Essential Question:
– Why were the Tang & Song Dynasties considered the “golden age” of China?

Warm-Up Question:
– ?
Classical China

During the Han Dynasty, 200 B.C.–A.D. 220, the emperors of Han China created a large empire and developed numerous innovations for government employees based on that. The route attracted trade from outside China. The Silk Road trade route brought Chinese luxury goods to Europe and Asia and increased cultural diffusion.
Like the Roman Empire, Classical China under the **Han Dynasty** entered an era of decline & eventually fell.
After the Han Dynasty collapsed in 220 A.D., no emperor was strong enough to unify China. Over the next 350 years, more than 30 local dynasties rose & fell.
In 589, China was unified again & a strong central government was restored. The restoration of the examination system allowed intelligent bureaucrats to... During the Tang & Song Dynasties, China experienced an extended "golden age" & became the richest, most powerful, & most advanced country in the world.
Emperors did their best to try to protect the routes along the Silk Road. Chinese merchants relied on ocean routes as well to trade with India & Arabia.

Increased trade led to the spread of Chinese culture (centralized gov't, Confucianism, & writing) to Korea, Japan, & Southeast Asia.

For the 1st time in China's history, emperors encouraged foreign trade.
Increased trade helped spread Buddhism throughout China.
The Tang & Song dynasties were eras of major technological advancement:

- The technologies helped make China the most advanced country in the world
- Much of China’s technology spread to other people across trade routes

Class Activity

Working with a partner, guess what each of the following 10 Chinese innovations are
1. Mechanical Clock
2. Magnetic compass
3. Gunpowder
4. Printing Press
6. Chinese writing

琴 (Music)
飛錢 (Paper Money)
瓷 (Porcelain)
長城 (Rebuilding of the Great Wall)
驛站 (Roads and Relay Hostels)
舟 (Ships)

Smallpox (Smallpox Inoculation)
Spinning Wheel (Spinning Wheel)
Canal (Waterways)
7. Ship building
8. Vaccination
9. Silk weaving
10. Porcelain
The End of the Golden Age

Despite the wealth & culture during the Tang & Song Dynasties, the Chinese were briefly overthrown by the Mongols.
In 1368, the Chinese overthrew the Mongols & established the Ming Dynasty.
...and began a series of explorations led by Zheng He to demonstrate Chinese superiority.
Zheng He led 7 different expeditions with a fleet of over 100 ships. He explored areas along the Indian Ocean & Africa, expand trade, & collected tribute from foreigners. Zheng He had better ships & traveled farther than any European explorers would for 100 years.
Chinese Isolation

After the 7th treasure fleet voyage in 1433, Chinese leaders unexpectedly ended the expeditions & retreated into isolationism.

— Scholar-officials complained that Zheng He’s voyages used valuable resources that were needed to defend China.

— China’s official trade policy was to keep the influence of outsiders to a minimum.

— China’s geography & gov’t policies kept it relatively isolated for the next 300 years until European merchants in the 1800s demanded access to Chinese trade.