The Byzantine Empire

Overview
In this lesson, students learn about the rise of the Byzantine Empire and how it developed a separate religious tradition from western Europe. In a Visual Discovery activity, students read about and act out images that represent Constantinople, Justinian’s rule, the development of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the schism between Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians in 1054. Afterward, they share what they’ve learned by creating real estate advertisements that encourage people to move to Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire.

Objectives
Students will
• explain the importance of the city of Constantinople as a trading hub and how it emerged as the capital of the Byzantine Empire.
• describe the importance of the reign of Justinian I and the lasting impact of the new code of laws organized during his reign.
• trace the development of the Eastern Orthodox Church and its relations with the west.

Materials
• History Alive! The Medieval World and Beyond
• Interactive Student Notebooks
• Transparencies 6A–6E
• Placards 6A–6H
• Student Handout 6A (1 per group of 4)
• Student Handout 6B (1 per student)
• CD Track 5
• construction paper (in 7 colors)
• masking tape
**Preview**

1. **Review the intent of the Preview.** This Preview is designed to show students how the city of Constantinople thrived as a trading hub. This activity helps students understand why Constantinople became the capital of the Byzantine Empire.

2. **Prepare materials and the classroom.** Cut construction paper into 2-inch squares to create 7 sets of 28 trading tokens, each set a different color. Use masking tape to create a trading hub and seven routes as shown in the diagram. *(Note: Make some routes longer than others and some routes wavy to represent the varying distances traders traveled and they fact that some traveled by land and others by water.)* Place four desks at the end of each trade route to represent different regions of the world. Place a set of tokens at each group of desks.

3. **Introduce the Preview activity.** Tell students they will participate in an activity to learn how an important trading site in the Mediterranean functioned during the Middle Ages. Each student, representing a trader from one of seven regions of the world, will have seven trade tokens, representing trade goods from that region, and must exchange them with traders from other regions. The object is to accumulate the greatest variety of trade goods—as many of the seven colors of tokens as possible—for their region. The group with the greatest *variety* (not quantity) of tokens will win. Review these rules for trading (perhaps making a transparency of the rules to project while reviewing them):
   - All trading must take place in the trading hub at the center of the room.
   - Traders can bring only one token into the trading hub at a time.
   - To reach the trading hub, traders must walk, single file, along the tape.
   - Traders can trade for only one color of token while in the trading hub.
   - Once a trade is completed, a trader must return to his or her region and pick up another token before trading again.
   - Traders may not exchange tokens with members of their own group.
   - Traders may not travel to other regions.

4. **Have students trade.** Divide the class into seven groups. Have each group go to a trading region, and remind them that they will work together to trade for as many different colors of tokens as possible. Make sure students trade for only one color of token while in the trading hub and then return to their region to pick up another token. Continue the activity until at least one group has accumulated all seven colors.

5. **Debrief the activity.** Have each group tally their tokens. Ask a representative from each group to share how many of each color they acquired. *(Note: You might reward bonus points or candy to groups who acquired all seven colors.)* Then hold a class discussion centering on these questions: *How did you feel during the activity? What did you like about trading?*
Lesson 6

What was difficult about it? Was it easy to acquire different colors once you reached the trading hub? Explain. Where do you think one of the most important trading hubs was located during the Middle Ages?

6 Project Transparency 6A: Lands and Trading Routes of the Byzantine Empire and have students complete Preview 6 in their Interactive Student Notebooks. Guide them by using details from the image and the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Experience</th>
<th>Historical Connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students were members of different groups.</td>
<td>Traders came from various regions of the world, such as Africa, France, and China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students traded different colors of tokens.</td>
<td>Various goods were traded during the Middle Ages, such as ivory, wool, and silk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokens had to be traded in the trading hub.</td>
<td>Many traders came to Constantinople to trade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students could trade for only one token at a time.</td>
<td>Traders could carry only limited supplies of goods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students walked along strips of tape to trade.</td>
<td>Traders traveled to Constantinople by land and water routes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups finished the activity with a variety of token colors.</td>
<td>Traders brought new products to their homes after trading in Constantinople.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graphic Organizer

1 Introduce Chapter 6 in History Alive! The Medieval World and Beyond. Tell students that in this chapter they will learn about the development of the Byzantine Empire and its political and religious traditions. Have them read Section 6.1. Make sure they understand the meanings of the boldfaced key terms, which are defined in the Glossary. When they have finished, ask, Where was the Byzantine Empire located? How did life in the Byzantine Empire seem different from life in medieval Europe? (Note: You may want to have students use the Prereading Handout in this Lesson Guide to conduct a prereading of the chapter.)

