

Measuring the Travels of Two Adventurers

Materials

- Battuta's and Polo's Travels maps
- Two books: *Traveling Man* and *Marco Polo: A Journey Through China*
- Handout 1, "Miles to Go Before I Sleep"
- Handout 2, Worksheet Practice with Miles & Kilometers
- Key for Handout 2 Worksheet Practice with Miles & Kilometers
- Rulers
- Handout 3 Assessment Questions based on map skills and reading about Battuta and Polo
- Key for Handout 3 Assessment

Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Estimate and compare measurements in both US customary and metric units.
2. Convert within a single measurement system (6th grade standard); convert a measurement from US customary to metric, and vice versa. (7th grade standard).
3. Explain the influences and effects from Ibn Battuta's and Marco Polo's travels on Asian trade and migration in medieval times.
4. Interpret maps using scale.

Procedures

Students should have some basic knowledge of kilometers/meters and miles/feet. If necessary, help them become familiar with the length of a kilometer (see Extension activities). 7th grade students must be familiar with conversion from one system to the other. Students should also have basic knowledge about map scale.

1 mile is equal to 1.6 kilometers. 1 kilometer is equal to .6 miles. To convert km to miles, multiply the number by .6. ($Km \times .6 = Miles$) OR to convert miles to km, multiply the number by 1.6. ($Miles \times 1.6 = Km$)

SESSION ONE

1. Teacher will read aloud highlights from the two books: *Traveling Man: The Journey of Ibn Battuta, 1325-1354* and *Marco Polo: A Journey Through China*. (Choose parts that emphasize the motivation behind the travels and distances traveled.)

2. Give each student a copy of both maps and familiarize the class in locating and comparing distances traveled by both men in miles and kilometers.

3. Distribute Handout 1, "Miles to Go Before I Sleep", a reading about the effects of Marco Polo's and Ibn Battuta's travels. Read aloud or have the class share in the reading of the text.

4. Distribute Handout 2 to be used for homework practice.

SESSION TWO

5. Using the maps and Handout 2 check for understanding of comparison, estimation, and conversion in kilometers and miles.

6. Have students complete the assessment, Handout 3.

Assessment

Students will use the maps to compare and estimate distances and answer multiple-choice questions about the effects of Battuta's and Polo's travels. Geography is assessed by Handout 3 questions 1-5; math is assessed by Handout 3 questions 6-10. The 7th grade standard for conversion is assessed by Handout

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3 questions 11 & 12. Handout 2 – Worksheet Practice with Miles & Kilometers can also be used as an assessment. Mastery is considered 80% or higher for math and geography concepts.

Extensions

Ask students to estimate how long it would take to walk one kilometer. Have students walk a kilometer (which is just over 0.6 mile). How long would it take to walk 10 kilometers? Students should time how long it takes to walk the kilometer.

Select a few modern-day cities that were on the itineraries of Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta. (Examples: Cairo, Baghdad, and Jerusalem). Use the daily temperatures from these cities in both Celsius and Fahrenheit in comparisons and estimations.

Discuss with students whether the United States should convert entirely to the metric system.

There are some excellent Web sites for other extension lessons:

http://www.sfusd.edu/schwww/sch618/Ibn_Battuta/Ibn_Battuta_Rihla.html

http://www.sfusd.k12.ca.us/schwww/sch618/islam/nbLinks/Ibn_Battuta_map_sites.html

http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/activity/a_journey_battuta/

<http://cnn.com/nature/9911/02/asia.quest/>

<http://project.edtech.sandi.net/memorial/MarcoPolo/>

Source

Traveling Man: The Journey of Ibn Battuta, 1325-1354; by James Rumford; Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 2001.

Marco Polo: A Journey Through China; by Fiona Macdonald; Franklin Watts, 1997.

Calliope, World History; “Ibn Battuta;” Cobblestone Publishing Company, Peterborough, NH.

Calliope, World History; “Silk Road;” Cobblestone Publishing Company, Peterborough, NH.

