

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Use this activity to introduce your students to Ancient China and get them thinking about the Silk Road. The focus of this activity is of an artifact currently on view in the Penn Museum's China gallery.**

*About QFocus: Question Formulation Technique harnesses students' innate curiosity to get them looking closer and thinking deeper about a given text or image. The following is a simplified activity that can easily be adjusted to suit classroom goals.*

**Step 1:** Have students consider the image to the right for a few minutes.

**Step 2:** Individually, or in small groups, have students list as many questions as they can come up with about this image, using the included Question Formulation Worksheet. Any question that comes to mind is fair game—no limits based on spelling or phrasing.

**Step 3:** After 3-5 minutes of listing questions, have each student or group prioritize their questions. You as the educator are free to choose how you want students to prioritize, narrow down, or focus their inquiry. Possible prompts for prioritization include:

- Choose the 3-5 questions you would most like answered
- Choose the 3-5 questions you think you could easily answer
- Choose the 3-5 questions you don't think you could answer

**Step 4:** Share/discuss questions as a group. You know your students best, so use whatever format best suits established dynamics in your classroom. Possible formats for group discussion include:

- Students read their prioritized questions aloud individually/group by group.
- Each group lists their prioritized questions on chart paper; Student groups rotate around the room to read/comment on each other's questions
- Each student or group lists their prioritized questions on a sticky note and brings it forward to be added to a Question Wall. As a group, find questions that were asked more than once, hone in on shared or differing points of interest.

**Step 5:** As a class or in small groups, consider how to evaluate and seek answers to the questions students posed. Some questions may have easy answers, while others may be more complex and require more in-depth research. Use the included Question Answering Guide to help structure this process.

**Step 6:** If students still have unanswered questions, or want to learn more, consider as a class what they will need in order to find answers or more supporting evidence for their ideas. Whose expertise, and what types of sources should they seek? Use the hyperlinked Further Resources as possible starting points for further investigation.



### Question Formulation Worksheet

List as many questions you can think of about this image. Don't worry about spelling or phrasing. Don't stop to judge, discuss, or answer your questions. If you get stuck, just think: What, Where, When, Who, Why, How

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. \_\_\_\_\_
- 18. \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. \_\_\_\_\_
- 20. \_\_\_\_\_

## Question Answering Guide

Now that you have figured out what you want to know, use this guide to help figure out how to find answers to your questions.

**Step 1:** Look at your list of questions. Choose a question from your list that you would like to answer, and re-write it below:

**Step 2:** Consider possible answers to your question and list them below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 3:** Choose the possible answer you think is most likely to be true. List three pieces of evidence (prior knowledge or observations) that support this answer below:

4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 4:** Rate how confident you are in this answer based on the evidence:

Very      Moderately      Not at all

**Step 5:** If you are not confident in your answer, or you still want to know more, consider what evidence you would need to prove or disprove your inference. Write down some ideas below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Further Resources

The following resources provide more background information related to the included image, and may serve as a starting point for deeper research as students seek answers to their questions.

**Use these prompts to help scaffold the research process:**

1. What makes this resource credible?
2. Whose voice or perspective is represented in this source? Whose voice or perspective is missing?
3. Who is the intended audience for this source?
4. Does this source give me the information I need to answer my question? If not, what do I still want to know, and where might I look to find more information?

**Penn Museum Digital Collection object webpage (Camel Figure):**

<https://www.penn.museum/collections/object/17112>

**Penn Museum online video of staff members encountering Bactrian camels near Qizil Caves in Xinjiang Province:**

<https://www.penn.museum/collections/videos/video/1051>

**National Geographic Photo Ark: Bactrian Camels:**

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/b/bactrian-camel/>

**National Geographic Kids webpage about Bactrian camels, including photos and video:**

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/bactrian-camel/>

**Expedition article “The Silk Road in History”:**

<https://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/the-silk-roads-in-history/>

**Ted Ed video “The Silk Road: Connecting the Ancient World Through Trade”:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vn3e37VWc0k>

**More information on Question Formulation Technique:**

<https://rightquestion.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Minigan-Beer-2017-Inquiring-minds-Using-the-Question-Formulation-Technique-to-activate-student-curiosity.pdf>