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Part 1: Careful Reading

Reading Passage 1: Globalization and Its Impact on Local Cultures

Reading (50 minutes)



Globalization, a multifaceted phenomenon characterized by the increasing interconnectedness and interdependence of countries through the exchange of goods, services, information, ideas, and people, has become an undeniable force shaping the contemporary world. Driven by advancements in technology, communication, transportation, and the liberalization of trade policies, its tendrils reach into nearly every aspect of human existence, from economic structures to political landscapes, and, most pertinently for this discussion, to the diverse tapestry of local cultures. The impact of globalization on these cultures is a subject of intense debate, presenting a complex interplay of opportunities for enrichment and threats of erosion.

One of the most frequently cited positive impacts of globalization is the unprecedented level of cultural exchange it facilitates. As barriers to communication and travel diminish, individuals and communities are exposed to a wider array of cultural expressions, traditions, and perspectives than ever before. This can lead to a "cosmopolitan consciousness," a term coined by sociologist Ulf Hannerz, where individuals develop a greater appreciation for cultural diversity and a more nuanced understanding of the world. The global flow of music, film, literature, and art can inspire local artists and creators, leading to innovative hybrid forms that blend local traditions with international influences, thereby enriching both. For instance, the rise of "world music" genres often involves local musicians incorporating global sounds and technologies while retaining the essence of their indigenous musical heritage.

Furthermore, globalization can empower local cultures by providing them with new platforms and audiences. The internet and social media, in particular, have enabled marginalized communities and indigenous groups to share their stories, advocate for their rights, and preserve their cultural heritage on a global stage. Artisan cooperatives in remote villages can now market their unique crafts directly to international consumers, bypassing traditional intermediaries and potentially reaping greater economic benefits. This direct engagement can foster a sense of pride and economic viability, which are crucial for cultural survival. Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai refers to these globalized cultural flows as "scapes" – ethnoscaping, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, and ideoscapes – which interact in complex ways to produce new cultural forms and identities, not always dominated by a single hegemonic power.

However, the narrative of globalization's impact on local cultures is not unequivocally positive. A significant concern revolves around the concept of cultural homogenization, often described as "cultural imperialism" or "McDonaldization." This perspective argues that the pervasive influence of dominant global cultures, primarily Western (and often American), can overwhelm and dilute local traditions, languages, and values. The global proliferation of fast-food chains, blockbuster movies, and standardized consumer goods may lead to a "global monoculture," where unique local customs are replaced by

standardized, internationally recognized norms and products. Linguist Tove Skutnabb-Kangas has extensively documented the threat to linguistic diversity, noting that globalization often accelerates the decline of minority languages as global languages like English become dominant in commerce, education, and media. This linguistic erosion can mean the loss of unique worldviews and knowledge systems embedded within those languages.

The economic dimensions of globalization can also exert considerable pressure on local cultures. The influx of cheap, mass-produced goods can undermine local industries and traditional crafts, leading to a loss of livelihoods and the skills associated with them. Moreover, the integration of local economies into the global market can make them vulnerable to international economic fluctuations and corporate practices that may not prioritize local cultural preservation. Sociologist George Ritzer's concept of "grobalization" (growth-oriented globalization) emphasizes the imperialistic ambitions of nations, corporations, and organizations to impose themselves on various geographic areas, often at the expense of local particularities. This can manifest in the tourism industry, where the drive to attract international tourists might lead to the "commodification" or "Disneyfication" of culture, where sacred rituals or authentic traditions are transformed into superficial performances for tourist consumption, thereby stripping them of their original meaning and context.

The media plays a crucial role in this dynamic. Global media conglomerates, with their vast resources and reach, often disseminate content that reflects the values and lifestyles of their countries of origin. While this can offer entertainment and information, it can also contribute to the marginalization of local narratives and perspectives. Young people, in particular, may be more inclined to adopt global youth culture, sometimes perceiving their own local traditions as "old-fashioned" or "irrelevant." This creates a generational disconnect and can weaken the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge, a process vital for the continuity of any culture. As scholar Herbert Schiller argued, the seemingly neutral flow of media and cultural products often carries with it an underlying ideological agenda that promotes consumerism and Western cultural norms.

