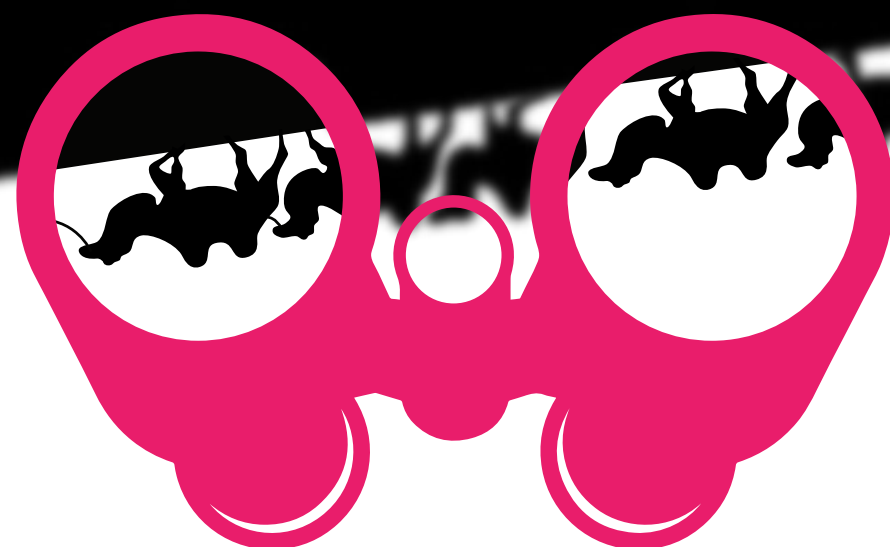


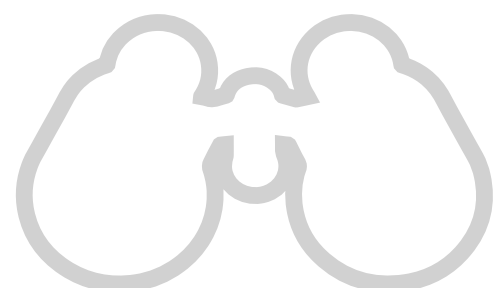
Silk Roads explorers



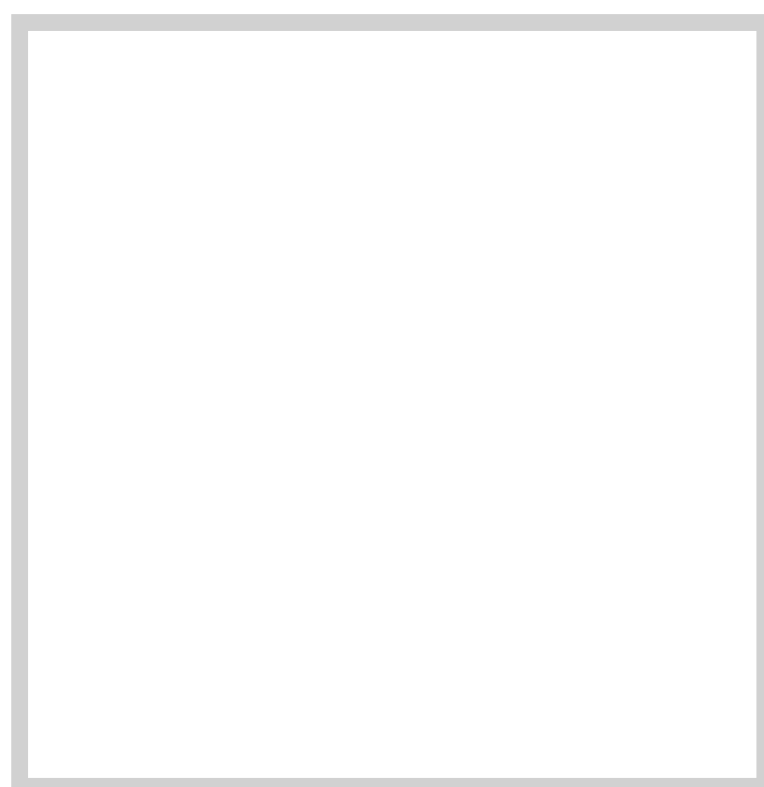
Families
Ages 6+

The British
Museum

Make sure to get your completed
trail stamped at the Families Desk
in the Great Court!



