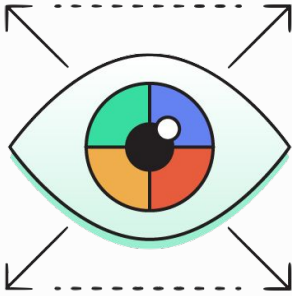


## Formative Assessment:

# Perspective



**Thinking historically means considering how one's personhood has influenced their perspective. It also means recognizing how diverse viewpoints and experiences shape the understanding of historical events. This allows students of history to cultivate empathy for the people of the past that are studied.**

**Directions:** Read the following author context and primary source. Then, answer the questions on perspective that follow. The multiple choice questions for this formative assessment are Weighted Multiple Choice (WMC) Questions. This means that there is only one *incorrect* answer, but the other 3 choices are weighted. The *two best* answers are 2 points, the *next-best* answer is 1 points, and the *incorrect* answer is 0 points.

# Formative Assessment: Perspective

## Author Context:

Marco Polo (1254-1324), a Venetian merchant and explorer, took a famous journey from Europe to China in the 13th century. His travels revealed stark differences between the two civilizations. In Europe, trade and commerce faced significant challenges due to the feudal system. This system meant there were different rules for different regions, which made trade inconsistent. The lack of a centralized authority and inefficient transportation added to the difficulty in establishing reliable trade connections.

In contrast, Polo encountered a more centralized and prosperous political structure in China. It had advanced economic practices, agricultural innovations, and impressive infrastructure, making it a hub for international trade. Polo was amazed by China's wealth, organized trade networks, and sophisticated urban centers, highlighting sharp differences with Europe. These distinctions fascinated Europeans and inspired them to explore and engage in trade with East Asia.

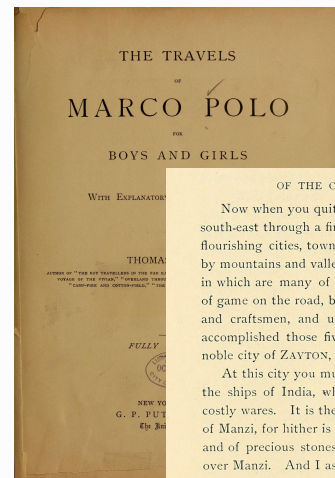
Source: Marco Polo and Rustichello of Pisa, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, Vol. 2. 1299 C.E.

This version was published as: *The Travels of Marco Polo, for Boys and Girls*, edited by Thomas W. Knox, 1885. [Library of Congress](#).

Note: A digital copy of a c. 1350 manuscript of the book is available via the [Library of Congress](#).

## OF THE CITY AND GREAT HAVEN OF ZAYTON\*

At this city you must know is the Haven of Zayton, frequented by all the ships of India, which bring thither spicery and all other kinds of costly wares. It is the port also that is frequented by all the merchants of Manzi [southern China], for hither is imported the most astonishing quantity of goods and of precious stones and pearls, and from this they are distributed all over Manzi. And I assure you that for one shipload of pepper that goes to Alexandria [Egypt] or elsewhere, destined for Christendom, there come a hundred such, aye and more too, to this haven of Zayton; for it is one of the two greatest havens in the world for commerce...



OF THE CITY AND GREAT HAVEN OF ZAYTON.  
Now when you quit Fuju and cross the River, you travel for five days south-east through a fine country, meeting with a constant succession of flourishing cities, towns, and villages, rich in every product. You travel by mountains and valleys and plains, and in some places by great forests in which are many of the trees which give Camphor. There is plenty of game on the road, both of bird and beast. The people are all traders and craftsmen, and under the government of Fuju. When you have accomplished these five days' journey you arrive at the very great and noble city of ZAYTON, which is also subject to Fuju.

At this city you must know is the Haven of Zayton, frequented by all the ships of India, which bring thither spicery and all other kinds of costly wares. It is the port also that is frequented by all the merchants of Manzi, for hither is imported the most astonishing quantity of goods and of precious stones and pearls, and from this they are distributed all over Manzi. And I assure you that for one shipload of pepper that goes to Alexandria or elsewhere, destined for Christendom, there come a hundred such, aye and more too, to this haven of Zayton; for it is one of the two greatest havens in the world for commerce.

