

Marco Polo and the Silk Road (Social Studies)

Last week you read about Marco Polo and his travels across Asia. This week we're going to continue learning about the Silk Road. It's not exaggerating to say that the Silk Road changed the entire world!! As you read, the Silk Road wasn't really a road, but a group of connected trade routes/paths between Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Along these paths travelled traders, artists, storytellers, scientists, musicians, politicians and religious leaders. Different cultures were shared and blended because of the Silk Road.

Learn more about the Silk Road. Watch this video by BrainPop about Marco Polo.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bj7NeciFrZ0>

Yo-Yo Ma is one of the most famous musicians in the world. He plays the cello and he is a founding member of the *Silk Road Ensemble*. He believes that the arts (and in particular, music) can make the world a better place and that through collaboration one can both preserve tradition and create cultural change. Interestingly, the Chinese characters for Yo-Yo mean friendship. He has made connections with musicians from around the globe.

Your task, listen to Yo-Yo Ma play his cello https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCicM6i59_I
As you listen, think about why Yo-Yo Ma selected this piece to be included in the Silk Road Project. How does this song help people to find common ground? How does music help strangers to communicate? Get out your composition book and use the following prompts to write as you listen to the song:

- Describe the images that come to mind
- Name the feelings and thoughts that are triggered by the sounds in the music
- Write sentences that follow the pacing of the music. Think about the rhythm of words.
- Bach is the composer of this piece. Describe what you think his theme or message was for the music.

Your goal should be to fill at least one complete page with writing. If need be, listen to the piece a second or even a third time. Return your writing to your teacher.

_____ Watch video about Marco Polo and the Silk Road

_____ Watch/listen to the video of Yo-Yo Ma

_____ Complete writing assignment.