MAIN IDEAS

1 Government The Mongols built a vast empire stretching from Europe to China.

2 Government The Mongols kept some features of the Chinese form of government but did not let Chinese officials have important jobs.

3 Economics The Mongols encouraged and increased trade and foreign contacts.

TAKING NOTES

Reading Skill: Explaining Chronological Order and Sequence
Ordering events in the correct chronological order can help you see how they are related. As you read about Mongol China, record major events on a time line like the one shown below.

▲ Mongol Passport The Mongols issued passports for officials on government business in other countries or for important foreign visitors. The passport stated that the bearer was protected by the emperor.

CALIFORNIA STANDARDS

7.3.3 Analyze the influences of Confucianism and changes in Confucian thought during the Song and Mongol periods.

7.3.4 Understand the importance of both overland trade and maritime expeditions between China and other civilizations in the Mongol Ascendancy and the Ming Dynasty.

CST 2 Construct various time lines of key events, people, and periods of the historical era they are studying.

Framework Foreign merchants such as Marco Polo were given special privileges and high office.
The Mongol Empire

Build on What You Know  As you read in Lesson 1, nomads from the north invaded China when the Han Dynasty fell. In the 1200s, outsiders once again invaded China. This time, the invaders were the Mongols.

The Mongol Invasion

ESSENTIAL QUESTION  How did the Mongols build a vast empire that stretched from Europe to China?

The Mongols were fierce nomadic warriors who lived in the vast plains to the northwest of China. In the 1200s, they invaded and conquered China.

A Great Leader  The Mongols lived in independent family groups called clans. These clans were joined together into several tribes, which were independent of each other. But around 1206 a strong leader named Temujin (TEHM•yuh•juhn) united the Mongol tribes. He fought and defeated all his rivals for leadership one by one. By doing so he became the khan, or ruler, of all the Mongols. He took the name **Genghis Khan** (JEHNG•gihs KAHN), which means “universal ruler.” Genghis organized the Mongol warriors into a mighty fighting force and began a campaign of conquest. He invaded northern China, then moved west across Central Asia.

Throughout history, nomadic people often had a military advantage against settled people. Settled people tried to defend their cities and towns. Nomads, however, moved quickly, looked for weak spots, attacked, and moved on. This helped them succeed at war. By 1221, the Mongols had conquered all of Central Asia.

**Mongol Warrior**  In this Persian painting from the 15th century, a Mongol warrior prepares to do battle. Stirrups allowed the warrior to stand and use both hands to fight.
The Mongol Empire  When Genghis died in 1227, his son, Ogadai (OH•goh•DAY), took power. Ogadai captured the rest of northern China. He also extended Mongol rule as far west as Russia and Persia. The Mongol Empire was divided into four large parts called khanates. A different descendant of Genghis ruled each part. **Kublai Khan** (KOO•blee KAHN), Genghis’s grandson, took power in the Chinese part of the empire in 1260. At that time, southern China was still under Song control. Kublai’s forces finally defeated the Song in 1279. The Mongols now controlled all of China and would rule until 1368.

**REVIEW** What regions did the Mongol leaders conquer?
Mongol Government

**Essential Question** What features of the Chinese form of government did the Mongols adopt?

Kublai Khan was the first ruler in 300 years to control all of China. The Mongols were also the first foreign power to rule China. Kublai ruled China for 15 years and died in 1294.

**Learning to Rule** The Mongols did not have much experience with government. The Chinese, on the other hand, had a long history of organized government. So Kublai kept many aspects of Chinese rule. He built his capital at Beijing in traditional Chinese style and declared himself emperor. He also founded a new dynasty—the Yuan (Yoo•ahn) Dynasty. These steps were familiar to the Chinese and made it easier for Kublai to control China.

**Maintaining Control** Kublai kept features of the Chinese form of government, but he made sure that the Chinese politicians didn’t gain too much power. He did this to keep control of China in Mongol hands. He ended the civil-service examination system for choosing officials. Instead, he gave the important government jobs to Mongols or to trusted foreigners. Chinese officials were given only minor jobs with little or no power.