2 Introduce the graphic organizer. Ask students to examine the illustration on page 61. Ask, What do you see? What key place is indicated on the map? What might the buildings represent? What do you think the fence represents? Explain that students will use this map to learn about the development of the Byzantine Empire and its separate political and religious traditions.
Visual Discovery

Before class, post Placards 6A–6H: Elements from an Eastern Orthodox Church on the walls to create eight stations. Cue CD Track 5, “Pascha Ieron,” in the CD player. Seat students in mixed-ability groups of four. Tell them they will now analyze images and read sections in History Alive! The Medieval World and Beyond to learn about the rise of the Byzantine Empire and how it developed a separate religious tradition from western Europe.

Constantinople

1 Project Transparency 6B: Constantinople and have students analyze the image. Ask, What do you see here? (Consider having volunteers come to the screen to point out details.) What types of physical features do you see? What buildings stand out? What do you think they are used for? What features protect the city from invaders? What allows people to reach this city easily? Why do you think this city was called a “crossroads”?

2 Have students read Section 6.2 and complete the corresponding Reading Notes. Have them share their responses, and use Guide to Reading Notes 6 to review the main points with the class.

The Reign of Justinian I

1 Project Transparency 6C: The Court of Justinian and have students analyze the image. Ask, What do you see here? (You might have volunteers point out details.) Who stands out in this image? Why does he stand out? This is Justinian, a famous Byzantine ruler. What do you notice about the figures standing next to him? What roles do you think they played in his court? What does this image say about Justinian’s power?

2 Have students read Section 6.3 and complete the corresponding Reading Notes. Have them share their responses, and review the main points with the class.

3 Pass out Student Handout 6A: Creating an Act-It-Out About Justinian to each group and have students prepare for and perform an act-it-out.

- Assign each group one of these characters: church official, general, Justinian, legal advisor, Procopius, or Theodora. (Note: With larger classes, assign some roles to more than one group.)
- Tell students they will have 10 minutes to prepare an act-it-out to bring to life a scene in Justinian’s palace. Make sure they understand that they are responsible for portraying only their assigned character.
- Explain that because Procopius and Theodora are not pictured, actors representing those characters will stand to the left and right of the projected image during the act-it-out. The class will pretend these characters are speaking from another room in Justinian’s palace.
- Review the guidelines on the handout with students.
• When the class is ready, randomly select one student from each group to “step into” the projected image and take on the various roles, with Procopius and Theodora standing to the far left and right.

• During the act-it-out, interview the characters using the questions from the handout. Begin by asking Justinian and his entourage questions first, and then interview Procopius and Theodora.

The Eastern Orthodox Church

1 Project Transparency 6D: Interior of Hagia Sophia and have students analyze the image. Remind them that this structure was first built during the reign of Justinian. Ask a few students to come stand in front of the image as though they have just entered Hagia Sophia. Prompt them to think about the feelings such a structure inspires by asking, What do you see? (Encourage them to touch items they mention.) What is the mood like in this building? What types of activities might take place here? What aspects of the architecture strike you as interesting? How high do you think the dome is? (It reaches 180 feet, or 12 stories above the floor.) How does the building’s size make you feel? What do you notice about the lighting? Why do you think light might be important in a church?

2 Have students read Section 6.4 and complete the corresponding notes. Have them share their responses, and review the main points with them.

3 Review the directions for analyzing Eastern Orthodox religious objects. Tell students they will now analyze objects and people that would be found in an Eastern Orthodox Church, such as Hagia Sophia, during Justinian’s reign. Distribute Student Handout 6B: Analyzing Aspects of Eastern Orthodoxy to each student, and review these directions:
   • With another student from your group, examine one of the posted placards. (Note: Students work in pairs. For large classes, have two pairs work at each station at the same time.)
   • Use details from your notes and your book to answer the question on the placard. Write your answer on the handout.
   • Have the teacher check your work.
   • Repeat the process until you have examined all eight images.

4 Have students analyze the images. Play CD Track 5 to establish an appropriate mood. When a pair has finished with a placard, have both students raise their hands to indicate that they are ready for you to check their work. Use the list that follows to verify their answers. If correct, have them proceed to another station. Repeat this process until most pairs have analyzed all eight placards. (Note: You may wish to share with students that the music they are listening to is called “plainsong chant” and was used to recite prayers in the early Christian church.)
   • Placard 6A: Mary; according to Eastern Orthodox belief, she is the god-bearer. St. Basil; according to Orthodox belief, he promoted charity and reformed the liturgy.
• **Placard 6B**: Icon; many Orthodox Christians believe sacred pictures bring them closer to God. Jesus, or the Pantocrator, holding a gospel and giving a blessing; according to Eastern Orthodox belief, he rules all.