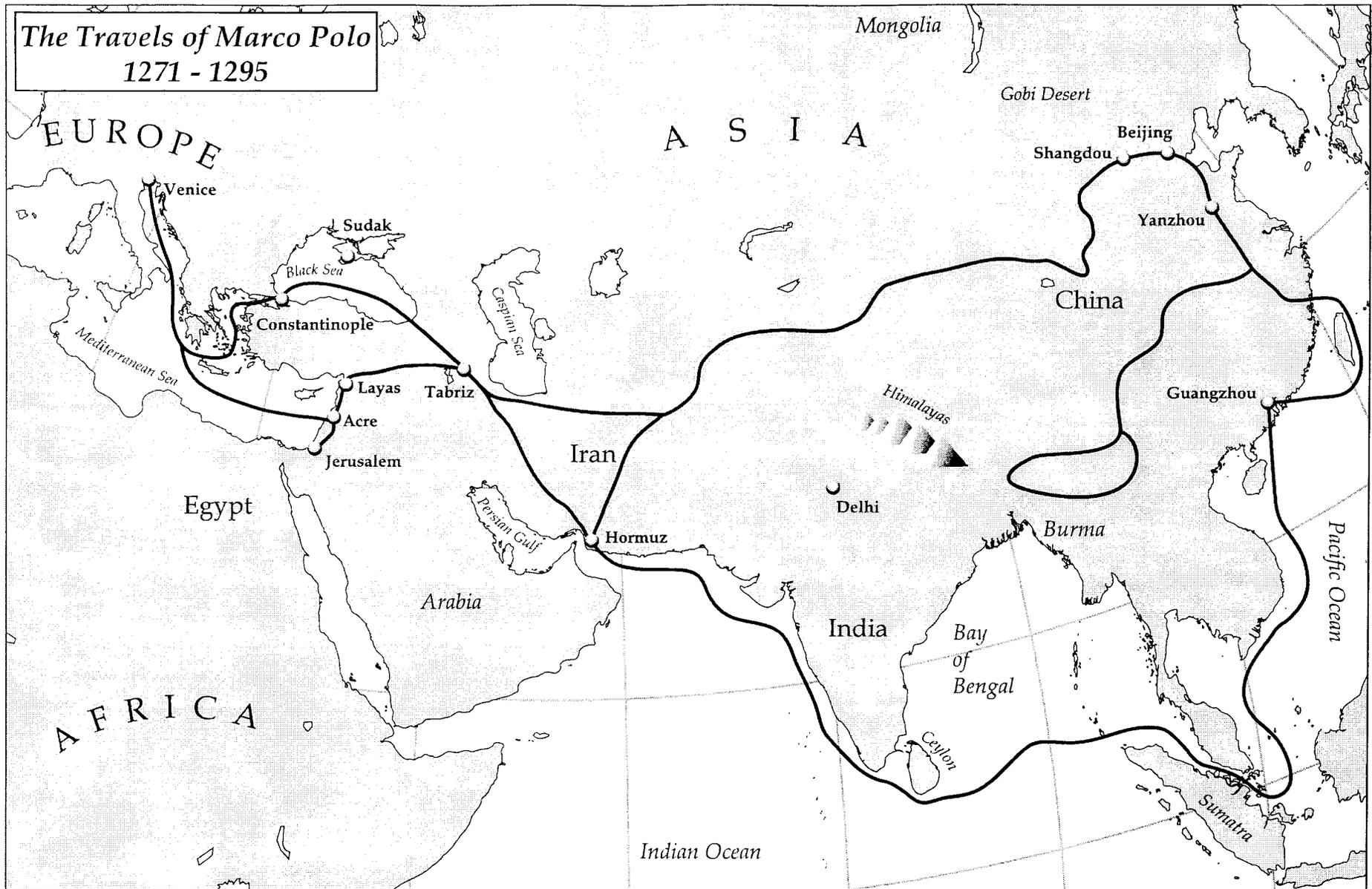
“Marco Polo,” *Kids Discover*, Vol. 11, Issue 12, December 2001; Kids Discover, New York, New York

<http://www.silk-road.com/art1/marcopolo.shtml>
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/activities/10/marcopolo.html>

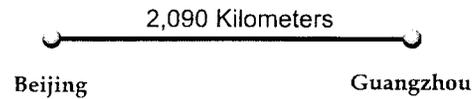
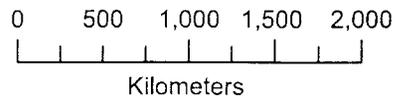
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0106/feature2/index.html>

Measurement Benchmarks, Dale Seymour Publications, Palo Alto, CA, 1996.

