

THE SILK ROADS

C2nd BCE- C15th CE

Since the Han Dynasty, Chinese merchants had travelled west to trade goods with the Persian and Roman empires. They used a network of routes that became known as the Silk Roads.

A lot of these routes passed through very difficult terrain, such as mountains and deserts. So oases towns grew up along the Silk Roads as places for travellers to rest. These towns became prosperous, cultural melting pots where people met and traded goods and ideas.

Life on the road was dangerous but trade flourished under groups that unified and protected the routes such as, the Tang Dynasty (in C8th CE) and the Mongol Empire (in C13th CE).

What is a caravan?

Merchants used camels, yaks and donkeys to carry goods and supplies. They travelled in groups called caravans for safety.



By C15th CE the Silk Roads decline when merchants begin to favour sea routes.

What is a merchant?

Merchants are traders, who buy and sell goods. They weren't the only people to travel the Silk Roads. Slaves, scholars, pilgrims, travellers and performers did too.

Goods traded on the
Silk Roads:



Silk



Paper



Porcelain



Horses



Tea



Silver

Glass



Gunpowder



SILK ROADS MAP

Helgö Buddha



Discovered at a Viking site in Sweden, this little buddha had travelled 5000km along the SILK ROADS.

SAMARKAND was the capital of the Sogdian Empire (618-907 CE). It was a central point for trade on the SILK ROADS.

The 'Library Cave' at Dunhuang is one of the most important archaeological sites on the SILK ROADS.

p10



Preservation at Astana cemetery (200- 700 C.E) is so good that paper, textiles and even food offerings have survived.

P9



CHANG'AN was the capital of Tang Dynasty China. By 800 CE it had become so rich from trade it was the largest city in the world.

P12



During the Nara period Buddhism spread through Japan via the SILK ROADS.

You are here!

Helgö

Rome

Hagia Sophia



CONSTANTINOPLE The gateway between Asia and Europe on the SILK ROADS.

Constantinople

Baghdad

Built in the C8th, BAGHDAD was the heart of the Islamic world. Many scholars, traders and artists flocked to this thriving city.

P11



The Great Stupa

Kashgar

Samarkand

Merv



Dunhuang

Astana

Chang'an

Sanchi

Guangzhou

Guangzhou Ship



One of many shipwrecks discovered, that show how important the MARITIME SILK ROAD was to trade.

Nara

GEOGRAPHY QUIZ

Many empires rose and fell during the time of the Silk Roads. As a result towns and cities changed names. Can you match the old place names (on the left) to their new place names (on the right)? Use the map in this resource pack to help you.

Constantinople

Baghdad

Chang'an

Nara

Heijō-kyō

Istanbul

Madinat al-Salam

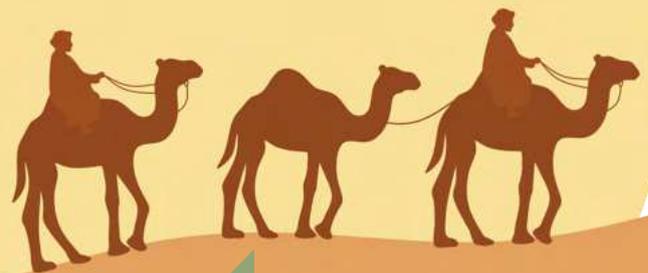
Turpan

Gaochang

Xi'an

The Taklamakan Desert

Is one of the largest deserts in the world, located in northwest China. Can you spot it on the map? It was a major obstacle for Silk Road traders. To circumnavigate this deadly desert the Silk Road split into two. The NORTHERN SILK ROUTE and SOUTHERN SILK ROUTE. Before joining back together again around Kashgar.



DISCOVER:

Why not search for some of these places on [google earth](#)?



