



# Class 11

## THE CLASSICAL AGE EAST

**Title:**

**Class 11: The Classical Age East**

**Topics (CHAPTERS – Video lectures):**

**Class 11.** [Introduction Video](#)

**Chapter 1a Video.** [Byzantium – Sultan Ahmed – Turkey](#)

**Chapter 1b Video.** [Byzantium – Hagia Sophia & The Blue Mosque – Turkey](#)

**Chapter 2 Video.** [The Mongols – The Registan – Uzbekistan](#)

**Chapter 3a Video.** [The Great Wall of China – China](#)

**Chapter 3b Video.** [The Great Wall of China – China](#)

**Chapter 3c Video.** [The Great Wall of China – China](#)

**Subject/Course:** Civics, History, Geography, Religion, Ethics, Social Studies

**Grade:** Secondary School Level

**The Ages of Globalization book reference chapters:** Chapter 5. The Classical Age

Download your free copy of the AOG book [here](#).

[Timeline of Historical Events](#)

## Stage 1 – Desired Results



*In this section, you will find a detailed framework that outlines the overall learning goals, the enduring understandings, attitudes and values students will develop, essential questions students should be able to formulate and/or to provoke deep thinking and discussion, and specific learning outcomes that emphasize both knowledge and skills.*

### Established Goals:

#### Summary/Overarching:

Learners will examine the Classical Age through a balanced lens, exploring the often underrepresented perspectives of the East of Eurasia. This approach challenges the traditional Western-centric narrative that emphasizes the dominance of the Roman Empire and the triumph of the West. By

understanding the significant contributions of powerful Eastern civilizations, such as those in China and India, students will gain insight into the historical roots of a multipolar world and the ongoing rebalancing of global power, economy, and geopolitics.

### Enduring Understandings:

#### Students will...

- ▶ Understand that the advancements of the Classical Age took place in both West and East, despite the dominance of the Classical Age told from the Western centric point-of-view.

### Essential Questions

- ▶ What are the undertold advancements of the



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East during the Classical Age?

- ▶ How has geography and climate played a role in the empires of the Classical Age?

### Students will know...

- ▶ The untold story of the East during the Classical Age
- ▶ Balance of East and West in History
- ▶ Differences in Civilization (Democracy/Bureaucracy, Unity/Division)

- ▶ The Great Eurasian Landmass (Eastern and Western Roman Empire)
- ▶ Mongol Conquests
- ▶ China as a Unique, Stable, United Civilization

### Students will be able to...

- ▶ Identify the critical advancements during the Classical Age in the East.
- ▶ Research key advancements in their own region during the Classical Age.

## Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence



*In this section, you'll find key concepts and definitions essential for understanding the course material as well as activities, such as Vocabulary Flashcards, Check-Your-Facts and Fill-in-the-Blank to enhance your students' comprehension and retention. You can adapt these activities to suit various subjects and grade levels.*

### Concepts & Definition

*Familiarize yourself with the provided terms such as "Caliphs," "Han Dynasty," "Confucius," and others. Understanding these definitions will help you effectively teach the material and connect it to your lessons.*

### Vocabulary Activity

*Create physical flashcards for each term. This hands-on approach helps reinforce terminology and aids in building a solid foundation of knowledge. Encourage students to use these flashcards for review and practice.*

- ▶ **Caliphs:** A Caliph, in Islamic history, is the ruler of the Muslim [community](#). While the term khalifah (plural khulafā') appears in the [Qur'an](#) referring to humans as God's [stewards](#) or vice-regents on Earth, it did not represent a formal political or religious institution during the Prophet [Muhammad's](#) lifetime. The concept

of the Caliphate evolved into an institution following Muhammad's death on June 8, 632 CE. (Source: Britannica)

