

UNIT 4 TOPIC 7 CHINA AND THE WORLD

Pre-knowledge

Before class, students should read Unit 4 Topic 7 and information on the Internet to gain a basic understanding of the historical relations China had with the world, as well as her role and importance to the present world and in the future.

Aim and Objectives

Topic 7 aims to equip students with some knowledge of the historical development of China's relations with the world, and her historical roles and functions in the world order. It will also equip them with some knowledge of her increasingly important role in shaping the future of the world.

Teaching and Learning Activities

Activity 1

Print out and have your students read these articles:

- "China's role in the next phase of globalization" published by McKinsey Global Institute (available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/China/Chinas%20role%20in%20the%20next%20phase%20of%20globalization/MGI-Chinas-role-in-the-next-phase-of-globalization.ashx>)
- "China's role in the global economy" published by the Centre for International Governance Innovation (available at: <https://www.cigionline.org/thematics/chinas-role-global-economy>)
- "Just how big is China's impact on the world economy?" written by Kenneth Rapoza. (available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2016/04/14/just-how-big-is-chinas-impact-on-the-world-economy/#255f2eda7b9d>)

Then have a class discussion on China's role in the world and influence on the global economy.

You may use this as reference:

- China's rise on the global stage has often been described as one of the most important geopolitical events and economic success stories in modern times. Now the world's third-largest economy and the largest holder of foreign exchange reserves, China's growing international influence is also marked by her position in the six-party talks on North Korea's denuclearisation and an array of global discussions ranging from trade to climate change. From 1979 to 2014, China's Gross Domestic Product grew at an average annual rate of nearly 10 percent. The World Bank estimates that from 1981 to 2010, 679 million people in China were raised out of extreme poverty.
- In recent years, the slowdown in China has hit world trade in general but her economy remains the single largest contributor to GDP growth in the world. For a weakened global economy unlikely to withstand a significant shock without toppling into renewed recession, that contribution is all the more important.

Activity 2

Watch the video clips *U.S. vs China – What the World Thinks*, published by The Daily Conversation (available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6hpXDwrLj8>), and *Australia and China: Turning the page – Counting the Cost*, published by Al Jazeera English (available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBYo6eRodm0>). Have your students take down some notes for a class discussion on the influence of China around the world.

Activity 3

Have your students read the article *Ancient Chinese inventions and Discoveries that Shaped the World* (available at: <http://blog.world-mysteries.com/science/ancient-chinese-inventions-and-discoveries-that-shaped-the-world/>). Then have a class discussion on China's contributions to the world over the last 2,000 years.

Activity 4

Divide your class into four groups. Have each group choose one of the Four Great Inventions of China and discuss its importance and contributions to the world. Each group will then prepare a PowerPoint presentation on China's role in the world vis-à-vis this invention.

Activity 5

Have your students to research on Marco Polo and ask your them to prepare a speech on Marco Polo, touching on who he was, what he did and what he is famous for.

Activity 6

Explain to your students who Zheng He was and the purposes of his voyages. Then have a class discussion on the significance of his voyages.

Activity 7

Have your students research how China started its trade and communication with the West and the impact of this trade and communication on China and the world.

Activity 8

Watch the video clip *The Silk Road and Ancient Trade: Crash Course World History #9* published by CrashCourse (available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfe-eNq-Qyg>). Have your students take down some notes for a class discussion on the significance of the Silk Road.

Activity 9

Explain to your students the concept of the Belt and Road initiative. Talk about the reactions of various countries, including Australia, to this proposal.

Activity 10

Pair your students up. Then have each pair role-play on this topic: What does China hold for you in your future career? One student will play the role of someone who believes that China will affect his career choices, while the other will play the role of someone who is less certain China will have any impact on his future.

Activity 11

Ask your students to do Exercise 7 of the Workbook according to your teaching needs and progress.

You may use this as reference:

- It is widely acknowledged that one of the most important changes in the world is the rapid development of China. People are watching her growth and wondering what kind of role she is going to play in the region and the world.
- To understand the role of China, it is important to know her history.

