



# What was the Black Death?

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Social Studies  
Grades 6-8



## Introduction

Students will discover information surrounding the Black Death. Students will investigate the social and economic effects of its spread throughout Asia and Europe. Students will also discuss how it affected the growth of a modern economy.

## Learning Objectives

- Students will describe the Black Death and examine its path across Asia and Europe.
- Students will describe the social and economic effects of the spread of the Black Death.
- Students will evaluate how the Black Death affected the emergence of a modern economy.

## Materials Needed

- Map of Asia and Europe (to display)
- Map of Asia and Europe (one for each student)
- Crayons, colored pencils, highlighters, or markers
- Journals or notebook paper

## Activity

Students will discuss questions pertaining to the Black Death as a class. Students will trace the spread of the disease on maps. Students will construct circles and compare the social and economic effects of the Black Death. To conclude the lesson, students will respond to a short writing prompt about how the Black Death affected the emergence of a modern economy from a technological, agricultural, or banking standpoint.

## Procedure

1. Introduce the Black Death to students. Answer and discuss the following questions with the class:
  - What was it?
  - Where did it start?
  - How did it start?
  - How did the people react to it?
  - How long did it last?
  - When did it end?



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2. Give students a map of Asia and Europe. Display the same map on the board. Show students where the Black Death started in the 1300s in China. Have students color China red using crayons, colored pencils, highlighters, or markers. Slowly, show how the Black Death spread throughout Asia and Europe through trade routes, etc. Use arrows to depict the direction of the disease and shade each country with a different color for variation.
3. Now that students understand what the Black Death was and where it spread, it is time to look at the social and economic impact that it had on society. In journals or notebook paper, ask students to draw two circles. Label the first circle "social" and the second circle "economic." Ask students to gather in small groups. Groups will use technology, textbooks, or teacher-provided materials to research the effects of the Black Death on social life and economic life in Asia and Europe. Groups should fill up each circle with the information that is found.
4. On the board, construct the same two circles as the students. Ask for student volunteers to share information from their circles with the class. Add all relevant information contributed to the appropriate circle on the board. Ask students to add information to their circles if they do not already have it represented. Be sure to discuss and elaborate on each element that is added to the circles.

Social Impacts:	Economic Impacts:
Social isolation	Prices increased (inflation)
Less time with family/friends	Need for workers was high
Lack of funerals	Lack of workers
Faith in God decreased for some	Standard of living was raised

5. To conclude the lesson, students should respond to the following prompt: *Pick one of the following aspects of a modern economy and explain how its emergence was affected by the Black Death: technological, agricultural, or banking improvements.*

## Evaluation

Student learning will be evaluated by his or her response to the short writing prompt. Students should take their newfound knowledge and demonstrate an understanding of how the Black Death affected the emergence of modern technology, agriculture, or banking practices.