The Travels of Marco Polo
1271 - 1295

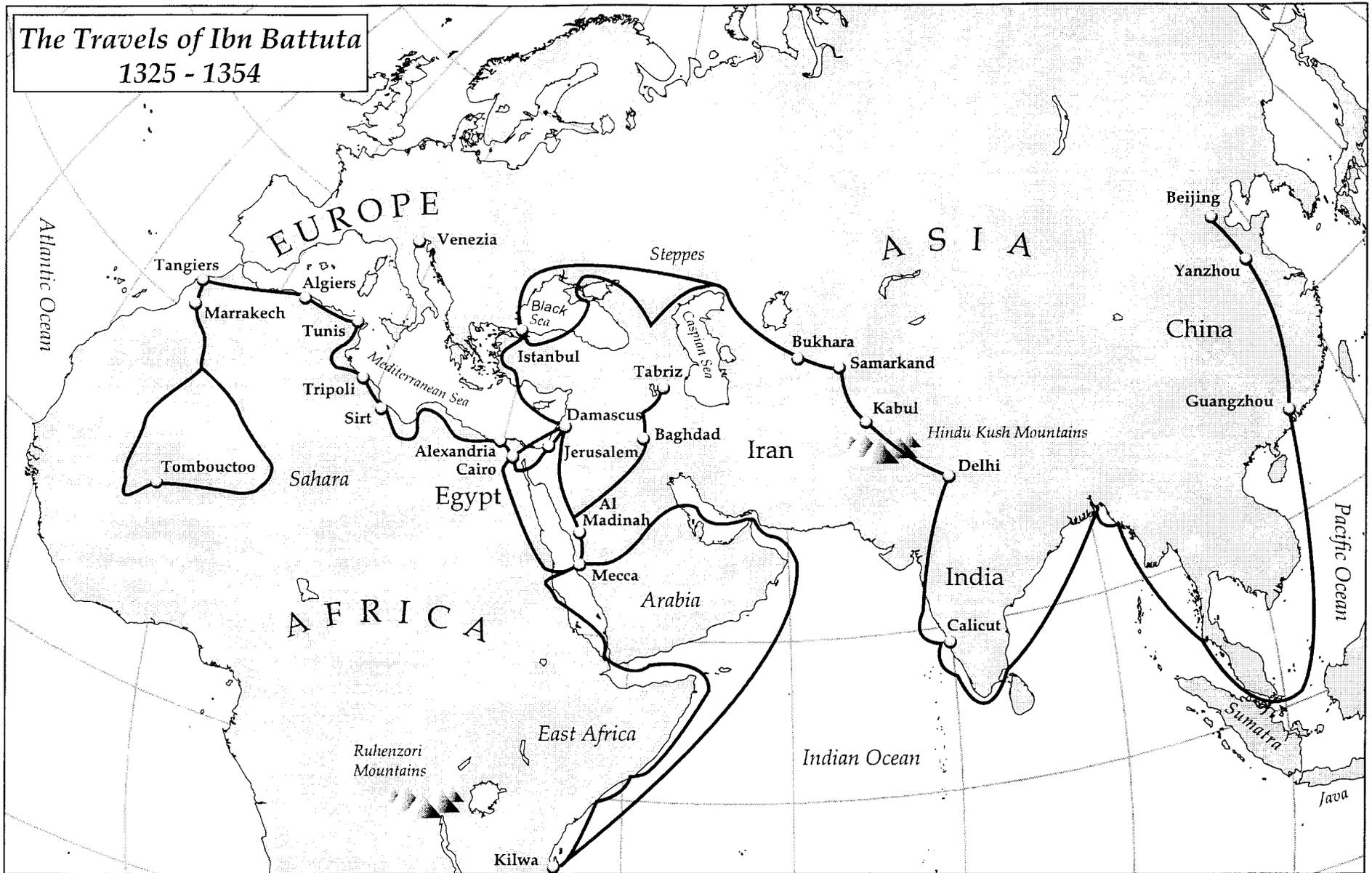


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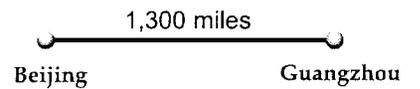
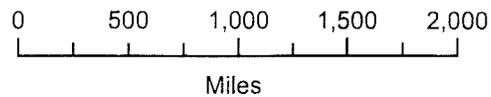
Marco_Polo_Route.PDF03

The Travels of Ibn Battuta
1325 - 1354



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Ibn_Battuta_Route.PDF03



Courtesy: Arizona Geographic Alliance
Department of Geography, Arizona State University
Becky L. Eden

Handout #1

Miles to Go Before I Sleep:

Two Great Adventurers, Battuta and Polo, Affect on the Medieval World

When you take a trip or a vacation, how do you record what you did? You probably take pictures, perhaps even a video recording; you send postcards or e-mails to your family and friends about your travels. You might keep a journal to record events as they happen; and you probably bring back souvenirs to show your family and friends. Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo traveled in a time around the 13th and 14th Centuries when recording events was not as easy as it is today. Upon their return to their homes, both Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo recorded their adventures. Both of their stories were very influential, stimulating trade and travel in the regions about which they wrote.

