empire. (This empire was short-lived, lasting only some fifty years, and ended when the Byzantines overthrew the Latins in 1261). A few years later, Pope Gregory IX set into motion the now-notorious Inquisition, a formalized interrogation and persecution process of perceived heretics. Punishment for so-called nonbelievers ranged from excommunication and exile to torture and execution. Due to the pervasiveness of the church and its ultimate power at this time, it is sometimes referred to as the Universal Church or the Church Militant.

The Birth of Scholasticism
Another important effect of people thinking more openly was the founding of universities, where men (not women) could study philosophy, law, and medicine, and learn from the advances made in Muslim cultures. In science, the ideas of Aristotle, Ptolemy, and other Greeks were brought to Europe through contacts with Islamic and Byzantine Empires (again, via trading and crusading). This progression, called scholasticism, also sometimes came into conflict with the church because it relied on reason rather than faith.

Late in the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274 C.E.), a famous Christian theologian, made significant inroads in altering Christian thought. He wrote the Summa Theologica, which outlined his view that faith and reason are not in conflict, but that both are gifts from God and each can be used to enhance the other. His writings had a major impact on Christian thought, although the church remained a strict guardian of its own interpretations.
Focus On: The Bubonic Plague
Referred to as the Black Death, this epidemic originated in China, where it killed an estimated 35 million people. It spread rapidly through Europe in the mid-fourteenth century. Its transmission was facilitated by new forms of commerce and trade, including Mongol control of the central Asian Silk Routes, that increased the interaction between Europe and Asia. First occurring in the 1330s, the epidemic spread westward with traders and merchants and arrived in Italian port cities as early as 1347. Crowded conditions in Europe’s cities and the lack of adequate sanitation and medical knowledge all contributed to its rapid spread. Within only two years, more than a third of Europe’s population was dead, and traditional social structures nearly collapsed. The dramatic changes brought by the epidemic sped up social and economic movements that were already impacting Europe. These included a shift toward a commercial economy, more individual freedoms, and development of new industries.

The Emergence of Nation-States: Power Solidifies
Keep in mind that during the Middle Ages, western Europe wasn’t organized into countries (nation-states); rather, it was broken up into feudal kingdoms. However, by the close of the Middle Ages, western Europe began to organize along cultural and linguistic lines. People who spoke French aligned themselves with France. Those who spoke English united under the banner of England. We’ll be talking a lot more about this in the next chapter, but for now just keep this general concept in mind.

The various parts of Europe took different paths to achieve statehood during the thirteenth century. In Germany, for example, the reigning family died out without a suitable successor to the emperorship, so the region entered a period known as an interregnum (a time between kings). Germany and Italy became decentralized in a group of strong, independent townships and kingdoms, similar to city-states. In this environment, merchants and tradespeople became more powerful. In northern Germany, for example, the Hanseatic League (the influential association of merchants mentioned earlier) led the region’s progress in international trade and commerce.

England, by contrast, unified much more quickly. Since the time of William the Conqueror, England had followed a tradition of a strong monarchy. However, during the rule of King John, powerful English nobles rebelled and forced him to sign the Magna Carta (1215 C.E.). This document reinstated the feudal rights of the nobles, but also extended the rule of law to other people in the country, namely the growing burgher class, laying the foundation for the Parliament. Initially, an assembly was established made up of nobles who were responsible for representing the views of different parts of England on law-making and taxation issues. After a trial period, the Parliament was established. Later, it was divided into two branches: the House of Lords (nobles and clergy) and the House of Commons (knights and wealthy burghers). The House of Lords presided over legal issues and advised the king; the House of Commons was concerned with issues of trade and taxation. The result was that England established its identity pretty early on.
The formation of France was bound up with England. In 987, King Hugh Capet ruled only a small area around Paris; for the next 200 years or so, subsequent French kings expanded the territory. Beginning in the twelfth century, England began to claim large parts of present-day France. The English occupation of the French-speaking territories led to revolts and, eventually, to French statehood. (The goal was to unite France under its own leadership.) This effort was spearheaded by an unlikely candidate.

