



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Center for Middle Eastern Studies

Assignment Description (For Teachers)

Title: Explorations in Central Asia

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Purpose/Connection to the Curriculum:

This lesson is designed to have students engage in learning about the great sites in Central Asia, particularly in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, to explore history from the Silk Road through the Russian/Soviet period through the establishment of national identities/states. Students learn through a background activity, an active learning project, and a presentation to share what they have learned with others.

Overview:

Students are divided into teams of 2-3 people. After doing a background history/geography overview, they engage in a scenario in which they work for a travel agency specializing in educational tours to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Each group chooses or randomly draws a group for whom they have to research and design a themed tour with 8 days of focused activities and a more specific outline of 3 of those days. (Packets of supplementary materials and internet sources of information are included with the lesson.) Along with the map and itinerary, students develop a powerpoint or other media production to supplement a 3-5 minute presentation to the “board of directors” (a panel of students with the teacher who evaluates – and grades – the proposal). Students thus deepen their understanding of history and geography, while developing presentation skills needed in the workforce.

Grade Level: High School

Time:

4 class periods if you have 55-minute classes; 3 periods if you have block schedules. (Note: Assigning the background or some of the research will allow you to shorten the time requirement or to spend more time on one particular aspect of the project.) This activity covers or reviews a wide variety of history, geography, and English standards and leads students to explore the cultural interaction of peoples, religions/religious communities, environmental issues and adaptations, Central Asian history from medieval times through the present, international relations from the Silk Road through the Cold War through contemporary rivalries among China-Russia-the U.S., and many other topics.

Required materials: Ideally, each student needs a computer or laptop and access to a file with the materials loaded on it. However, if your school has limited access, you can do the first day overview as a whole-group presentation (powerpoint included) and only use the computers or library for days 2-3.

Targeted Skills - Based on Arizona State Standards:

High Social Studies – History

The development of civilizations, societies, cultures, and innovations have influenced history and continues to impact the modern world.

- HS.H1.1 Explain the process of state-building, expansion, and dissolution.
- HS.H1.3 Evaluate the consequences that resulted from civilizational and cultural interactions.
- HS.H1.4 Analyze the impact of cultural diffusion.
- HS.H1.6 Analyze the relationship among different regional, social, ethnic, and racial groups and explain how these groups' experiences have related to national identities.
- HS.H1.7 Analyze how technological innovation and trade has affected economic development and transformed societies.

Economic, political, and religious ideas and institutions have influenced history and continue to shape the modern world.

- HS.H3.2 Analyze how ideologies, religion, and belief systems have influenced economic, political, and social institutions over time.

Patterns of social and political interactions have shaped people, places, and events throughout history and continue to shape the modern world.

- HS.H4.1 Examine how historically marginalized groups have affected change on political and social institutions.
- HS.H4.2 Explain how artistic, philosophical, and scientific ideas have developed and shaped society and institutions.

High School Social Studies – Geography:

The use of geographic representations and tools help individuals understand their world.

- HS.G1.1 Use geographic data to explain and analyze relationships between locations of place and regions. • Key tools and representations such as maps, remotely sensed and other images, tables, and graphs
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Human-environment interactions are essential aspects of human life in all societies

- HS.G2.1 Analyze interactions within and between human and physical systems.
- HS.G2.3 Evaluate the impact of human settlement on the environment and culture of specific places and regions.

High School English/Language Arts – Grades 9-10:

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:

- 9-10.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- 9-10. SL 5 Make strategic use of digital media in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

Suggested Procedures:

Before starting the project in class:

1. You will need a computer or laptop for each student (though you may use photocopied pages instead). *If you use computers (the more efficient way), you will also need a way to upload computer files in advance so that students can access the computer-based materials – or you can refer them to the CMES lesson plan webpage, where the materials are posted.
2. Divide students into groups of 2-3. (Groups of mixed abilities/talents work better than friendship groups.)
3. Decide how to assign each group a topic. (You may write topics on the assignment sheet – **Document 3a** – and have one student from each group randomly draw an assignment sheet with a topic OR have groups sign up from the list – included on **Document 1b** – on a first come, first served basis.)
4. Arrange for each student to have access to individual computers or laptops, at least for days 2-3 of the unit (preferably days 1-3).

Day 1 – Overview

* Needed before class: (a) laptops/computers for each student and a way for students to access the powerpoint individually OR the ability to show the powerpoint to the whole group – **2a - Powerpoint**; (b) handouts of the review questions for students to answer – with the outline map on the back - **Documents 2b and 2c**, (c) assignment description sheets and topics, one for each student – **Document 3a**, and (d) a copy of **Document 1b** for you in assigning and recording student research topics.

1. Have the students – individually or in pairs – do the overview of Central Asia powerpoint (**2a**) and answer the questions (**2b and 2c**). (Or you may show the powerpoint to the whole group and have them answer the questions as you go along.)
2. While they are working, hand out the assignment sheet – **Document 3a** – and assign or have students choose a topic. (Suggestion: Record the pairs and their topics so that if they forget tomorrow, you don't have to start over again!! OR keep the document with the students' names on it in a file folder in the classroom.)

Days 2-3 – Travel Agency Mini-Research/Creative Project Assignment

*Needed: access to individual laptops/computers with internet connection; student access to research guides – **Documents 4a-4n** – either by putting them where students can access them via computers or printing the appropriate research guide for each student. Be sure students bring their copy of **Document 3a** to class.

Plan: Have students work developing their itineraries and preparing their presentations.

Day 4 – Presentations:

*Needed: 4 copies of the judging sheet (printed 2 per page to save paper) for each scheduled presentation (that includes 1 for you), a computer and projector (Be sure students load their presentations in advance. You might want to require that they submit them the day before so that you can load them on the computer.)

1. Have the students give their presentation according to a pre-arranged schedule to maximize efficiency.
2. Have 3 students – preferably not friends or rivals of people in the presenting group – join the teacher as “Directors” who evaluate each presentation. (Use 3 different students for each presentation, giving all students plenty of opportunity to serve as evaluators.)
3. In grading, you can determine whether to average all 4 scores or whether to give your own score greater weight. The “secret” purpose of student evaluators is to increase their learning more than to solicit their input.

Grading:

- overview questions – 20 points
- quality of the project itself – 60 points
- presentation – 20 points