In response to these pressures, various strategies of cultural resistance and adaptation have emerged. Many communities are actively engaged in efforts to preserve and revitalize their cultural heritage. This can take the form of language nests for children, cultural festivals, the documentation of oral traditions, and the promotion of local arts and crafts. Some scholars, like Roland Robertson, have introduced the concept of "glocalization," suggesting that global forces and products are often not just passively received but are actively interpreted, adapted, and modified to fit local cultural contexts. For example, McDonald's offers different menu items in various countries to cater to local tastes (e.g., McSpicy Paneer in India). This suggests a two-way process where the global is localized, and the local is, in turn, shaped by global influences, leading to new hybrid cultural forms rather than outright homogenization.

Another adaptive response is the rise of cultural hybridity, where elements from different cultures are blended to create new, unique expressions. This is not merely a superficial mixing but can involve a deeper integration of values, practices, and identities. Think of fusion cuisine, Spanglish, or the syncretic religious practices found in many parts of the world. Homi Bhabha's work on hybridity emphasizes the "third space" that emerges from cultural encounters, a space of negotiation and transformation where new cultural meanings are forged. This perspective challenges the binary notion of globalization as either purely destructive or purely beneficial, highlighting the agency of local cultures in navigating and responding to global influences.

The role of education and policy is also critical. Educational systems can play a vital role in fostering cultural literacy, promoting local languages and histories, and encouraging critical engagement with global media. Government policies can support cultural industries, protect intellectual property rights associated with traditional knowledge, and create frameworks that encourage cultural diversity rather than assimilation. UNESCO's Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) is an example of an international effort to affirm the rights of nations to maintain and promote their cultural policies in the face of globalization.

However, the path is not always clear-cut. Dr. Ananya Sharma's (2021) study on indigenous artisan communities in Southeast Asia revealed a paradox: while global market access provided economic upliftment, the demand for standardized products for export often led to a simplification of traditional designs and techniques, a subtle form of cultural erosion driven by market forces rather than overt cultural imposition. This highlights the "double-edged sword" nature of globalization – what empowers in one aspect might diminish in another. Sharma terms this phenomenon "market-driven simplification," where the intricacies of cultural expression are pared down to meet perceived global consumer preferences for easily digestible or replicable items.

Ultimately, the impact of globalization on local cultures is a dynamic and ongoing process, characterized by tensions, negotiations, and transformations. It is not a simple story of domination versus resistance, but a complex interplay of forces where local agency, historical context, economic pressures, and technological mediation all play significant roles. While the risks of cultural homogenization and loss are real and warrant serious attention, the potential for cultural exchange, revitalization, and the creation of new hybrid forms also offers a more optimistic, albeit nuanced, perspective. The challenge lies in fostering a form of globalization that respects and promotes cultural diversity, allowing local cultures not just to survive, but to thrive and contribute to a richer global human experience. This requires a conscious effort from individuals, communities, and institutions to navigate the complexities of an interconnected world with wisdom and foresight.


Questions for Passage 1

1. Based on the context in the passage, what does the phrase "cosmopolitan consciousness" in paragraph 2 primarily imply?

- A. A preference for foreign goods over local ones.
 - B. An increased awareness and appreciation of diverse cultures.
 - C. The loss of one's own cultural identity due to global influences.
 - D. A political stance favoring global governance.
-

2. Consider the following case: A remote Amazonian tribe uses a satellite internet connection to create a website showcasing their unique weaving patterns and oral histories, selling digital prints of their artwork to a global audience.

According to which one of Appadurai's "scapes" mentioned in paragraph 3 is this tribe primarily leveraging to share their culture?

- A. Ethnoscapes
 - B. Mediascapes and Technoscapes
 - C. Finanscapes
 - D. Ideoscapes
- 
-

3. The author mentions "fast-food chains, blockbuster movies, and standardized consumer goods" in paragraph 4 primarily to illustrate...

