

Bridging History: LEARNING PLAN/UNIT TWO, *Connections* 6 Oct – 7 Nov

Theme 4, “Connections Across Water” This theme explores the emergence of water-based trading networks. These networks emerged gradually, first along river systems, then later across large bodies of water. Historically, there have been many *motives* for sea travel, but the desire for commercial connections is probably the most common. To put it simply, societies able to produce more food and other materials than they needed to support themselves often tried to find other communities with people interested in trading for the surpluses. However, *the cultural and religious ties* that formed across waterways survived long after material commodities disappeared. Indeed, the comforts of philosophy and religion often traveled by water; believers in Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam all sailed in ships. Over the centuries, the great sailing ships linked humanity into an all-encompassing network, a web of *communication* into which all could enter—but from which few could escape. Three ancient routes provide varied examples of waterborne trade, expansion, and migration: Indian Ocean routes, active from around 200 BCE onward, the vast explorations of the Vikings in the ninth to twelfth centuries CE, and the riverine domain carved out by the Mississippian peoples of North America between 700 and 1700 CE.

Big Ideas: **1.** Connections made by water routes have helped *integrate distant peoples* through trade, contact, and cultural influences for thousands of years. **2.** As in land-based trade, the contacts made through water-based trade also caused people to become more *aware of cultural differences*. **3.** Water-based trade and travel have *linked widely separated cultures* since antiquity. Therefore, water should be seen as a conduit for connections rather than a barrier. **4.** Although water-based trade routes have not received as much historical attention as land-based routes, they have been equally as — if not more — important in the history of the world. **5.** Studying water-based trade routes allows historians to see the complex ways that they were connected to a larger network that also included land-based trading routes. For example, the rise of the Swahili people was only possible because they were able to profit from both land-based trade with Africa’s interior and seaborne trade in the Indian Ocean.

Questions To Consider: **1.** What role did water-based trade play in the development of *connections* between the world’s peoples? **2.** What kinds of evidence do historians use to follow the transmission of *religion, disease, commodities, and the movements of peoples* across sea routes or by riverine networks? **3.** Why have water-based trade routes that developed prior to 1500 tended to receive less historical attention than land-based trade routes of the same period? **4.** How were water-based trade routes and land-based trade routes connected?

Topic	Assignment	Objective(s)
Connections Across Water	Watch, study & take notes on each of the three video segments.	<i>Describe</i> the routes and goods carried for each of the Indian Ocean network, by the Vikings, and the Mississippians. <i>Explain</i> the ideas, technologies and diseases carried along these routes. <i>Explain</i> the religions, diseases, commodities, and the movements of peoples along in these networks & by these peoples.
Water Based Trade	Document Analysis	<i>Analyze</i> (break down) what role water-based trade played in the development of connections between the world’s peoples. <i>Analyze</i> what kinds of evidence historians use to follow the transmissions of religion, disease, commodities, and the movements of peoples across sea routes or riverine networks.
Water & Land Trade	Read and research the handout	<i>Analyze</i> the ways in which water-based trade routes and land-based trade routes were connected.