Even so, the influence of Confucian thought remained strong during Mongol rule. Mongol officials adopted Confucian approaches to government. In addition, Kublai appointed Confucian scholars to educate the sons of the Mongol nobility.

Despite differences with the Chinese, Kublai Khan was a capable leader. He worked to rebuild China after years of warfare. He restored the Grand Canal and extended it 135 miles north to Beijing. And he built a paved highway that connected Beijing and Hangzhou. These land and water routes allowed for easy travel between north and south. He also made changes that helped promote trade and contacts with the rest of the world.

**REVIEW** How did the Mongols maintain control of China?

Opening China to the World

**Essential Question** How did the Mongols encourage trade?

During Kublai Khan’s rule, China became more open to the outside world. The Mongols developed a thriving sea trade and welcomed visitors from foreign lands.
Trade Routes  One way that the Mongols encouraged trade was by making trade routes safer. In the past, China sometimes closed overland trade routes because of warfare and banditry. Now, the Mongols controlled all of Central Asia. This period of Mongol control is known as the Mongol Ascendancy. Mongol control made overland travel safe.

Caravans moved along the Silk Roads, ancient trade routes stretching from China to the Black Sea. (See the map on page 234.) Merchants took silks, porcelain, tea, and other goods to western Asia and Europe. The merchants brought back new foods, plants, and minerals. The Mongols also encouraged sea trade. Ships crossed the Indian Ocean and South China Sea to reach Chinese ports such as Guangzhou (gwahng•joh) and Fuzhou (foo•joh). There, merchants did a lively trade in goods from both East and West.

Foreign Contacts  Trade brought increased contact with foreign peoples and cultures. People from Arabia, Persia, and India frequently visited Mongol China. Even missionaries and diplomats from as far away as Europe made the long trip. These visitors helped tell the rest of the world about Chinese civilization.

The most famous European visitor during this period was Marco Polo. Polo was a young trader from Venice, Italy. He traveled
the Silk Roads to China with his father and uncle. He arrived around 1275 and stayed for 17 years. Polo became an assistant to Kublai Khan and traveled throughout China on government missions. He later published a book about his adventures. Polo’s book was a great success, but many Europeans found his vivid descriptions of China hard to believe. (See Primary Source Handbook, page R49.) In the next lesson you will learn how the Chinese overthrew the Mongols.

**REVIEW** How did the Mongols promote Chinese contact with the rest of the world?

**Lesson Summary**
- The Mongols built an enormous empire stretching from China to Europe.
- The Mongols adopted some features of the Chinese style of government.
- The Mongols increased foreign trade, especially along the Silk Roads to Western markets.

**Why It Matters Now . . .**
The contacts between Mongol China and the Arab and Western worlds spread important ideas and trade goods. Because of this, many Chinese inventions can be found worldwide today.

**Terms & Names**
1. Explain the importance of
   - Genghis Khan
   - Mongol Ascendancy
   - Kublai Khan
   - Marco Polo

**Using Your Notes**
Explaining Chronological Order and Sequence Use your completed time line to answer the following question:
2. What were the main events of the Mongol conquest of China? (CST 2)

**Main Ideas**
3. How did the Mongols gain power? (7.3.3)
4. How did the Mongols control China’s government? (7.3.3)
5. What was the Mongol policy toward trade and foreign contacts? (7.3.4)

**Critical Thinking**
6. Making Inferences Why do you think Kublai Khan did not want Chinese to fill important government jobs? (7.3.3)
7. Forming and Supporting Opinions Was Mongol rule good or bad for China? Explain your opinion. (7.3.3)

**Internet Activity** Use the Internet to research the inventions that Marco Polo brought back from China. Create a poster showing these inventions. Write captions for the inventions pictured. (7.3.3)

**INTERNET KEYWORDS:** Marco Polo, inventions