

Trade Creates Links

A trade network exists when a group of people or countries buys from or sells to each other on a regular basis. Historically, trade networks arose as merchants traded local products for those from other places—often very distant places. Trade is a good way to spread products that are in high demand. Unit 3 discussed trade networks in the Arabian Peninsula, Asia, the Mediterranean Sea, the Sahara, and the Indian Ocean. In the next six pages, you will see how these networks worked.



Components of Trade Networks

Trading Partners

Merchants could grow rich selling highly desired goods that were not produced locally. To obtain such goods, merchants traded with people in other regions. When two regions trade regularly, they become trading partners.

Trade Goods

Products become trade goods when one region lacks them and another has a surplus to sell. Trade goods may be valuable because they are rare (such as ivory), useful (such as salt to preserve meat), or beautiful (such as silk).

Modes of Transport

Caravans of camels, mules, or other animals carried trade goods over land. Vessels that relied on wind power (such as the dhow) or the strength of human rowers shipped trade goods across the seas.

Currency

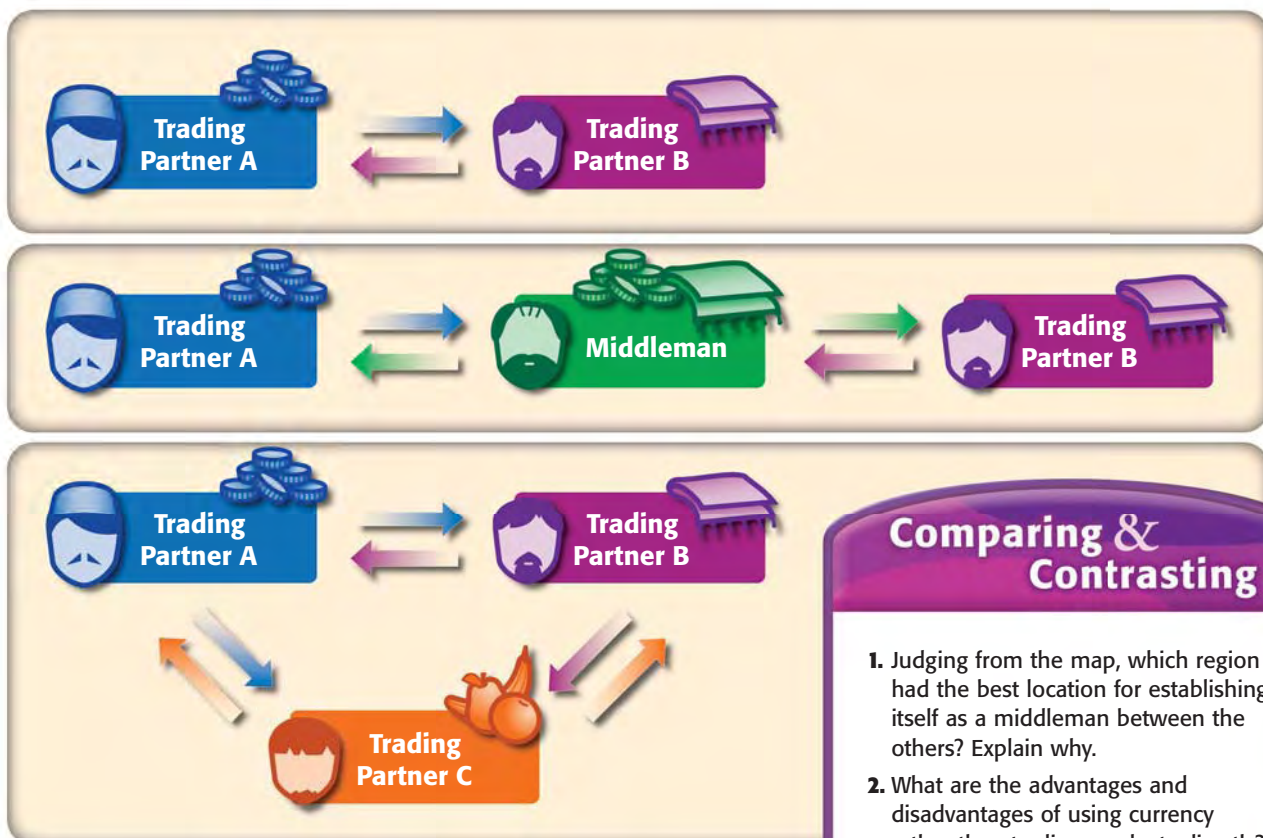
Merchants do not always exchange one product directly for another. They may buy goods with money. Currency is any item that is accepted as money in a region. Besides paper money, cowrie shells, salt, and metals served as currency.