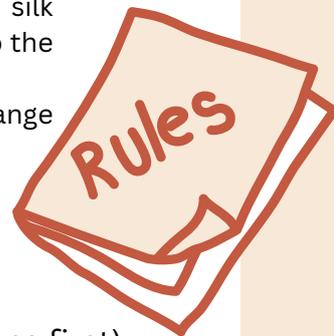
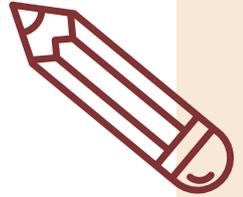
2-4 players

Age: 8+
Time:
45 mins

Activity: THE SILK ROADS TRADING GAME

You will
need to:

- Divide your members up so there are 2-4 players per board game.
- Print out the correct number of board games and colour.
- You will need x1 handmade paper counter per player see bonus activity on p8 or you can use regular playing counters if you wish.
- Print out the images of goods and faiths on p5 & 6 to create your trading cards. Or why not make your own?
- You will need x2 trading cards for each of the five 'goods', per person (so if you have 4 players you will need 8 silk cards, 8 silver cards etc). Pile your trading cards next to the board in their groups.
- You will only ever need x1 religion card per player. Arrange these in a pile next to the other trading cards.



How to play

- Place counters at the start and take turns to roll the die (youngest goes first).
- Move the counters along the path, following the movement and instructions.
- When you land on a square then you must pick up that trading good card e.g. If you land on the spice square, then pick up a spice card.

NB. Other than 5 trading goods (Gold, Silver, Spice, Food and Silk) there is also an 'ideas' square (marked by a lightbulb). When you land on this square you can pick any religion card.

- The winner is the first to collect all 6 cards and pass the start again.
- If two players land on the same square they have the option to trade with one another.
- If a trading good runs out e.g. there are no more gold trading cards left in the gold pile, then there is a 'goods shortage'. Every player with that goods card is taxed and must return one card of that item back to the pile.
- If you catch the plague your faith card will save you – you do NOT have to return it to the pile.
- You can only ever have one religion card at a time. If you land on the lightbulb square again then you have the option to swap faiths with another player.
- If you land on the bonus square where you can trade with another player, you can dictate what good you would like to trade and the other player must oblige.



GOOD
LUCK

4

Trading Good Cards

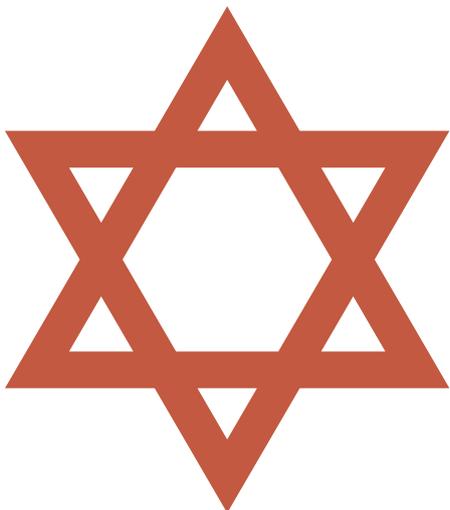
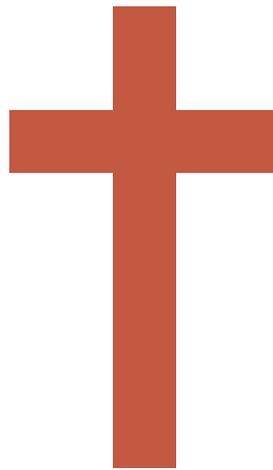
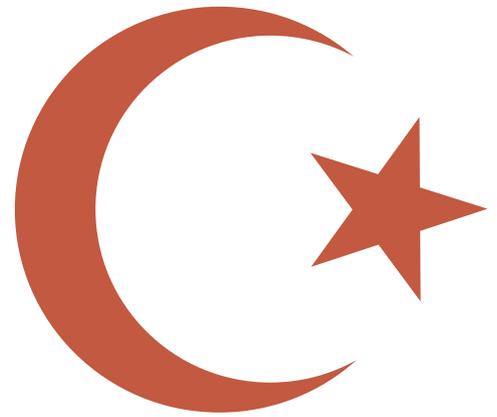
Use these images to create your trading good cards. Remember you need x2 per player.

