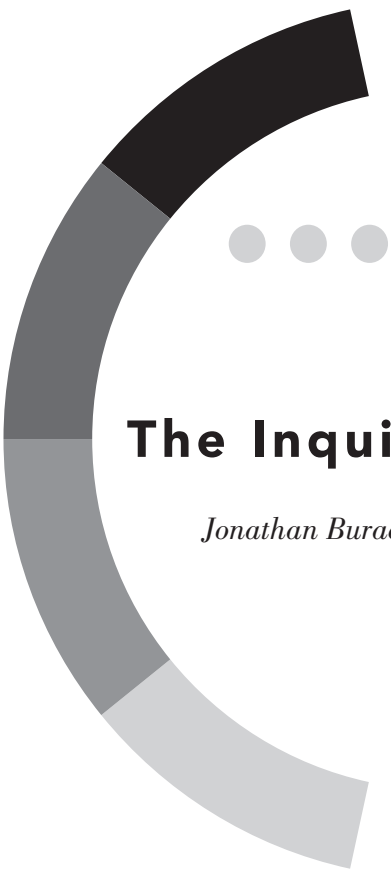


The Age of Faith



The Inquiry Arc in World History

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Overview

Introduction

No one knows for sure when tribes of horse-riding pastoral nomads appeared on the vast Eurasian steppe. Some archaeologists believe that people there began using horses as long ago as 4000 BCE. Others think it was as late as 1000 BCE before they truly mastered the use of the horse as a weapon of war. Whenever it was, such horse-riding tribes quickly spread across this vast, treeless land of grass stretching from the edge of Eastern Europe, across Ukraine and parts of Russia, to Central Asia and Mongolia. At times, the nomadic tribes would unite in larger federations. When this happened, their incredible war-fighting abilities terrified the otherwise wealthier and far more populous settled societies around them. At times, small nomad armies conquered and ruled far more complex societies—though usually not for long. How did they have such a fearsome and dramatic impact? That is the compelling question this lesson will focus on. Students will work with ten primary sources that form the core content for tasks that will help them answer the lesson’s compelling question.

Objectives

Students will work individually and in small groups to respond in a meaningful way to a compelling question about the nomads of the steppe. They will apply discipline-specific background knowledge, use scaffolding, and engage in instructional activities to interpret primary sources before presenting their ideas to the class.

C3 Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- ◆ **D1.4.6-8.** Explain how the relationship between supporting questions and compelling questions is mutually reinforcing.
- ◆ **D1.5.6-8.** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of views represented in the sources.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.5.6-8.** Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.11.6-8.** Use other historical sources to infer a plausible maker, date, place of origin, and intended audience for historical sources where this information is not easily identified.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.12.6-8.** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to identify further areas of inquiry and additional sources.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.16.6-8.** Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.
- ◆ **D2.ECO.7.6-8.** Analyze the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in a market economy.
- ◆ **D2.GEO.5.6-8.** Analyze the combinations of cultural and environmental characteristics that make places both similar to and different from other places.
- ◆ **D2.GEO.6.6-8.** Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.
- ◆ **D3.1.6-8.** Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.
- ◆ **D3.2.6-8.** Evaluate the credibility of a source by determining its relevance and intended use.
- ◆ **D3.3.6-8.** Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources to support claims, noting evidentiary limitations.
- ◆ **D3.4.6-8.** Develop claims and counterclaims while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.
- ◆ **D4.1.6-8.** Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments.

- ◆ **D4.3.6-8.** Present adaptations of arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., internet, social media, and digital documentary).
- ◆ **D4.6.6-8.** Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

Common Core Anchor Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1.** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2.** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6.** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9.** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7.** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1.** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Teaching Instructions

Compelling Question

What made the nomads of the Eurasian steppes so fearsome?

Preparation

Provide all students with a copy of the Introductory Essay. Assign this reading as homework. In addition, assign all relevant parts of your course textbook or other basic reading material. Remind students to keep the compelling question for the lesson in mind as they read.