Middlemen

Because some trade goods traveled very long distances, merchants did not always buy products directly from their places of origin. Middlemen acted as go-betweens, buying goods from merchants in one region to sell to merchants in another.

Types of Trade Networks

Trade networks frequently include more than two partners. Merchants from one area might sell their goods to several different regions. Middlemen might also do business with various different partners. The diagrams below show three basic types of trade networks.



Comparing & Contrasting

1. Judging from the map, which region had the best location for establishing itself as a middleman between the others? Explain why.
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using currency rather than trading products directly?



Major Trade Networks

The five major trade networks that you studied in Unit 3 are listed on the chart. Notice who the different trading partners were in each network and the products that they sold each other. Consider why the dhow and the camel described on the next page were particularly useful as modes of transport.

	Trading Partners	Trade Goods	Modes of Transport
Trans-Arabia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sassanid Empire • Arabia • Byzantine Empire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Asia: silk, gems, dyes, cotton cloth • Arabia: incense, spices • Southwest Asia: wool, gold, silver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • camel caravans
Silk Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China • India • Persia and Central Asia • Europe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia: silk, porcelain, spices, precious woods, gems • Europe: wool cloth, gold, silver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • caravans of camels and other pack animals
Mediterranean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Europe • North Africa • Southwest Asia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Europe: wool and linen cloth, wine, metal • North Africa: wool • Asia: spices, fruit, cloth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by sea, galleys with numerous rowers • overland, caravans of pack animals
Trans-Sahara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Africa • West Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Africa: cloth, salt, horses, guns • West Africa: gold, dyed cloth, leather goods, slaves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • camel caravans
Indian Ocean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China • India • Arabia • East Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia: porcelain, silk, jewelry, cotton • East Africa: ivory, gold, tortoiseshell, leopard skins, slaves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arab dhows • Chinese junks

SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts

- 1. Making Generalizations** *How would you characterize most of the products that came from Asia?*
- 2. Making Inferences** *What role did Arabian traders probably play in the Indian Ocean trade network? Explain.*

By Land or by Sea?

The different modes of transport used were well suited to their environments.

Advantages of Dhow Ocean Travel

- Stern rudders made dhows (shown in photograph) easy to maneuver.
- Lateen, or triangular, sails enabled sailors to sail against the wind.

Advantages of Land Travel by Camel

- Camels can carry heavy burdens over long distances.
- Fat reserves in their humps enable them to go without food or water for many days.
- Double sets of eyelashes, hairy ears, and nostrils that close protect camels from sand.
- Soft feet that stretch out make camels sure-footed on sand or snow.



Astrolabe ►

Sailors used astrolabes to measure the height of the sun or a star above the horizon. With that information, they could determine both the time of day and the latitude where they were located.



◀ Chinese Compass

Although the floating compass needle actually points to magnetic north, sailors could calculate true north and use that information to navigate. Knowing which way was north also enabled them to figure out in what direction the wind was blowing their ship.



Comparing & Contrasting

1. Read the information about the camel above. Then notice which trade networks on the chart on page 432 relied on camel caravans. What geographic information can you infer about those trade routes?
2. Which of the two navigation instruments do you think would be most useful for land travelers, such as those who traveled the Silk Roads or the trans-Saharan routes? Why?



