Summer Institute 2025: Mongolia

Discovering the Identity of Modern-Day Mongolia: The Legacy of the Silk Road

Name, School, Grade Level

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Title of Unit/Lesson

Discovering the Identity of Modern-Day Mongolia: The Legacy of the Silk Road

Organizing/Essential/Guiding Questions

How can students in California discover and understand how the legacy of the Silk Road has helped to shape the ***identity*** of modern-day Mongolia?

By studying Mongolia's history and its connection to the Silk Road, students can see how historical events and cultural exchange have a lasting impact on a people's sense of self.

Introduction/ Overview

This is a student-centered lesson designed in collaboration with our Ethnic Studies teacher. This is designed for a freshmen class, with a thematic focus on identity. The hope is that as students shift from one station to the next they begin to understand that the history of the country (ie- the legacy of Mongolia's role in the Silk Road) has helped shape modern-day Mongolian identities. This is intended to be a dynamic, inquiry-based lesson.

In my role as a Teacher Librarian, I am a bit at the whimsy of the teachers timing and goals. This lesson was created in collaboration with an Ethnic Studies teacher at my school and I am beholden to his planning timeline. The format is one we have successfully used in other units to introduce large topics in a more casual, interactive style. This proven success for our students with this model, we are using it again in this lesson.

Content Standards

The *California Model School Library Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*, provide a framework for what students should know and be able to do to be information literate. This lesson aligns with these standards, particularly the four overarching standards for student learning.

California Model School Library Standards (there are 4 standards):

Standard 1: Students access information

The student will access information by applying knowledge of the organization of libraries, print materials, digital media, and other sources.

1.1 Recognize the need for information:
- a. Identify topics, broaden or narrow a topic, and develop ideas to direct the focus of an inquiry.

1.4 Retrieve information in a timely, safe, and responsible manner:
- a. Demonstrate proper procedures and good citizenship online.
- c. Use “pre-search” strategies to identify what should be read in depth (e.g., scan titles, headings, captions, introductions, summaries, and conclusions).
- d. Analyze the structure and format of informational text that make information accessible and usable (e.g., graphics, sequence, diagrams, illustrations, charts, maps).

Lesson Alignment: The lesson is designed around students actively accessing information from a variety of sources. The Teacher Librarian's role is to provide a rich collection of resources at each station, including print materials (maps, books), digital media, and other realia. The collaboration between the teacher and librarian is key here, as they work together to ensure that the resources are appropriate, accessible, and organized for student use.

Standard 2: Students evaluate information.
The student will evaluate and analyze information to determine what is appropriate to address the scope of inquiry.

2.1 Determine the relevance of the information:
- b. Analyze important ideas and supporting evidence in an information source by using logic and informed judgment to accept or reject information.
- c. Interpret meaning from charts, maps, graphs, tables, and pictures.

2.2 Assess the comprehensiveness, currency, credibility, authority, and accuracy of resources:
- a. Verify the authenticity of primary and secondary source information found online.
- b. Identify bias and prejudice in historical interpretations.
- c. Analyze media for purpose, message, accuracy, bias, and intended audience.

2.3 Consider the need for additional information:
- a. Determine and use strategies for revising, improving, and updating knowledge of a subject.
- b. Review work through self-reflection, peer review, and teacher feedback to determine whether the information is sufficient and the research process was effective.

Lesson Alignment: This lesson plan implicitly requires students to evaluate the information they encounter. As they move from one station to the next, they are being asked to synthesize information to answer a guiding question. For example, students might compare information from a historical map with a modern-day travel guide to understand how Mongolia has changed over time.

Standard 3: Students use information.

The student will organize, synthesize, create, and communicate information.

3.1 Demonstrate ethical, legal, and safe use of information in print, media, and online resources:
- g. Use materials, equipment, and facilities responsibly and independently.

3.2 Draw conclusions and make informed decisions:
- a. Analyze information from multiple sources and identify complexities, discrepancies, and different perspectives of sources.

3.3 Use information and technology creatively to answer a question, solve a problem, or enrich understanding:
- a. Explain how meaning is conveyed in image and sound and recognize that many media messages are constructed to generate profit, influence viewers, or both.
- f. Analyze and interpret results of experiments, surveys, and interviews, using quantitative and qualitative methods.
- g. Be aware of the impact of personal bias when interpreting information.
- h. Draw clear and appropriate conclusions supported by evidence and examples
- j. Construct and test hypotheses; collect, evaluate, and employ information from multiple primary and secondary sources; and apply it in oral and written presentations, using appropriate citations.

Lesson Alignment: This lesson is fundamentally about using information to create new understanding. The guided questions and final reflection prompt students to respond using the information they gathered. The lesson also supports ethical use of information as students work with various sources in a structured, guided environment.

Standard 4: Students integrate information literacy skills into all areas of learning.

The student will independently pursue information to become a lifelong learner.

4.1 Read widely and use various media for information, personal interest, and lifelong learning:
- a. Independently read two million words annually, including a wide variety of classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, and online information.
- b. Demonstrate competence and self-motivation in reading, listening, and viewing information.
- d. Demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning.
- e. Select information on a topic of interest.

4.2 Seek, produce, and share information:
- a. Locate information independently to satisfy curiosity.
- b. Contribute actively to the learning community, and participate in groups to pursue and generate information.

4.3 Appreciate and respond to creative expressions of information:
- a. Read and listen to a range of literary and other creative forms of expression (e.g., poetry, drama, film, literature, visual arts).
- b. Monitor one's own progress in seeking and handling information, and adapt as necessary.