- ▶ **Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Mansur:** Al-Mansur was the second [caliph](#) (ruler) of the 'Abbasid dynasty, which ruled over the eastern Islamic world from 750 to 1258. He reigned from 754 to 775. Most historians consider him the real founder of the dynasty because he unified the empire's power. Al-Mansur turned the focus of the empire from North Africa and the Mediterranean to the east and established the capital city at [Baghdad](#) (now in Iraq). He also arranged the succession in favor of his son, al-Mahdi, and every future 'Abbasid caliph could trace his descent directly to al-Mansur. (Britannica Kids)
- ▶ **Han Dynasty:** is the second great imperial [dynasty](#) of [China](#) (206 BCE–220 CE), after the [Zhou dynasty](#) (1046–256 BCE). It succeeded the [Qin dynasty](#) (221–207 BCE). So thoroughly did the Han [dynasty](#) establish what was thereafter considered Chinese [culture](#) that "Han" became the Chinese word denoting someone who is ethnically Chinese. (Britannica)
- ▶ **Song Dynasty:** In 1000, 1100, 1200, and 1300, China was the most advanced place in the world. Marco Polo (1254-1324) recognized this when he got to China in the late 13th century after traveling through much of Asia. fostered the Crusades and witnessed the rise of Venice, the mercantile center that was Marco Polo's home. A magnificent picture scroll



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painted by a Chinese artist in the 12th century provides us with a look at society and urban life in China during this time. For several centuries the Chinese economy had grown spectacularly: “Between ... 960 and ... 1127, China passed through a phase of economic growth that was unprecedented in earlier Chinese history, perhaps in world history up to this time. It depended on a combination of commercialization, urbanization, and industrialization that has led some authorities to compare this period in Chinese history with the development of early modern Europe six centuries later.” During the Song (Sung) Dynasty (960-1276), technology was highly advanced in fields as diverse as [agriculture](#), [iron-working](#), and [printing](#). Indeed, scholars today talk of a Song economic revolution. The [population](#) grew rapidly during this time, and more and more people lived in [cities](#). The Song system of government was also advanced for its time. The upper-levels of the government were staffed by highly educated scholar-officials selected through [competitive written examinations](#). Why else is the Song Dynasty so significant? Many ways of living and acting that are now seen as “Chinese,” or even characteristically East Asian, did not appear before the Song. Rice and tea are historically important crops/staple foods in China; but most Chinese during the previous Tang dynasty and before ate wheat and millet and drank wine. Rice and tea became the dominant food and drink in the Song. China’s population is large, and tends to “explode” in certain periods; its first explosion occurred in the Song. Many Chinese are “Confucians”; but the kind of Confucianism that served as government orthodoxy throughout late-imperial times was a Song reinvention. Chinese women are known to have bound their feet; but they did not bind them until the Song. Even the “Chinese” roof with its turned-up corners is by origin a Song Chinese roof. (2) Yet, despite its political and economic strengths, Song China was not able to dominate its neighbors militarily. Central to its engagement with the outside world were efforts to maintain peace with its [powerful northern neighbors](#) and extend its [trading networks](#). ([Asia for Educators, Columbia University](#))

- ▶ **Confucius:** Confucius was a philosopher and teacher who lived from 551 to 479 B.C.E. His thoughts on ethics, good behavior, and moral character were written down by his disciples in several books, the most

important being the *Lunyu*. (National Geographic)

- ▶ **Confucianism:** Confucianism, one of the most influential philosophies in Chinese history, has shaped Chinese culture and society for over 2,500 years. Rooted in inner virtue, morality, and respect for community values, it emphasizes personal ethics and a harmonious social order. While its classification as a religion or philosophy remains debated, Confucianism promotes ancestor worship and human-centered virtues as the path to a peaceful life. Its guiding principle, the golden rule, is: “Do not do unto others what you would not want others to do unto you.” This belief system continues to be a cornerstone of Chinese thought and cultural identity. (National Geographic)
- ▶ **Qin Shi Huang** (born c. 259 BCE, Qin state, northwestern China—died 210 BCE, Hebei) was the [emperor](#) (reigned 221–210 BCE) of the [Qin dynasty](#) (221–207 BCE) and creator of the first unified [Chinese empire](#) (which collapsed, however, less than four years after his death). (Britannica)
- ▶ **Pax Mongolica:** The Pax Mongolica ushered in an era of stability and commerce that successfully connected Europe and East Asia. The Pax Mongolica, Latin for “Mongol peace,” describes a period of relative stability in Eurasia under the Mongol Empire during the 13th and 14th centuries. The Pax Mongolica brought a period of stability among the people who lived in the conquered territory. (National Geographic)
- ▶ **Mongols:** Mongol, member of a Central Asian ethnographic group of closely related tribal peoples who live mainly on the Mongolian Plateau and share a common language and nomadic tradition. Their homeland is now divided into the independent country of Mongolia (Outer Mongolia) and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China. (Britannica)
- ▶ **Genghis Khan:** Genghis Khan is the most famous ruler in all of Mongolia’s history. Khan’s empire occupied a large piece of modern day Asia, including most of China.