When you get home, use this space
to draw a picture of yourself as a
Silk Roads explorer!



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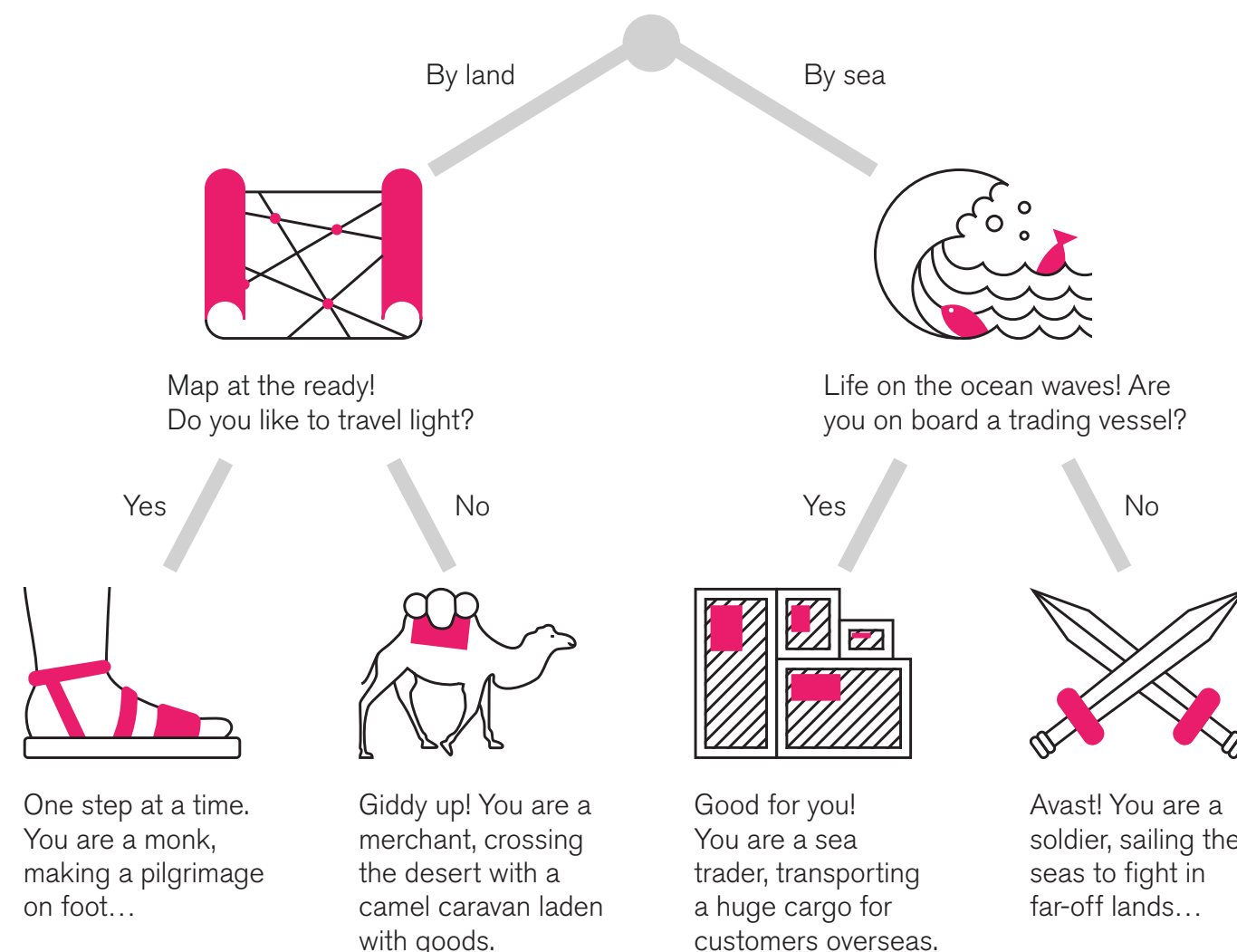
09/2024

The 'Silk Roads' is the name given today to
the different routes that connected peoples
and cultures for thousands of years.