Ethnic Studies Content Standards: The SRVUSD has an internal document that includes the standards below. I don't have the ability to link it publicly. However, our district website has a fairly robust presence and is linked here.

Chronological and Spatial Thinking:

CST1: Compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.

CST2: Analyze how change happens at different rates at different times; understand that some aspects can change while others remain the same; and understand that change is complicated and affects not only technology and politics but also values and beliefs.

Historical Interpretation:

HI1: Show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.

HI4: Understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions.

Reading:

RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

RH.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

Writing:

WHST.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

WHST.9-10.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Speaking and Listening:

SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.9-10.3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric

SL.9-10.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically (using appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation) such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose (e.g. argument, narrative, informative, response to literature

presentations), audience, and task.

Social Justice:

ID.9-12.3: I know that all my group identities and the intersection of those identities create unique aspects of who I am and that this is true for other people too.

DI.9-12.6: I interact comfortably and respectfully with all people, whether they are similar to or different from me.

DI.9-12.9: I relate to and build connections with other people by showing them empathy, respect and understanding, regardless of our similarities or differences.

DI.9-12.10: I understand that diversity includes the impact of unequal power relations on the development of group identities and cultures.

Note: A central tenet of Ethnic Studies is to highlight the histories, struggles, and contributions of historically marginalized and underrepresented groups. These standards encourage educators to build in examples and case studies from diverse backgrounds. This lesson plan provides a case study by focusing on Mongolia's rich culture and history, including its role in the Silk Road, which is a transnational and comparative framework encouraged by the standards.

The standards describe Ethnic Studies as an interdisciplinary field that encompasses history, literature, economics, sociology, and more. The provided lesson plan, which uses a variety of resources like maps, atlases, encyclopedias, and travel guides, exemplifies this interdisciplinary approach by encouraging students to gather information from different sources to understand a complex topic.

Objectives

By the end of this lesson students will have collected information from a variety of sources and used this information to complete the guided questions. Through conversation with their peers, and as a class, students will write a short response reflecting on the experience.

Materials/Resources

Each station will need various items for study. I have provided ideas, links, and an abundance of options for each station. Please note: there is far more here than is feasible in one rotation. Select what works for your lesson, timing, goals, etc. The intention is not to use every resource at every station as that will not fit the timing of things. All students will need the Guiding Questions for the activity. I find that printing them and hand-writing on them (as opposed to making it a Google doc/form) is better because hauling laptops from station to station is cumbersome and distracting.

If you have access to a color printer, that is best, as color is vital to this vivid culture. Feel free to create QR codes, or have ipads/laptops at stations with access to items. Whatever works for your school site- do that!

Please, please remember that your school librarian is a great resource for you. Do not hesitate to reach out to them and ask if there are any resources available in your school library that you can use. Items such as: maps, globes, atlases, encyclopedias, *National Geographic* books or backissues, travel guides, and other realia.

Special Equipment

Other than what is explained above under "Materials/Resources" no other special equipment is needed.

Teacher Preparation

This lesson can be a bit chaotic- that's okay! Be prepared for a loud day, but hopefully a fun one!

Time/Timeline

We have a modified block schedule. Monday, Tuesday, and Friday, we have all periods for 55 minutes. Wednesday and Thursday we see each period once for a 68 minute block of time. This lesson can be modified based on your school day schedule.

The timeline for this lesson is as follows: a Mongolian history lesson on Tuesday to preface the activity that will be on block day, followed by a debrief and discussion in class on Friday.

I wish I had more time with this lesson, and if given the opportunity, I would push the history lesson to Monday, and add in a lesson Tuesday that allows time for exploring the Silk Road online, and frontloading the directions for block day.

Procedures

68 minute block period:

Welcome and settle in- 3 minutes
Review of the Mongolian history lesson from yesterday- 5 minutes
Explanation of stations and today's activity- 5 minutes
Move to station 1: 1 + 10 minutes
Move to station 2: 1 + 10 minutes
Move to station 3: 1 + 10 minutes
Move to station 4: 1 + 10 minutes
Return to seats and wrap up: 10 minutes
Finish the reflection for class Friday.

Assessment – Performance Standards, Rubric, Project

Assessments take several forms for this lesson:

- ➔ Guiding Questions handout- written
  - ◆ This can be collected and graded, or just collected so you can informally assess their written understanding. Since they are working in groups, many will share answers. However, the intro questions, and reflection questions should be unique. Those could be graded.
- ➔ Reflection Questions- group discussion then whole-class discussion
  - ◆ How has the legacy of the Silk Road helped shape the ***identity*** of modern-day Mongolia?
  - ◆ Additionally, what surprised you or was new to you today about Mongolia?
  - ◆ How can today's lesson help you better understand the concept of ***identity***?
  - ◆ There is space to jot notes for this on the Guiding Questions handout.
- ➔ Final Reflection- written
  - ◆ In 5-7 thoughtful sentences, explain which of the four stations you visited resonated with you the most. Be sure to explain **why**!
  - ◆ This can be hand-written or on a Google form. The purpose is to have them reflect on the lesson so far, and to give the teacher some insights into what resonates with students for future reference. There is space for this on the Guiding Questions handout.

Other thoughts:

A lesson on the Silk Road inherently examins the connections between various cultures and regions across Asia, and how they influenced one another. It moves beyond a singular, nationalistic perspective to a more interconnected, global one.