

The Postclassical Era 600-1450

If you only learned six things in this unit...

1. Like the foundations period, this time period witnesses a tremendous growth in long distance trade due to improvements in technology. Trade through the Silk Road, the Indian Ocean, the Trans-Saharan trade, and the Mediterranean Sea led to the spread of ideas, religion, and technology.
2. Major technological developments such as the compass, improved ship-building technology, and gunpowder shaped the development of the world.
3. The movement of people greatly altered our world. Nomadic groups, such as the Turks, Mongols, and Vikings, for instance, interacted with settled people-often because of their technology- leading to further change and development.
4. Religions such as Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism preached the equality of all believers in the eyes of God*. And though patriarchal values began to dominate, the monastic life of Buddhism and Christianity offered an alternative path for women.
5. The spread of religion aided by the increase in trade often acted as a unifying force, though it sometimes caused conflict. Christianity and the Church served as a centralizing force in Western Europe, and throughout East Asia, the spread of Confucianism and Buddhism solidified a cultural identity. The new religion of Islam created a new cultural world known as dar-al Islam which transcended political boundaries.
6. The political structures of many areas adapted and changed to the new conditions of the world. Centralized empires like the Byzantine, Arab Caliphates, and the Tang and Song dynasties built on the successful models of the past, while decentralized areas (Western Europe and Japan) developed political organization that more effectively dealt with their unique issues. The movements of the Mongols altered much of Asia's political structure for a time, and the recovery from that Mongol period introduced political structures which defined many areas for centuries to follow.