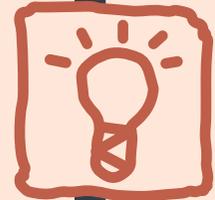


(Photos by Zlatáky.cz; Jan Canty; Marisol Benitez; Scottsdale Mint and Marion Botella on [Unsplash](https://unsplash.com)).

Religion Cards

Use these images to create your faith cards. Remember you need x1 per player.



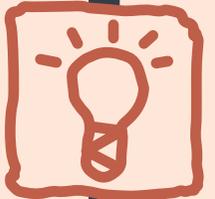


Meet some merchants
- trade a card with another player



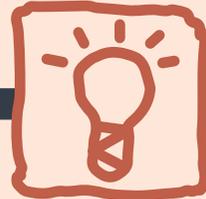
You'll need:

- counters
- trading cards
- a die



SILK ROADS

Trading Game
2-4 players



Reach an oasis
- pick any trading card

BONUS ACTIVITY

Chinese paper folding

Age: 8+
Time:
30 mins

You will need
(per person):

x1 piece of 4 inch origami paper

Before you start

Get inspired! The papermaking process is thought to have originated in China. Archaeologists have recovered fragments of paper at Dunhuang, on the Silk Road, dating to 65 B.C.E!

Zhezhi is the art of paper folding believed to have originated in medieval China.

1. Make the Body

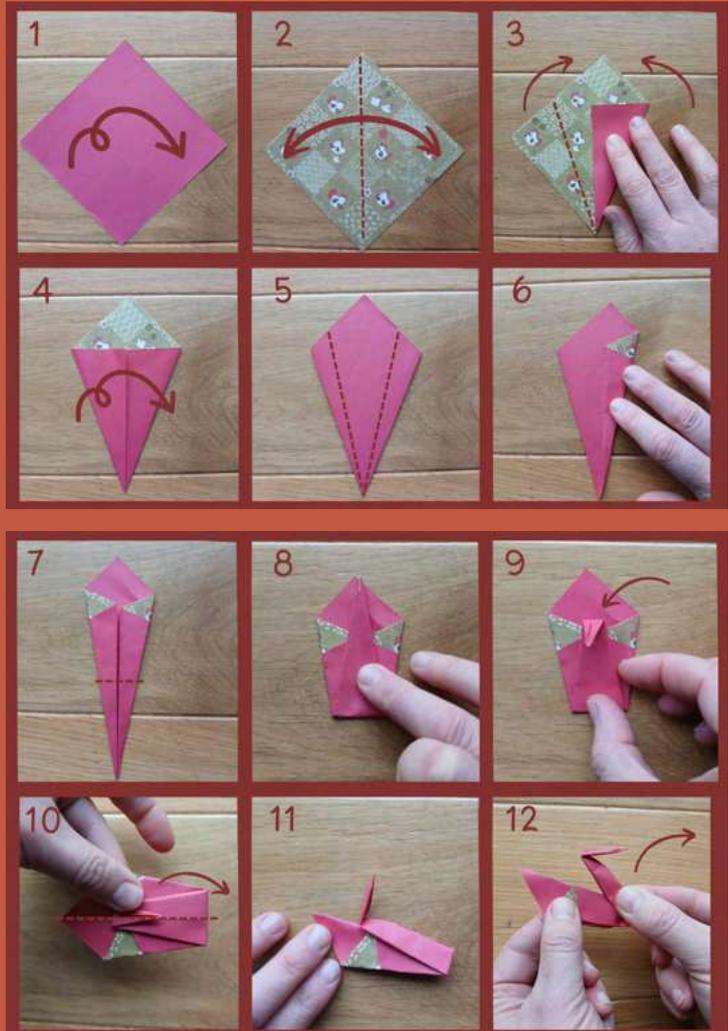
- Fold the paper in half diagonally and unfold (1-2).
- Fold the left and right edges into the middle (3-4).
- Flip over (5).

