

**Oakland Unified School District
7th Grade – Medieval to Early Modern Times
Assessment Pilot
Fall Semester, 2009 – 2010**

Topic: The Chinese Examination System

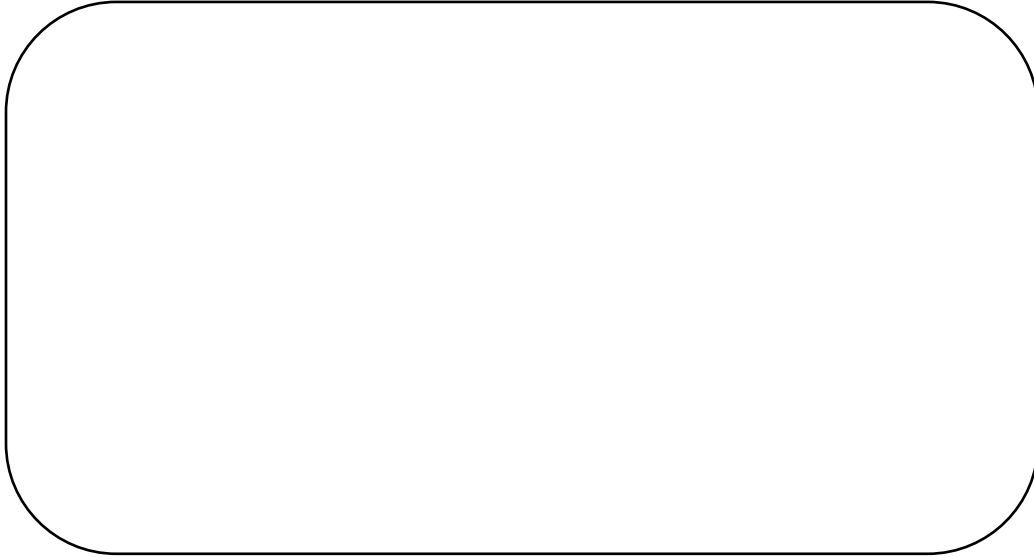


Hook – Principal for a Day!

You have been recruited as a candidate for the “Principal for a Day” opportunity. In order to be selected, you must pass the following examination. Any student who receives 80% or higher will be eligible to take the next level exam.

1. Recopy this sentence in your **BEST CURSIVE** handwriting in the box below.

“The Master said, ‘He who learns but does not think, is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger.’”



2. Study the following poem by Emily Dickinson. What does it mean? On the following page write it in your own words.

There is no Frigate like a Book by Emily Dickinson

There is no Frigate like a Book
To take us Lands away
Nor any Coursers like a Page
Of prancing Poetry –
This Traverse may the poorest take
Without oppress of Toll –
How frugal is the Chariot
That bears the Human soul.

Follow-up Questions

1. What did you think of this test?

2. Would you use this test to select a principal? Why or why not?

3. What skills are needed in order to be a good principal? Why are these good skills for a principal?

4. What questions might you ask of a candidate for principal?

5. Is testing a good way to select a principal? Why or why not?

6. Are there some jobs for which passing a test might be a good measure? What are they?

What do students need to know before completing this assessment?

Chapters & Activities

Holt: "Confucianism and Government" – Chapter 7, Section 3, pages 176-179

TCI Activities: Three Ways of Thought, Approaches to Government (Optional, but extremely helpful.)

Terms & Concepts:

Primary Source

Secondary Source

Confucius

Confucianism

Analects & "Classics"

Bureaucracy

Civil service/servant

Civil service exam

Scholar-official

Meritocracy

Hierarchy

Imperial

Additional Resources for background information:

<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/song/>

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

In preparation for reading the background information and the source documents, complete the following vocabulary review chart by writing a definition in your own words and making a personal connection OR creating a symbol to help you remember the definition of the word. The first two are completed for you.

Word	Definition (in own words)	Personal Connection/Symbol
Primary Source	Information about an event by someone who took part in or was a witness to the event.	My diary is a primary source about my life.
Secondary Source	Information about an event that is gathered by someone who did not take part in or witness the event.	My textbook was written by authors who did not experience the events they're writing about so it's a secondary source.
Confucius		
Confucianism		
Analects and "Classics"		
Bureaucracy		
Civil service/servant		
Civil service exam		
Scholar-official		
Meritocracy		
Hierarchy		
Imperial		

Background Essay
Chinese Examination System

Chinese emperors ruled according to the ideals of **Confucius**. Confucius taught that it was important to have civil servants (government workers) who were men of learning (scholars.) Because the Chinese empire was so big, emperors relied on a **bureaucracy** made up of these civil servants to help them rule. This **bureaucracy** was made up of departments (or bureaus), each with its own specific area of responsibility. For example, there was a department that dealt with trade and a different department that dealt with collecting taxes. **Imperial** decisions and laws were communicated from the emperor to the people through the civil servants. This was an outgrowth of the Confucian teaching that harmony and stability in society could only result from respecting **hierarchies**.