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### Check-Your-Facts / Review Questions

*Utilize this activity to promote critical thinking by having students verify and analyze information related to the concepts and definitions.*

- 1. What are some of the Great Empires of this Classical Age?** (Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome, India, China) and later the (Ottoman and Mongol empires) who competed for glory, beliefs, wealth and power and ambition.
- 2. How did ancient Greek learning influence Arab caliphs and Islamic philosophers?** (The caliphs and philosophers methodically studied and translated the ancient Greek volumes into Arabic, a principal route by which the Greek treasures have survived to the present. Throughout the Islamic world, great philosophers, including Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and later Ibn Rushd (Averroes), followed in the path of Philo and Origen by incorporating Aristotelian science and ethics into Islamic thinking and wisdom.)
- 3. How did papermaking know-how make its way from the Chinese to the Arab world?** (As described by Violet Moller, the art of making paper from fibrous plants was transferred to the Arab world by two Chinese soldiers captured in battle, leading to the first paper mill in the Muslim world in Samarkand in 751, with the know-how arriving in Baghdad some 40 years later.)
- 4. What are some of the innovations that flowed into ancient China from the West that spurred China's own capacity for technological innovation?** (Fighting on horseback (from western steppes); ox-drawn plow from Near East; glassware (from the Mediterranean); astronomical ideas (from South Asia))
- 5. How long did the Han Dynasty last?** (About 400 years, from 206 BCE to 220 CE).
- 6. What was a factor that affected China's inability to fully succeed in incorporating its southern tropical neighbors into its rule?** (The climate barrier ultimately set the limit of imperial expansion.)
- 7. What are some of the spectacular breakthroughs and homegrown technologies under the Han Empire?** (Papermaking, navigation (the rudder), mathematics (negative numbers, solution of equations), flood

control (along the Yellow River), the waterwheel, metallurgy (wrought iron), and the seismometer; The empire also invented a model of administration that would last throughout China's history - a centralized national government with Confucianism codified as the state ideology.)

- 8. What are some of the most spectacular breakthroughs under the Song Dynasty?** (The technological innovations of the Song era, propelled by urbanization, peace, prosperity, and market forces, were astounding—one of the greatest technological flowerings of human history. The Song age brought major advances in navigation, including the nautical compass, the rudder, improved shipbuilding, and other maritime technologies; gunpowder and artillery; the moveable-type printing press, roughly two centuries before Gutenberg; structural engineering; metallurgy; artisanal ware, including fine porcelain and silk textiles; mechanical clocks; paper currency; and institutions of banking, insurance, and joint-stock enterprises. These advances gradually found their way west along the steppes and lucky latitudes to Venice and on to Western Europe.)
- 9. Why might the Song Dynasty might justly be considered the world's first large scale capitalist economy?** (Land was privately owned, merchant families invested in joint-stock companies, international trade was open, harbors were improved, and Chinese ocean-based trade expanded throughout the Indian Ocean to East Africa and the Red Sea.)

### Fill-In-The-Blank

*Incorporate this activity to assess students' understanding of key concepts and historical periods. Provide a word bank to support their learning and check their grasp of the material.*

1. Most of the world population in most of world history has been in the continent of **(Asia)**.
2. The two capitals of the Roman Empire were in **(Rome)** for the Roman Empire in the West and **(Constantinople)** of the Eastern Roman Empire of the East in present day's city of **(Istanbul)**.



