Warm Up

Discuss these questions with a partner.

1. Who are some great explorers from history? What are they well known for?
2. Which places remain to be explored today?
3. Would you like to be an explorer? Why or why not?

Many early explorers traveled the world by ship, spending months and even years at sea.
The Polos—Marco, his father Niccolò, and his uncle Maffeo—had been traveling for three and a half years when they finally achieved their objective—a long-awaited meeting with the powerful Mongol leader, Kublai Khan. The historic event took place in 1275 at the Khan’s luxurious summer capital in Shengdu, in what is now northern China. Kublai Khan was surprisingly informal as he greeted his tired guests: “Welcome, gentlemen! Please stand up. How’ve you been? How was the trip?”

Marco Polo’s trip had, in fact, started more than 9,000 kilometers (5,600 miles) away in Venice when he was just 8 years old.

In Marco Polo’s journal, he writes of the great cities of China, filled with grand buildings and palaces, like nothing he had ever seen before.

A. Reading Maps. Look at the map of the explorer Marco Polo’s journey. Then answer the questions.

1. Where did Marco Polo start and finish his trip? For how many years did he travel?
2. What were some of the furthest places he reached during his travels?
3. What other places did he visit? What do you know about these places?

B. Predict. Why do you think Marco Polo went on such a long journey? Read the passage to check your ideas.

1 The capital of a country is the city where its government meets.
15 a teenager. His father and uncle already knew Kublai Khan from a
previous visit five years earlier, when they had spent a short time in
Shengdu. On this second trip, the Polos stayed for 17 years before
they returned home. They made themselves useful to the Khan and
undertook various missions and tasks for him. It is likely that the
Khan considered it an honor that these Europeans—who were rare
in China—had made this extremely difficult journey, and he took the
opportunity to make good use of their skills and knowledge.

While he was in the service of Kublai Khan, “the most powerful man
in people and in lands and in treasure that ever was in the world,”
Marco Polo was able to learn and experience many things that
were new to Europeans. In his travel journal, he wrote that Kublai
Khan’s palace was the greatest he had ever seen. He admired the
Khan’s recently completed new capital, Daidu, whose streets were
“so straight and so broad.” The city was located in what is now
the center of Beijing, and Kublai Khan’s city planning can still be
perceived in the straight, broad streets of China’s modern capital.

We learn from Marco Polo that, in the administration of his
empire, Kublai Khan made use of a fast and simple message system.
Horse riders spaced every 40 kilometers allowed messages to cover
500 kilometers a day. As soon as one horse had run 40 kilometers,
the next horse would run the next 40 kilometers, and so on. Marco
also learned the secret of asbestos cloth, which is made from a
mineral and doesn’t catch fire. Paper money also took him by
surprise, since it was not yet in use in the West at that time. Homes
were heated with “black stones . . . which burn like logs.” Those
stones were coal—unknown in most of Europe—and were so
plentiful that many people had a hot bath three times a week.

Although the Khan did not want his visitors to leave, the Polos
finally received permission to return home in 1292. Marco
continued his observations while on the ocean voyage by way of
Sumatra and India. After he returned home, Marco completed
a book about his trip, full of details about his amazing cultural
experiences. It was probably the single greatest contribution to
geographical knowledge ever made to the West about the East.
Multiple Choice. Choose the best answer for each question.

Gist 1. What is the passage mainly about?
   a. Marco Polo's relationship with Kublai Khan
   b. why Marco Polo's travels are important
   c. why Marco Polo decided to write a book
   d. how Marco Polo was able to reach China

Detail 2. What was surprising about the Polos' meeting with the Khan?
   a. He could speak English.
   b. He spoke to them informally.
   c. He lived in a luxurious palace.
   d. He didn't remember them from a previous visit.

Detail 3. The phrase considered it an honor in line 17 is closest to _____.
   a. was angry  b. thought it was strange
   c. felt respected  d. thought it was useful

Detail 4. Kublai Khan used _____ to deliver messages to his people.
   a. runners  b. the Polos
   c. horse riders  d. birds

Inference 5. Marco Polo saw that asbestos cloth, paper money, and coal were used in the East. According to the passage, this shows that
   a. the West already knew about and used these inventions
   b. the East had learned various technologies from the West
   c. the West had forgotten the technologies used in the East
   d. the East was ahead of the West in some areas of technology

Sequence 6. What did Marco Polo do after he left China but before he returned to Venice?
   a. He wrote a book.
   b. He crossed Asia by land.
   c. He visited India and Sumatra.
   d. He undertook a mission for Kublai Khan.

Reference 7. In line 45, the word it refers to _____.
   a. culture  b. the book
   c. completion  d. his contribution

Understanding Time Clauses/Time Relationships

In addition to before and after, we can also indicate time relationships with when, as soon as, as, and while. These words can begin a sentence (with a comma following the clause), or be used in the middle of a sentence.

The word when can be used when one action happens after another action, or during the same period of time.

Example 1: When I decided to take a trip to China, I told my parents.
Example 2: When he was six, he moved to another city.