As a teenager, farm girl Joan of Arc claimed to have heard voices that told her to liberate France from the hands of the English, who had by the early fifteenth century claimed the entire French territory. Remarkably, this uneducated youngster somehow managed to convince French authorities that she had been divinely inspired to lead men into battle, and they supplied her with military backing. With her army, she forced the British to retreat from Orleans, but was later captured by the French, tried by the English, and burned at the stake by the French. Nevertheless, she had a significant impact on the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453) between England and France, which eventually resulted in England's withdrawal from France.

At around the same time, Spain was united by Queen Isabella, the ruler of Castile (present-day central Spain). Power in the Spanish-speaking region of Europe had been divided for two reasons: first, Castile was one of three independent Spanish kingdoms, and therefore no single ruler controlled the region, and second, the peasants were split along religious lines (mostly Christian and Muslim), due to the lasting influences of the Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages. To overcome these obstacles, Isabella married Ferdinand, heir to the Spanish Kingdom of Aragon, in 1469, thus uniting most of Spain in a single monarchy. Rather than compete with the church for authority, Isabella and Ferdinand, both Christians, enlisted the Catholic Church as a strong ally. Spanish statehood thrived under the new monarchy, and the alignment with the Catholic Church effectively ended religious toleration in the region. The result was that non-Christians (predominantly Muslim and Jewish people) were forced to convert to Christianity or leave the country. This policy marked the beginning of the Spanish Inquisition. The consequences for non-Christian Spaniards were tragic; the consequences for the Spanish monarchy were huge. Newly unified and energized, Spain embarked on an imperial quest that led to tremendous wealth and glory, eventually resulting in the spread of the Spanish language, Spanish customs, and Christianity to much of the New World (as you will see in the next chapter).
What About Russia?

Recall that eastern Europe and Russia at this time were very different from the West. The Eastern Orthodox Christians of this area spent much time and effort defending themselves from the colonization of various western invaders. It wasn’t until 1242 that Russia succumbed to the Tatars (a group of Mongols from the east) under Genghis Khan. The Tatars ruled a large chunk of Russia for two centuries, leading to a cultural rift that further split eastern and western Europe.

By the fourteenth century, Mongol power started to decline and the Russian princes of Muscovy grew in power. By the late 1400s, Ivan III expanded Muscovy territory (the area surrounding Moscow) into much of modern-day Russia and declared himself czar, the Russian word for emperor or Caesar. As the center of the Eastern Orthodox Church, Moscow was declared the Third Rome, after the real Rome and Constantinople. By the mid-1500s, Ivan the Terrible had centralized power over the entire Russian sphere, ruling ruthlessly and using the secret police against his own nobles. The next chapter will go into more of the details about Russia. By this time, nationalism in Russia was well underway.

Focus On: Urbanization

If trade is the way you make your living, chances are you are spending lots of time in cities. Traders and merchants needed a place to meet and conduct business and this period saw the growth of urban culture throughout the world, mostly as a result of trade contacts and networks. Along with trade, cities showcased the wealth and power of the rulers who both controlled and benefited from the trade. Urban centers usually developed along trade routes or in locations necessary for strategic defense.

In the early years, the most populous cities were in the Muslim world and China—cities that were part of the network of Silk Routes: Baghdad, Merv, and Chang’an. Prior to 1400, Constantinople was the only European city of any size and it was really considered part of the Eastern world. Along with their economic role, these cities became political and cultural centers for the new trade empires. After 1400, European cities begin to grow with Paris and the Italian city-states emerging as new trading powers.

C. Developments in Asia

1. China and Nearby Regions

The three powerful Chinese dynasties during this period, T’ang (618–907 C.E.), Song (960–1279 C.E.), and Ming (1368–1644 C.E.), developed Golden Ages with unique characteristics. T’ang and Song are grouped together (although they are very different) while the Ming came to power after a brief period of domination by Mongol invaders. You should understand from the outset that when we speak of China, we’re actually talking about its influence throughout much of east and southeast Asia. We’ll talk more specifically about Korea, Vietnam, and Cambodia in a minute. For now, you just need to understand that China had an enormous impact on cultural and political developments in those civilizations.
A Quick Review of the Rise and Fall and Rise and Fall and Rise