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- The **(Ottoman)** Empire took over the prior Roman Empire.
- The Abbasid caliph **(Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Mansur)** moved the capital of the caliphate from **(Damascus)** to a new City of Peace **(Madinat-al-Salam)**, today's **(Baghdad)** and attracted scholars to the new city and embarked on a huge mission of translating ancient texts from Greek to Arabic.
- Mansur's grandson and successor as caliph established the Bayt-al-Hikmah **(House of Wisdom)** as Baghdad's great library and repository of ancient and current knowledge. Fortuitously, a great invention arrived in Baghdad at the same time: **(papermaking)**, a Chinese innovation.
- Emperor **(Qin Shi Huang)** first united China in 221 BCE. The Qin Dynasty **(221 - 206 BCE)** was followed by **(Han Dynasty)**.
- Around 1 CE, the stability of the Han Empire was marked by internal peace, high productivity of grain and animal farm systems with technological breakthroughs; which, in turn, resulted in a population of around 60 million people. The Roman Empire at that time reached around 45 million people. The Han and Roman empires together accounted for roughly **(one-half)** of the world's population.
- The **(steppe regions)** provided the highways along the so-called Silk Road that connected **(Rome)** with the **(Han Empire)**.
  - Matching:**
    - Silk flowed from : China to Rome
    - Glassware flowed from : Mediterranean to China
    - Buddhism : China to northern India in 65 CE
- (Genghis Khan)** was a Mongol warlord who defeated rival Mongol leaders and declared himself king of all the Mongols in 1206. From that point, he and his successors led the Mongol armies of tens of thousands of horsemen into conquests of China, Central Asia, Russia, the Caucasus, West Asia, and Eastern Europe.
- One intriguing hypothesis as to the extraordinary burst of Mongol military might is a **(climate period)** especially suited to livestock. In particular, there were fifteen consecutive years of above-average moisture that was "unprecedented over the last 1,112 years." "These climate conditions promoted high grassland productivity and favored the formation of Mongol political and military power." In essence, exceptionally good rains led to good grasses, which fueled the horsepower to conquer Eurasia.
- It was on the Mongol Silk Road that **(Marco Polo)** took his famed journey to Khanbaliq **(today's Beijing)**, Kublai Khan's capital in China.
- China was recaptured by **(Han)** rulers in 1378, ending a century of Mongol rule and ushering in the Ming Dynasty. Other Mongol khanates lasted longer, but generally were overtaken by local powers.
- The final remarkable attempt was due to an ethnic Turk, born near Samarkand **(modern-day Uzbekistan)**, who took his inspiration from Genghis Khan. Timur, known to the West as Tamerlane - Timur the Lame- because of injuries he had incurred as a youth, was born circa 1330, roughly 170 years after Genghis Khan. While Timur was not a direct descendant of Genghis, and was ethnically **(Turco-Mongol)** rather than Mongol, he claimed a common ancestor with Genghis and depicted his conquests as serving to restore the rightful rule of the Mongols. He also declared his conquests to be in the name of Islam.

### Stage 3 – Learning Activities



*In this section, you will find the different learning activities associated with this specific Class. We recommend that you begin by watching the lecture videos as a basis for the course and as a primary element for the course content. Interactive reference maps are mentioned in the lectures and activities.*

### Lecture Videos

**Class 11.** [Introduction Video](#)

**Chapter 1a Video.** [Byzantium – Sultan Ahmed – Turkey](#)



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**Chapter 1b Video.** [Byzantium – Hagia Sophia & The Blue Mosque – Turkey](#)

**Chapter 2 Video.** [The Mongols – The Registan – Uzbekistan](#)

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**Chapter 3b Video.** [The Great Wall of China – China](#)

**Chapter 3c Video.** [The Great Wall of China – China](#)

5.6 Silk Road, 1st Century CE (AOG Book)

5.8 The Umayyad Empire, 700 CE

5.9 The Ottoman Empire, 1566 CE

5.10 The Song Dynasty, 1200 CE

5.11 The Mongol Empire at its Maximum Extent, 1259 CE

5.12 The Timurid Empire, 1400 AD

### Reference Map

<https://sdgstoday-sdsn.hub.arcgis.com/pages/aog-class-11>

### Timeline

[http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/timelines/china\\_timeline.htm](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/timelines/china_timeline.htm)

## Summary



*In this section, you can find a summary of this Class for your reference. Chapter summaries provide insight into the era discussed in each class period. Should you have issues watching the videos, e.g. due to internet bandwidth, the summaries provide some of the key insight you can build on.*

- ▶ The Classical Age spanned from 1000 BCE to 1500 CE, witnessing the rise of major religions and philosophies, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, as well as the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, and the Buddha.
- ▶ Powerful empires such as Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome, India, China, and later the Ottoman and Mongol empires thrived during this time, actively engaging in globalization efforts.
- ▶ These empires disseminated ideas, technologies, and institutions on a continental scale, aided by technological advancements in agriculture, transportation, and warfare.
- ▶ The Axial Age, from 800 to 300 BCE, marked a period of simultaneous philosophical and religious insights across civilizations.
- ▶ Written scripts facilitated the preservation of foundational texts and philosophies, while civilizations diversified into thalassocracy and tellurocracy.