Ibn Battuta's desire to see the lands where his fellow Muslims lived led him across Asia, Africa, and Europe and the seas between. His nearly thirty years of travel began when he was twenty-one years old when he set off for a pilgrimage to Mecca. After that, he traveled over 75,000 miles. Ibn Battuta traveled by joining trading caravans. Caravans were bands of travelers who journeyed together for security and mutual aid. He told of his adventures when he returned home to Morocco, and those who heard thought his stories should be written down. The sultan of Morocco commissioned a young court secretary named Ibn Juzayy to listen to Ibn Battuta's stories and record them. It took two years to write everything down. The result was the *Rihla*, a story of travels centered on a pilgrimage. The *Rihla* was an inspiration to other Muslims to make a hajj, or pilgrimage, to Mecca. Battuta's stories also taught other Muslims about places, cultural practices, and religious events in the 14th Century Islamic world.

The *Rihla* not only helped people in Ibn Battuta's time to know the world better, but today it is still giving us insights into the world of Africa, Asia, and Europe in the 1300s. Geographers consider Ibn Battuta one of the earliest geographers.

Unlike Ibn Battuta who left home for religious reasons, the Italian Marco Polo left home seeking trade opportunities. His father and uncle, jewel merchants, had spent time at the court of Kublai Khan, the Mongol ruler of China, and took the young Marco with them for a return trip. Khan immediately liked Marco, and sent him on diplomatic missions throughout his empire. Marco spent 17 years in Khan's service, traveling a great deal all over China, and he acquired great wealth in jewels and gold.

Handout #1, page 2

Much like Ibn Battuta, upon his return after twenty-four years away from home, Marco Polo began telling stories of his adventures. A young writer named Rustichello recorded Marco's travels in a book called *The Travels of Marco Polo*, considered to be one of the most famous travel books in history.

Some scholars doubt whether Polo's accounts really happened. These scholars think he got his information from traders he met. It does not matter, though, because Polo's biggest achievement is the affect his book had on European readers. His travelogue was the most influential one written about the Silk Road. His system of measuring distances was remarkably accurate, and map makers and explorers looked to it for information about Asian regions. Merchants used his book for planning commercial ventures. Sailors studied it to seek a route to India in the 15th century. One important sailor, Christopher Columbus, relied heavily on Polo's geography when he planned his voyage to sail west from Europe to reach Asian markets.

On his death bed, Polo said that he had "only told half of what I saw, because no one would have believed me." For Ibn Battuta, traveling "leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller."

These two Medieval travelers, the Moroccan Ibn Battuta, and the Italian Marco Polo, although leaving their homes for different reasons, both greatly influenced travel and trade of the people who heard and read their stories.

Handout 2 Worksheet Practice with Miles & Kilometers

1. Ibn Battuta traveled between Beijing and Guangzhou. This distance was 1,300 miles. Which is the best ESTIMATE of the distance he traveled between Tangier and Tunis?

- a. 2,000 miles b. 1,300 miles c. 1,000 miles d. 500 miles

2. Marco Polo also traveled between the cities of Beijing and Guangzhou, but on his map it is in kilometers, and he went 2,090. Which is the best ESTIMATE of the distance Marco Polo traveled between Constantinople and Tabriz?

- a. 2,090 kilometers b. 1,500 kilometers c. 1,000 kilometers d. 500 kilometers

3. What is the estimate of the shortest distance Battuta went between Marrakech and Tombouctoo?

- a. 2,000 miles b. 1,800 miles c. 1,500 miles d. 1,200 miles

4. Approximately how far did Polo travel between Sumatra and Yanzhou?

- a. 3,000 kilometers b. 2,000 kilometers c. 4,500 kilometers d. 6,000 kilometers

5. Marco Polo went from Venice to Jerusalem; Ibn Battuta went from Istanbul to Delhi. Which traveler went the greater distance? How did you find your answer? (Include your estimates of the travels of each man.)

6. Ibn Battuta went from Bakhura to Calicut. Marco Polo traveled from Venice to Acre. Who traveled the greater distance? How did you find your answer (include your estimates of the travels of each man)?

The next two questions apply to the 7th grade standards for conversion:

7. Measure the distance Marco Polo traveled from Layas to Tabriz. Approximately how many miles is that distance?

8. Measure the distance Ibn Battuta traveled through the Red Sea from Mecca to Kilwa. Approximately how many kilometers is that distance?