1. Whose ideas were extremely important in the governing of China?

2. What are some examples of the departments or bureaus in Chinese government? (If needed, refer to the caption called "Scholar Officials" in the Holt textbook, page 179.)

In ancient China, most jobs in the emperor's bureaucracy were given to men from important and/or wealthy families. However, beginning in the Sui Dynasty, there was a new system of filling government positions. For the first time, an examination system was specifically designed to encourage more local talented young men to be tested and then hired. Later, Song Dynasty emperors made an effort to recruit and educate talented Chinese young men from all ranks (rich, middle class, poor) of society so that they would be able to take the all-important Civil Service Exam. Success in the exams could lead to a steady job and a good income.

3. Why might it be a good idea to have men from all ranks of society prepare and take the Civil Service Exam? _____

The **civil service examinations** were based on the ideas and teachings of Confucius. Emperors approved of these ideas because Confucius taught that there should be a hierarchy of power; that people should respect authority; and that people should participate in jobs that encouraged **public (civil) service**. Civil service examinations were designed to test knowledge of Confucian philosophy (ways of thought), law, and literature.

4. Why do you think emperors would approve of Confucius' ideas?

5. What were some of the topics on the civil service exam?

In theory, any male adult in China, regardless of his wealth or social status, could become a high-ranking government official by passing the highest level of the civil service examination – the **imperial** (palace) examination. Although there are many examples in Chinese history in which men moved from a low social status to a higher status as a result of successfully completing the imperial examination, this didn't happen often. Only families who could afford to send their sons to school instead of having them work in the fields were able to provide for their sons to be educated to take the exam.

6. Why were most men who took the civil service exams wealthy?

During the Song times, success on the exams greatly increased a man's status and importance. The number of men entering the competition grew from 30,000 early in the dynasty to about 400,000 at the end of the dynasty. However, the number of available jobs did not change so a candidate's chance of passing and getting a civil service job greatly decreased. In fact, most of those who had devoted their lives to preparing for the exams never even became officials.

7. Why did a candidate's chance of passing the civil service exam decrease during the Song Dynasty?

As a way for ensuring government by the brightest young men (**meritocracy**), regardless of class or social standing, the examination system may be seen as one of the world's earliest democratic (equal for all) systems. It was not perfect. It did not include women. Also, the system put enormous pressure on young boys of ambitious families. However scholarships were given to promising students of various social classes and success on the exam would give them fame and importance in their home villages.

8. What were two disadvantages of the civil service examination system?

9. What were two advantages of the civil service examination system?

Question: Was the Examination System during the Song Dynasty in China a good way to select government officials? Defend your position.

I. Working with Sources (Documents)

Read the source descriptions and the source documents below. Answer the questions that follow each source document. The responses to the questions for Source 1 have been completed for you.

Source 1: *This source is from a paper written in about 640 C.E. by Emperor Taizong who ruled China during the Tang dynasty. In this excerpt, he uses metaphors to explain how to hire and organize a bureaucracy in order to have an effective government.*

Government jobs should be organized by departments to make the best use of officials' abilities...A barbeque large enough for an ox should not be used to cook a chicken, nor should a raccoon good at catching rats be ordered to fight against huge beasts...Those with low skills or capabilities should not be given difficult tasks or responsibilities. If the right person is given the right task or responsibility, the empire can be governed with ease. Whether the emperor gets hold of the right person for the right task determines whether his empire will be well governed.

Emperor Taizong, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, page 112

1. This source is Primary or Secondary (circle one)
2. How do you know? It was written by a person who experienced the event.
3. What does the author mean by "barbeque?" It is an outdoor cooking area.
4. What does this source tell us about how government should be organized?

This source says that there should be many different government jobs and the person who does each government job should have the right skills for it. The government will be well-run if the government workers are matched with a job that suites their abilities.

5. a) What is the author's job? He's an emperor.
b) Why might this author wish to make sure the empire is well-governed?

Because he is the emperor, he will be considered a good leader and he'll be able to accomplish great things if his empire is well-governed and effective.

6. I would use this source to argue that the examination system is good not good (circle one) because this source says that the government will be well-run if the right person is in the right job. I think a test would help the emperor decide if the right person is in the right job.

Source 2: Sources 2-6 are about what the Civil Service Exam was like and what the testing conditions were like.

Not all Confucian scholars could paint, but [on the exam] all of them were expected to write in an elegant style and produce philosophy, poetry, or history that would teach moral lessons.