- A. the economic benefits that globalization brings to local communities.
 - B. examples of successful cultural exchange programs.
 - C. the vehicles through which cultural homogenization can occur.
 - D. the technological advancements driving globalization.
 - E. the diversity of products available due to globalization.
-

4. What term discussed in paragraph 5 describes the phenomenon where authentic cultural practices are altered into simplified spectacles for tourists, losing their original significance?

5. Herbert Schiller (paragraph 6) would most likely argue that the global spread of Western television shows...

- A. is a neutral process offering diverse entertainment choices.
 - B. primarily benefits local television producers by inspiring new content.
 - C. can subtly promote consumerism and Western cultural values.
 - D. is essential for fostering global understanding and peace.
 - E. has little to no impact on local cultural preferences.
-

6. According to the concept of "glocalization" discussed by Roland Robertson in paragraph 7, which of the following is most likely to happen when a global product enters a local market?

- A. The local market will completely reject the global product.
 - B. The global product will entirely replace local alternatives.
 - C. The global product will be adapted to suit local preferences and contexts.
 - D. The local culture will remain completely unchanged by the global product.
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7. According to Dr. Ananya Sharma's study (paragraph 10), what was the "paradox" faced by indigenous artisan communities in Southeast Asia?

8. Based on the discussion of Homi Bhabha's work in paragraph 8, "hybridity" is presented as a process that...

- A. inevitably leads to the complete erosion of one of the interacting cultures.
 - B. results in a superficial mixing of cultural elements without deep change.
 - C. creates a new space for negotiation and the formation of new cultural meanings.
 - D. is primarily driven by economic forces and market demands.
-

9. According to the text, which of the following is NOT explicitly mentioned as a strategy for cultural preservation or adaptation in response to globalization?

- A. Language nests for children.
- B. Complete isolation from global influences.
- C. Promotion of local arts and crafts.
- D. Government policies supporting cultural industries.
- E. Documentation of oral traditions.

Read paragraphs 4, 5, 7, and 10 in the text again. Each short text given below provides support for or an example of the main idea of ONE of the paragraphs. Match each short text with the correct paragraph and write the paragraph NUMBER in the blank given. There is an extra paragraph number in the box which is not related to any of the short texts.

paragraph 4 paragraph 5 paragraph 7 paragraph 10

10. A small community in the Scottish Highlands, known for its traditional wool sweaters, finds its local knitters struggling to compete with large factories in Asia producing similar-looking garments at a fraction of the cost. Many younger community members are no longer learning the craft, leading to fears that this centuries-old skill will die out.

11. Starbucks in Japan offers a "Sakura Blossom Latte" during cherry blossom season, and in India, it features menu items like the "Tandoori Paneer Roll," blending its global brand with distinct local culinary traditions to appeal to regional customers.

12. A recent survey among teenagers in several non-Western countries revealed that a majority prefer Hollywood action films and American pop music over locally produced movies and traditional music genres, citing the global media as more "exciting" and "modern."

Answer Key: Careful Reading: Globalization and Its Impact on Local Cultures

1. **B. An increased awareness and appreciation of diverse cultures.**

Explanation: Paragraph 2 states, "This can lead to a 'cosmopolitan consciousness,' a term coined by sociologist Ulf Hannerz, where individuals develop a greater appreciation for cultural diversity and a more nuanced understanding of the world." This directly supports option B.

2. **B. Mediascapes and Technoscapes**

Explanation: Paragraph 3 mentions Appadurai's "scapes." The tribe is using the internet (technoscape) to create a website (mediascape) to showcase their culture. While ethnoscap (movement of people) might be indirectly related, mediascapes (flow of images and information) and technoscapes (flow of technology) are directly applicable to using a website and internet.

3. **C. the vehicles through which cultural homogenization can occur.**

Explanation: Paragraph 4 discusses cultural homogenization and states, "The global proliferation of fast-food chains, blockbuster movies, and standardized consumer goods may lead to a 'global monoculture,' where unique local customs are replaced by standardized, internationally recognized norms and products." These items are examples of how dominant cultures spread.

