

## Student worksheets

### Activity 1

- Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?
  - 1) Marco Polo was an explorer.
  - 2) He was born in Venice.
  - 3) He was the first western man to reach China.
  - 4) He crossed the Gobi Desert.
  - 5) He spent more than 20 years travelling.
  - 6) When he returned to Venice he wrote a book.

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### Activity 2

- Work with a partner (one student A and one student B).
- What is the significance of these words and dates?
  - a. Cathay
  - b. Kublai Khan
  - c. 17
  - d. Niccolo Polo
  - e. Gobi Desert
  - f. 1254
  - g. Constantinople
  - h. 1292
  - i. Rustichello

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### Activity 3

- Work with a partner (one student A and one student B) and answer these questions.
  1. How long did Marco's journey to China take?
  2. In which year did Niccolo return to Venice from his first trip to China?
  3. What was the name of the book about Marco Polo's travels?
  4. Where did Niccolo and Maffeo stay for three years?
  5. Which route did Marco, his father and uncle take on their journey to China?
  6. Why was Marco's father away from home a lot?
  7. How many years did Marco spend away from Venice?

8. Why were Niccolo and Maffeo unable to return from their trip to Sudak?

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## Texts

### Student A

Marco Polo was born in Venice in 1254. His father and uncle were merchants who spent a lot of time away from home. In fact, when he was very young Marco didn't see much of his father (Niccolo) because he lived for much of the time in Constantinople (modern day Istanbul). From there it was easier to trade with countries to the East like Persia and Cathay (the name for China). In 1260 his father and uncle set off on a journey to Sudak on the other side of the Black Sea and then up the river Volga. Unfortunately for them a war broke out and they were unable to return by the same route. Instead they continued east until they reached the great city of Bukhara where they stayed for three years. While they were there Niccolo and Maffeo were invited to the court of the great Mongol Emperor, Kublai Khan. Crossing the Gobi Desert they were the first westerners to travel into China. When they finally returned to Venice Niccolo was to discover that his wife had died and that Marco was now a young man of 15.

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### Student B

When we think of great explorers, one name that many people think of is Marco Polo. In fact, Marco Polo was not really an explorer, he was a merchant. At the age of 17 the young Marco set out with his father and uncle on the journey that was to make him famous. They travelled south of the Black Sea, across Persia and then north through Afghanistan. Eventually they reached the Gobi Desert, the gateway to China. Finally, almost three and a half years after leaving Venice, they reached the court of Kublai Khan. Once there, it appears that the young Marco was very popular with the Khan and may even have spent some time working for him. In 1292 Marco offered to travel with a Mongol Princess who was to marry the Argun Khan of Persia. From there he continued west and finally returned to Venice in 1295. Once he arrived back he began telling everybody about his adventures and what he had seen. Then, in 1298, he was taken prisoner by the Genoese who were at war with Venice. During his time in jail he met another prisoner – Rustichello of Pisa. Marco talked about his travels and Rustichello wrote a book called *The Description of the World*.