

Asia's Contributions to the World

Asia's contributions to the world begin with the achievements of the many ancient civilizations that once flourished in places throughout the continent. For example, the Sumerians of Mesopotamia had one of the world's oldest forms of writing. The Sumerians were among the first to map the stars into constellations. Later the Babylonians prospered in the same general region as the Sumerians. The Babylonians are known for advanced literature, religion, and science. Their expertise in sciences included botany, medicine, chemistry, zoology, mathematics and astronomy. One of Babylonia's kings, King Hammurabi, is famous for devising the first set of written laws called Hammurabi's Code.

Ancient China is known for many inventions including paper, the compass, and the abacus. Chinese craftsmen learned how to weave silk with delicate brocade patterns as early as 1000 BCE. Traders came from as far away as Europe, crossing the Asian continent and the Himalayan Mountains on what is still called the Silk Route or Silk Road. Early Chinese porcelain pottery was also exported and never equaled.

Asia has been home to many great philosophers and religious figures. Confucius and his philosophy of Confucianism are still studied today, including in philosophy courses in U.S. colleges. Three other great philosophies and religions from Asia are Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. The Dalai Lama, once from the country of Tibet which is now part of China, remains a revered Buddhist religious leader known throughout the world.

The countries of modern Asia are among the largest in the world in terms of area and population. China is emerging as a world power due to its exports. The Chinese people are producing all kinds of goods that are coming especially to the United States. China is also exporting its natural resources. Countries of Central Asia, like the former Soviet Republics of Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, are developing their natural resources for export. Of course, the Arabian Peninsula and the nearby countries of Iran and Iraq are world leaders in the production of oil.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Multiple Choice Questions

Circle the correct answer.

1. King Hammurabi is known for
 - a. Being a mathematician
 - b. The first written laws
 - c. His knowledge of astronomy
 - d. Advances in botany

2. Which early civilization invented paper?
 - a. Ancient China
 - b. Ancient Japan
 - c. Sumerians
 - d. Babylonians

3. The Ancient Chinese exported
 - a. Linen
 - b. Silk
 - c. Both a. and b. above
 - d. None of the above

4. The Dalai Lama is associated with
 - a. Islam
 - b. Hinduism
 - c. Buddhism
 - d. Confucianism

5. The Silk Road crossed the
 - a. Rocky Mountains
 - b. Andes Mountains
 - c. Himalayan Mountains
 - d. None of the above

6. Iran and Iraq are known for their exports of
 - a. Silk
 - b. Porcelain
 - c. Oil
 - d. All of the above

Name: _____ Date: _____

Short Answer Questions

1. Do some research and write a short report about the Sumerian calendar.
2. Have a class discussion about why having a written set of laws like Hammurabi's code and our modern written laws is important.
3. Do some research and write a short report about the Chinese invention of paper. Include information about how or why they kept their process for making paper a secret from the rest of the world.
4. Do some research and locate Chinese pottery from the Ming Dynasty. Find the piece that you like best and write a descriptive essay about it.
5. Do some research and locate pictures of Chinese silk brocade fabric. Select a pattern that interests you and explain why you like it.
6. Do some research and write a short report about one of the cities of Uzbekistan, Samarkand or Bukhara.
7. Among the world's population 34% are Christian, 19% follow Islam, 13% follow Hinduism and 6% are Buddhist. Create a pie chart that illustrates this information.

Answer Key

Multiple Choice

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

Short Answer

1. Individual response
2. Individual response
3. Individual response
4. Individual response
5. Individual response
6. Individual response
- 7.

