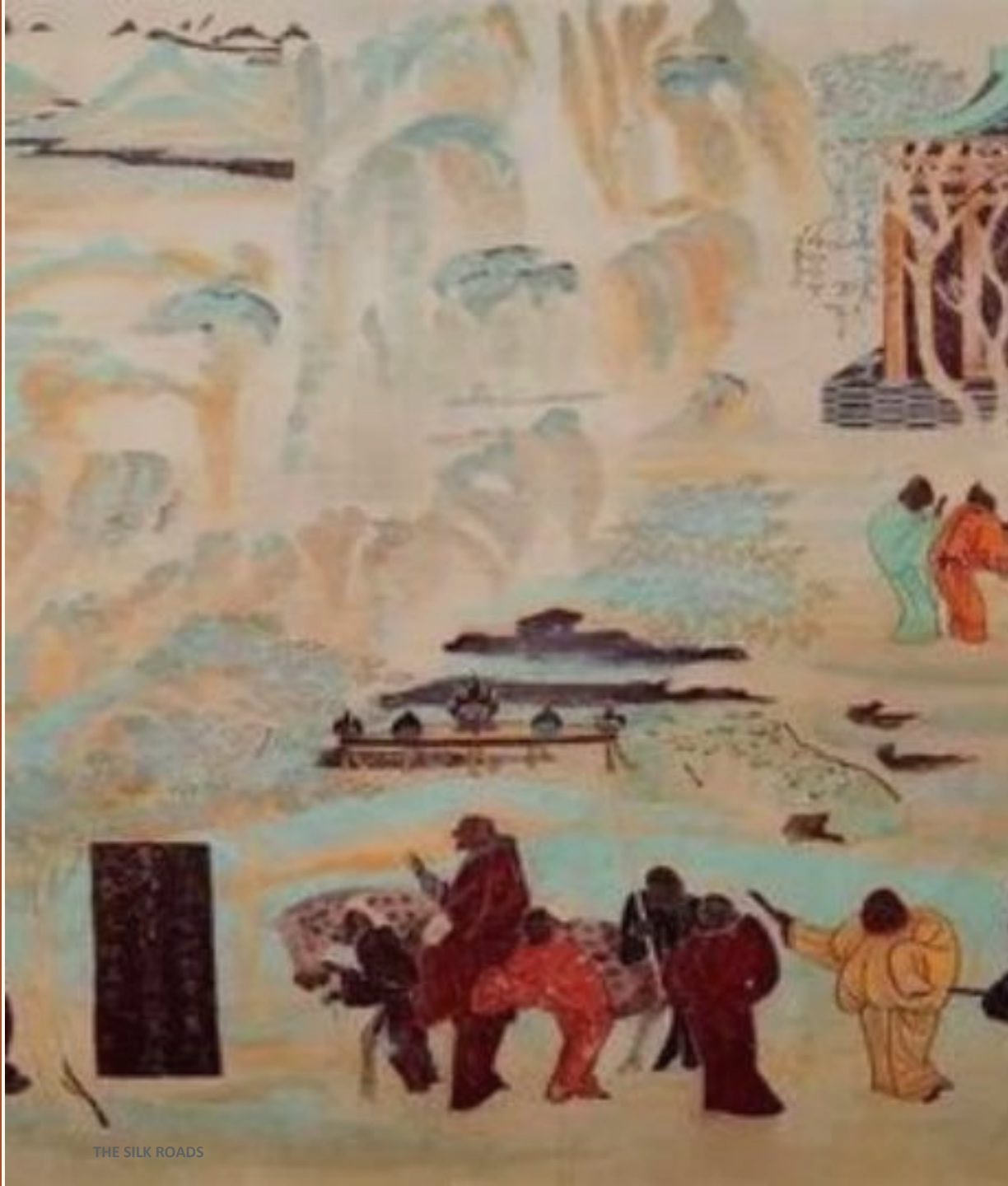


ONE MESSAGE. THOUSANDS OF MILES. NO SINGLE ROAD.

How did land, government goals, and many travelers turn routes into a network of exchange?



MISSION 01

You are carrying a Han court message west.

Your map is incomplete.
Your water is limited.
No one traveler knows the whole route.

Today you must decide:

Where will you travel—and whom will you trust?

A network stretched across Eurasia



LOOK FOR

branches

gaps

meeting
places

Why might the
routes split
instead of staying
in one line?