The T'ang Dynasty ruled China beginning in 618 C.E. Under Emperor Xuanzong, the T'ang expanded Chinese territory into parts of Manchuria, Mongolia, Tibet, and Korea. By 907, however, the empire had become so large that local warlords gained more and more power, and the T'ang dynasty collapsed. In 960, after a brief era of restlessness, China was reunified under the Song Dynasty and Emperor Taizu. Despite a long period of peace and prosperity, the Song eventually fell to the Jurchen and then the Mongols until finally in 1279, the Mongols established the Yuan Dynasty in its place. That dynasty lasted less than a century. The Mongols were driven from China, and in 1368 the Ming Dynasty restored traditional Chinese rule to the empire.

From the seventh to the thirteenth centuries, the T'ang and then the Song Dynasties in China were accomplished in virtually every category of human endeavor—art, architecture, science, philosophy, porcelain-making, silk-weaving, construction of transportation systems, and more. Yet, it is probably poetry that made the T'ang Dynasty truly unique. Today, T'ang poetry tells us about daily life in China during that time. The Song built on the T'ang Dynasty's talent for poetry with more practical applications of words in the form of encyclopedias and histories. Under the Song Dynasty, China developed printing processes that facilitated the spread of its literary accomplishments throughout Asia and later influenced the development of literature in Korea and Japan.
At the height of both the T’ang and Song Dynasties, China was relatively stable. One of the many reasons for the stability was the bureaucratic system that was based on merit through the use of the civil service examinations (remember which dynasty created it? The Han Dynasty—see previous chapter for review). The T’ang and Song rulers continued to modify the civil service examination, but kept it focused on Confucian principles, which created a large core of educated, talented, and loyal government workers. The T’ang and Song also built an extensive transportation and communication network, including canals. They developed new business practices, including the introduction of paper money and letters of credit (hmmm...where have we seen these before?). All of this, of course, led to increased trade and cultural diffusion.

Because the power of the dynasties was based on trade and expansion, each developed an urban base to pursue its economic and political strategies. T’ang power was based on military garrisons along the central Asian trade routes and their capital at Chang’an (today Xi’an), the eastern terminus of the Silk Road and the largest city in the world at this time. This cosmopolitan city hosted a multinational and multireligious population. It was also the center of the T’ang tribute system, through which independent countries including Vietnam, Korea, Tibet, and various central Asian tribes acknowledged the supremacy of the Chinese emperor and sent ambassadors to the city with gifts. Indirect rule of these vassal states spread Chinese influence far and wide and brought religion, among other things, into China. A similar tribute system would be repeated during the early years of the Ming Dynasty.

Focus On: Civil Service in China
The bureaucracy contributed to China’s stability in huge ways because it generally stayed in effect even as dynasties changed. Regardless of who was in charge, the leaders generally depended on the bureaucracy to carry out the functions of government. Remember, since appointment to a civil service position was earned by a strong performance on the civil service examination, the civil service was a meritocracy (earned) as opposed to an aristocracy (inherited). When power changed from ruling family to ruling family, it didn’t impact the earned positions in the civil service.

Think about it in terms of the U.S. bureaucracy. No matter who gets elected president, most of the bureaucracy remains the same. Most CIA agents, Department of Agriculture employees, and IRS agents are going to keep their jobs regardless of who is president. Some of the higher-up positions get newly appointed leaders when a U.S. administration changes, but the underlying functions of the government remain remarkably stable.

Even when the Mongols ruled in China, the underlying bureaucracy remained. The Mongols brought in foreign government administrators, but the lower-level support and service jobs were kept by locals. Thus the system returned and stayed intact.
The Song Dynasty, under pressure from northern nomads, withdrew to the south and established a capital city at Hangzhou, the southern end of the Grand Canal. Here they concentrated on developing an industrial society, building on many of the ideas of the previous dynasty. An early form of moveable type resulted in an increase in literacy and bureaucrats among the lower classes. Printed books also spread agricultural and technological knowledge, leading to an increase in productivity and population growth. By the 1100s, the Song were an urban population with some of the largest cities in the world. Their wealth was based in part on their powerful navy and their participation in international trade throughout southeast Asia.