4. **Commodification (or Disneyfication) of culture**

Explanation: Paragraph 5 states: "...the drive to attract international tourists might lead to the 'commodification' or 'Disneyfication' of culture, where sacred rituals or authentic traditions are transformed into superficial performances for tourist consumption..."

5. **C. can subtly promote consumerism and Western cultural values.**

Explanation: Paragraph 6 discusses Herbert Schiller's view: "As scholar Herbert Schiller argued, the seemingly neutral flow of media and cultural products often carries with it an underlying ideological agenda that promotes consumerism and Western cultural norms." This aligns directly with option C.

6. **C. The global product will be adapted to suit local preferences and contexts.**

Explanation: Paragraph 7 explains "glocalization" as a process where "global forces and products are often not just passively received but are actively interpreted, adapted, and modified to fit local cultural contexts." The example of McDonald's adapting its menu illustrates this.

7. **Economic upliftment through global market access came at the cost of simplification of traditional designs/techniques (or market-driven simplification).**

Explanation: Paragraph 10 states: "Dr. Ananya Sharma's (2021) study on indigenous artisan communities in Southeast Asia revealed a paradox: while global market access provided

economic upliftment, the demand for standardized products for export often led to a simplification of traditional designs and techniques, a subtle form of cultural erosion..."

8. **C. creates a new space for negotiation and the formation of new cultural meanings.**

Explanation: Paragraph 8 describes Homi Bhabha's work: "Homi Bhabha's work on hybridity emphasizes the 'third space' that emerges from cultural encounters, a space of negotiation and transformation where new cultural meanings are forged."

9. **B. Complete isolation from global influences.**

Explanation: Paragraph 7 mentions language nests, cultural festivals (implicitly promoting arts/crafts), and documentation of oral traditions. Paragraph 9 mentions government policies. While resistance is mentioned, "complete isolation" is not presented as a viable or explicitly mentioned strategy; rather, adaptation, glocalization, and hybridity are discussed as responses.

10. **Paragraph 5**

Explanation: This scenario describes local artisans being unable to compete with cheap, mass-produced goods, leading to a loss of traditional skills and livelihoods, which is a key theme of paragraph 5 ("The economic dimensions of globalization can also exert considerable pressure on local cultures. The influx of cheap, mass-produced goods can undermine local industries and traditional crafts...").

11. **Paragraph 7**

Explanation: This is a clear example of "glocalization," where a global company (Starbucks) adapts its products to local tastes, as discussed in paragraph 7 ("For example, McDonald's offers different menu items in various countries to cater to local tastes...This suggests a two-way process where the global is localized...").

12. **Paragraph 4**

Explanation: This scenario illustrates the concern of cultural homogenization driven by dominant global media, where youth prefer foreign cultural products over local ones, fitting the description in paragraph 4 ("This perspective argues that the pervasive influence of dominant global cultures...can overwhelm and dilute local traditions...The global proliferation of...blockbuster movies...may lead to a 'global monoculture'"). Paragraph 6 also discusses media influence on youth, but paragraph 4 directly addresses the homogenization aspect through such products.

Part 2: Search Reading

Reading Passage 2: Marco Polo: Bridging East and West Through Exploration

Reading (45 minutes)



Marco Polo (1254-1324) stands as one of history's most renowned explorers, a Venetian merchant whose epic journey to the East and subsequent accounts captivated Europe and profoundly shaped its understanding of Asia. His book, "The Travels of Marco Polo" (originally "Livre des Merveilles du Monde," or "Book of the Marvels of the World"), provided Europeans with their first detailed glimpse into the mysterious and distant lands of China, Persia, India, and other Asian territories. While controversies surround some of his claims, his narrative undeniably fueled Europe's imagination, influenced cartography, and inspired future generations of explorers, including Christopher Columbus.