• **Placard 6C**: Mary; according to Eastern Orthodox belief, she is the god-bearer. Emperors Constantine and Justinian; Orthodox Christians during Byzantine times believed that emperors were living representations of God and Jesus. Greek writing; Greek is the language of the Orthodox liturgy. Dome on the church in Justinian’s hands; according to Orthodox belief, it represents heaven.

• **Placard 6D**: Greek prayer book; Greek is the language of the Orthodox liturgy. Richly decorated altar; according to Orthodox belief, these decorations remind worshipers of what it will be like to enter God’s kingdom.

• **Placard 6E**: Jesus; according to Eastern Orthodox belief, he is the ruler of all. Emperors; Orthodox Christians during Byzantine times believed that emperors were living representations of God and Jesus. Greek writing; Greek is the language of the Orthodox liturgy.

• **Placard 6F**: Mary; according to Eastern Orthodox belief, she is the god-bearer. Jesus; according to Eastern Orthodox belief, he is the ruler of all. Brightly colored mural; Orthodox Christians believe sacred pictures help bring them closer to God and remind them of what it will be like to enter God’s kingdom.

• **Placard 6G**: Icon; many Orthodox Christians believe sacred pictures bring them closer to God. St. Cyril; he helped create the Cyrillic alphabet, which allowed scholars to translate the Bible for people in eastern Europe to read.

• **Placard 6H**: Patriarch; he is a leading member in the Orthodox Church hierarchy. Rich decorations; according to Orthodox belief, such decorations remind worshipers of what God’s kingdom will be like.

**Conflict Between East and West**

1. **Project Transparency 6E: Emperor Leo V and Patriarch Nicephorus I and have students analyze the image.** Ask, *What do you see here?* (Consider having volunteers point out details.) Describe the two men who are seated. What positions do you think they hold in Byzantine society? What do the two men on the right appear to be doing? Why might their actions upset many Christians?

2. **Have students read Section 6.5 and complete the corresponding notes.** Have them share their responses, and review the main points with them.

3. **Have students reexamine Transparency 6E.** Encourage them to use what they learned in Section 6.5 to answer these questions: What is happening here? What are the two men on the right doing? Who are the two seated figures? How did events like these affect relations between leaders of the Byzantine Empire and those in medieval Europe?
Processing
Have students complete Processing 6 in their Interactive Student Notebooks.

Assessment
Masters for assessment appear on the next three pages.


10. Student should write three sentences about the given topics that incorporate the given words.

Online Resources
For more information on Unit 1: Europe During Medieval Times, refer students to Online Resources for History Alive! The Medieval World and Beyond at www.historyalive.com/historyalive, where they will find the following resources and assignments:
• excerpts from primary sources and literature
• biographies of people important in the history of medieval Europe
• Internet research project and links to related Web sites for more in-depth exploration
• enrichment essays and activities

Options for Students with Special Needs
See page 440 for tips on adapting this lesson to meet the needs of
• English language learners.
• learners reading and writing below grade level.
• learners with special education needs.
• advanced learners.
1. Which of the following events happened first?
- The Roman pope excommunicated Cerularius.
- The Roman and eastern churches split.
- The Roman capital moved to Byzantium.
- The Roman Empire fell.

2. Consider this about Constantinople:
- It was surrounded on three sides by water.
- It was located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia.
- Its harbor could be easily guarded against attack.
- It was 800 miles east of Rome.

How can you best characterize these features of Constantinople?
- They are military benefits.
- They are geographic features.
- They are economic benefits.
- They are political features.

3. Byzantine emperor Leo III established the policy of iconoclasm because
- he wanted to have more paintings of Jesus in the churches.
- he believed people needed pictures to help them pray to God.
- he thought people were worshiping pictures rather than God.
- he did not like the style of the religious paintings in Constantinople.

4. After the riots of 532, who was responsible for rebuilding Constantinople?
- Charlemagne
- Justinian
- Constantine
- Leo III

5. What conclusion can you draw from this passage?

_The Byzantines viewed the emperor not just as the head of the government but as the living representative of God and Jesus Christ._
- The Byzantine Empire united church and state.
- The Byzantine people rebelled against the emperor.
- The Byzantine government struggled to maintain power.
- The Byzantine church weakened the government.