Use as soon as when one action happens immediately after another action.

Example: As soon as I landed in Beijing, I texted my parents.

Use while and as when two actions happen at the same time.

Example 1: I felt very excited as the taxi arrived at my hotel.
Example 2: I made a lot of new friends while I was in China.

A. Noticing. Find and underline the words before, after, when, as soon as, and while in the passage on pages 117–119.

B. Sequencing. For each pair of actions, mark them 1 (happened first) or 2 (happened second). If both actions happened at the same time, mark both 1.

1. ______ Marco Polo met Kublai Khan.
   ______ Marco Polo traveled for three and a half years.

2. ______ Marco Polo's trip started.
   ______ Marco Polo became a teenager.

3. ______ Marco Polo was in the service of Kublai Khan.
   ______ Marco Polo was able to learn and experience many new things.

4. ______ Marco Polo returned home.
   ______ Marco Polo completed a book.

Did You Know?
Some people believe Marco Polo introduced pasta to Europe from China. He does mention “macaroni or other sorts of pasta” in his journal. However, Europeans had probably known about these foods for many years.

Critical Thinking. Discuss with a partner. Who do you think gained more from the Polos’ visit to China—Marco Polo or Kublai Khan? Why?
**Vocabulary Practice**

**A. Definitions.** Complete the definitions using the correct words from the box.

administration  admire  informal  mineral  objective  undertake

1. Your ________ is what you are trying to achieve.
2. If you _______ someone, you like and respect him or her.
3. A(n) _______ is a solid, naturally occurring substance.
4. When you _______ a task or job, you start doing it.
5. The _______ of a country is conducted by its government.
6. If a situation is _______, it is usually relaxed, friendly, or unofficial.

**B. Completion.** Choose the correct words to complete the information below.

After surviving the dangers of the ocean 1. (voyage / mineral) from China, Marco Polo reached his home city of Venice. But more troubles waited for him there. Italy at that time was not united under one government, and the 2. (administration / admiration) of each city was left to different powerful families. So the different cities were often at war with each other. During fighting between Venice and Genoa, Marco Polo was put in prison. There, he met Rustichello, a writer of fairy tales, who 3. (undertook / contributed) to Polo’s future fame by helping him create a(n) 4. (journal / objective) of his travels. Because of this book, many people around the world 5. (perceive / admire) Polo’s achievements as an explorer. Today, Marco Polo is 6. (perceived / contributed) by many to be one of the greatest explorers that ever lived.

**Before You Read**

**A. Reading Maps.** Ibn Battuta was born in Tangier, in what is now Morocco. He was a great explorer, and traveled to many places around the world during the 14th century. Look at the map of his travels and try to guess the answers to these questions.

1. Which person traveled further, Ibn Battuta or Marco Polo?
2. How many places did Ibn Battuta visit?
3. For how many years was Ibn Battuta traveling?

**B. Scan.** Now quickly read the first two paragraphs on page 124 to check your guesses.
The Long Journey

“I left Tangier, my birthplace, the 13th of June, 1325, with the intention of making the pilgrimage to Mecca. . . . to leave all my friends both female and male, to abandon my home as birds abandon their nests.” So begins an old manuscript in a library in Paris, the travel journal of Ibn Battuta.

Almost two centuries before Columbus, this young Moroccan set off for Mecca. Returning home three decades later, he is now regarded as one of history’s great travelers. Driven by curiosity, he journeyed to remote corners of the Islamic world, traveling three times as far as Marco Polo, through 44 modern countries. Though little celebrated in the West, his name is well known among Arabs. In his hometown of Tangier, a square, a hotel, a café, a ferry boat, and even a hamburger are named after him.

Prior to his adventures traveling the world, Ibn Battuta studied in Mecca for several years. However, the urge to travel soon took over. He traveled to India, seeking profitable employment with the Sultan of Delhi. On the way, he described his group being attacked in the open country by 80 foot soldiers and two horsemen: “we fought . . . killing one of their horsemen and about twelve of the foot soldiers. . . . I was hit by an arrow and my horse by another, but God in his grace preserved me. . . . We carried the heads of the slain to the castle of Abu Bak’har . . . and suspended them from the wall.”

In Delhi, the sultan gave him the position of judge, based on his studies at Mecca. But the sultan had an unpredictable character, and Ibn Battuta was soon looking for an opportunity to leave. When the sultan offered to finance a trip to China, Ibn Battuta agreed. He set off in three ships, but misfortune struck while he was still on shore. A sudden storm grounded and broke up two ships. Scattering treasure, the storm drowned many people and horses. As he watched, the third ship, with all his belongings and slaves—one carrying his child—was carried out to sea and never heard from again.

After a lifetime of incredible adventures, Ibn Battuta was finally ordered by the Sultan of Morocco to return home to share his wisdom with the world. Fortunately, he consented and wrote a book that has been translated into numerous languages, allowing people everywhere to read about his unparalleled journeys.

A pilgrimage is a trip to a place of religious importance.
A manuscript is a piece of writing that is handwritten, or an early version of a book.
A sultan is a ruler in some Islamic countries.