Born in Venice, a thriving maritime republic and a key hub for trade between Europe and the Levant, Marco Polo hailed from a family of merchants. His father, Niccolò Polo, and his uncle, Maffeo Polo, were experienced traders who had already ventured deep into Asia before Marco's famed journey. They had traveled to the court of Kublai Khan, the Mongol Emperor who had conquered China and established the Yuan Dynasty. The Khan, intrigued by their accounts of European life and Christianity, had expressed a desire to learn more and requested that the Polos return with a hundred learned men and holy oil from the lamp at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

In 1271, when Marco was just 17 years old, he embarked on his momentous journey with his father and uncle. Their mission was to fulfill Kublai Khan's request, though they were ultimately unable to gather the hundred scholars. Their overland trek was arduous and perilous, traversing vast deserts, scaling towering mountain ranges like the Pamirs, and navigating through territories often fraught with bandits and political instability. They passed through lands such as Armenia, Persia, Afghanistan, and the Gobi Desert. The journey took approximately three and a half to four years, a testament to their resilience and determination in an era devoid of modern transportation and communication.

Upon their arrival at Kublai Khan's summer palace in Shangdu (also known as Xanadu) around 1275, the Polos were warmly received. Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, was a powerful and intellectually curious ruler. He was particularly impressed by the young Marco Polo's intelligence, linguistic abilities (he reportedly learned several languages, including Mongolian and possibly some Chinese dialects, though this is debated), and keen observational skills. Marco quickly gained the Khan's favor and was appointed to various positions within the Mongol administration.

For the next 17 years, Marco Polo served Kublai Khan in various capacities. He undertook numerous missions and diplomatic assignments to different parts of the vast Mongol Empire, including regions of China that were previously unknown or only rumored in Europe, such as Yunnan, Tibet, and Burma (modern-day Myanmar). His duties often involved reporting on the conditions, customs, and resources of these territories. These travels provided him with unparalleled opportunities to observe the diverse cultures, advanced technologies, and immense wealth of the East. He noted the efficient Mongol

postal system, the use of paper money (a novelty to Europeans), the production of silk and porcelain, the burning of coal for fuel, and the elaborate infrastructure of cities like Kinsay (modern Hangzhou), which he described as one of the grandest and most beautiful cities in the world.

Marco Polo's descriptions in "The Travels" covered a wide array of subjects. He detailed the geography of Asia, the flora and fauna, the social customs, religious practices (including Buddhism, Hinduism, and Nestorian Christianity), political structures, and economic activities of the lands he visited. He wrote of exotic spices, precious gems, and magnificent palaces. Some accounts, like the existence of "black stones" (coal) that burned, or creatures like crocodiles (which he may have described as giant serpents), seemed fantastical to his European contemporaries but were often based on real observations, albeit sometimes embellished or misinterpreted through the lens of his own cultural understanding. He also described the military might of the Mongols and the splendor of Kublai Khan's court, painting a picture of an empire far more sophisticated and powerful than any in Europe at the time. His accounts of the organized bureaucracy and infrastructure were particularly striking.

After nearly two decades in the Khan's service, the Polos desired to return to Venice. Kublai Khan was initially reluctant to let them leave, as he valued their service, especially Marco's. However, an opportunity arose in 1292 when they were tasked with escorting a Mongol princess, Kököchin, to Persia, where she was to marry Arghun Khan, the Ilkhan of Persia. This journey was primarily by sea, a perilous voyage that took them through the South China Sea, past Sumatra, Sri Lanka, and along the coast of India, eventually reaching the Persian Gulf. The sea voyage was fraught with danger; many of the original party perished due to storms and disease, but the Polos and the princess survived.

The Polos finally arrived back in Venice in 1295, after an absence of 24 years. They were reportedly laden with riches and jewels acquired during their travels, sewn into the linings of their coats. Initially, their relatives had presumed them dead and struggled to recognize these weathered travelers. The stories of their adventures were met with a mixture of awe and disbelief. The term "million," previously not in common parlance, was said to have become associated with Marco Polo (as "Il Milione") due to his frequent use of the number to describe the vast wealth and populations of the East.