Trade Goods

As trade networks developed, trading partners began to manufacture goods specifically for sale in other places. The more they learned about other cultures, the better they were able to design products that would suit foreign tastes. Consider how the items below were appropriate for sale in foreign places.

PRIMARY SOURCE

Moon Flask

This porcelain object is known as a moon flask for its round shape. During the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368), China produced delicate porcelains with elaborate painted decorations such as this. Like silk, porcelain originated in China. It was several centuries before Europe learned how to produce porcelain of such a high quality.



DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

A trade good may be valued for its usefulness, rarity, or beauty. For which of those reasons do you think people wanted this porcelain flask? Explain.

PRIMARY SOURCE

African Ivory Spoon

Ivory, which usually comes from elephant tusks, was one of Africa's most common trade goods. Frequently, it was carved into utensils or decorative objects. This carved spoon came from Benin.



DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

Why would people in Europe or China need to trade to obtain ivory?

PRIMARY SOURCE

Silk Cloth

The Chinese began manufacturing silk by about 2500 B.C. and trading it to foreign lands by the time of the Han Dynasty (202 B.C. to A.D. 220). Many people desired silk because it was shiny and could be dyed many beautiful colors. It was also extremely strong yet lightweight.

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

What class of people do you think were most likely to wear clothes made of silk?



Trade Narratives

The following excerpts describe life in towns and countries along the different trade routes that merchants traveled.

PRIMARY SOURCE

INTERACTIVE

Francesco Balducci Pegolotti

An Italian commercial agent, Pegolotti wrote a guidebook around 1340 for European merchants traveling overland to China.

Whatever silver the merchants may carry with them as far as Cathay [China] the lord of Cathay will take from them and put into his treasury. And to merchants who thus bring silver they give that paper money of theirs in exchange . . . With this money you can readily buy silk and other [merchandise] . . . And all the people of the country are bound to receive it. And yet you shall not pay a higher price for your goods because your money is of paper.

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

Judging from this excerpt, were Pegolotti's European readers familiar with paper money? How can you tell?

PRIMARY SOURCE

INTERACTIVE

Ibn Battuta

Text not available for electronic use. Please refer to the text in the textbook.

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

Why did the people of Takadda need to produce copper rods?

PRIMARY SOURCE

INTERACTIVE

Fernão Lopes de Castanheda

The following description of the goods available in Calicut is from *History of the Discovery and Conquest of India*, published in 1552.

[Calicut is] the richest mart [market] of all India; in which is to be found all the spices, drugs, nutmegs, . . . pearls and seed-pearls, musk, sanders [sandalwood], fine dishes of earthenware, lacquer, gilded coffers, and all the fine things of China, gold, amber, wax, ivory, fine and coarse cotton goods, both white and dyed of many colours, much raw and twisted silk, . . . cloth of gold, cloth of tissue, grain, scarlets, silk carpets, copper, . . . and all kinds of conserves.

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

How does Lopes de Castanheda support his point that Calicut is the richest market in India?

Comparing & Contrasting

1. Judging from the information in the sources, why did Takadda and Cathay use such different types of currency?
2. Which of the trade goods shown on the opposite page are mentioned in the description of Calicut? What does this tell you about the reason for Calicut's riches?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Go to a supermarket or produce store and write down what fruits and vegetables are being sold that are out of season or not native to your area. Then find out where they come from. Start by looking at signs and boxes where foods are packed. Interview the produce manager to find out what countries supplied the produce. Then create a chart or map that conveys the information you have learned.

UNIT
4

Connecting Hemispheres

500–1800





Seeking new land and new markets, European explorers sailed around the world. This painting by Theodore Gudin depicts French explorer La Salle's Louisiana expedition of 1684.

Comparing & Contrasting

Methods of Government

In Unit 4, you will learn about different methods of ruling a nation or empire. At the end of the unit, you will have a chance to compare and contrast the governments you have studied. (See pages 578–583.)