During the Song Dynasty, new technologies were applied to the military. Gunpowder started to be used in primitive weapons. The magnetic compass, watertight bulkheads, and sternpost rudders made the Chinese junks, as their ships were called, the best of their time. The junks were also used as merchant ships, of course.

Between 800 and 1100, iron production increased tenfold to about 120,000 tons per year, rivaling the British production of iron centuries later (in the 1700s). Song technology also included the production of steel using water-wheel-driven bellows to produce the needed temperatures.

The introduction of Champa, a fast-ripening rice from Vietnam, linked with new agricultural techniques, increased food supplies. This led to a rapid population rise from 600 to 1200 C.E. China’s population more than doubled, increasing from 45 million to 115 million. The urban centers expanded greatly.

**Chinese Women Under the T'ang and Song Dynasties**

One of the more incredible events during the T'ang Dynasty was the rise of Wu Zhao, who became the first (and to date, only) Empress of China at the death of her husband, Emperor Gaozong. An able ruler, she was both ruthless toward her adversaries and compassionate toward peasants. The vast majority of women in China, however, never gained that kind of power. Highly patriarchal, Chinese men considered women inferior, and like European men of the Middle Ages, they considered a woman’s beauty and femininity as virtues worth protecting. During the Song Dynasty, adherence to a new Confucianism justified the subordination of women, and foot binding became a widespread practice. A woman’s feet would be bound shortly after birth in an effort to keep them small—if kept bound for a long enough time, they wouldn’t grow even as the rest of the body did. Large feet were considered masculine and ugly. This practice, which lasted for centuries among elite families, was not only painful, but also often deforming and sometimes crippling.

**Religion in China: Diverse Beliefs**

Following the fall of the Han Dynasty, there were a number of different religious influences in China, such as Nestorianism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam. The religion that had the greatest impact by far was Buddhism, especially in two of its forms: Mahayana and Chan. Mahayana Buddhism appealed to many because of its emphasis on a peaceful and quiet existence and a life apart from
worldly values. With its emphasis on meditation and appreciation of beauty, Chan (or Zen) Buddhism won converts in the educated classes, who generally followed the tenets of Confucianism.

Both the Confucians and the Daoists reacted strongly to the spread of Buddhism. Many Confucians saw Buddhism as a drain on both the treasury and the labor pool, especially because Buddhism dismissed the pursuit of material accumulation. The Daoists saw Buddhism as a rival religion that was winning over many of its adherents. In the mid-800s under Emperor Wu zong, a wave of persecutions destroyed thousands of monasteries and reduced the influence of Buddhism in China.

2. Japan

Because Japan consists of four main islands off the coast of mainland Asia, it was relatively isolated for thousands of years. Ideas, religions, and material goods traveled between Japan and the rest of Asia, especially China, but the rate of exchange was relatively limited. Only in recent centuries has Japan allowed Western influences.

Little is known of early cultures in Japan prior to 400 C.E., except that they were influenced by Korea and China. The first important ruling family was the Yamato clan, whose international connections helped them emerge as leaders in the fifth century. One of the unique things about Japan is that the Yamato clan was both the first and the only dynasty to rule it. The current emperor is a descendent of this same clan.

Early on, the Shinto religion took hold in Japan. Under Shinto, which means “the way of the gods,” the Japanese worshipped the kami, which refers to nature and all of the forces of nature, both the seen and unseen. The goal under Shinto is to become part of the kami by following certain rituals and customs. The religion also encourages obedience and proper behavior. The Yamato clan claimed that the emperor was a direct descendent of the sun goddess, one of the main forces in the Shinto religion. This claim helped the Yamato stay in power—if you believe the emperor is divine, you’re probably going to want to keep him around.

Can’t Get Enough of China? Go to Japan.

In the sixth century, China’s influence on Japan increased dramatically. In 522, Buddhist missionaries went to Japan and brought Chinese culture. In no time, Chinese things were all the rage. Buddhism spread quickly, but interestingly, it didn’t replace Shinto. Instead, most Japanese adopted Buddhism while hanging on to their Shinto beliefs. In other words, they followed both religions simultaneously.