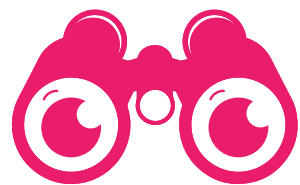
Lots of different kinds of people used them:
travellers, soldiers, monks and traders to name
a few. They moved many things – not just silk –
along these routes, which crossed huge
distances and connected Asia, Africa and
Europe. These journeys shaped the world.

This family trail is designed to be used in the *Silk Roads* exhibition.
Start your journey of discovery and, whatever you find out, enjoy
yourself! Don't forget to collect a Silk Roads explorers stamp at the
end from the Families Desk or Information Desk in the Great Court.

Ready? First, take our Silk Roads explorer test!
Which route will you choose to travel along?



Can you find these objects?



1



Gold cup

This solid gold cup was rescued from the wreck of a ship that sank off the coast of present-day Indonesia more than 1,000 years ago. It was probably on its way to the Middle East from China. The shipwreck shows us how huge cargoes travelled across oceans as well as over land along the Silk Roads. The people shown on each of the cup's eight sides are musicians or dancers, with long hair and billowing robes – it looks like they knew how to have fun on the Silk Roads!

Dance your way to the next object...

3

Head of the Buddha

Religions and ideas moved along the Silk Roads as well as objects. Buddhism spread from ancient India to China and beyond, changing each new society it reached. This Buddha head is from present-day Tajikistan in Central Asia. Buddhists follow the teachings of the Buddha, which means the 'enlightened one'. Meditation, good deeds and kindness are at the heart of these teachings.

Can you think of something nice you could do for someone today?



2



Charred wooden door panel

You might not have heard of them, but the Sogdians were once among the great traders of the Silk Roads. Branching out from their society in present-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in Central Asia, they welcomed a range of different cultures and religions. At the top of the arch of this burnt door, found in the ruins of a royal fortress, is Nana, the supreme goddess of Sogdiana, in her four-armed form. Around her are admiring worshippers and musicians.

Stand with somebody in your group to create your own four-armed god or goddess...

5



Gold coins

These gold coins come from the kingdom of Aksum in Northeast Africa. At its height, Aksum was described as one of the four greatest empires of the world. From its Red Sea ports, it controlled trade to and from both the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean worlds. Aksum was an international kingdom, and we can see this in the way Aksumite kings used Greek alongside their own language, Ge'ez, on their coins.

Look closely, what can you see on the coins?

4



Viking kaftan buttons

As well as travelling east and west, the Silk Roads routes ran north and south. Vikings sailed their longships south from present-day Scandinavia, connecting with rivers in eastern Europe, Russia and Ukraine. These snaking routes were gateways for the Vikings to trade in other parts of the world. They adopted lots of ideas from other cultures, including fighting styles and fashions.

What would you adopt from other cultures along the Silk Roads, or anywhere else?

6



Bone with writing on

Technology, cultures and languages moved along Silk Roads routes, to be taken on and changed by other societies. This cow's shoulder blade was found in al-Andalus in present-day Spain and Portugal, which came under Islamic control soon after AD 711. The new rulers brought their language, Arabic, with them. The bone's smooth, flat surface is carved with letters of the Arabic alphabet, perhaps by someone practising this new language.

Whisper something in another language you might know to someone in your group...

Image credits:

1. Asian Civilisations Museum, Tang Shipwreck Collection.

2. Art and Culture Development Foundation of Uzbekistan, Samarkand State Museum Reserve. Photo: Andrey Arakelyan.

3. State Institution 'National Museum' of the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

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