Marco Polo's life took another turn a few years after his return. Around 1298, during a naval conflict between Venice and its rival, Genoa, Marco Polo was captured and imprisoned in Genoa. It was during this imprisonment, lasting about a year, that he dictated his experiences to a fellow prisoner, Rustichello da Pisa, a writer of romances. Rustichello, it is believed, may have embellished Marco's straightforward accounts with some of the more romantic or exaggerated elements found in the book to make it more appealing to the literary tastes of the time. This collaboration resulted in the manuscript

that would become "The Travels of Marco Polo." The book was initially written in Old French, the literary language of the time for such narratives.

Upon his release and return to Venice, Marco Polo married, had three daughters, and lived the rest of his life as a relatively wealthy merchant. He died in 1324 and was buried in the Church of San Lorenzo in Venice. Even on his deathbed, he was reportedly urged by friends and family to retract the more "fabulous" stories from his book. His famous reply, according to legend, was, "I have not told half of what I saw."

The impact of "The Travels of Marco Polo" was profound and multifaceted, though not immediate. Initially, many readers dismissed it as a collection of tall tales or fables. However, as manuscript copies circulated and were translated into various European languages, its influence grew. Geographers and cartographers, such as Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli, used Polo's descriptions to create more accurate maps of Asia, significantly expanding Europe's geographical knowledge. Christopher Columbus owned a copy of the book and made extensive annotations in it, suggesting it played a role in inspiring his westward voyages in search of a route to the Indies. The book revealed the existence of advanced civilizations in the East, challenging Eurocentric views and stimulating an interest in trade and exploration.

Despite its significance, "The Travels of Marco Polo" has been a subject of scholarly debate and controversy for centuries. Some historians and critics have questioned the veracity of his accounts, pointing to omissions such as the Great Wall of China, foot-binding, or the Chinese use of tea, which a long-term resident might be expected to mention. Others have doubted whether he actually reached China, suggesting he might have compiled his stories from Persian merchants or other travelers he met further west. The accuracy of distances, place names, and the extent of his personal involvement in Mongol administration have also been scrutinized.

However, proponents argue that many of Polo's descriptions have been corroborated by Chinese historical records and archaeological findings. The omissions can be explained: the Great Wall, as it is known today, was largely a Ming Dynasty construction, built after Polo's time; foot-binding was not universally practiced or might have been confined to certain classes or regions he did not extensively interact with in that specific context; and tea drinking, while prevalent, might not have struck him as uniquely noteworthy compared to other marvels. Furthermore, his descriptions of Mongol customs, court life, and specific events align with other contemporary sources. The very detail and scope of his observations across such a vast and diverse territory are considered by many to be strong evidence of his firsthand experiences. Modern scholarship, including the work of historians like Frances Wood (a skeptic) and Hans Ulrich Vogel (who found Polo's descriptions of salt production and currency remarkably accurate), continues to explore these complexities.

Regardless of the ongoing debates, Marco Polo's journey and his book remain a pivotal moment in the history of East-West interaction. He served as a crucial bridge, transmitting knowledge and sparking curiosity that transcended geographical and cultural barriers. His narrative, whether entirely factual or partly embellished, opened a window to a world previously shrouded in mystery for Europeans, fostering an age of discovery and forever altering the Western perception of the Orient. His legacy is not just that of an explorer, but of a storyteller whose words helped to map not only lands but also the imaginations of generations to come.

Questions for Passage 2

1. In paragraph 1, the word "captivated" is used to describe Europe's reaction to Marco Polo's accounts. What does "captivated" mean in this context?

- A. Confused
- B. Angered
- C. Fascinated
- D. Alarmed

2. What is the primary purpose of paragraph 2?

- A. To describe the political climate of Venice during Marco Polo's birth.
- B. To detail Marco Polo's early education and training as a merchant.
- C. To provide background information on Marco Polo's family and their prior connections with Kublai Khan.
- D. To explain the economic reasons for European exploration in the 13th century.