Neo-Confucianism in China

As China turned away from otherworldly ideas of the Buddhists during the late Tang and early Song, new ideas about Confucian philosophy developed. Where older Confucianism had focused on practical politics and morality, the neo-Confucianists borrowed Buddhist ideas about the soul and the individual. This new tradition became the guiding doctrine of the Song Dynasty and the basis for civil service. At its core was a systematic approach to both the heavens and the role of individual. Filial piety, the maintenance of proper roles, and loyalty to one’s superiors were again emphasized.
By the early seventh century, Chinese influence increased yet again. Prince Shotoku borrowed bureaucratic and legal reforms, which were modeled on the successes of the T'ang Dynasty in China. These reforms were enacted after his death as the Taihō Reforms (645 C.E.). In the eighth century, when the Japanese built their new capital, they modeled it on the T'ang capital. At the risk of giving the impression that Japan became a "Little China," you should keep in mind one thing: the Japanese largely rejected Confucianism, as well as the idea of the civil service examination. Why? Both of these systems held the educated in high esteem. In Japan, education wasn't nearly as important as birth. The noble classes were hereditary, not earned.

Contrast Them: China and Japan
Even though China influenced Japan enormously, it didn't penetrate Japanese identity. Birth was more important than outside influence or education. The aristocracy remained strong. Despite the widespread influence of Confucianism and Chan (now Zen) Buddhism, the Japanese continued to observe the rites of their indigenous religion, Shintoism. Even at the height of T'ang influence, it can be said that Japan drew inspiration from China, but maintained its own distinctive traditions.

Here Come the Fujiwara: At Home in Heian
In 794, the capital was moved to Heian, and a new era of Japanese consciousness began. The Chinese influence abated, while the power of aristocratic families increased. One of the most powerful families, the Fujiwara, intermarried over several generations with the emperor's family and soon ran the affairs of the country. The emperor remained as a figurehead, but the real power had shifted to members of the Fujiwara family.

Under the Fujiwara, Japanese society experienced something like a golden age, especially in terms of literature. Japanese noblewomen were particularly prolific, especially when compared to women of other cultures. By the twelfth century, however, power in Japan had spread among a larger and larger pool of noble families, and soon they were fighting with each other for control over their small territories. In other words, Japan had devolved into a feudal system not unlike the one in Europe.

Feudal Japan
The interesting thing about feudalism in Japan is that it developed at around the same time as feudalism in western Europe, but it developed independently.

In 1192, Yoritomo Minamoto was given the title of chief general, or shogun, by the emperor. As with the Fujiwara family, the emperor was the figurehead but didn't hold the real power, which was in the hands of the shogun. Below the shogun in the pecking order were the daimyo, owners of large tracts of land (the counterparts of the lords of medieval Europe). The daimyo were powerful samurai, who were like knights. They were part warrior, part nobility. They, in turn, divided up their lands to lesser samurai (vassals), who in turn split their land up again. Peasants and artisans worked the fields and shops to support the samurai class. Just as in European feudalism, the hierarchy was bound together in a land-for-loyalty exchange.
The samurai followed a strict code of conduct known as the Code of Bushido, which was very similar to the code of chivalry in Europe. The code stressed loyalty, courage, and honor, so much so that if a samurai failed to meet his obligations under the code, he was expected to commit suicide.

Interestingly, unlike under European feudalism, women in Japan were not held in high esteem. Remember that in Europe, noblewomen were given few rights, but they were adored, at least to the extent that they were beautiful and possessed feminine traits. In contrast, Japanese women lost any freedom they had during the Fujiwara period and were forced to live harsher, more demeaning lives.

**Compare and Contrast Them: European and Japanese Feudalism.**
They were similar in terms of political structure, social structure, and honor code. They were different in terms of treatment of women and legal arrangement. In Europe, the feudal contract was just that, a contract. It was an arrangement of obligations enforced in law. In Japan, on the other hand, the feudal arrangement was based solely on group identity and loyalty. In both cases, the feudal arrangement was based on culture, and so the feudal system stayed around for a very long time.

