

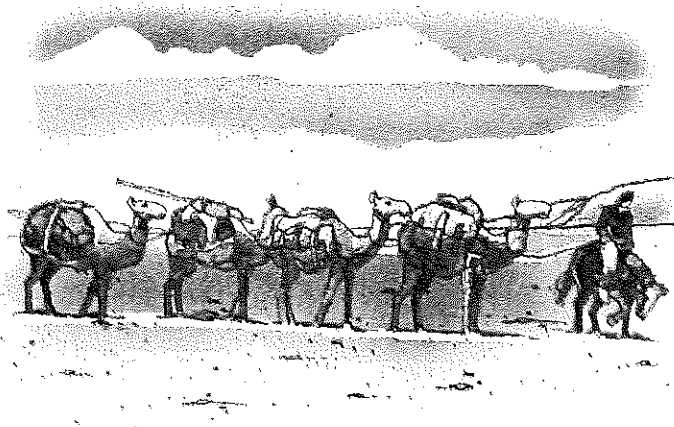
READING COMPREHENSION

The Silk Road: Doorway to the East

In 1492, Columbus sailed in search of a better route to Asia and landed in the Americas. The route Columbus was trying to replace was called the Silk Road. This ancient system of paths was used for more than a thousand years to carry goods between Asia and Europe.

Even in ancient Roman times, Europeans wanted to buy the fine silk and porcelain that China produced. (1) To do this, traders had to *traverse* rugged land, using a 4,000-mile trail. (2) The *itinerary* started in Europe and continued through Turkey to Central Asia, and finally, China. Along the way, travelers met people from many different cultures.

(3) A Silk Road expedition was difficult and expensive to *mobilize*. Heading east from Constantinople, in Turkey, traders used camel caravans. (4) Camels were not as *agile* as horses, but could travel for long periods of time without food or water. Most important, many could carry 500–600 pounds.



a camel caravan

Caravans often stopped for food and water at *caravansaries*. These “motels” of the past had large open-air spaces for tying up camels. Around the spaces were small, dark rooms where travelers slept.

Wherever traders stopped, they bought and sold goods in busy bazaars. Because caravans often traveled for months between caravansaries, it was important to buy enough supplies to last between stops.

Imagine a trader preparing to leave a caravansary in the city of Samarakand, Uzbekistan. (5) Perhaps he *dawdles*, knowing it might be the last time he will sleep indoors for months. From now on, he will rest beneath the stars. (6) Finally ready to leave, he looks back, as the crowded bazaars, colorful costumes, and food stalls *recede* into the background. (7) He will ride his camel through vast, sun-blasted deserts so hot that the air seems to *quiver*. Later, freezing mountain air will chill him to the bone. (8) Although he will try to follow his itinerary, he may have to *modify* it. (9) Rain or snow could so *distort* the path he is following, he may become lost in the wilderness. There may be dangerous robbers to deal with, too. But the trader will also get to see many exotic, interesting things, and experience the unique and ancient cultures of the regions he travels through.

Trade along the Silk Road brought gold and precious stones to China, and brought silk, spices, and porcelain to Europe. It also made traders, willing to risk the difficult and dangerous journeys, quite wealthy.

In the 1200s, Italian explorer and trader Marco Polo went on a twenty-four-year journey along the Silk Road. The fabulous tales he brought back inspired Europeans to search for an easier route to China. (10) Soon after Columbus’s voyage, sea routes *supplanted* the Silk Road, but this well-worn path remains an important part of world history.

Each sentence below refers to a numbered sentence in the passage. Write the letter of the choice that gives the sentence a meaning that is closest to the original sentence.

- _____ 1. To do this, traders had to _____ rugged land.
a. cross b. schedule c. change d. hike
- _____ 2. The _____ started in Europe.
a. trading b. caravan c. route d. changing of shape
- _____ 3. A Silk Road expedition was difficult and expensive to _____.
a. alter b. organize c. waste d. replace
- _____ 4. Camels were not as _____ as horses.
a. organized b. wasteful c. strong d. quick

NAME _____

DATE _____

- _____ 5. Perhaps he _____, knowing it might be the last time he will sleep indoors for months.
a. moves slowly b. organizes a trip c. prepares for war d. changes his plans
- _____ 6. The crowded bazaars, colorful costumes, and food stalls _____ into the background.
a. retreat b. move quickly c. cross d. change
- _____ 7. He will ride his camel through vast, sun-blasted deserts so hot that the air seems to _____.
a. become clearer b. change slightly c. wiggle and shake d. be lost
- _____ 8. Although he will try to follow his itinerary, he may have to _____ it.
a. waste b. organize c. change d. quicken
- _____ 9. Rain or snow could so _____ the path, he may become lost in the wilderness.
a. beautify b. organize c. prepare d. change
- _____ 10. Soon after Columbus's voyage, sea routes _____ the Silk Road.
a. replaced b. improved c. adjusted d. became

Indicate whether the statements below are TRUE or FALSE according to the passage.

- _____ 1. Water routes were less efficient for trade than the Silk Road was.
- _____ 2. Columbus's main purpose for sailing in 1492 was to discover a new trade route.
- _____ 3. Traveling traders risked their lives to get goods such as silk and porcelain.

WRITE THE DERIVATIVE

Complete the sentence by writing the correct form of the word shown in parentheses. You may not need to change the form that is given.

_____ 1. Our new plan is just a _____ of the old one. (*modify*)

_____ 2. As they age, many men develop a _____ hairline. (*recede*)

_____ 3. The politician was very skilled and experienced at the _____ of workers for an effective campaign. (*mobilize*)

_____ 4. The skater's _____ was absolutely amazing. (*agile*)

_____ 5. A herd of elk was _____ the large field. (*traverse*)

_____ 6. Instead of cleaning her room, Edwina just _____ around. (*dawdle*)

_____ 7. We knew from his _____ lips that he was about to cry. (*quiver*)

_____ 8. Our _____ is as follows: three days in Venice, five days in Florence, and four days in Rome. (*itinerary*)

_____ 9. That story is a total _____ of the truth! (*distort*)

_____ 10. Internet shopping has not completely _____ shopping in stores. (*supplant*)