3. Kublai Khan was particularly impressed with Marco Polo due to his intelligence, linguistic abilities, and _____.

4. What does the phrase "a novelty to Europeans" in paragraph 5 suggest about paper money?

- A. Europeans had recently invented paper money themselves.
 - B. Paper money was common and widely used in Europe at the time.
 - C. Europeans were unfamiliar with the concept of paper money.
 - D. Europeans considered paper money to be an unreliable form of currency.
-

5. What is the main idea of paragraph 6?

- A. Marco Polo's descriptions were often inaccurate and fantastical.
 - B. Marco Polo focused solely on the military strength of the Mongol Empire.
 - C. "The Travels" provided diverse and detailed information about Asian societies, economies, and customs, often new to Europeans.
 - D. European readers were primarily interested in Marco Polo's accounts of exotic animals.
-

6. According to paragraph 8, why was the term "Il Milione" associated with Marco Polo?

7. Which of the following is NOT mentioned in paragraph 9 as a detail about the creation of "The Travels of Marco Polo"?

- A. Marco Polo dictated his experiences while imprisoned.
 - B. The book was co-authored with Rustichello da Pisa.
 - C. Rustichello may have added embellishments to the accounts.
 - D. The book was immediately translated into multiple European languages.
 - E. The original manuscript was written in Old French.
-

8. How does paragraph 13 primarily relate to paragraph 12?

- A. It provides further examples of the controversies mentioned in paragraph 12.
 - B. It dismisses all the doubts raised in paragraph 12 as unfounded.
 - C. It offers counter-arguments and supporting evidence to address the criticisms discussed in paragraph 12.
 - D. It shifts the focus from historical debate to the literary qualities of Polo's book.
-

9. There is a missing sentence in paragraph 11. Read the paragraph again and decide where the following sentence could be added:

This newfound awareness of the East's riches and sophisticated societies acted as a powerful magnet for merchants and adventurers alike.

Where does this sentence best fit in paragraph 11? Write the answer (A, B, C, or D) in the blank. The paragraph is reproduced here with insertion points:

(Paragraph 11) The impact of "The Travels of Marco Polo" was profound and multifaceted, though not immediate. Initially, many readers dismissed it as a collection of tall tales or fables. - (A) - However, as manuscript copies circulated and were translated into various European languages, its influence grew. - (B) - Geographers and cartographers, such as Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli, used Polo's descriptions to create more accurate maps of Asia, significantly expanding Europe's geographical knowledge. - (C) - Christopher Columbus owned a copy of the book and made extensive annotations in it, suggesting it played a role in inspiring his westward voyages in search of a route to the Indies. The book revealed the existence of advanced civilizations in the East, challenging Eurocentric views and stimulating an interest in trade and exploration. - (D) -

10. Read the short passage about Ibn Battuta, another famous traveler, below. According to the information in the main text about Marco Polo and the passage below, which statement accurately compares or contrasts the two explorers?

Ibn Battuta (1304-1369) was a Moroccan scholar and explorer who widely travelled the medieval world. Over a period of thirty years, Ibn Battuta visited most of the Islamic world and many non-Muslim lands, including Central Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and China. His journeys were primarily motivated by a desire to perform the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) and to seek knowledge and employment within the Islamic legal and scholarly communities across these regions. His travelogue, the "Rihla," details his observations of cultures, societies, and legal systems.

- A. Both Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta were primarily motivated by religious quests in their travels.
- B. Unlike Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta's travels were confined only to Muslim-majority lands.
- C. Both explorers served in administrative roles for foreign rulers during their travels (Polo for Kublai Khan, Battuta implied by "employment within legal and scholarly communities").
- D. Marco Polo's book focused more on trade and marvels, while Ibn Battuta's "Rihla" focused more on Islamic law and scholarship.

11. What CANNOT be reasonably inferred from the whole text about "The Travels of Marco Polo"?

- A. The book's credibility has been enhanced over time by some external verifications.
- B. The process of the book's creation might have introduced elements not directly from Marco Polo's own narration.
- C. The book had a uniform and overwhelmingly positive reception across Europe immediately upon its release.
- D. The book's content was diverse, covering more than just geography and trade routes.