The land forced every traveler to choose.



MOUNTAINS

barrier



DESERT

risk



OASIS

water + information

CASE STUDY

Why did Dunhuang matter?

WATER

Travelers could recover.

ROUTES

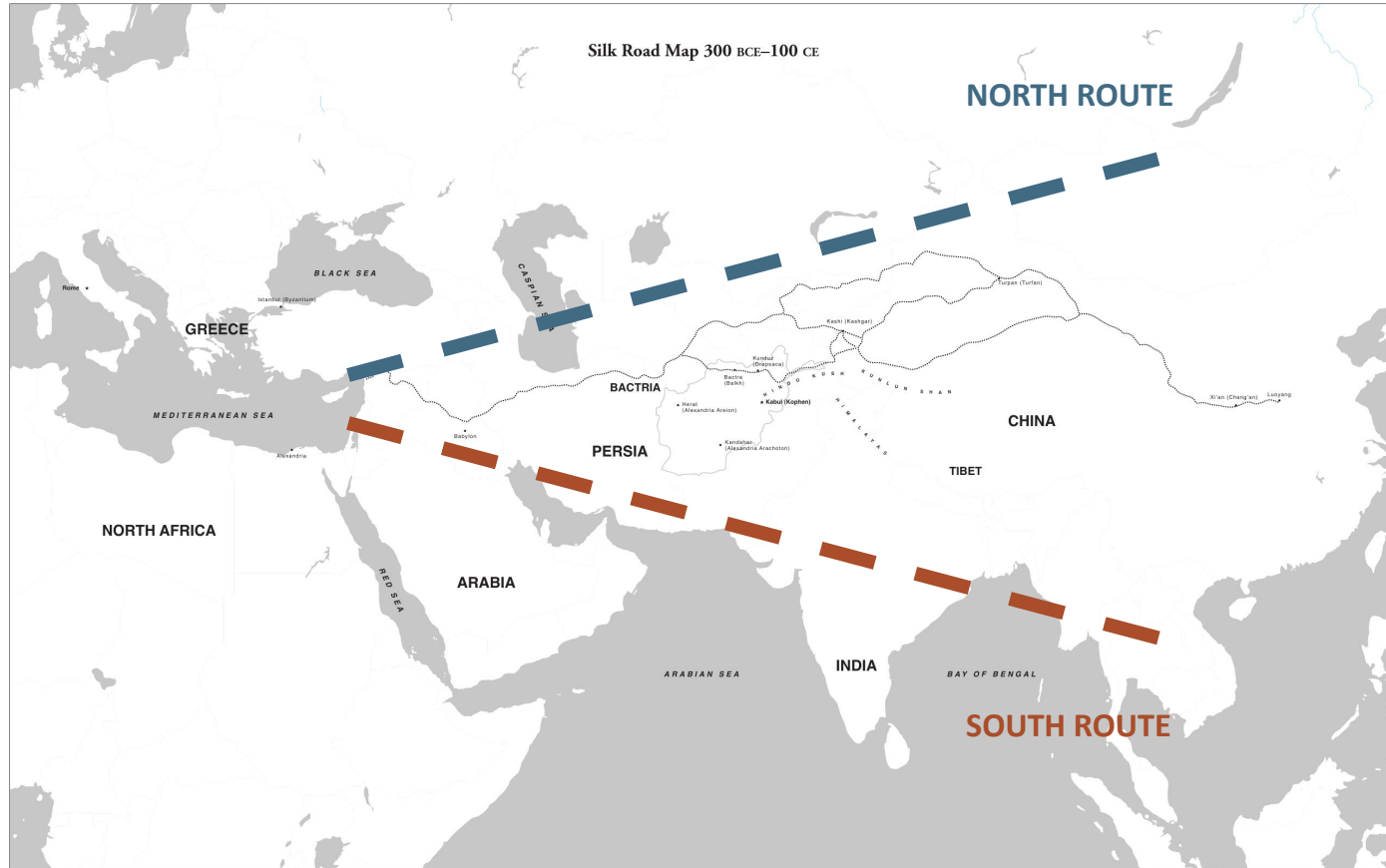
Paths met and split.

INFORMATION

News moved with people.



North or south of the Taklamakan?



SCENARIO

Choose a route.

**You have 12 pack animals.
Two are weak. A dust
storm was reported on the
northern route.**

**Use two map clues and
one risk to defend your
choice.**

Handout p. 2



ZHANG QIAN

ENVOY

an official representative sent by a ruler

His mission began with Han diplomacy and security—not a shopping trip.

