138 BC – AD 1498

Put the Events in Order

Name _____ Date _____

These 10 events from the Silk Road timeline are out of order. Write a number from 1 to 10 in each box, from the earliest event (1) to the latest (10).

☐ **Romans Discover Silk**

Chinese silk, passed along by Parthian and other traders, becomes a luxury in the Roman Empire; in the next century the Roman writer Pliny the Elder complains about how much money Romans spend on it.

☐ **The Black Death Spreads**

A deadly plague spreads from Central Asia along trade routes; in 1347 ships from the Black Sea carry it to Mediterranean ports.

☐ **Xuanzang's Journey**

The Chinese Buddhist monk Xuanzang travels the Silk Road to India to study and collect holy texts, returning 16 years later with hundreds of scrolls.

☐ **Marco Polo Travels**

The Venetian merchant Marco Polo travels to China, then ruled by the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan; the Mongol peace makes the routes safer than ever, and his book about the journey becomes famous in Europe.

☐ **The Diamond Sutra Is Printed**

A Buddhist text called the Diamond Sutra is printed from carved wooden blocks in China; it was found in 1900 in a sealed cave near the Silk Road town of Dunhuang.

☐ **Battle of Talas**

An Arab Abbasid army defeats a Chinese Tang army near the Talas River in Central Asia; by about 794 a paper mill was working in Baghdad.

☐ **A Sea Route to India**

Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama sails around Africa and reaches Calicut in India.

☐ **Zhang Qian Travels West**

Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty sends the envoy Zhang Qian to find allies in Central Asia; he is captured and held for about ten years but returns around 126 BC with reports of rich lands and fine horses to the west.

☐ **Silkworms Smuggled West**

According to the historian Procopius, monks smuggle silkworm eggs from Central Asia to Constantinople for Emperor Justinian, possibly hidden inside hollow canes.

☐ **Buddhism Comes to China**

Monks and merchants from India and Central Asia bring Buddhism along the trade routes into China, where it slowly gains followers.

138 BC – AD 1498

Put the Events in Order: Answer Key

138 BC	1.	Zhang Qian Travels West
1st century BC	2.	Romans Discover Silk
1st century AD	3.	Buddhism Comes to China
c. AD 552	4.	Silkworms Smuggled West
629–645	5.	Xuanzang's Journey
751	6.	Battle of Talas
868	7.	The Diamond Sutra Is Printed
1271–1295	8.	Marco Polo Travels
1340s	9.	The Black Death Spreads
1498	10.	A Sea Route to India



FOR TEACHERS

The Silk Road Teaching Pack, $7. A two-week unit: lesson slides with guided notes, illustrated readings, maps, primary sources, activities, a quiz and answer keys.

printablescholar.com/printable-maps/silk-road-map

See the pack →