- China's geographic boundaries were more or less set during the Han Dynasty. It shows that China has not been a country pursuing an expansionist policy. Her political philosophy is based on harmony and good neighbourliness.
- For the most part of her long history, China was one of the largest economies in the world. In his book *Reorient: the Global Economy in the Asian Age*, Andre Gunder Frank used extensive research results to show that, between the Great Age of Discovery and the eve of industrialisation in the 18th century, China was the economic centre of the world, exporting large volumes of silk and porcelain and receiving more than 60 percent of silver, the hard currency of the world at that time, that was flowing into the country.
- Over the past four decades, China has forged her own distinctive pathway forward to becoming the second largest economy in the world. Economic and political developments in China over the next few decades, every single strategic move of hers, will have profound implications for the world. Her rise is definitely reshaping the global order. She exerts significant influence and plays an increasingly important role in international politics. She is also building up her soft power as the rest of the world is discovering her rich history (being the one nation believed to have the oldest continuous civilisation) and culture.
- China's leaders advocate building a "community of common destiny" that seeks win-win cooperation and collaboration in a peaceful and stable environment. They speak of China's "peaceful rising". It is a matter of urgency for people around the world to understand contemporary China better as they get more and more involved in trading with China in modern-age globalisation.

Resources/Materials

Apart from those listed in the activities, you may also consult these resources/materials:

1. Boone, P., Gomulka, S. & Layard, R. (eds.) (1998), *Emerging from Communism: Lessons from Russia, China, and Eastern Europe*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
2. Feenstra, R. C. & Wei, Shang-jin (eds.) (2010), *China's Growing Role in World Trade*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
3. Jacques, M. (2009), *When China Rules the World: The Rise of the Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World*. London: Penguins Books.
4. Stuenkel, O. (2016), *Post-Western World – How Emerging Powers are Remaking Global Order*. Oxford: Polity Press.
5. Swaine, M. D. & Tellis, A. J. (2000), *Interpreting China's Grand Strategies*. New York: RAND Corporation.
6. Sacramento Chinese Culture Foundation (2012), "Ancient Chinese Inventions and Discoveries that Shaped the World". *World-Mysteries Blog* [Online]. Available at: <http://blog.world-mysteries.com/science/ancient-chinese-inventions-and-discoveries-that-shaped-the-world/>

Assessment

1. Collect the notes taken by your students during all group and class discussions.
2. Prepare some questions and assess your students when they answer them verbally.

3. Students are required to prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the Silk Road and its significance.
4. Each student is required to write a 500-word research report on the driving forces behind China's development over the past four decades.
5. Each student is required to a 800-word essay on the key aspects of the Belt and Road Initiative and his reflections on the initiative.
6. Each student is required to write a 500-word essay on his reflection on China's increasingly important role in the world.

Workbook Answer Key

1. What are Four Great Inventions of China? What has been their impact on China and the world?

Students should consider these points:

- Compass: A lodestone compass was used in China during the Han Dynasty between the 2nd century BC and 1st century. It was called the south governor.
- Gunpowder: Chinese alchemists searching for an elixir of immortality discovered gunpowder in the 9th century. By the middle of the 14th century, the explosive potential of gunpowder had been perfected.
- Papermaking: Papermaking has traditionally been traced to China, when, in 105, Cai Lun, an official attached to the Han Dynasty Imperial court, created a sheet of paper by mixing mulberry and other bast fibres with fishnets, used rags and hemp waste.
- Printing: The Chinese invention of woodblock printing, at some point before the first dated book in 868 (the *Diamond Sutra*), produced the world's first print culture.
- These inventions helped China make scientific and technological advancements and develop her society and economy.
- Had these inventions not been exported to other parts of the world, these other parts of the world might not have developed in the way they did historically.

2. Internet Search + Pair Work

With a partner, find out four other Chinese inventions. Prepare a PowerPoint on these inventions. Include a brief history of how each invention came about and whether they are still in use today.

