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## **The Opium Trade, the Opium War, and the Treaty of Nanjing**

**Purpose:** To analyze the English model of imperialism with regard to China and examine the economic and political impact of trade and conflict between England and China in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

**Grade Level and Subject:** 9th grade World Studies (a required course with students who have a broad range of educational needs)

**Length of Lesson:** 2 50 minute class periods

### **Essential Questions:**

Why was Great Britain interested in trading with China in the 18th and 19th centuries?

What areas of China did Great Britain influence in this time period?

Why did the Chinese discourage contact with foreigners?

What did the Chinese have to gain from trade with the British?

How did an unfavorable balance of trade lead to the British smuggling large amounts of opium into China?

What problems did the growing supply of opium cause for China?

How were Chinese pleas to stop the opium trade received by the British?

What was the nature and outcome of the clash between the British and the Chinese in the Opium War?

What were the terms of the Treaty of Nanjing?

What were the long term results of this interaction between England and China?

### **Materials**

Text

McDougal Littell, *Modern World History: Patterns of Interaction*, McDougal Littell Inc.. (2003)pg. 332- 339.

Primary Source ( in teacher materials for McDougal Littell text -see citation above)

Letter to Queen Victoria from Lin Zexu

Overheads (in teacher materials for McDougal Littell text - see citation above)

Sorting of Cocoons ( Chinese book illustration from early 1800s by unknown artist)

Map of Foreign Influence in China 1850 - 1911

Geography Application: The Opium Wars (in teacher materials for McDougal Littell text - see citation above)

Web site

The British Library Trading Places ( The East India Company and Asia 1600 - 1834)

[www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/trading/home.html](http://www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/trading/home.html)

Teacher Resource

Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, Cambridge University Press. ( 2006) pg. 234 - 241.

## **Activities**

### **Day 1**

Introduction: Large Group Work

1. Project illustration entitled Sorting of Cocoons and explain how China had a self-sufficient economy in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Examine the map and timeline on pg. 332-333 in text and engage class in discussion about:

the size of China

the areas of British influence in China

the date of the British and Chinese clash in the Opium War

2. Use pg. 334 in text to help students look at foreign trade issues from the perspective of a Chinese local government official

Small Group Work

1. Divide students into pairs and have them read a copy of Lin Zexu's Letter to Queen Victoria. The pairs should write a paragraph summarizing why Lin opposed the opium trade.

2. Issue computers to the pairs and have them look at the British Library's web site about Trading Places (the East India Company and Asia 1600 -1834) especially

Foundations of the East India Company

<http://www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/trading/world5.html>

Why China <http://www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/trading/china1.html>

Trade <http://www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/trading/china2.html>

Silk <http://www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/trading/china3.html>

Porcelain <http://www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/trading/china4.html>

Tea <http://www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/trading/china5.html>

Opium <http://www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/trading/china6.html>

Students should make a list of exactly what goods the company wished to trade with the Chinese.

Homework Assignment:

Each student is to read pg. 335 - 339 and complete numbers 1, 2, and 3 for homework.

## **Day 2**

Follow- Up

Do visual cruise of student work to assess whether they completed the previous assignments (paragraph, list, and homework)

Large Group Work

1. Call on students to check understanding of:

Chinese resistance to foreign influence

Chinese self sufficiency

the tea - opium connection

the Opium War of 1839

the terms of the Treaty of Nanjing

2. Write the lesson title on the board. Make two columns on the chalkboard headed "short term effects" and "long term effects". Place cards summarizing the short and long term impacts of the opium trade and Opium War on the chalkboard ledge. Call on individual students to place cards in correct columns. Students should defend placing cards in various spots on the chalkboard.

Suggested wording for cards

Short Term Effects

China suffered a humiliating defeat.

British got control of the island of Hong Kong and five treaty ports were opened to them.

The British made huge profits and enjoyed a favorable balance of trade.

Christian missionaries were given increased privileges in China.  
British were confirmed in their role as a world power.  
The Chinese had to pay the British for the costs of the war.  
Lin Zexu was exiled.

#### Long Term Effects

Millions of Chinese were addicted to opium.  
Political corruption from the opium trade weakened the Chinese government.  
Other countries step into China to take advantage of its weaknesses.  
Chinese suspicion of foreigners increased.  
Humiliated Chinese citizens pressed the government for reforms.

#### Individual Assessment

##### Geography Application: The Opium Wars

Students will read a summary of the British-Chinese interaction in the 17th and 18th century, examine a trade map, and view a chart about the opium trade. Then they will write short responses to specific questions about the summary, map, and chart.

### **9th Grade Social Studies Standards**

#### Economics A

Compare how different economic systems answer the fundamental economic questions of what goods and services to produce, how to produce them and who will consume them.

1. Describe costs and benefits of trade with regard to usage of productive resources

#### Geography A

Analyze the cultural, physical, economic and political characteristics that define regions and describe reasons that regions change over time.

2. Explain how differing points of view play a role in conflicts over territory and resources.

3. Explain how political and economic conditions, resources, geographic locations and cultures have contributed to cooperation and conflict.

#### History C

Analyze the reasons that countries gained control of territory through imperialism and the impact on people living in the territory that was controlled.

4. Describe the political, economic, and social roots of imperialism.

5. Analyze the perspectives of the colonizers and the colonized concerning:  
political systems  
natural resources

6. Explain the global impact of imperialism including political and social reform in China

#### People in Societies B

Analyze the consequences of oppression, discrimination and conflict between cultures

2. Analyze the results of political, economic, and social oppression and the violation of human rights including:  
the exploitation of indigenous peoples

#### People in Societies C

Analyze the ways that contacts between people of different cultures result in exchanges of cultural practices.

3. Explain how advances in communication and transportation have impacted cooperation and conflict