Someone who has been slain has been killed.
If you suspend something from a high place, you hang it from that place.
If things are scattered, they have been thrown or dropped so they are spread all over an area.
**Recognizing Participle Clauses**

Participle clauses are very common in written English. They show relationships between two or more actions. Recognizing them will help you understand how one action is related to another action.

Participle clauses can use the present participle (-ing) or past participle (-ed). When the sentence shows one subject performing two different actions, use the -ing form for the first verb.

**Example:** She stared at the map. She looked for a bus stop. = Staring at the map, she looked for a bus stop.

You should use the -ed form when one action is in the passive voice.

**Example:** The residents were rescued by the firefighters. They all survived the fire. = Rescued by the firefighters, the residents all survived the fire.

**A. Analyzing.** These sentences are from the reading on pages 124–125. Choose the correct participle to complete each sentence. Then check your answers in the reading.

1. (Returning / Returned) home three decades later, he is now regarded as one of history’s great travelers. (paragraph 2)
2. (Driving / Driven) by curiosity, he journeyed to remote corners of the Islamic world . . . (paragraph 2)
3. Though little (celebrating / celebrated) in the West, his name is well known among Arabs. (paragraph 2)
4. He traveled to India, (seeking / sought) profitable employment with the Sultan of Delhi. (paragraph 3)
5. (Scattering / Scattered) treasure, the storm drowned many people and horses. (paragraph 4)

**B. Combining.** Combine the two sentences into one. Make the first sentence a participle clause.

1. I (left / left) my friends behind. In 1325, I started traveling. = Leaving my friends behind, I started traveling in 1325.
2. His book is known as (Rihla / Rihla). It details his travels in Asia and Africa. = His book details his travels in Asia and Africa. = Rihla.

**Critical Thinking** Discuss with a partner. How were the travels of Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta different? How were they similar?
A. **Definitions.** Read the information below. Then complete the definitions using the words in **red**.

During his travels, Ibn Battuta suffered many **misfortunes**. Here’s one:
In his final journey, he traveled to the **remote** land of Mali, with the **intention** of meeting a king who gave his visitors wonderful gifts. Said to be **unparalleled**, these gifts often included large amounts of gold.
However, **prior** to Ibn Battuta’s arrival, the old king died. The new king, Mansa Sulayman, only gave Ibn Battuta a little food. When he saw his gift, Ibn Battuta could only laugh.

1. An area that is ___________ is far away and difficult to get to.
2. If you have the ___________ of doing something, you have decided to do it.
3. A person’s ___________ are bad or unlucky things that happen to them.
4. If something happens ___________ to another thing, it happens before it.
5. If you describe something as ___________, you are emphasizing that it is bigger, better, or worse than anything else of its kind.

B. **Completion.** Complete the sentences below with the words in the box.

- **abandoned**  
- **consented**  
- **financed**  
- **translators**  
- **wisdom**

1. Thanks to the work of many ________________, the writings of Ibn Battuta can be read in all major languages.
2. The king and queen of Spain ________________ Christopher Columbus’s voyage to the New World.
3. Kublai Khan finally ________________ to the Polos’ request to return to Europe.
4. A good king is one who has great ____________ and makes good decisions for his people.
5. Urban explorers explore places within a city, including buildings that have been ____________ and now lie empty.
The Legend of Marco Polo

Before You Watch

A. Definitions. Here are some words you will hear in the video. Match the words to their definitions.

1. formidable • a. an area within a country
2. banquet • b. to remove earth carefully to find buried objects
3. excavate • c. a large, grand meal, usually for many people
4. province • d. inspiring fear or respect by being large or powerful

While You Watch

A. Completion. Many people believe Marco Polo visited China, but others argue that he didn’t. As you watch, choose the correct words from the video to complete the chart.

Arguments against Polo visiting China

There are factual 1. (statements / inaccuracies) in Polo’s book, such as saying a 2. (battle / wedding) took place in the wrong year.

The book describes things that are not possible, such as a 3. (tiger / fish) that is a hundred feet long with 4. (feathers / fur) on it.

Arguments for Polo visiting China

There are details in his book that couldn’t have been 5. (invented / believed) in Europe, such as Polo seeing 6. (camels / coal) for the first time.

Polo described a hall big enough for 7. (6,000 / 10,000) people. When the city was excavated, the placement and style of the 8. (buildings / streets) were exactly as Polo had described them.
A. Correction. The captions below are not accurate. Use the information in the video to correct each caption.

1. When Marco Polo wrote his book, he was in jail in China.

2. Marco Polo set off for China from Venice in 1271 A.D., traveling as a geographer.

3. The Chinese call the Taklamakan Desert the “desert of summer.”

4. Marco Polo claims he went to Shengdu, to Kublai Khan’s spring palace.

B. Discuss. Discuss these questions with a partner.

1. Which arguments do you think are stronger—that Marco Polo did or didn’t visit China?

2. Is there information in this video that supports or doesn’t agree with the reading on pages 117–119? If so, which do you think is more convincing?