Students may consider these inventions:

- Mechanical Clock (725): The Water-driven Spherical Birds, the world's first mechanical clock, was invented by Yi Xing (宜兴), a Buddhist monk. It had a wheel, powered by dripping water, which made one revolution in 24 hours. More than 250 years later, in 1092, inventor Su Song (苏颂) developed a more sophisticated clock, the Cosmic Empire. It was still 200 years earlier before the mechanical clock was created in Europe.
- Tea Production (2737 BC): According to legend, tea was first discovered by Shen Nong, the Father of Agriculture in China. During the Tang Dynasty tea became a popular drink enjoyed by all social classes. Lu Yu's 茶经 (*Book of Tea*), written in the Tang Dynasty, explicated ways to cultivate tea, tea drinking and different classifications of tea in details. The world's oldest (about 3,200 years) and largest living tea tree can be found in Lincang (临沧). Tea is still popularly used around the world today.
- Toothbrush (1498): The Chinese made a tool with coarse horsehairs attached to a bone or bamboo handle for brushing their teeth. This became the very first bristle toothbrush,

which was later brought to the new world by Europeans. Today, everyone uses a toothbrush every day though the materials used are different from the original one.

- Paper Money (9th century): The Chinese started using paper money in its raw form at the end of the 9th century. Paper bills were originally used as privately issued bills of credit or exchange notes. A merchant could deposit his cash in the capital and receive a paper “exchange certificate” which he could exchange for metal coins in other cities. Every country in the world is now using paper money.

3. How did China start its trade and interaction with the West? Explain briefly how it was carried out with examples.

Students should consider these points:

- China began trading and interacting with the West from as early as Western Han Dynasty, when the Silk Road was established by Chinese envoys (led by Zhang Qian), linking China and Central Asia.
- During later dynasties, Chinese ships traded throughout maritime Asia, reaching places as far away as the African coasts. Caravans extended trade into the Middle East.

4. Watch the video clip *Zheng He – The Great Voyager 1405-1433* on YouTube or any other video sharing website. Write down your thoughts on the voyages that he made and what he achieved from them.

Students should consider these points:

- Zheng He was a eunuch, explorer, diplomat and fleet admiral from the Ming Dynasty.
- He undertook seven voyages on the order of the emperor, trading and collecting tributes from nations lining the (western) Pacific and Indian Oceans.
- His fleet visited Southeast Asia, India, Africa and Arabia, dispensing and receiving goods along the way. He presented countries they visited with gifts of gold, silver, porcelain and silk. In return, he received novelties such as ostriches, zebras, camels and ivory.
- His contributions include being an ambassador of the Chinese culture and helping to expand overseas trade for China, as well as to develop Chinese diplomacy.

Assess points as presented by your students.

5. Why was the Silk Road important?

Students should consider these points:

- Flourishing from the 2nd century BC to the end of the 14th century, the Silk Road started from Chang'an (present-day Xi'an) and ended in the Mediterranean in the West, linking China with the Roman Empire. It was a route used for trading amongst many nations that lay along it. Because silk was the main product traded along this route, it was named the Silk Road.
- The Silk Road connected East Asia, Central Asia, India, West Asia and the Mediterranean. It had great significance in promoting the interaction of the cultures of China, India, Persia, Arabia, Greece and the Roman Empire, as well as the progress of world civilisation.
- Other products traded along the Silk Road were fruit and vegetables, livestock, grains, leather and hides, tools, artworks and religious objects, precious stones and metals.
- Languages, cultures, philosophies, religious beliefs and sciences were exchanged.

6. Pair Work

With a partner, visit the Chinese Museum in Melbourne's Chinatown. Find out the contributions the Chinese settlers made to Australia during the period of the Gold Rush. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation on what you have learnt.