He traveled, observed, negotiated, and reported what he learned to the Han court.

NOT: merchant • NOT: tourist

It failed—and still changed what the Han knew



Failure to secure the alliance ≠ failure to produce knowledge



PRIMARY-SOURCE LAB

What did the Han court learn?

Adapted from the History of the Former Han:

“The envoy reported on distant states, their products, and the routes between them.”

MARK THE TEXT

Underline what Zhang Qian learned.
Circle who would value that information.
Box one word that needs context.

A source can reveal without proving everything

IT CAN SHOW

knowledge

government interest

reported routes

IT CANNOT PROVE

one fixed road

one traveler carried every good

every route worked the same way

Finish the sentence: This source supports ____, but it does not prove ____ .

THE NETWORK HAD MANY JOBS

No single traveler made the network work.

ENVOY

carries official messages

MERCHANT

buys and sells

INTERMEDIARY

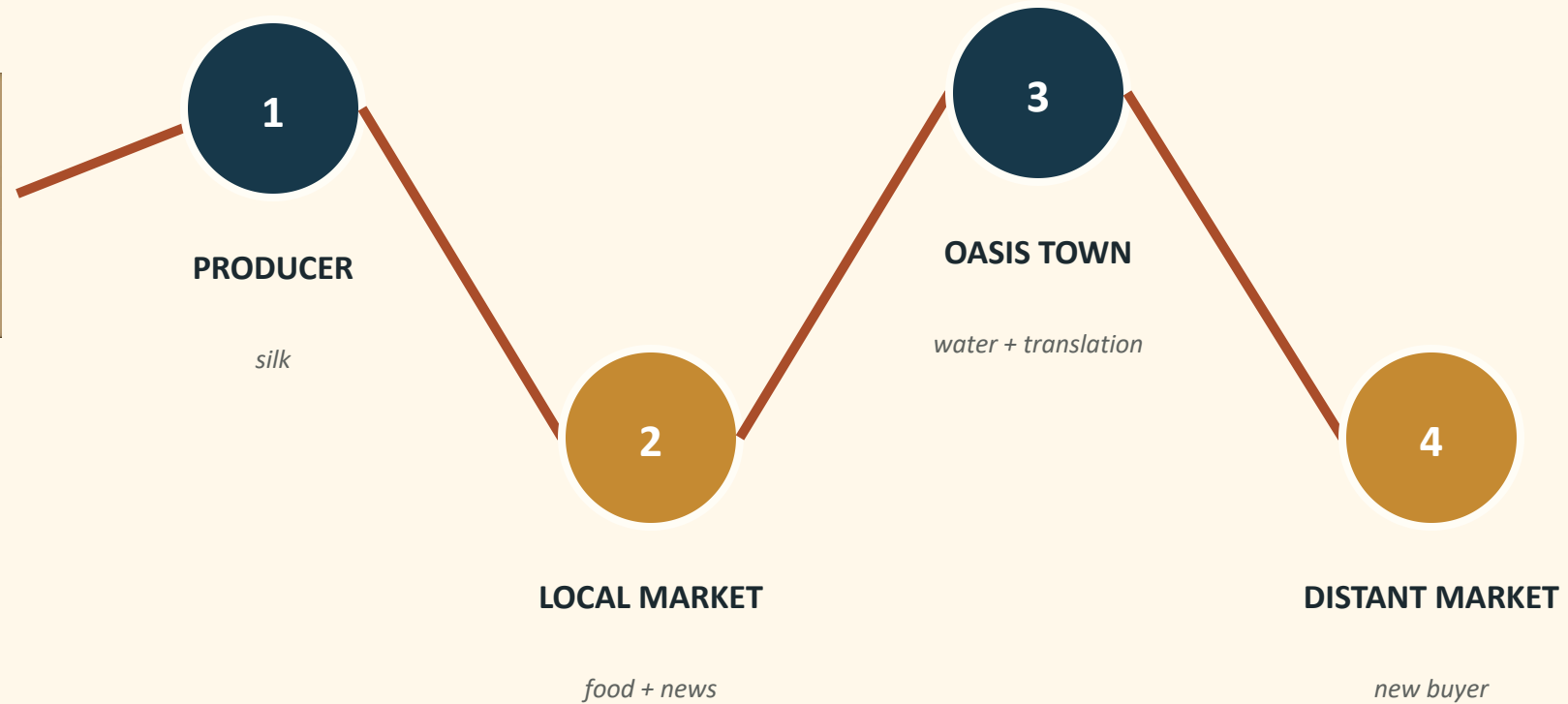
connects languages and markets

GOVERNMENT

guards, taxes, and negotiates

Which role controls movement? Which role connects people?

