THE MONGOLS

THEIR CONQUESTS
AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE WORLD
ESSENTIAL QUESTION:
What was the impact of the Mongolian Empire on the world?
THE MONGOLIAN EMPIRE
WHERE WAS IT?
Who were the Mongols?

The Mongols were among the numerous nomadic tribes who lived in Central Asia.
The Mongols lived in the Asian steppes, so Mongolia was a region where only the strong survived.
Only one percent of Mongolia’s land was good for farming, so Mongols were pastoralists (shepherds and livestock farmers who herded animals).

As the summer herds thinned out during the winter, making milk and meat scarce, the only way for Mongols to survive was by raiding other neighboring clans and stealing their herds.
Mongols lived in **nomadic clans**; they were often on the move, traveling on **horseback**, searching for better pasture lands for their herds.

The members of **clans** were related and **descended** from a common ancestor.

Because of the clans raiding each other’s herds, toughness and **ability to fight** were highly **valued** among the Mongols.
It would take a strong leader to unite all of the warring Mongol clans together into one group.

That strong leader would be a man named Temujin, who was born around 1162.

When Temujin became undisputed leader of all Mongol tribes after a series of battles, he took the name “Genghis Khan”, which means “Universal Ruler”.
Equally intelligent and vicious, Genghis Khan would lead the creation of the largest land empire in human history. From 1200 to 1206, Genghis united all of the Mongol clans under his rule.
Genghis Khan built a powerful army out of the Mongols and began a 21 year long conquest of Asia and parts of Europe.
Led by Genghis, the Mongols began taking new territory in 1207, first going after China.

Genghis wanted control of the Silk Road, the valuable trade routes between Asia and Europe.

The Mongols conquered the kingdom called Xia in northern China, then attacked the Jin Dynasty, bringing all of China under Genghis Khan’s control.
After conquering China, Genghis took over most of Central Asia.

Future Mongol leaders after Genghis increased Mongol borders to its greatest extent, which was the largest land empire in history.
As a result of their lifestyle and environment, the Mongols were natural horsemen and extremely tough and skilled warriors.
In addition to being natural horsemen, the Mongols were adept at using **bows and arrows** while riding.
Their speed on horseback, weapons, and fighting skill made the Mongols an unstoppable enemy.
Groups of archers could rain arrows on the enemy from 300 yards away.

The extremely strong and flexible compound bow was the super-weapon of its time.

It could shoot arrows faster and more accurately than any bow before it; fired properly, it could pierce armor at 190 MPH.
Genghis was a highly intelligent military commander. He would often trick enemies into attacking, using small forces to lure them into traps, where the rest of the Mongol army would appear and destroy them. Genghis assembled the Mongols into a very organized war machine.
Another reason they were so deadly is that they adapted: from each group of people they conquered, the Mongols would pick up new tactics and weapons, such as Chinese siege weapons and gunpowder.
Genghis Khan’s army quickly gained a reputation for **extreme cruelty** during battle.

If an enemy refused to **surrender**, Genghis would order the death of the **entire population**, torturing and killing every soldier and civilian.

One story of Mongol cruelty: after the Mongols took a Persian city that resisted, the governor of the city was brought alive to Genghis; he ordered **molten gold** to be poured down the governor’s throat.
As brilliant a strategist as Genghis Khan was, his greatest weapon was the spread of terror. As a 13th Century historian wrote of the Mongols: “They are inhuman, more like monsters than men.”
IN GENGHIS’ OWN WORDS...

“The greatest happiness is to scatter your enemy, to drive him before you, to see his cities reduced to ashes, to see those who love him shrouded in tears, and to take his wives and daughters.”
While merciless in battle, the Mongols were surprisingly tolerant of their conquered subjects in times of peace. The Mongols never forced their way of life on conquered people; instead they often adopted cultures of those they ruled over.
In the West, some Mongols **converted** to Islam

In the East, Mongols **embraced** Chinese culture
As long as the conquered people paid tribute to their Mongol rulers, they would live. Genghis controlled his warriors’ ferocity: rape and plunder without his permission was strictly forbidden. Genghis also shared his power; he gave his finest warriors leadership positions throughout the Mongolian Empire.
Interaction between Mongols and conquered Muslims mostly happened in Persia and Western China. After initial brutality, the Mongols showed much religious toleration towards the Muslims. Muslim merchants were invited to China to promote trade between the Mongols’ empire and the Middle East.
The Muslim pilgrim Ibn Battuta, who traveled 73,000 miles in his lifetime, remarked on the toleration for Muslims living in the Mongols’ empire. They had a separate sphere in each city and were treated with respect. 
Interactions between Mongols and conquered Christians mostly happened in Russia.