TCl textbook, *History Alive! – The Medieval World and Beyond*–page 182 (2005)

1. This source is Primary or Secondary (circle one)

2. How do you know?

3. What were all Confucian scholars expected to do?

4. Do you think these skills would be helpful for a scholar-official to do his job well? Why or why not?

5. I would use this source to argue that the examination system is good not good because...

Source 3:

Tests of memory and questions about styles of reading, writing, and creating structured poetry were chosen by examiners because they made grading easier and more objective...Exams rarely revealed something about either a man's character or his ability to be a good official.

A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilizations – page 208 (2006)

1. This source is Primary or Secondary (circle one)

2. How do you know?

3. Why are tests of memory and questions about styles of reading, writing, and structured poetry easier to grade?

4. What are two problems with a test of memory and tests about styles of reading, writing, and creating structured poetry?

A) _____

B) _____

5. I would use this source to argue that the examination system is good not good because...

Source 4:

The task of having to memorize...more than 400,000 characters is enough to make you dizzy. They required exactly six years of memorizing at the rate of two hundred characters a day.

Ichisada Miyazaki, *Worlds of History*, p. 265 (1976)

1. This source is Primary or Secondary (circle one)

2. How do you know?

3. What is a Chinese “character?”

4. Write about an experience that you had memorizing something. Include details about how easy or hard it was to memorize.

5. I would use this source to argue that the examination system is good not good because...

Source 5:

The exams could be grueling, and guards watched candidates closely to prevent cheating. Candidates were locked in a small room for several days. In addition, a second person copied each paper so that the examiners wouldn't know whose work they were reading.

TCI textbook, *History Alive! – The Medieval World and Beyond*, page 183 (2005)

1. This source is Primary or Secondary (circle one)

2. How do you know?

3. What does “grueling” mean?

4. Why would another person copy each candidate's paper before it was graded?

5. I would use this source to argue that the examination system is good not good because...

Source 6: *Once a candidate passed the exam, Sources 6 and 7 tell of some of the advantages and job options available to him.*

Officials who had passed the examination shared a similar intellectual background and had a similar set of values. They were gentlemen who were scholars as well as officials.

A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilizations – page 208 (2006)

1. This source is Primary or Secondary (circle one)

2. How do you know?

3. Why would it be good to have officials who had a similar intellectual background and a similar set of values?

4. Why would it **NOT** be good to have officials who had a similar intellectual background and a similar set of values?

5. I would use this source to argue that the examination system is good not good because...

Source 7:

The typical jobs [of scholar-officials], as part of China's large bureaucracy, might include running government offices; fixing roads, irrigation (water) systems, and other public works; updating and maintaining official records; or collecting taxes. *Medieval to Early Modern Times* (Holt textbook)– page 179 (2006)

1. This source is Primary or Secondary (circle one)

2. How do you know?

3. How would you describe the work of many scholar-officials?

4. I would use this source to argue that the examination system is good not good because...

Source 8: *Young boys studying for the exam were at the age when they wanted to play most of the time. They were extremely unhappy to be stuck in a classroom all day. The Song emperor Chen-Tsung wrote the following poem (in about 1000 C.E.) to inspire them.*

To enrich your family, no need to buy good land:
Books hold a thousand measures of grain.
For an easy life, no need to build a mansion:
In books are found houses of gold...
In books there are girls and faces of jade.
A boy who wants to become a somebody:
Devotes himself to the classics, faces the window, and reads.

Emperor Chen-Tsung, *Worlds of History*, – page 266

1. This source is Primary or Secondary (circle one)

2. How do you know?

3. What does Emperor Tsung mean when he says that “in books are found houses of gold...(and) girls?”

4. I would use this source to argue that the examination system is good not good because...

Source 9: *The following anecdote (short story), supposedly based on true events, was included in a collection of short stories. These stories were written in the late Tang period (about 900 C.E.), because this was the first dynasty in which examinations came to play an important part in selecting men for office. Some of the stories in this collection were meant to poke fun at the way some men acted. Other stories were meant to show noble hopes and deeds.*

Lu Zhao was from the town of Yiqun, in the province of Yuanzhou. Lu Zhao and Huang Po, who was also from the same town, were equally famous. When they were young, Huang Po was wealthy, but Lu Zhao was very poor. When they were ready for the imperial examination, the two of them decided to set out on the trip together. The town gave a farewell dinner at the Pavilion of Departure, but only Huang Po was invited. When the party was at its peak, with lots of wine and music, Lu Zhao passed by the pavilion, riding on an old, weak horse. He traveled past the city limits, then stopped to wait for Huang Po to join him.