A bolt of silk traveled farther than its seller



RELAY TRADE

goods pass through several handoffs

The object keeps moving. The people—and the information—change.



SILK



GRAPES



HORSES



GLASS

More than goods moved.

OBJECTS

materials + products

SKILLS

how to make or use things

IDEAS

beliefs + stories + knowledge

CAUTION: these examples show a long history of exchange; they do not all belong to one year or one journey.

Plan a route you can defend



DELIVERY

Dunhuang → Kashgar

Your caravan carries silk and an official letter. Winter is coming.

Mark:

- 1 route
- 2 stopping places
- 1 physical barrier
- 1 reason your plan works

Water made places powerful.

At an oasis, travelers could rest, trade, exchange news, find guides, and change routes.

So what?

Explain how one water source could shape an entire network.

Turn and talk • 30 seconds each

Why did the Silk Roads become a network?

CLAIM

Answer the question in one sentence.

EVIDENCE

Use one map detail and one lesson detail.

REASONING

Explain how your evidence supports the claim.

Possible evidence: barriers • oases • Han goals • envoys • intermediaries • relay trade

Choose the next investigation



A ARTIFACT DETECTIVE

What can one object reveal?



B RELAY SIMULATION

How do handoffs change trade?



C LAND OR SEA?

How do routes change with geography?

Each option includes teacher directions and a student task in the companion materials.

Artifact detective



OBSERVE

List three visible details. Do not infer yet.

INFER

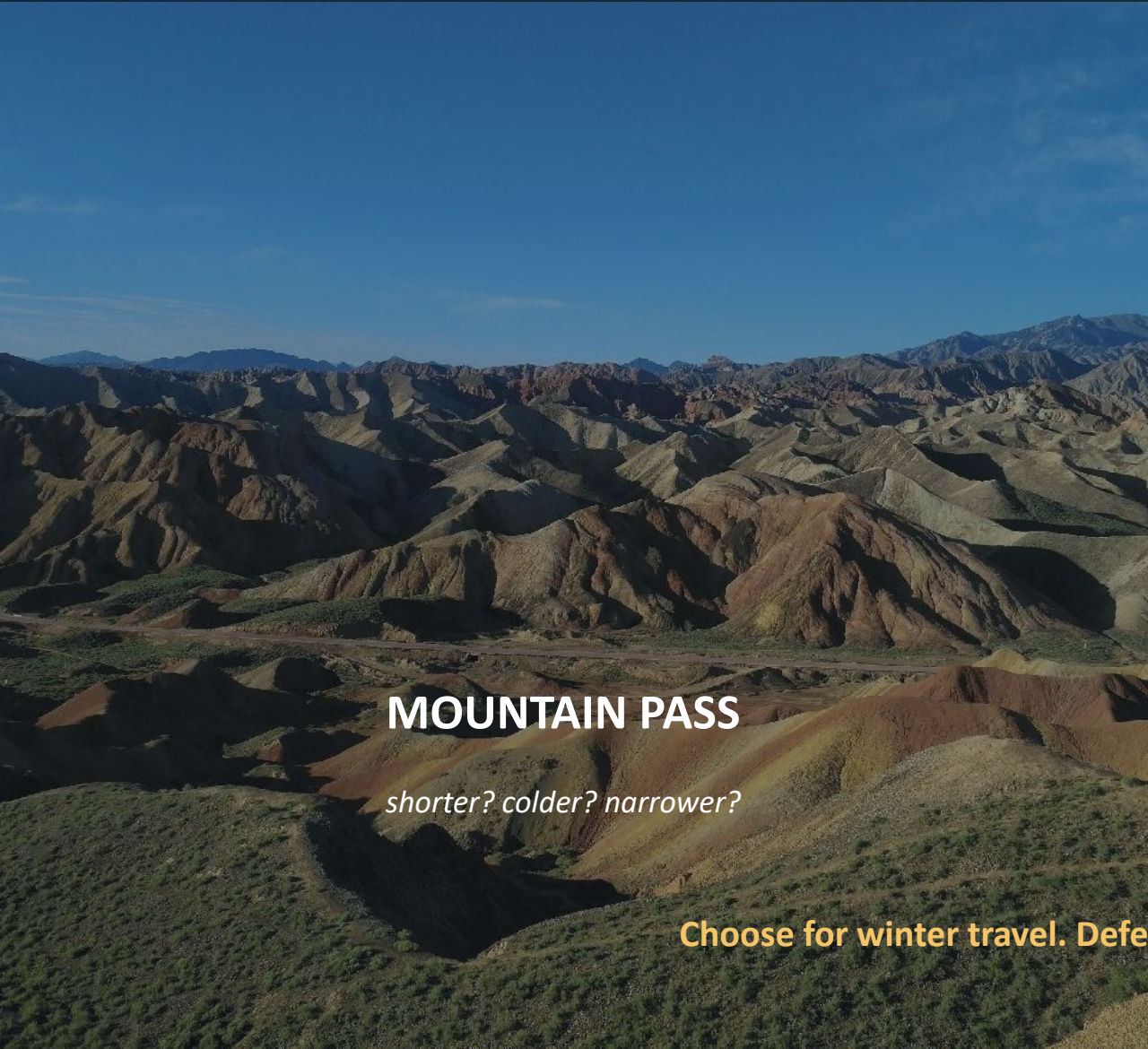
What might material, shape, or technique suggest?