2. Fold the Head and Neck

- Fold the left and right edges to the middle (6-7).
- Fold the bottom corner up to the top (8).
- Fold down a small section to make the swan's head (9).

3. Finishing Touches

- Fold the top side in half, lengthwise (10-11).
- While holding the bottom pull the swan head and neck up (12).
- Crease the swan's neck in position.
- Use your paper model as a counter so you can swan around the board game!



TOP TIPS



If you can't get hold of origami paper, you can use regular A4 paper. Follow this link to learn [How to Make a Square from Rectangular Paper](#).

RUG SUDOKU

Silk was not the only textile traded along the Silk Roads. Wool was important too. Woven wool was used to make rugs that were highly prized in homes far and wide; and the rug trade could prosper thanks to this ancient network of routes.

Rug weaving already existed in many places. Persian, Oriental, Turkish and Central Asian rugs all had their distinctive style but thanks to the Silk Roads ideas and techniques could be exchanged too. Resulting in a rich tapestry of designs!

This fragment of tapestry (551 CE) was found by archaeologists at the burial site of Astana, on the Silk Road. It has a Sogdian style showing the influence of Iranian culture from the west.

Who were the Sogdians?

An Ancient Iranian people who once lived in an area around present-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. They were great Silk Road traders and flourished from 4th- 8th century CE.



Photo credit: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Astana cemetery was the burial place for many of the inhabitants of the ancient city of Gaochang (modern day Turpan). An oasis stop on the northern route of the Silk Road around the formidable Taklamakan Desert. The regions dry climate and the site's good preservation offers archaeologists a glimpse of how people living along the Silk Roads used textiles as currency.

			4
2			
			2
1			

		2	3
3	1		

2			
	4		
		2	
		1	

GOOD LUCK

Can you solve the sudoku puzzles inside each rug? Numbers 1-4 should be added to each row, column and 2x2 box. Remember each number should only appear once in each.

RELIGION QUIZ

Much more than silk was traded on the Silk Roads. As well as goods, exciting new ideas and inventions were shared. This is how many religious beliefs spread out in all directions. Below are some of the faiths that were practiced along the Silk Roads. Can you match each religion to the correct symbol?

Christianity



Buddhism



Taoism



Zoroastrianism



Hinduism



Judaism



Islam



Why not do your own research. Can you find out more about Zoroastrianism online?

The Dunhuang Caves

Dunhuang was an important cultural crossroads on the Silk Roads. Many religions and languages are represented in the thousands of documents discovered by archaeologists in caves here.

DISCOVER:

Want to know more? Why not check out the [International Dunhuang Project website](#).



FIND THE ODD ONE OUT!

Pilgrims and missionaries spread their beliefs as they travelled. But religion was often more than just about faith, it was about power and politics too. In response to competition many religions began to build impressive monuments and places of worship. Pagodas, stupas and monasteries popped up at locations all along the Silk Roads. Below are 12 temples- can you spot the odd one out?



What is a stupa?

Stupas are Buddhist domed structures used for meditation and to house religious relics.

DISCOVER:

Why not do your own research?
Can you find out more about the Great Sanchi Stupa built in India in C3rd BCE?



Age: 8+
Time:
45 mins

Activity: Make your own mini pagoda with mantra.

You will need
(per person):

x1 small paper bowl
x2 small paper cups
x2 small paper plates (6")
x1 sheet of paper
PVA Glue
Scissors
Pencil
Ink
x1 cuticle stick

TOP
TIPS



- If you have more time, instead of using colourful paper tableware sets, you can use plain versions and decorate them yourself.
- If you can't get hold of aged paper - make some yourself by tea staining some paper beforehand.

What is a pagoda?