The Great Kaan derives a very large revenue from the duties paid in this city and haven; for you must know that on all the merchandize im-

Let me tell you also that in this province there is a town called TYUNJU, where they make vessels of porcelain of all sizes, the finest that can be imagined. They make it nowhere but in that city, and thence it is exported all over the world. Here it is abundant and very cheap, insomuch that for a Venice groat [coin] you can buy three dishes so fine that you could not imagine better.

\*Zayton was the western name for the city of Quanzhou



## Formative Assessment: Perspective

1. Using both the author context and the primary source, select the **two statements** that best demonstrate how the perspective of Marco Polo as a European merchant shaped his description of Quanzhou.
  - A. Polo noted the abundance of spices and luxury goods passing through Quanzhou's port, items that were rare or costly in Europe.
  - B. Polo's identity as a Venetian merchant led him to compare Quanzhou's porcelain prices to a Venetian coin, reflecting how his European commercial background shaped the way he measured value.
  - C. Polo's experience with European trade led him to view Quanzhou's commercial activity as disorganized and inferior to the trade networks he had known in Venice.
  - D. Polo's experience with the difficulties of European trade made him uniquely positioned to appreciate the scale and volume of commerce at Quanzhou's port.

2. Historians evaluate the significance of the attributes of a person to better interpret a source. Using both the author context and the primary source, explain why one of the statements you chose represents a more significant influence on Marco Polo's description of Quanzhou. Cite evidence.



## Formative Assessment: Perspective

- Using both the author context and the primary source, select the **two statements** that best demonstrate how the perspective of Marco Polo as a European merchant shaped his description of Quanzhou.
  - Polo noted the abundance of spices and luxury goods passing through Quanzhou's port, items that were rare or costly in Europe. **(1 point)**
  - Polo's identity as a Venetian merchant led him to compare Quanzhou's porcelain prices to a Venetian coin, reflecting how his European commercial background shaped the way he measured value. **(2 points)**
  - Polo's experience with European trade led him to view Quanzhou's commercial activity as disorganized and inferior to the trade networks he had known in Venice. **(0 points)**
  - Polo's experience with the difficulties of European trade made him uniquely positioned to appreciate the scale and volume of commerce at Quanzhou's port. **(2 points)**

2. Historians evaluate the significance of the attributes of a person to better interpret a source. Using both the author context and the primary source, explain why one of the statements you chose represents a more significant influence on Marco Polo's description of Quanzhou. Cite evidence.

**With properly cited evidence from the primary source and author context, students can successfully make the case that either Choice B or Choice D held more influence on Polo's description of Quanzhou. As referenced in the author context, Polo's identity as a Venetian merchant led him to instinctively compare porcelain prices to a Venetian groat, reflecting how his commercial background shaped the way he measured value. Additionally, his firsthand experience with the difficulties of European trade made him uniquely positioned to appreciate the scale and volume of commerce at Quanzhou's port. Therefore, Choices B and D are worth 2 points. Choice A is supported by the source, but does not clearly connect Polo's European perspective to his description of Quanzhou, and is therefore worth 1 point. Choice C, worth 0 points, is directly contradicted by the source, in which Polo expresses clear admiration for Quanzhou's commercial activity rather than viewing it as inferior to Venice.**



## 1. Weighted Multiple Choice

|                  |                             |                       |                        |
|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Choice 1</b>  | 2 points<br>(Choice B or D) | 1 point<br>(Choice A) | 0 points<br>(Choice C) |
| <b>Choice 2</b>  | 2 points<br>(Choice B or D) | 1 point<br>(Choice A) | 0 points<br>(Choice C) |
| <b>Subtotal:</b> |                             |                       | <b>_____/ 4</b>        |

## 2. Short Answer: More Significant Factor

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| 3 points   | 2 points  | 1 point   | 0 points  |
| Student identifies one choice as a more significant factor and cites clear evidence from both the author context and primary source to justify their choice. | Student identifies one choice as more significant and cites clear evidence from one source to justify their answer. Both sources may be cited, but only one provides clear justification. | Student identifies one choice as more significant and may or may not cite evidence to justify their answer. If evidence is cited, it does not provide clear justification for their choice. | Students does not identify one choice as more significant. Student either misunderstood question or did not attempt to answer it. |
| <b>Subtotal:</b>   |   |   | <b>_____/ 3</b>   |

**Total: \_\_\_\_/7**