Answer Key: Search Reading: Marco Polo: Bridging East and West Through Exploration

1. C. Fascinated

Explanation: Paragraph 1 states his accounts "captivated Europe and profoundly shaped its understanding of Asia," implying a strong positive interest and enchantment, which aligns with "fascinated."

2. C. To provide background information on Marco Polo's family and their prior connections with Kublai Khan.

Explanation: Paragraph 2 details his merchant family background, his father and uncle's previous journey to Kublai Khan, and the Khan's request, setting the stage for Marco's own journey.

3. keen observational skills

Explanation: Paragraph 4 states, "He was particularly impressed by the young Marco Polo's intelligence, linguistic abilities...and keen observational skills."

4. C. Europeans were unfamiliar with the concept of paper money.

Explanation: Paragraph 5 mentions "the use of paper money (a novelty to Europeans)." "Novelty" means something new, unfamiliar, or unusual, indicating Europeans did not commonly use or perhaps even know about it.

5. C. "The Travels" provided diverse and detailed information about Asian societies, economies, and customs, often new to Europeans.

Explanation: Paragraph 6 outlines the wide array of subjects Polo covered: "geography...flora and fauna, social customs, religious practices...political structures, and economic activities," many of which were new to Europeans.

6. Due to his frequent use of the number "million" to describe the vast wealth and populations of the East.

Explanation: Paragraph 8 states, "The term 'million,' previously not in common parlance, was said to have become associated with Marco Polo (as 'Il Milione') due to his frequent use of the number to describe the vast wealth and populations of the East."

7. D. The book was immediately translated into multiple European languages.

Explanation: Paragraph 9 details his imprisonment, dictation to Rustichello, Rustichello's potential embellishments, and the original language (Old French). Paragraph 11 mentions translation happened later ("as manuscript copies circulated and were translated"), not immediately upon creation.

8. C. It offers counter-arguments and supporting evidence to address the criticisms discussed in paragraph 12.

Explanation: Paragraph 12 outlines criticisms and doubts about Polo's accounts. Paragraph

13 directly addresses these by stating, "However, proponents argue that many of Polo's descriptions have been corroborated..." and offers explanations for omissions and support for his claims.

9. **D**

Explanation: The sentence "This newfound awareness of the East's riches and sophisticated societies acted as a powerful magnet for merchants and adventurers alike" logically follows and expands upon the idea that "The book revealed the existence of advanced civilizations in the East, challenging Eurocentric views and stimulating an interest in trade and exploration." It serves as a concluding thought to the positive impacts listed before it in the paragraph.

10. **D. Marco Polo's book focused more on trade and marvels, while Ibn Battuta's "Rihla" focused more on Islamic law and scholarship.**

Explanation: The main text emphasizes Marco Polo's merchant background and his descriptions of "wealth," "exotic spices, precious gems, and magnificent palaces" (paragraph 6), and "stimulating an interest in trade" (paragraph 11). The passage on Ibn Battuta states his "Rihla" details "observations of cultures, societies, and legal systems" and his motivation to seek "knowledge and employment within the Islamic legal and scholarly communities." Option A is incorrect because Polo's primary motivation wasn't religious. B is incorrect as Battuta also visited non-Muslim lands. C is plausible for Polo, but the Battuta passage only vaguely implies "employment," not necessarily administrative roles for foreign rulers in the same direct way as Polo. D best captures the differing thematic focuses suggested.

11. **C. The book had a uniform and overwhelmingly positive reception across Europe immediately upon its release.**

Explanation: Paragraph 11 explicitly states, "Initially, many readers dismissed it as a collection of tall tales or fables," indicating its reception was not immediately or uniformly positive. The other options can be inferred: (A) from paragraph 13 (corroboration), (B) from paragraph 9 (Rustichello's embellishments), and (D) from paragraph 6 (wide array of subjects).

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