**3. Vietnam and Korea**
Because China’s dynastic leaders were intent on expanding by means of trade and force, Chinese armies had been in Korea and Vietnam as early as the Han Dynasty. However, it was the large-scale military campaigns of the T’ang that resulted in cultural exchange in both regions.

Korea had its own independent and powerful dynasty, but in order to maintain the appearance of cordial relations with their powerful Chinese neighbors, it became a vassal-state of the T’ang. The gift-giving and exchanges resulted in Korean schools and the imperial court being organized like those of the Chinese, although the power of the royal houses and nobility in Korea prevented the development of a true bureaucracy based on merit. The tribute relationship was also responsible for the spread of both Confucianism and Chan Buddhism to Korea.

The Viet people of Southeast Asia were much less willing to accept even the appearance of a tribute relationship with their northern neighbors and actively resisted the T’ang armies. Although a tribute relationship was eventually established, Confucian education was accepted, and an active trade relationship existed between the two entities, the Vietnamese maintained local traditions and continued to actively revolt against T’ang authorities. After the fall of the T’ang, the Vietnamese maintained their independence in the face of later Chinese expansion.
4. India
As you should remember from the last chapter, India was the birthplace of two major religions: Hinduism and Buddhism. In the tenth century, another major religion made its way to the Indus valley: Islam.

The Delhi Sultanate
After defeating the disorganized Hindus, the Islamic invaders set up shop in Delhi under their leader, the sultan. Hence, this kingdom is referred to as the Delhi Sultanate. For over three hundred years beginning in about 1206, Islam spread throughout much of northern India. While many Hindus held on to their religious beliefs under this theoretically tolerant regime, individual sultans were highly offended by Hinduism’s polytheistic ways and did their best to convert them. Like non-Muslims under the Umayyads in Arabia, non-Muslims under the sultans in India had to pay a tax. But more than that, the sultans were capable of religiously motivated destruction. Hindu temples were sometimes destroyed, and occasionally violence erupted in communities.

Contrast Them: Hinduism and Islam
Islam on top of Hinduism was a strange concoction. Hinduism is polytheistic while Islam is monotheistic. Islam holds that all people are equal under God, while Hinduism upholds the caste system. To Islamic people, cows are food; to Hindus, cows are sacred. Hinduism sees itself as universal and exclusive; Islam sees itself as tolerant of other beliefs and even mixed with other beliefs. These two religions have often clashed. If you don’t remember how bad things got between the two groups in India, you’ll review the consequences later in this book.

Despite the differences between the Islamic and Hindu cultures, an amazing amount of progress occurred in India under the sultans. Colleges were founded. Irrigation systems were vastly improved. Mosques were built, often with the help of Hindu architects and artists. Many Hindus in northern India converted to Islam. Sometimes the conversions were genuine; other times, they just made life easier. In any case, a considerable number of Hindus in northern India converted to Islam while the vast majority of Hindus in southern India held on to their traditions.

D. The Rise and Fall of the Mongols
The Mongols, the epitome of a nomadic culture, existed as a society for a long time before they became a force on the broader world scene. The Mongols were superb horsemen and archers and probably could have been a world power early on in the development of major civilizations. However, rivalries between tribes and clans kept them from unifying, so for centuries they fought with each other and remained fairly isolated from the rest of the world.
In the early 1200s, all that changed. Using his tremendous military and organizational skills, Genghis Khan (also spelled Chingiss Khan) unified the Mongol tribes and set them on a path of expansion that would lead to the largest empire the world had ever seen.

Genghis Khan unified several nomadic tribes of Mongolia and led the Mongol invasion of China in 1234, which was the beginning of the enormous Mongolian conquests. The Mongol Empire eventually spanned from the Pacific Ocean to eastern Europe. Following the death of Genghis Khan, his followers splintered off into different groups they called hordes. The members of these hordes elected a new Great Khan after Genghis and his successor, but by the election of Kublai Khan these hordes, or Khanates, were largely independent of any sort of central leadership from the homeland in Mongolia proper. The Golden Horde conquered the region of modern-day Russia. In China, Kublai Khan ruled. Mongols destroyed cities and were ruthless warriors, but once their domain was established, the empire was relatively peaceful. (This peace is sometimes called the Pax Mongolica.) The continuous empire allowed for the exchange of goods, ideas, and culture from one distant region to another. Mongols, who were illiterate, nomadic people prior to their conquests and education reforms brought about by Genghis Khan, eventually became assimilated into the cultures of the people they defeated.