Key for Handout 2 Worksheet Practice with Miles & Kilometers

1. C
2. B
3. C
4. D
5. Ibn Battuta went further; he traveled approximately 3100 miles while Marco Polo traveled approximately 3000 km. Kilometers are shorter than miles, so Ibn Battuta went the greater distance in this problem.
6. Ibn Battuta went further again; he went approximately 2300 miles and Marco Polo traveled approximately 2200 km. Miles are longer than km, so Battuta went a greater distance.
7. The distance is approximately 1,000 km, or approximately 600 miles.
8. The distance is approximately 3,000 miles, or approximately 4,800 km.

Handout 3

Assessment Questions based on map skills and reading about Battuta and Polo

1. Ibn Battuta left his home in Morocco and kept traveling for the next 29 years. What was his original purpose in leaving his home?
 - a. He wanted to study other religions.
 - b. He wanted to write a book about his faith, Islam.
 - c. He wanted to go on a holy pilgrimage to Mecca.
 - d. He wanted to set up a trade route.

2. Marco Polo left his home in Venice, Italy, and was away from his home for 24 years. What was Polo's purpose?
 - a. He wanted to research about China for a book.
 - b. He wanted to get valuable silks and jewels from East Asia.
 - c. He wanted to draw maps of Asia.
 - d. He wanted to escape his cruel mother.

3. Ibn Battuta's story, the *Rihla*
 - a. influenced other Muslims to make a hajj.
 - b. helped the Islamic world understand other places and cultures.
 - c. helped map the regions of Africa, Asia, and Europe.
 - d. All of the above

4. Marco Polo's story
 - a. was the most influential one written about the Silk Road.
 - b. tells about Mongol and Chinese society during the 13th Century.
 - c. helped trading merchants plan their ventures.
 - d. All of the above

5. One of the most important effects of Marco Polo's travels was
 - a. Christopher Columbus relied heavily on Polo's geography when he planned his own voyage to Asian markets.
 - b. Silk, spices, coffee, and salt were introduced to the Medieval European markets.
 - c. Medieval Europeans learned about the Great Wall of China and about Chinese customs.
 - d. All of the above

6. What is the best ESTIMATE of the distance Marco Polo traveled between Tabriz and Sumatra?
 - a. 25,000 km
 - b. 20,000 km
 - c. 15,000 km
 - d. 8,000 km

7. What is the best ESTIMATE of the distance Ibn Battuta traveled between Tabriz and Baghdad?
 - a. 550 miles
 - b. 400 miles
 - c. 300 miles
 - d. 250 miles

8. Estimate the distance traveled by each man. Decide which traveler covered the greater distance, and explain how you arrived at your answer. Include the estimates you made about the distances traveled.

Ibn Battuta traveled from Tangier to Cairo.

Marco Polo traveled from Venice to Acre.

The following questions apply to 7th grade standards:

9. Marco Polo went from Tabriz to Shangdou. How far is that in kilometers and miles?

10. Ibn Battuta traveled from Kabul to Delhi. How far is that in both miles and kilometers?

Key for Handout 3 Assessment

Questions assessing the geography reading:

1. c
2. b
3. d
4. d
5. a

Questions assessing math:

6. d
7. b

8. Ibn Battuta traveled further in this case; he went approximately 2,600 miles and Marco Polo went approximately 2,600 km. Miles are greater than kilometers, so in this case, Ibn traveled the greater distance.

Questions assessing 7th grade math standards:

9. From Tabriz to Shangdou is approximately 6,700 km or approximately 4,020 miles.

10. From Kabul to Delhi is approximately 700 miles or approximately 1,120 km.

Measuring the Travels of Two Adventurers: Marco Polo And Ibn Battuta

Note: This lesson meets the following recently revised Arizona State Social Studies Standard for 6th grade:

Strand 4: Geography Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms

PO 3 Interpret maps, charts, and geographic databases using geographic information.

PO 5 Interpret thematic maps, graphs, charts, and databases depicting various aspects of world regions (apply to regions studied).

Strand 2: World History Concept 3: The World in Transition

PO 3 Describe the culture and way of life of the Arab Empire (b) extensive trade and banking network.

Note: The National Geography Standards and the Arizona Math Standards (for grades 6, 7, and 8) remain as written on page one of the lesson.

For purposes of this lesson competition, copies of the covers of the materials and readings are included. Please see complete citations in the *Sources* section.