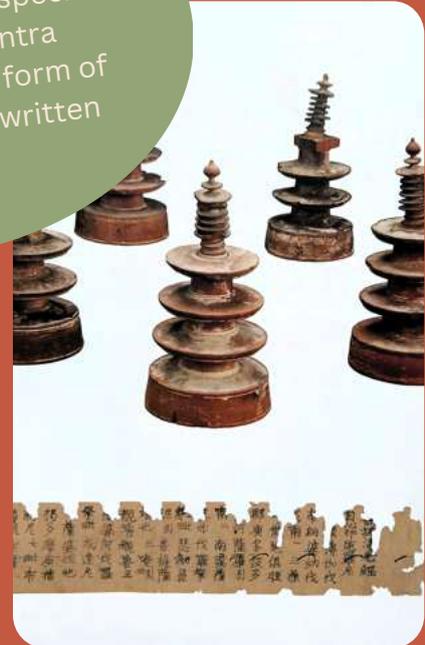
A pagoda is a tiered tower built as a place of worship. Most pagodas are Buddhist temples but some are Muslim mosques or Taoist temples.

What is a mantra?

A mantra is a sound, word or phrase believed to have special spiritual power. A mantra should be repeated as a form of meditation and can be written or chanted.

Before you start

Get inspired! Buddhism spread from India eastwards along the Silk Roads. Between 764-770 CE Empress Shōtōku in Japan, popularised the religion further with her 'One Million Pagodas' project. She commissioned hundreds of thousands of wooden, miniature pagodas (each containing a Buddhist mantra) to be sent across her kingdom. Not only was this a way to spread Buddhism it was also used to legitimise her rule as female emperor.



Miniature pagodas

Photo credit: The British Museum

Activity: Make your own mini pagoda with mantra.

1. Start stacking

Place your paper bowl upside down. This is the base of your pagoda. Next glue x1 paper cup upside down on top of the bowl. Followed by x1 paper plate. Let it dry whilst you complete the next stage.



2. Get your scissors

Cut an opening in your second cup- like a doorway. (This is where you will store your written mantra). Next cut around the rim of your second plate.



3. Continue stacking

Glue the second cup on top of your pagoda to make the next tier. Then add the plate centre. Roll up the plate rim to create the peak and glue to the top of the structure.



4. Write your mantra

Using the ink and cuticle stick write your mantra onto your sheet of paper. Try it in pencil first if you are unsure. You can use the sacred mantra Om (shown below).

*If you wish to try out some Japanese script see our bonus activity on p14. * Let your ink dry.

Why not try chanting the sound 'Om' whilst you write it?

5. Make your own reliquary

Roll up your mantra like a scroll and place it safely into your pagoda.



What is a reliquary?

It is a container for holy relics and texts. Some are portable so that holy items can be moved from place to place.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Write your name in Japanese script

Age: 11+
Time:
30 mins

Katakana is a
women's text developed
around 9th CE in Japan.

You will need
(per person):

- x1 sheet of paper
- Pencil
- Ink
- x1 cuticle stick

Before you start

Japanese consists of three alphabets: Kanji (from the Chinese), Hiragana (a simpler alphabet) and Katakana (which is mostly used to spell foreign names). Use the Katakana system here to write your own name.



Learning a foreign language can be tricky (let alone one that has a totally different alphabet!), so here are a few tips:

- Each character in Japanese represents two letters in English, a consonant and a vowel (e.g. “ni” “mo” “ka”...).
- Some sounds that exist in English do not exist in Japanese (and vice versa), so sometimes it is necessary to adapt and find the closest sound.
- Thinking of the name phonetically rather than trying to translate the name letter by letter makes a lot more sense in Japanese!
- And finally, in Japanese, R and L are the same letter.

	a	i	u	e	o
	アイ	イ	ウ	エ	オ
K	カ	キ	ク	ケ	コ
S	サ	シ	ス	セ	ソ
T	タ	チ	ツ	テ	ト
N	ナ	ニ	ヌ	ネ	ノ
H	ハ	ヒ	フ	ヘ	ホ
M	マ	ミ	ム	メ	モ
Y	ヤ		ユ		ヨ
R	ラ	リ	ル	レ	ロ
W	ワ		ン		ヲ
G	ガ	ギ	グ	ゲ	ゴ
Z	ザ	ジ	ズ	ゼ	ゾ
D	ダ	ヂ	ヅ	デ	ド
B	バ	ビ	ブ	ベ	ボ
P	パ	ピ	プ	ペ	ポ