Warning! You Are Now Entering a Golden-Age-Free Zone
One of the most striking things about the Mongols is that their empire was one of territory, infrastructure, and conquest, but not one of “culture.” Because the Mongol Empire was so enormous and conquered so many different kinds of civilizations, it did not attempt to force a unified religion or way of life on its people. That being said, although the Mongols did not make many advances in the arts and sciences themselves, their superior infrastructure allowed for the exchange and spread of ideas. Genghis Khan also established the first pony express and postal system and gave tax breaks to teachers and clerics within his empire. In other ways, however, the Mongol Empire had a profoundly negative impact on conquered cultures, stifling cultural growth rather than contributing to it by having been so brutal in their initial raids.

Contrast Them: The Mongol Empire and All Other Major Civilizations
We’ve seen the golden age of Gupta. The golden age of Shang. The golden ages of Greece, Rome, and Islam. The Mongol Empire was larger than any of the empires that produced those golden ages. Yet rather than imposing their own cultural developments on the areas it conquered, it generally accepted or ignored those of the people they conquered. Unlike the sultans who took over India, the Mongols allowed their subjects to practice their own religions without interference. It should be pointed out that because the Mongol empire was so expansive, it tied much of the world together and served as a conduit across which ideas and culture spread from the Pacific to the Mediterranean and vice versa. It’s just that it wasn’t the Mongols’ own culture.
Timur Wasn't Timid
In addition to invading Russia, Persia, Central Asia, and China, the Mongols also found time on their itinerary for a layover in India. They swept in under their leader, the untamed Timur Lang, who destroyed just about everything in sight and massacred thousands, and then just as quickly swept out. The sultanate was destroyed, but after Timur Lang (sometimes referred to as Tamerlane) returned to his capital in Samarkand, the Mongols pulled out as well. Just a few years later, the sultanate was restored. Islam continued to grow in India for the next few centuries under the Mongol Empire, even as many Hindus hung on to their beliefs. Look for more on this later.

How the Mongols Did It: No Rest Until Conquest
Imagine that you live in a village that lies in the path of an advancing Mongol horde. You’ve heard the stories. If you put up a fight, they’ll pummel you. If you retreat to your house, they’ll burn it. If you organize a resistance in your place of worship or civic building, they’ll level it. You’ve also heard that if you just give in, they might spare your city, but they also might not. They’re not really interested in changing your culture. So your only real choice, if you want to stay alive, is to give in. If you do, you may or may not be able to keep your life and your culture, but if you don’t, you’ll suffer a certainly grotesque death. What would you do?

In the 1200s and 1300s, a lot of people gave in, and those who did not met their death. The Mongols weren’t called ruthless warriors for nothing. They knew how to fight, but they were more than fierce fighters. They were also highly organized and highly mobile. Unlike the much-feared Roman army, which in its heyday could cover about 25 miles per day, the Mongol horsemen could cover about 90. Their bows, designed to be launched from horseback, had a range of up to 300 yards, way more than anybody else’s. Their armies were divided into units, which were further separated into light and heavy cavalries and scouting units. They were extremely motivated—Genghis Khan punished traitors swiftly and rewarded the courageous generously. They were stealthy—they had an extensive network of spies who scouted their enemies before battle. Finally, their goals were made unmistakably clear—the consequences of putting up a fight against the Mongols meant certain destruction of the entire village, so most learned not to resist. In short, they were really, really good at what they did: conquering.