LIMIT

What cannot this object prove by itself?

Roman glass bowl • late 1st–early 3rd century CE • Met object 17.194.75

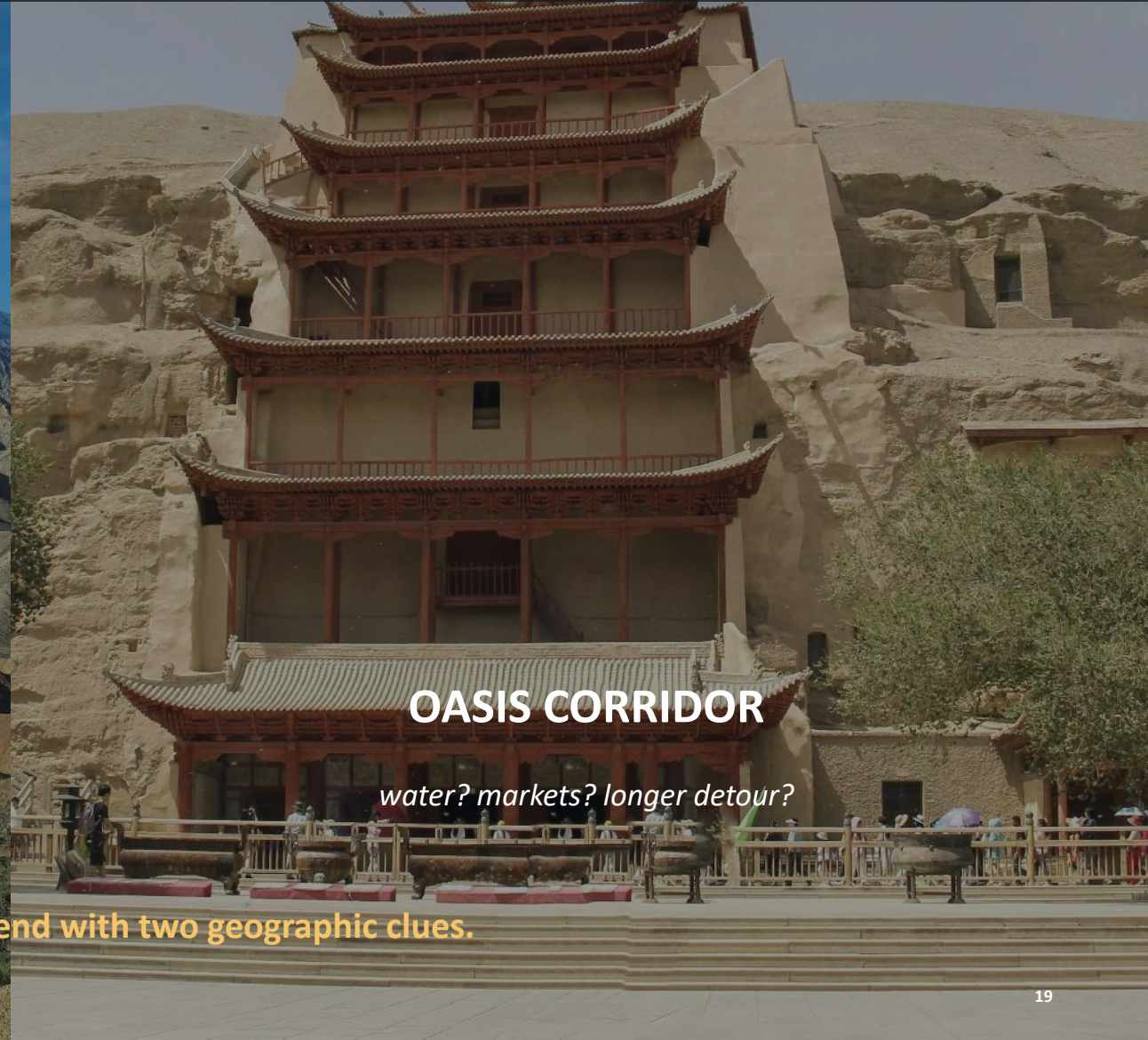
Land routes were never one-size-fits-all



