



SILK ROAD Reading Comprehension

In 1274, Italian explorers Marco and Niccolo Polo set out on a 24-year journey in which they traveled the famous Silk Road from Italy, through brutal deserts and towering mountains, to eastern China. They traveled over 4,000 miles in all. Marco and Niccolo were among the very first Europeans to explore the fabled empire of China. In China, Marco Polo even worked for ruler Kublai Khan. Polo detailed his experiences and findings in China by writing a book. Polo described materials and inventions never before seen in Europe. Paper money, a printing press, porcelain, gunpowder, and coal were among the products he wrote about. He also described the vast wealth of Kublai Khan, as well as the geography of northern and southern China. European rulers were very interested in the products Polo described. However, trading for them along the Silk Road was dangerous, expensive, and impractical. European rulers began to wonder if there was a sea route to the east to get the products they wanted at a reasonable price.

1.) How many years did Marco Polo's journey to China last? _____

2.) Marco Polo traveled over _____ miles in his travels to China.

3.) In China, Marco Polo worked for _____, the ruler of China.

4.) Marco Polo came to China from what country?

- a.) Europe
- b.) China
- c.) Italy
- d.) England

5.) While traveling in China, Marco Polo observed many new discoveries. Which of the following is not one of the discoveries?

- a.) cigarettes
- b.) gunpowder
- c.) paper money
- d.) coal

6.) Marco Polo traveled to China with _____ Polo.

7.) What word below best captures the meaning of "impractical" in the sentence:

However, trading for them along the Silk Road was dangerous, expensive, and impractical.

- a.) not funny
- b.) ridiculous
- c.) too difficult
- d.) positive

8.) Because of the difficulties in traveling the Silk Road, European rulers began wondering if there was a _____ route to the east.