The Mongols killed many Christians, but not because of their religion; the reason was because of Christian resistance to Mongol rule.
DEATH OF GENGHIS KHAN

After Genghis Khan’s death from an illness in 1227, the Mongols (under other Khans) continued to expand the Mongolian Empire.
THE MONGOLS CONTINUE TO CONQUER

Russia

Korea

Central Asia

the Islamic Empire

Mongol Empire
1206–1279

- Mongol lands, 1206
- Conquests under Genghis 1206–1227
- Later Mongol conquest

Mongol invasions
City devastated by Mongols
How Big Was the Mongol Empire?

The Mongol Empire stretched from the Pacific Ocean to Eastern Europe.
After the death of Genghis Khan, the Mongol Empire was divided into four major sections called khanates, each ruled by a son or grandson of Genghis. But the most important khanate was the one located in China: “The Khanate of the Great Khan.”
In 1279, Genghis’ grandson **Kublai Khan** became the ruler of “The Khanate of the Great Khan” and as such, the **first** foreign leader to reside within China as he ruled it.
Kublai Khan began a new era in China called the **Yuan Dynasty**.

Kublai enjoyed **Chinese culture** so much that he moved the Mongolian capital to China.

However, he *excluded* the Chinese from serving in **leadership positions**; he relied on non-Chinese people to serve in his government.
Kublai Khan proved to be a good emperor for China. Under Kublai, foreign trade with China increased; he built roads and extended the Grand Canal to improve transportation.
PAX MONGOLICA: “MONGOL PEACE”

From the mid-1200s to the mid-1300s, the rule of the Mongols was a time of **peace** and **stability**.

This era of stability was called “**Pax Mongolica**”, which means “**Mongol Peace**”.

Because of the **safety** of Pax Mongolica, there was **enormous trade** between Asia and

Safe passage was granted for **trade caravans**, travelers, and missionaries.
Chinese technologies like *gunpowder* and the magnetic *compass* reached Europe; this would later help the Europeans when they began exploring and conquering other parts of the world.
On the negative side, *diseases* like the *Plague* (Black Death) also made their way from Asia to Europe along those same trade routes and *killed millions* of people.
In 1275, a European merchant named Marco Polo visited Kublai Khan’s court. Marco was very impressed by the riches on display in China.

**PRIMARY SOURCE**

More precious and costly wares are imported into Khan-balik [Beijing] than into any other city in the world. . . . All the treasures that come from India—precious stones, pearls, and other rarities—are brought here. So too are the choicest and costliest products of Cathay [China] itself and every other province.

*MARCO POLO, The Travels of Marco Polo*
Kublai Khan was impressed with Marco, so the emperor employed him in the Yuan government for 17 years.
When Marco Polo returned to Italy in 1292, he wrote a *book* about his travels; his stories of China increased *European demand* for Asian products.
Twice, Kublai Khan tried to invade Japan by sea; both invasions failed. During the second invasion, a massive storm swept away the Mongols’ ships.
For many years, the Japanese would speak of the “divine wind” that saved Japan from Mongol invasion. The Japanese word for “divine wind” is “kamikaze.” These failed invasions cost the Mongols a lot of men and money; this began the decline of the Mongol Empire.
By the time of **Kublai Khan’s death** in 1294, the entire Mongol Empire was growing **weak**.

In 1368, the **Chinese** overthrew the Mongols and started the Ming Dynasty.

In 1330, the Mongols lost control of **Persia**.
In 1370, the Mongols lost control of Central Asia.

In 1480, under Czar Ivan III, Russia gained independence from Mongol rule and started the Romanov Dynasty.
The Mongols’ empire was gradually reduced until all they had left was the territory they originally had in the early 1200s.
How did the Mongols create the largest land empire in human history?

- Genghis Khan’s *military genius*
- Organized, fast-moving, *tough warriors*
- Using *new tactics and weapons* from conquered people
- *Spreading terror* to make enemies surrender without a fight
- *Fear, along with tolerant rule,* kept the conquered people from rebelling against the Mongols for a long time
THE MONGOLS’ IMPACT

How did the Mongols’ power decline?

- Leaders after Genghis and Kublai were not as capable
- Attempted invasions of Japan and Southeast Asia failed; they cost a lot of money and soldiers
- The conquered people would use the Mongols’ own fighting tactics against them and eventually overthrow them
THE MONGOLS’ IMPACT

What were the effects of Mongol rule?

➢ Millions of people **lost their lives** to the ravages of the Mongol army
➢ However, the Mongols brought about a time of **stability** and **peace** as they ruled (Pax Mongolica)
➢ Marco Polo’s time with the Mongols increased **European interest** in Asia
➢ This was good for **trade**, so there was more exchange of goods between Europe and Asia than ever before
➢ Europe gained **new technology** (gunpowder)
➢ Europe also may have gotten the **Plague** from the Mongols, which **killed millions** of people