The Mongol Impact
As mentioned earlier, the Mongols were great diffusers of culture. Some Mongols were assimilated by those they conquered. In Persia, for example, most Mongols became Muslim. Elsewhere, Mongols either couldn’t absorb those they conquered or intentionally didn’t. In China, for example, Kublai Khan, the grandson of Genghis, dismissed the Confucian scholars, forbade marriage between Mongols and Chinese, and wouldn’t allow the Chinese to learn the Mongol language. Because the Chinese weren’t allowed to Mongolize, they didn’t. They kept their own identity, and when they finally kicked the Mongols out in 1368, the Chinese were
able to establish the Ming Dynasty under traditional Chinese practices, which they had never lost.

There were, however, two major consequences of Mongol rule. The first is that Russia, which was conquered by the Golden Horde and treated as a vassal state, didn’t unify or culturally develop as quickly as its European neighbors to the west. The second, and globally more important impact was that world trade, cultural diffusion, and awareness grew. Think about it: The Mongol empire touched Europe and very nearly touched Japan. It stretched southward to Persia and India, making possible not only trade but also the transmission of the Black Death (bubonic plague) in the fourteenth century. This one empire touched nearly all the major civilizations of the day. So, strange as it sounds, the often brutal Mongols, in their own way, brought the world together. By 1450, as the Mongol Empire was well into its decline, the world would never again be disconnected.
CHAPTER 8 DRILL
See page 250 for the answers and explanations.

Questions 1–4 refer to the passage below.

"In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate. This is a letter to the servant of God Umar [ibn al-Khattab], Commander of the Faithful, from the Christians of such-and-such a city. When you came against us, we asked you for safe-conduct for ourselves, our descendants, our property, and the people of our community, and we undertook the following obligations toward you:

We shall not build, in our cities or in their neighborhood, new monasteries, Churches, convents, or monks' cells...
We shall not teach the Qur'an to our children.
We shall not manifest our religion publicly nor convert anyone to it. We shall not prevent any of our kin from entering Islam if they wish it.
We shall show respect toward the Muslims, and we shall rise from our seats when they wish to sit.
We shall not seek to resemble the Muslims by imitating any of their garments, the qalansuwa, the turban, footwear, or the parting of the hair....
We shall not mount on saddles, nor shall we gird swords nor bear any kind of arms nor carry them on our persons....
We shall not sell fermented drinks....
We shall always dress in the same way wherever we may be....
We shall not display our crosses or our books in the roads or markets of the Muslims.... We shall not bury our dead near the Muslims."

Pact of Umar, treaty between Muslims and Christians of modern-day Syria, seventh century C.E.

1. The text of this passage is best viewed as evidence of which of the following in Arabic conquests of non-Muslim territories?
   (A) Relatively mild treatment received by non-Muslims following Arabic conquests
   (B) Extremely harsh treatment received by non-Muslims following Arabic conquests
   (C) Uncompromising suppression of Christianity in favor of Islam
   (D) Hearfelt respect for Islam on the part of those conquered

2. Which of the following best describes the expansion of the Islamic Caliphate, which existed from 632 C.E. to 1258 C.E.?
   (A) A rapid expansion across Arabia, northern Africa, and western Asia followed by defeat and collapse at the hands of the Second Crusade
   (B) A rapid initial expansion followed by a long period of overall border stability before defeat and collapse at the hands of the Mongols
   (C) A slow and steady expansion across the Middle East, northern Africa, and large parts of Asia until it reached its greatest extent under Ottoman emperors
   (D) A slow and steady expansion across the Middle East and southern Europe until defeat by Charles Martel

3. The arrangements indicated in this text best support which aspect of life in Islamic society during the Caliphate?
   (A) Christian opposition to fermented drinks and wearing turbans
   (B) The necessity of safe-conducts for the populations of every Arabic city
   (C) A sharp distinction between Shia and Sunni branches of Islam
   (D) The centrality of religion to cultural and social rights held by individuals

4. When compared to the previous state of affairs, which of the following best illustrates the change in the status of women brought about by the Caliphate?
   (A) The spread of Islam brought with it some improvement in the legal rights of women, including an independent legal existence and the right to testify in court.
   (B) The spread of Islam substantially worsened the legal position of women, removing previously existing rights and subordinating them to men.
   (C) Under the Caliphate, women achieved parity with men in almost every aspect of life.
   (D) The Caliphate did not substantially change the role of women in the areas it grew to control.