

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Mongol Empire Timeline Assignment

 Compton's by Britannica

**Directions:** Read the following handout and complete the timeline that follows. The timeline will be collected.

The traditional homeland of the Central Asian people known as the Mongols is a vast highland region in what are now Mongolia and northern China. The Mongols share a common language and a tradition of following a nomadic way of life herding livestock. Their origin is unknown. By the 13th century a confederation of nomadic Mongol tribes had become a powerful military force. Under the leadership of Genghis Khan and his successors, they established an empire that reached from what are now China and Korea in the east to Eastern Europe and the shores of the Persian Gulf in the west. At the height of their power, they overthrew the rulers of northern and southern China and reunited China under Mongol rule, as the Yuan (or Mongol) Dynasty. The Mongols were the first foreigners to rule all of China. The western part of their empire, in Russia and Eastern Europe, was known as the Golden Horde. The power of the Mongol Empire declined greatly in the 14th century.

In 1206 Genghis (or Chinggis) Khan was elected head of the All the Mongols league, a confederation of Mongol tribes, and founded the Mongol Dynasty. Between 1206 and 1227, when Genghis Khan died, the Mongols conquered a dominion that stretched from the China Sea to the Caspian. On the north it bordered the forest belt of Siberia, and on the south it touched the Kunlun Mountains, Tibet, and the central plains of China. The Mongols' impressive military conquests were largely due to their armies of archers mounted on horseback, who possessed great speed and mobility.

Their first attack was launched against the Xi Xia, who occupied a border state in northwestern China. They next began to fight the Jin Dynasty, which controlled the rest of northern China. By 1215 the Mongols had taken the Jin capital of Yanjing (now Beijing). They eventually conquered all of northern China. By 1225 they had taken Turkistan, in Central Asia. Advance troops penetrated into southern Russia and raided cities in the Crimea. The Mongol Empire created by Genghis Khan was not a unified state but a vast collection of territories held together by military force. Because it was controlled by so many military leaders, all theoretically responsible to a leader known as the great khan, the empire carried within it the seeds of its own breakdown.

Central power rested with the great khan and his councillors. Although they were well organized militarily, the Mongols had no developed concept for ruling settled populations. The various territories were under the authority of military commanders. Most new conquests were not administered—just economically exploited. In areas that were under subjugation longer, there was some growth of administration. Local bureaucracies, though dominated by Mongols, usually followed administrative patterns that had been locally developed. This was especially true in China, with its ancient and vast bureaucracy.

While Genghis Khan was still living, he divided the empire between his four sons by his favorite wife. Tolui, the youngest, received eastern Mongolia. Ögödei received western Mongolia and part of northwestern China. Chagatai was given most of Turkistan and part of western China. The oldest son, Jöchi, received southwestern Siberia, western Turkistan, and Russian lands stretching north of the Black Sea. Genghis Khan and Jöchi both died in 1227. At a convocation of Mongol leaders, Ögödei was appointed great khan. Jöchi's lands in the west were inherited by his son Batu. Ögödei made his capital at Karakorum in central Mongolia. He immediately set out to add more of China to the Mongol conquests. By 1234 all but the southernmost region of China had been incorporated.

In the western part of the Empire, or the Golden Horde, Batu began a series of campaigns in 1236 in Russia and Eastern Europe. Resistance in Russia ceased after the fall of Kiev in 1240. The Golden Horde, at its peak, included most of European Russia from the Urals to the Carpathians, and it extended eastward deep into Siberia. The capital was Sarai Batu, on the Volga River. Terrorizing Eastern Europe, Batu's armies reached central Germany before turning southward to establish themselves in Hungary by 1241. The Mongol advance in Europe was stopped in 1241 by the death of Ögödei. Batu and his generals gave up their eastern European territory to return for the election of a new great khan. Because the succession was disputed for several years, Europe was saved from further incursions.

Güyük, a son of Ögödei's widow, was elected great khan in 1246 but died two years later. He was succeeded by Möngke, a son of Tolui. Under him the empire was expanded into unsubdued neighboring countries. The main new conquest was in the Middle East. Hülegü, a brother of Möngke, conquered what are now Iran, Iraq, and Syria in the 1250s. The only defeat the Mongols suffered was at the hands of the Mamluk Dynasty of Egypt in 1260. Hülegü's conquests resulted in the creation of a kingdom of nearly independent rulers, the Il-khans of Persia.

In the east the Mongols opened another campaign against China. During the conflict, in 1279, Möngke died. He was succeeded by his brother Kublai. The selection of Kublai Khan marked a turning point in Mongol history. In theory he was ruler of the whole empire, but he came to regard himself primarily as a Chinese emperor. The other parts of the empire began to go their separate ways. Under Kublai the center of power moved away from Mongolia into China. In 1267 the Mongols built their new capital, Dadu, just outside the old Jin capital, at what is now Beijing. Kublai renamed his dynasty the Yuan (meaning "beginning") Dynasty, to indicate that it would be the beginning of a long period of Mongol rule. He completed the conquest of China in 1279, finally conquering the Southern Song Dynasty.

In China, the Yuan Dynasty rebuilt the Grand Canal, put the roads and postal service in good order, and made paper money the sole legal currency throughout China. In the Yuan period, many foreigners traveled to China, and many Chinese journeyed to Iran, Russia, and even Western Europe. The Chinese resented their Mongol conquerors, however. The Mongols kept their own language and customs, rather than adopting Chinese ones, and they barred the Chinese from holding the higher political offices.

After Kublai's death in 1294 the Mongol Empire fragmented. From 1300 on, disputes over succession weakened the central government in China, and there were frequent rebellions there. The Yuan Dynasty fell in 1368, overthrown by a Chinese rebel leader who established a new dynasty, the Ming. In the Middle East, the Il-khans had lost power in 1353. The most enduring part of the Mongol Empire was the Golden Horde. It had begun to decline significantly in the 1340s, however, after outbreaks of the plague and the murder of one of its rulers. It broke apart into several smaller territories in the 15th century.

The only other notable Mongol conqueror appeared in the 14th century in the person of Timur Lenk. Although his conquests were extensive, they were temporary and never matched the extent of the empire under Kublai Khan.

MLA style:

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### Mongol History Timeline

**Directions:** Use the reading to complete the timeline below. Remember to include facts about **WHO** was involved and be specific about **WHAT** happened.

1206 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Also, what helped to create the downfall of the Mongol Empire?

1225 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1240 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Also, what was the effect of the event in 1241?

1279 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Identify three positives the Yuan Dynasty completed in China.

Also, what accounted for most of the Mongol's military success?

1215 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1227 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Also, what was the Golden Horde? Where was it?

1241 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Also, what was so significant about the event of 1279?

1294 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1368 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Also, what happened with the Golden Horde?

  
\_\_\_\_\_