Recipe: Make halva

Age: 8+
Prep time:
15 mins

Makes 20
small squares

You will need:

120g honey
300g of tahini
4tbs of coconut oil
1 tsp of vanilla essence
1 pinch of salt
Mixing bowl
Wooden spoon
Tupperware/container

Extras (according to taste)

- chopped pistachios
- chopped dates
- pomegranate seeds
- rose petals

Before you start

Get inspired! Halva is a fudgy treat made from a few ingredients. In Arabic “halva” means “sweet”. So why not have a go at making some for yourself? Thanks to the Silk Roads many versions of this recipe exist throughout the Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans, South and Central Asia. And the first written halva recipe dates back to C7th CE Persia!

1. Mix your ingredients

Pour your honey into the mixing bowl. Then add your tahini, coconut oil, vanilla essence and salt. Mix well.

2. Pour into a container

Line a container or tupperware then pour your mixture in.

3. Add your toppings

Choose which toppings you would like to add to your halva - then scatter on top.

4. Refrigerate

Leave to set in the fridge for at least an hour. Once set cut into tasty squares. Keep refrigerated.

IMPORTANT!

Check for allergies and dietary requirements beforehand. This recipe contains sesame seeds and nuts.



enjoy!

This is a non-cook halva. If you have access to a hob and want to make sugar syrup then this is a great recipe to follow:

Middle Eastern Halva Recipe



SILK ROADS WORD SEARCH

Whilst exploring the Silk Roads you may have discovered new places and learnt some new words. Can you find the words listed below in the puzzle on p17?

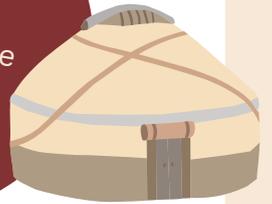
What is celadon?

A Chinese ceramic with jade green glaze. Celadon was highly desired in the medieval world. It was traded along the Silk Roads from China all the way to Syria.



What is a steppe?

A large, flat, grassy plain located in central Asia and eastern Europe. During the Silk Roads the steppe was home to nomads often living in yurts and moving about on horseback.



Remember words can be hidden in all directions!



- BUDDHISM
- STUPA
- KYOTO
- SALT
- CHINA
- GOLD
- JADE
- WORM
- COIN
- LINEN
- MERV
- FUR
- CARAVAN
- ISLAM
- SPICE
- TAOISM
- EXCHANGE
- TRADE
- CULTURE
- SILVER
- SITE
- STEPPE
- PORCELAIN
- WEST
- EAST
- RICE
- SILK
- TOWN
- MOUNTAINS
- MARKET
- SLAVE
- CAMEL
- DOCKS
- CELADON
- MERCHANT
- CONSTANTINOPLE
- OASIS
- DESERT
- TEXTILE



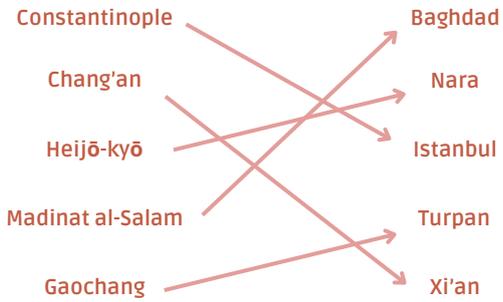
DISCOVER:
Still keen to know more?
Check out the [UNESCO Silk Roads Programme](#).