The next year, Lu Zhao came back to his hometown, having been awarded the title of “number one.” All the officials from the state came out to welcome him, and the mayor of Yuanzhou was greatly embarrassed.

Once when the mayor invited him to watch the dragon boat race, Lu Zhao composed a poem during the banquet, which read:

“It is a dragon,” I told you.
But you had refused to believe.
Now it returns with the trophy,
Much in the way I predicted.

Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook, page 129

1. This source is Primary or Secondary (circle one)

2. How do you know?

3. What does this story tell us about the family background of the candidates?

4. Why was the mayor of Yuanzhou “greatly embarrassed?”

5. Using your own words to explain the poem at end of this text.

6. I would use this source to argue that the examination system is good not good because...

Source 10: *Source 10 is taken from a book of analects (sayings) of Confucius (The Master) written in approximately 100 B.C.E.*

The Master (Confucius) said, “Highest are those who are born wise. Next are those who become wise by learning. After them come those who have to work hard in order to become learned. Finally, in the lowest class of ordinary people are those who have to work hard without ever learning.”

The Analects of Confucius – page 206

1. This source is Primary or Secondary (circle one)

2. How do you know?

3. What is Confucius saying about learning in this analect? _____


4. I would use this source to argue that the examination system is good not good because...

II. Organizing Source Documents

You have just finished reading and understanding the source documents that you will use in your essay. Now you need to organize the sources into three groups (sometimes called “buckets”).

In the box below, write the source numbers for all of the sources you could use to support your argument that the Examination System was a **GOOD** way to select government officials in China.

BOX #1 GOOD



In the next box, write the source numbers for all of the sources you could use to support your argument that the Examination System was **NOT GOOD** as a way to select government officials in China.

BOX #2 NOT GOOD



In the third box, write the source numbers for all of the sources that could support an argument **EITHER WAY. (GOOD OR NOT GOOD)**

BOX #3 GOOD OR NOT GOOD

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Examine your boxes. Select the opinion that you will write about and complete the following chart:

I think the Examination System was a _____ way to select government officials during the Song Dynasty in China.

The sources I will use to make my argument are: (use at least 4 sources)

Source _____	because _____
Source _____	because _____
Source _____	because _____
Source _____	because _____

The sources I will use to make and refute my counter-argument are:

Source _____	because _____
Source _____	because _____
Source _____	because _____

III. Final Assignment/Planning your Essay

Based on the information you learned in class and the source documents you read, decide whether the Examination System during the Song Dynasty in China was a good way to select government officials.

Check the box that represents your judgment.

I do think the Examination System was a good way to select government officials.

I do not think the Examination System was a good way to select government officials.

Now that you have made your judgment, your task is to support this decision by writing an essay that responds to the following question:

“Was the Examination System during the Song Dynasty in China a good way to select government officials? Defend your position.”

Write a multi-paragraph essay that answers this question. Your answer should support your opinion with:

- information learned in class;
- evidence from the primary and secondary sources you have read (include important quotations);
- explanations of how the evidence you have chosen supports your thesis (answer);
- your response (counterargument) to evidence that could be used to argue for a different answer.

To help you get started, you may use the following frame for the first paragraph (or you may create your own first paragraph). If you chose to use the paragraph frame below, be sure to re-copy the ENTIRE paragraph on the answer document (which begins on page 20.)

The Chinese Examination System was a series of very difficult tests given to young men who wished to work as government officials. The Examination System during the Song Dynasty was _____ (a good way OR not a good way) to select government officials. One reason that the Examination System was _____ (a good way OR not a good way) to select government officials is _____

Another reason why the Examination System was (a good way OR not a good way) to select government officials is _____

Although the both views have supporting evidence, the most convincing evidence suggests that the Chinese Examination System was _____ (a good way OR not a good way) to select government officials.

Use the checklist below to help you complete your essay and to make sure that it is well-written. Begin your essay (including the first paragraph) on the lined pages following these directions.

An excellent piece of historical writing contains the following:

- ___ A title that prepares the reader for the specific topic and content of the essay (you may wish to write this after you've completed your essay);
- ___ A thoughtful, well-developed thesis that clearly identifies your argument;
- ___ An introduction that contains the thesis, and maps out (identifies) the major reasons used to support the thesis;
- ___ Body paragraphs, each addressing one of your major reasons, which contain a topic sentence (baby thesis) and supporting evidence, and links back to the argument you make in your introduction;
- ___ Use of primary and secondary sources, connection between sources, and explanation of what sources mean;
- ___ Counterargument – identification and response to different ideas about the Examination System during the Song Dynasty;
- ___ Fluid writing, precise language, and organization that move your argument forward;
- ___ A powerful conclusion that summarizes arguments and adds significance.

Name _____ Date _____
Teacher _____ School _____