- ▶ Phoenicians exemplified thalassocracy, establishing trade networks and developing alphabets.
- ▶ The Achaemenid Persian Empire, founded by Cyrus the Great, expanded its territories, while Greek city-states engaged in conflicts like the Persian-Greek and Peloponnesian Wars.
- ▶ Alexander the Great's conquests spread Greek culture, influencing subsequent civilizations like Rome.
- ▶ Islamic scholars preserved and translated Greek texts, contributing to the revival of Greek wisdom in the Islamic world.
- ▶ China, under the Han Dynasty, focused on agriculture and experienced significant population growth.
- ▶ The Roman and Han empires dominated the Eurasian world, characterized by high population densities and long-distance trade routes like the Silk Road.
- ▶ Despite political instability, the Classical Age saw significant advancements and interactions, shaping modern civilizations and inspiring entities like the European Union, China, and the Islamic world.



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### Activities



#### Journal Activity

##### Journal Prompts

- ▶ “Confucianism is a philosophy and belief system from ancient China, which laid the foundation for much of Chinese culture. Confucianism believes in ancestor worship and human-centered virtues for living a peaceful life.” (National Geographic)
- ▶ What is an influential/foundational belief system that has affected your culture? Where does the belief system originate? How has it influenced your culture? How has it influenced your family / you?

#### Community Engagement & Student Action Considerations & Capstone Project

##### Capstone Project

In this lesson, we learned that it is important to understand various perspectives to find the truth. Consider the following statement: History is written by the victors. Consider your community/country. What perspectives have been the primary narrative? Why are they important to understand when looking at how your community came to be? Why are those perspectives important to understand when finding solutions to societal and community challenges?

##### References

**Confucius, Miles Menander Dawson, and American institute for scientific research. The Ethics of Confucius. New York: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1915.**

The Ethics of Confucius. Chapter 1. What constitutes the superior man. p.6-43

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/ia.ark:/13960/t4vh5n684>

**On THE CONFUCIAN POLITICAL IDEAL. Chinese Political Philosophy, By William Sumner Appleton Pott.**

**Read page 52 to page 56** [https://books.google.com/books?id=TcNGAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=in-author:%22William+Sumner+Appleton+Pott%22&hl=en&newbks=1&newbks\\_redir=0&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjL-jKqYw5eEAXUDj4kEHTtVBloQ6AF6BAgKEAI#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=TcNGAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=in-author:%22William+Sumner+Appleton+Pott%22&hl=en&newbks=1&newbks_redir=0&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjL-jKqYw5eEAXUDj4kEHTtVBloQ6AF6BAgKEAI#v=onepage&q&f=false)

Of the destruction of the ROMAN EMPIRE after the death of Constantine and the events which hastened its catastrophe. The Roman History: From the Foundation of the City of Rome, to the ..., Volume 2

By Oliver Goldsmith Pages 492-503

<https://books.google.com/books/content?id=qpHprcnuQ4C&pg=PA492&img=1&zoom=3&hl=en&sig=AC-fU3U3fRMRk2DcjbpxDXSvJ8D3vY5fcUiA&ci=209%2C449%2C757%2C136&edge=0>

**Roman Art: A Resource for Educators** By Nancy Lorraine Thompson, Philippe De Montebello, John Kent Lydecker, Carlos A. Picón **Read pages 70-73 and discuss the questions given on page 73**

[https://books.google.com/books?id=vmQNF0K2xig-C&newbks=1&newbks\\_redir=0&lpg=PA26&dq=Eastern%20Roman%20Empire%20Constantinople%20images&pg=PA71#v=onepage&q=constantinople&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=vmQNF0K2xig-C&newbks=1&newbks_redir=0&lpg=PA26&dq=Eastern%20Roman%20Empire%20Constantinople%20images&pg=PA71#v=onepage&q=constantinople&f=false)

Five Dynasties of China. **The World of Khubilai Khan: Chinese Art in the Yuan Dynasty** By James C. Y. Watt

[https://books.google.com/books?id=nCIPD1V39Qk-C&newbks=1&newbks\\_redir=0&lpg=PP1&dq=yuan%20dynasty&pg=PR13#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=nCIPD1V39Qk-C&newbks=1&newbks_redir=0&lpg=PP1&dq=yuan%20dynasty&pg=PR13#v=onepage&q&f=false)

