



Africa

In the 1480s, West Africa was an economic and intellectual power. Their trade with the Muslims had brought them great wealth and opportunity: selling the raw materials of salt, gold, ivory and slaves and receiving advanced finished goods in return. West African goods were sold along the Trans-Saharan Trade, Mediterranean Trade, and Indian Ocean Trade networks. Wealth and opportunity had also created small kingdoms along the East and South East regions of the African coast. The people of Africa were finding their opportunities to succeed by selling the magnificent raw resources available to them on their vast continent.



When the Europeans arrived in West Africa, they were inferior to the West African Kingdoms in practically every way, except that the Europeans had guns. Even with the military advantage, the few attempts that were made to colonize in West Africa failed miserably. The European forces were too small to conquer the West African forces and the Europeans were dying from the African diseases (especially Malaria).

As the Spanish, Portuguese, and British colonized the Americas in the, the need for labor grew tremendously. Since most of the American natives died from European diseases, there was a need for a work force that was used to hard labor, working in the hot sun and had immunity to diseases like small pox. This led the Europeans to tap into the African Slave Trade. The Europeans traded guns and goods to the West & Central African kingdoms in exchange for slaves. The Europeans got their work force and the kingdoms got weapons in hopes of turning their kingdoms into larger empires.



E Asia - Part 1: China

In the 1400s, the Ming Dynasty shifted China from being an international trader to a policy of isolationism. Their xenophobia, or fear of foreigners, caused the dynasty to shift its resources from building amazing boats to rebuilding and adding to the Great Wall of China to protect its northern border from nomadic invaders. China also sought to protect its culture from foreign influence. China's ability to be self-sufficient, or able to meet its own needs, gave little need for them import anything. The Chinese would move resources and migrate workers within China to meet whatever need may arise. This allowed their focus to be on exporting goods to foreigners and increase their profits, while resisting foreign cultural influences.

When traders and missionaries arrived from Spain and Portugal, they had trouble gaining a foothold in China. The Europeans did not have any finished goods that the Chinese needed. The Roman Catholic missionaries struggled to convert the polytheistic Chinese people. When the Roman Catholic missionaries became overly aggressive in their evangelism, the Chinese restricted trading access even further.

As Spain colonized the Americas, they did gain access to one resource China desired: Silver. The Mongols had used a paper currency. The Ming wanted to go back to the old Confucian method of Silver coins. Much of the silver from the Spanish colonies ended up in the Chinese banks because China's products were in such high demand around the world.

By the 1640s, the Ming Dynasty was having difficulties. The leaders had become lazy and had not kept up with internal affairs. The immense amount of silver from Spain had devalued the money, causing inflation. Inflation is when the prices increase, making a person's money worth less. Inflation caused an increase in taxes. The taxes on the peasants had grown too steep. To make matters worse, there were natural disasters. The Ming had lost the Mandate of Heaven. This led to a revolt by power-hungry generals. Out of the civil war emerged the Qing Dynasty in 1644, claiming the Mandate of Heaven. The Qing began the process of expanding China's Asian borders and promoting its own security. As of 1640, China was still the most advanced country in the world.

Japan... As Japan entered the 1500s, it was a period marked by instability and civil war. The feudal system had created a warrior culture that promoted intense fighting between feudal warlords. In 1590, internal peace was achieved in Japan when it was unified by Hidyoshi Toyotomi. Toyotomi conquered all the warlords and made himself Shogun, or leader of the country.

Japan, being a collection of islands, lacks resources. In particular, Japan struggled with having enough fertile land to grow food, along with metal resources. In the 1590s, Japan tried twice to fix this by invading Korea. Both times failed miserably.

During the 1540s, the Portuguese arrived in Japan, interested in trade and, secretly, evangelism. Soon, European style guns began replacing Samurai swords. European fashion began replacing traditional Japanese fashion. Christianity began to spread rapidly. The Japanese leaders felt threatened by these changes and did not like the way the Europeans were colonized (and abusing) other areas in the Pacific. In 1614, Japan choose the path of isolationism. Japan outlaws guns, Christianity, Europeans and their culture. The Japanese who continued in these European trends would be tortured and killed. Europeans were forced out of Japan through the port city of Nagasaki. Only the Dutch, who were good businessmen that cared little for conquest, were allowed to trade with Japan.



ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Read & Update the Content Matrix
- 2) Fill out this chart with the the strengths/positives and weaknesses/negatives of each region.

Region	Strengths	Weaknesses
Africa		
East Asia		

- 3) Create an impact chart. As you read you are to evaluate each area on the level of impact the people in that region had on the world culturally, militarily, and economically.
 - Rate each area as to how impactful you believe them to be at the at 1500 AD (■) and at 1640 AD (▲).
 - Draw arrows to show whether they grew or shrunk in impact and influence.
 - If there is change, ask yourself “What caused them to grow or shrink or stagnate in their influence?” and make note of it on your chart.

Examples