S	E	V	K	S	I	S	A	O	S	L	A	V	E	C	O
P	C	E	L	A	D	O	N	D	V	F	W	P	O	N	S
I	I	L	M	T	E	X	T	I	L	E	E	N	A	R	B
C	R	P	K	L	I	S	P	R	A	K	S	D	L	E	U
E	J	O	T	K	S	I	T	C	O	T	T	V	D	V	D
O	E	R	U	T	L	U	C	S	A	M	N	O	A	L	D
T	U	C	G	O	A	A	E	N	S	R	K	U	M	I	H
N	I	E	L	W	M	N	T	M	I	O	A	F	O	S	I
A	K	L	A	N	S	I	P	A	M	W	C	V	N	M	S
H	T	A	E	S	N	H	V	R	E	S	N	D	A	B	M
C	R	I	P	O	T	C	L	K	R	S	I	V	L	N	H
R	E	N	P	M	R	K	E	E	V	K	Y	O	T	O	R
E	S	L	E	V	U	A	M	T	L	C	S	R	A	C	G
M	E	N	T	U	F	J	A	D	E	O	A	P	U	T	S
R	D	S	S	N	I	O	C	P	I	D	L	I	N	E	N
E	X	C	H	A	N	G	E	K	E	K	T	E	T	I	S

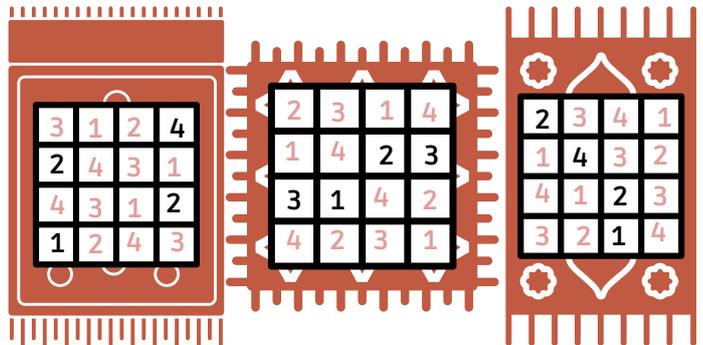
Answers:

Visit us at www.archaeodiscovery.com and follow us on social media!

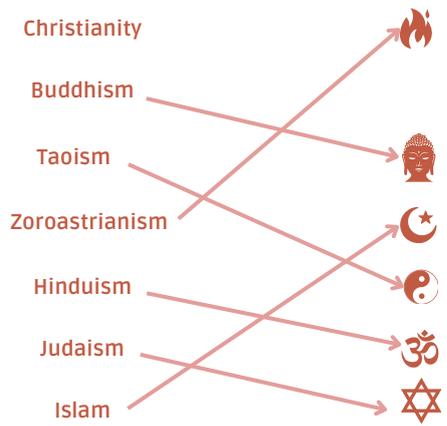
p3



p9



p10



p11



p17

S	E	V	K	S	I	S	A	O	S	L	A	V	E	C	O
P	C	E	L	A	D	O	N	D	V	F	W	P	O	N	S
I	I	L	M	T	E	X	T	I	L	E	E	N	A	R	B
C	R	P	K	L	I	S	P	R	A	K	S	D	L	E	U
E	J	O	T	K	S	I	T	C	O	T	T	V	D	V	D
O	E	R	U	T	L	U	C	S	A	M	N	O	A	L	D
T	U	C	G	O	A	A	E	N	S	R	K	U	M	I	H
N	I	E	L	W	M	N	T	M	I	O	A	F	O	S	I
A	K	L	A	N	S	I	P	A	M	W	C	V	N	M	S
H	T	A	E	S	N	H	V	R	E	S	N	D	A	B	M
C	R	I	P	O	T	C	L	K	R	S	I	V	L	N	H
R	E	N	P	M	R	K	E	E	V	K	Y	O	T	O	R
E	S	L	E	V	U	A	M	T	L	C	S	R	A	C	G
M	E	N	T	U	F	J	A	D	E	O	A	P	U	T	S
R	D	S	S	N	I	O	C	P	I	D	L	I	N	E	N
E	X	C	H	A	N	G	E	K	E	K	T	E	T	I	S



This resource pack was produced to answer the demand by Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) members for more World Archaeology themes (based on the recent YAC Impact Study 2023-24).

It was created by Felicity Thompson and Odile Rouard- co-founders of Archaeodiscovery and Brighton YAC Leaders. The pack is full of activities and ideas based on the Silk Roads theme.