MOUNTAIN PASS

shorter? colder? narrower?

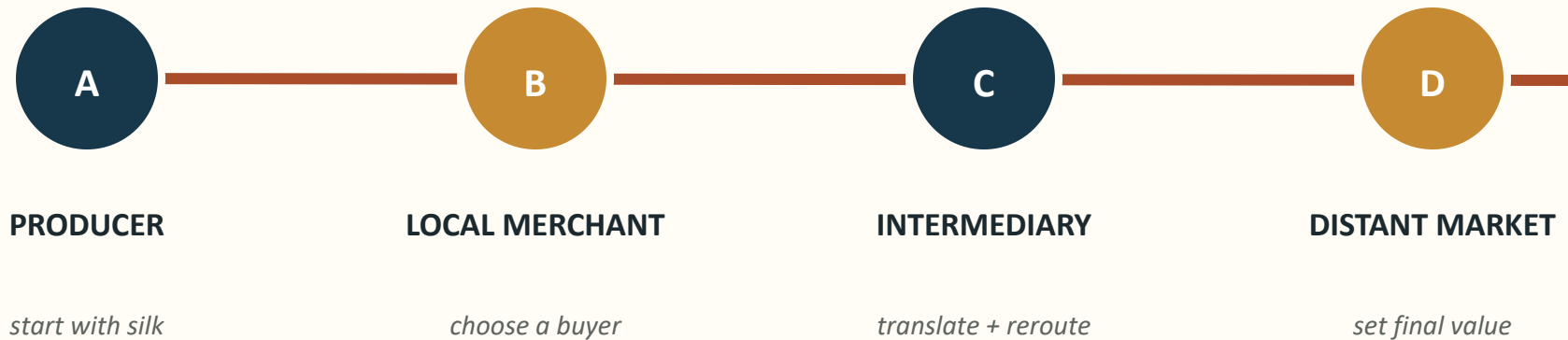
Choose for winter travel. Defend with two geographic clues.



OASIS CORRIDOR

water? markets? longer detour?

Relay-trade simulation



RULE: The object may move. You stay at your station.

At each handoff, record one change: price • language • risk • information

Debrief: Who traveled farthest? What traveled farthest?

Five clues. One network.

- 1** Why did routes split around the Taklamakan?

- 2** What was Zhang Qian's official role?

- 3** How is relay trade different from one long trip?

- 4** Name one thing a historical source cannot prove by itself.

- 5** Use oasis in a cause-and-effect sentence.

Separate quiz sheet • Teacher key: Guide p. 22

Sources, cautions, and asset trail

NETWORK

UNESCO Silk Roads Programme: many connected routes, not one road.

ZHANG QIAN

UW Silk Road Seattle translations and notes; c. 138 BCE departure used consistently.

DOMESTIC PPT 6

Geography, Dunhuang, oasis, caravan, timeline, food/silk visuals adapted into English.

MAP

Asian Art Museum map, 300 BCE–100 CE. Routes shown are simplified and approximate.

OBJECT

The Met Roman glass bowl, object 17.194.75, Public Domain.

FULL LEDGER

See companion source and asset ledger for URLs, licenses, and slide-level use.

All student-facing route lines are labeled as simplified models—not exact reconstructed roads.