People of the Silk Road - Nomads, Monks, Marauders, and the Mighty
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Overview: Students will generate a eulogy for one of the famous, or infamous, historical figures from the Silk Road regions. The eulogies, with visual representation, will be exhibited in a chronological timeline.

Objectives:
- Students will learn about the lives and contributions of key figures of the Silk Road region.
- Students will practice research, organization and the writing process.
- Students will place key figures in appropriate chronological order through history.
- Students will gain an appreciation for the cultural diversity and historical significance of this region.

Age level: middle through high school
Time required: As an in-class assignment this will take four days (one research, one drafting, one writing, one for presentation) An alternative is to offer this as a long term homework assignment with a portion of one class used to explain the assignment and one for presentation.

Materials:
Map of the Silk Road
Historical reference media (books, Internet)

Paper and pencil
Art materials for illustrations

Procedure:
1. Review the geographical extent of the Silk Road with the class using a map of the region. Note that the Silk Road has historical importance in four general periods of time: a) 2nd century BCE - 2nd century CE b) 7th - 9th century CE; 13-14th century CE; 19th century to present.
2. Explain that a eulogy is a speech written following the death of a person to celebrate their accomplishments, talk of their personal qualities, and summarize their lives.
3. Assign each student one of the following historical figures from the Silk Road. They will be responsible for writing a two page eulogy (double-spaced, 10-12 font). Students should also provide a visual depiction of their historical character. In many cases, it will be impossible to find a real likeness. They should be encouraged to create or find a visual representation that is appropriate to their historical character.

Xuanzang  Marco Polo  Abakh Khoja  Benedict de Goes
Zoraster  Chinggis Khan  Sir Aurel Stein  Iparhan/Xiang Fei
Tamerlane  Kublai Khan  Albert von Le Coq  Ban Chao
Babur the Tiger  Emperor Han Wudi  Sven Hedin  Fa Xian
Alexander the Great  Fengxiang  Islam Akhun  Zhang Qian
Satuq Bughra Khan  Yakub Beg  Empress Wu Zetian  Osama bin Laden
  Ibn Battuta  Rabban Bar Sauma  Mohammad Omar

4. Allow student one to research their characters, one day to write, another day to peer edit and revise.
5. Have students share their eulogies with the class, then arrange in exhibition, in chronological order.
6. Consider the following questions:

- How can these individuals be grouped by categories (invader, ruler, religious person)?
- Can you discern the historical periods of greatest activity on the Silk Road through your timeline?
- What are the great achievements of the historical figures of the Silk Road?
- How has the importance of this region changed in contemporary times?

References:
"Travelers on the Silk Road" at the Silk Road Foundation website offers the names of many, many Silk Road figures that can be researched from existing links.