Asking Questions about the Nomads of the Steppes
This part of the lesson stresses Dimensions 1 and 2 of the C3 Framework

Day One

1. Briefly discuss the Introductory Essay in class and address any initial questions students may have.
2. Distribute the How to Analyze a Primary Source handout. Review each suggestion with the class and remind students to refer to the handout as they read the primary sources in this lesson.
3. Divide the class into four small groups. Each group will focus its work on one of the four basic disciplines identified in Dimension 2 of the C3 Framework—history, civics, economics, or geography. As they work, the groups should keep in mind the unit’s overall compelling question. However, for Day One and Day Two, each group will work mainly with a second compelling question—one related specifically to its assigned discipline.
4. Provide each group with one copy of its discipline-specific Assignment Sheet. Give each student a copy of all the primary sources for this unit. Each group may share a primary source packet, if necessary.
5. Have students complete the Day One section of their Assignment Sheets. The objective for Day One is for groups to read three primary sources, and then formulate one supporting question about each of those sources. The supporting questions should be recorded in the spaces provided on the Assignment Sheet.



Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Evaluating Sources and Evidence
This part of the lesson stresses Dimensions 2 and 3 of the C3 Framework

Day Two

6. Students will return to their previously assigned groups and formulate a claim addressing their group’s compelling question. After reading the remaining seven primary sources, they will select one that supports their claim.

7. Using the evidence gathered from primary sources, each group will then prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation about the nomads from their group's disciplinary perspective. The presentation can be in the form of an oral report, a debate among group members, a PowerPoint, or related type of presentation. Allow time for students to prepare by discussing and debating topics among themselves.

Day Three

8. Each group will deliver its presentation. Allow time for class discussion following each presentation, and for a final effort to answer the central compelling question for the lesson.



Communicating Results and Taking Action

This part of the lesson stresses Dimension 4 of the C3 Framework

Students will complete a final project that expresses an understanding of the topic and responds clearly to the unit's central compelling question. The project may be completed in groups, but students should be evaluated individually.

Distribute the Communicating Results and Taking Action handout and decide whether you will assign the projects or allow students to form groups and choose tasks on their own. Set a reasonable deadline. Students should review the Nomads of the Steppes Rubric so they can understand how their performance will be evaluated. The projects are summarized below.

Communicating Results

- ◆ Ask students to focus attention on Primary Sources 1.2, 1.4, 1.5., 1.7, and 1.9. These are all descriptions of nomads by writers from settled societies. Ask each student to list some questions they have about the possible accuracy of each of these accounts. They should write a brief paper explaining what they think is most reliable in the accounts and what is least reliable. Share some of these papers in a class discussion about the reliability of these sources.
- ◆ Ask students to pretend that they are merchants in the 1300s. They should read Primary Source 1.10, a passage from Pegolotti's *Merchant Handbook*. Using this and at least two other primary sources, each student should write a journal with four entries. One should be about planning a trip from somewhere in present-day Iran or Turkey to China. Two entries should be about important stops along the way. The final entry should be about arriving in China. The entries should refer specifically to information in Pegolotti's handbook and two other primary sources for this lesson.
- ◆ Nomads were often vastly superior as warriors to the armies of more complex settled societies. Have students write a letter to the emperor of China explaining why these fighters were so fierce and effective. In explaining this to the emperor, the students should refer to the details of at least three of the primary sources for this lesson. Also recommend things the emperor might do to better defend against nomadic armies.

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

1.2

The Nomadic Way of Life

The nomads lived mainly on open grasslands, which were good for herding animals but generally too dry and harsh for much farming. They lived in tents, known as “yurts.” This photo from the late 1800s shows a group still living in this manner. It shows a yurt and a group with a horse, sheep, and camel. In a treeless environment, yurts were made of felt produced from wool. Over the course of a year, a tribe and its herds usually moved in a regular pattern, perhaps a hundred miles or so from one pastureland to another. This photo was published between 1865 and 1872. It shows a dwelling in the Kyrgyz Republic, or Kyrgyzstan.

Original Document



Original document source: Circa 1865, courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsca-12191.