Students should consider these points:

- The migration of Chinese to Australia during the Gold Rush shaped and influenced Australian policies for over a hundred years. A racist fear about Chinese migration was one of the driving factors behind the Australian Federation. Despite these attitudes and restrictions many people with Chinese heritage have left their mark on Australian History.
- Contributions the Chinese settlers made to Australia: Concentrations within capital cities and rural towns were developed into Chinatowns, which contained businesses, temples, theatres, restaurants, accommodation and schools among many other types of amenities.
- They sold medicinal herbs, fresh food, groceries and Chinese goods such as silk, tea and spices. They also provided services such as interpretation and clerical work.

7. Internet Search

Do you think that the Belt and Road Initiative could be achieved? Why? Mark out the route of the belt and the route of the road on a map of the regions involved.

Students should consider these points:

- The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road
 - are better known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the One Belt and One Road Initiative (OBOR), and the Belt and Road (B&R).
 - are a development strategy proposed by Chinese president Xi Jinping, unveiled in September 2013 and October 2013 respectively.
 - focus on connectivity and cooperation between Eurasian countries and China.
- The BRI strategy underlines China's push to assume a larger role in global affairs with a trading network that is centred on China.
- Over the past three years, the focuses were mainly on infrastructure investment, construction materials, railway and highway, automobile, real estate, power grid, and iron and steel.
- The real benefits of BRI to China could be the international clout she stands to gain as she attempts to spearhead international policies and improve relations with OBOR partner countries.

8. How is the phenomenon of the current rapid economic development and social changes in China related to its history?

Students should consider these points:

- Economic historians usually divide China's history into three key periods: the pre-imperial era before the rise of the Qin Dynasty, the early imperial era from the Qin Dynasty to the Song Dynasty, and the late imperial era from the Song Dynasty to the end of the Qing Dynasty.
- Han Dynasty: Considered to be the first golden age in Chinese culture; the brilliant dynasty saw the Chinese economy grow exponentially and laid the foundation for China to become one of the largest and most advanced economies in the world.
- 16th to 20th centuries: The economy started to stagnate at the beginning of the 16th century and declined in the 19th and 20th centuries, with a brief recovery in the 1930s.
- 18th century: China was claimed to be one of the richest, most fertile, cultured, industrious, prosperous and urbanised countries in the world.

- 1930s: China developed a modern industrial sector, which stimulated modest but significant economic growth. Before the collapse of international trade post Great Depression, China's share of world trade and the ratio of her foreign trade to GDP achieved levels not seen for the next 60 years.
- 1930s to 1940s: China's economy was severely affected by the war against Japan and the Chinese Civil War. The victorious communists started installing a planned economy after assuming power.
- 1950s to 1970s: The Chinese economy became stagnant again and was disrupted by the Great Leap Forward famine, which killed between 30 and 40 million people, and the disastrous Cultural Revolution. Living standards were no better in the 1970s than in the 1930s.
- 1978: Deng Xiaoping, paramount leader of China, started economic reforms termed "Socialism with Chinese character", in order to open up China to the world.

9. Class Discussion

Do you think that China is important to the world? As a class, discuss the roles China is now playing on the world and the influence it is exerting on the world in these roles.

Students should consider these points:

- In past decades, China's growth has been driven by exports. Although China is now the second largest economy in the world, she is still far behind the United States, the largest economy. But this gap also means potential to her. There is a long way to go, but China aspires to play a crucial role in global recovery and sustained prosperity.
- China remains the single largest contributor to GDP growth in the world and is very critical to helping the world withstand a global recession.
- China now aims to have a much wider and important role in the economic affairs of the world. She is investing heavily around the world in industries dealing with raw materials and energy, as well as in banking and financial sectors. This gives her economic and political powers that are more extensive and influential.
- There has been a dramatic shift in the geographic centre of the global economy and China is at the centre of this transformation. The world is in need of strong engines of growth with continued pragmatic policymaking. China can provide that impetus.

10. Imagine that you are a journalist 20 years from now. Write a newspaper article on Australia's relationship with China. You may include aspects such as how the countries are cooperating with each other in developing their respective economy and the cultural interactions they are engaging each other in. Your article should be between 600 and 800 words.

Access points as presented by your students.

Note: All URLs listed herein were ascertained to be accessible on 10 September, 2020.