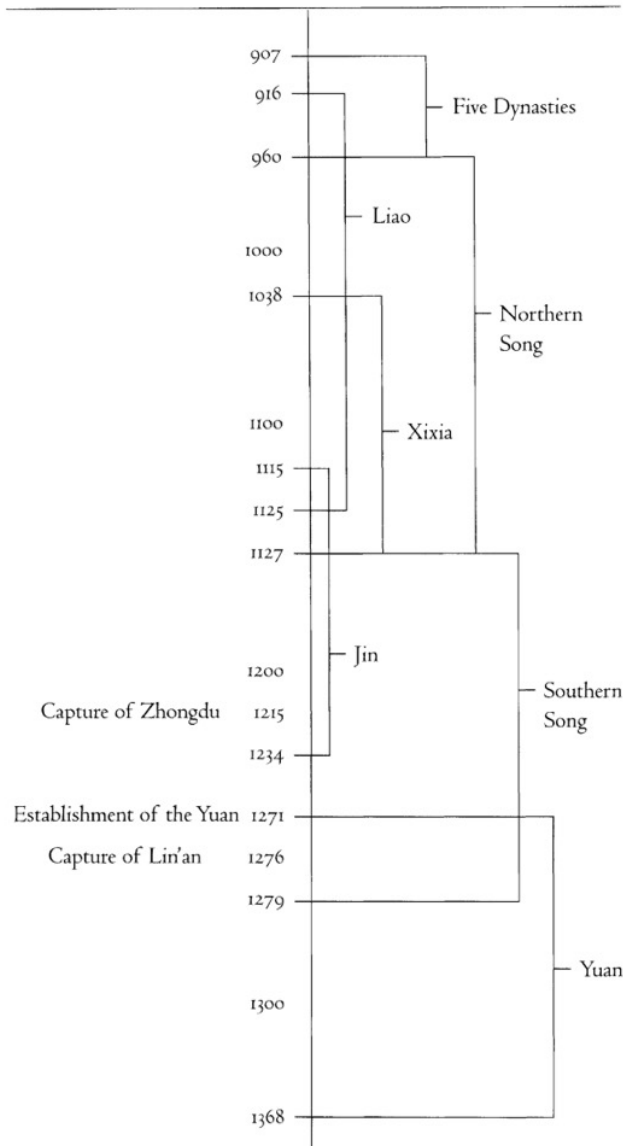
- ▶ See the maps of the Yuan Dynasty xv-xv11
- ▶ The Architecture of the Living and the Dying pages 65-73 [https://books.google.com/books?id=nCIPD1V39Qk-C&newbks=1&newbks\\_redir=0&lpg=PP1&dq=yuan%20dynasty&pg=PA65#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=nCIPD1V39Qk-C&newbks=1&newbks_redir=0&lpg=PP1&dq=yuan%20dynasty&pg=PA65#v=onepage&q&f=false)



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### Chronology



#### EMPERORS OF THE YUAN DYNASTY

Emperors' Posthumous Temple Names	Reign Dates
Shizu	1271–1294
Chengzong	1295–1307
Wuzong	1308–1311
Renzong	1312–1320
Yingzong	1321–1323
Taidingdi	1324–1328
Wenzong	1328–1329
Mingzong	1329
Wenzong	1330–1332*
	(*restored to throne)
Ningzong	1332
Shundi	1333–1368





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### Source:

[https://books.google.com/books?id=nCIPD1V39Qk-C&newbks=1&newbks\\_redir=0&lpg=PP1&dq=yuan%20dynasty&pg=PR13#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=nCIPD1V39Qk-C&newbks=1&newbks_redir=0&lpg=PP1&dq=yuan%20dynasty&pg=PR13#v=onepage&q&f=false).

[https://books.google.com/books?id=nCIPD1V39Qk-C&newbks=1&newbks\\_redir=0&lpg=PP1&dq=yuan%20dynasty&pg=PR13#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=nCIPD1V39Qk-C&newbks=1&newbks_redir=0&lpg=PP1&dq=yuan%20dynasty&pg=PR13#v=onepage&q&f=false).

\*Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005) Understanding by design (2nd ed.).  
Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum  
Development ASCD