**Trade Routes Vocabulary**

1. **Silk Road-** primarily a network of overland trade routes which connected East Asia and Southeast Asia with South Asia, Persia, the Arabian Peninsula, East Africa and Southern Europe. It was central to the economic, cultural, political, and religious interactions between these regions from the 2nd century BCE to the 18th century. It played a significant role in the development of the civilizations of China, Korea, Japan, the Indian subcontinent, Iran, Europe, the Horn of Africa, and Arabia.
2. **Caravans-** a group of people traveling together, often on a trade expedition; mainly used in desert areas and throughout the Silk Road, where traveling in groups aided in defense against bandits as well as helping to improve economies of scale in trade.
3. **Diffusion-** the spread of the beliefs and social activities of one culture to different ethnicities, religions, nationalities, etc.
4. **Commerce-** the exchange of goods, services or something of value, between businesses or entities
5. **Merchant-** a person or company involved in wholesale trade, especially one dealing with foreign countries or supplying merchandise to a particular trade
6. **Indian Ocean Trade-** the “Monsoon Marketplace”; maritime trade network in which merchants in dhows and sailboats made it a dynamic zone of interaction between peoples, cultures, and civilizations stretching from [Java](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Java) (Southeast Asia) to [Zanzibar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zanzibar) (East Africa). Prior to the Portuguese maritime expeditions in the 15th century, Muslim merchants dominated a great deal of this trade network.
7. **Trans-Saharan Trade-** trade route that requires travel across the Sahara (north and south) to reach sub-Saharan Africa from the North African coast, Europe, to the Levant. While existing from prehistoric times, the peak of trade extended from the 8th century until the early 17th century.
8. **Berbers-** an ethnic group indigenous to North Africa; exchanged salt for gold with West Africa= early converts to Islam (commercial connection); Berber merchants and nomads of the Sahara had initiated a trans-Saharan trade in gold and slaves that incorporated the lands of the Sudan into the Islamic world
9. **Junks-** a type of ancient Chinese sailing ship that is still in use today; developed rapidly during the Song dynasty (960-1279)
10. **Zheng He-** Chinese mariner, explorer, Muslim, diplomat, fleet admiral, and court eunuch during China’s early Ming dynasty (1368-1644). A favorite of the Yongle Emperor, he commanded expeditionary treasure voyages from China to Southeast Asia, South Asia, Western Asia, and East Africa from 1405 to 1433.
11. **Marco Polo-** Italian merchant, explorer, and writer who traveled through Asia along the Silk Road between 1271 and 1295 and stayed in China for 17 of those years and met Kublai Khan. His travels are recorded in in [*Livre des merveilles du monde*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Travels_of_Marco_Polo) (*Book of the Marvels of the World)*, a book that described to Europeans the then mysterious culture and inner workings of the Eastern world, including the wealth and great size of China and its capital Peking (Beijing), giving their first comprehensive look into China, India, Japan and other Asian cities and countries.
12. **Monsoon-** Seasonal winds in the Indian Ocean caused by the differences in temperature between the rapidly heating and cooling landmasses of Africa and Asia and the slowly changing ocean waters. These strong predictable winds have long been ridden across the open sea by sailors, and the large amount of rainfall that they deposit on parts of India, Southeast Asia, and China allow for the cultivation of several crops a year.
13. **Mali-** Empire created by indigenous Muslims in western Sudan of West Africa from the 13th to 15th century. It was famous for its role in the trans-Saharan gold trade.
14. **Ibn Battuta-** Moroccan Muslim scholar. The most widely traveled individual of his time. He wrote a detailed account of his visits to Islamic lands from China to Spain and the western Sudan.
15. **Mansa Musa-** Ruler of Mali (r. 1312- 1337). His pilgrimage through Egypt to Mecca established the empire’s reputation for wealth in the Mediterranean world.
16. **Dhows-** Characteristic cargo and passenger ships of the Arabian Sea. On a typical expedition, it might sail west from India to Arabia and Africa on the northeast monsoon winds (December to March) and return on the southwest monsoons (April to August).
17. **Swahili Coast-** East African shores of the Indian Ocean between the Horn of Africa and the Zambezi River.
18. **Malacca-** Port city in the modern Southeast Asian country of Malaysia, founded about 1400 as a trading center on the Strait of Malacca.
19. **Timbuktu-** City on the Niger Rover in the modern country of Mali. It was founded by the Tuareg as a seasonal camp sometime after 1000. As part of the Mali Empire, Timbuktu became a major terminus of the trans-Saharan trade and a center of Islamic learning.
20. **Syncretic/Syncretism-** a union or attempted fusion of different religions, cultures, or philosophies; a blending of two or more religious belief systems into a new system
21. **Missionary-** a person sent on a religious mission, to promote their religion in a foreign country (usually dealing with Christianity and Buddhism)
22. **Diasporic-** scattered population whose origin lies in a separate geographic location
23. **Astrolabe-** an instrument formerly used to make astronomical measurements, typically of the altitudes of celestial bodies, and in navigation for calculating latitude. In its basic form (known from classical times), it consists of a disk with the edge marked in degrees and a pivoted pointer.
24. **Magnetic Compass-** Used for navigation during the Chinese Song Dynasty of the 11th century, an instrument used for navigation and orientation that shows direction relative to the geographic cardinal directions; began to appear around 1300 in Medieval Europe and the Islamic world