6. In religious matters, what best describes the power structure in the Byzantine Empire?
- The pope had power over the bishops.
- The emperor had power over the patriarch.
- The patriarch had power over the bishops.
- The emperor and pope were equals.

7. What does the dome of Hagia Sophia represent?
- the emperor’s power
- earthly life
- peace
- heaven

8. What best describes the economic situation of people in Constantinople?
- Taxes paid by the wealthy supported the poor.
- The poor worked in exchange for bread.
- The consul passed laws that made it illegal to be poor.
- Military service provided the best way out of poverty.
9. Compare and contrast medieval Europe and the Byzantine Empire by completing the Venn diagram. List similarities in the overlapping parts of the ovals, and differences in the parts of the ovals that do not overlap. Include information on each of these topics:

- work and wealth
- cultural influences
- power
- religion
10. Around the drawing of an Eastern Orthodox church, use each given word to write a sentence about that topic in the related box.

*Topic: Church Hierarchy*

*Topic: Architecture and Art*

*Topic: Liturgy and Prayer*
You will work in your group to bring to life a scene in Justinian’s palace. Your teacher will assign a character to your group. When it is time, one member of your group will be selected to play the part of the character. A reporter will interview the characters.

**Step 1:** Circle the character your group has been assigned.

- church official
- general
- Justini an
- legal advisor
- Procopius
- Theodora

**Step 2:** Discuss the questions for your character. Make sure everyone in your group can answer your characters’ questions so that everyone is prepared to be the actor.

- **Questions for Justinian:** Who are you? What event caused you to start rebuilding parts of Constantinople? How successful have your military expeditions been? Why is Justinian’s Code considered such an achievement?
- **Questions for church official, general, and legal advisor:** Who are you? What are you holding? What have you done to help Justinian build the Byzantine Empire? How would you describe Justinian? Is he a good ruler? What are some of his accomplishments?
- **Questions for Procopius:** Who are you? What role do you play in Justinian’s court? As official court historian, have you described Justinian’s reign? What do you say about his reign in your *Secret History*?
- **Questions for Theodora:** Who are you? How have you helped Justinian? What do you think Constantinople’s most outstanding feature is? Why? How has Justinian’s Code helped women in Constantinople?

**Step 3:** Discuss how the person who is chosen to perform can make the character come alive. Use visual and written information to make the characterization realistic. Collect simple props that you can use during the act-it-out.
Examine each placard, and find the matching image below. Next to the image, write your answer to this question: *What aspects of Eastern Orthodox beliefs do you see in this image, and why are they important?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placard 6A</th>
<th>Placard 6B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Placard 6C</td>
<td>Placard 6D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placard 6E</td>
<td>Placard 6F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placard 6G</td>
<td>Placard 6H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Read Sections 6.2 to 6.5 of *History Alive! The Medieval World and Beyond* and answer the corresponding questions.

### 6.2 Constantinople

1. Why was Constantinople ideally located to be the capital of the Byzantine Empire?

   Constantinople was easy to defend and it lay at the crossroads of many sea and overland trade routes linking east and west.

2. What were some of Constantinople’s main features?

   Constantinople was surrounded by water on three sides and fortified by miles of walls with watchtowers and gates. A large chain protected the mouth of its harbor. The city had a sewer system, hospitals, homes for the elderly, and orphanages.

3. What was daily life like in Constantinople?

   Life in Constantinople was more advanced than in western Europe. The city’s language and culture were Greek, but traders and visitors spoke many languages. Most people lived in poverty. Many people attended chariot races. The emperor gave bread to the unemployed, who did public works in exchange.

### 6.5 Conflict Between East and West

1. Why did Byzantine emperor Leo III forbid the use of icons in 730? How did the pope react to Leo’s order?

   Leo III believed that people were wrongly worshiping the icons themselves. Pope Gregory III excommunicated the emperor.

2. What event in 800 increased tensions between the east and west?

   In 800 Leo crowned Charlemagne, the king of the Franks, as Holy Roman emperor. This outraged the Byzantines, who felt they were the rightful rulers of the Roman Empire.

3. How did the relationship between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church change in 1054?

   In 1054 a schism, or formal division, resulted in the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church becoming two separate Christian churches.
6.3 The Reign of Justinian I
1. What event forced Justinian to start rebuilding parts of Constantinople?

Large parts of the city were ruined when fighting in the Hippodrome spilled into the streets and escalated into a rebellion.

2. What were some of the improvements made to Constantinople as a result of Justinian’s public works projects?

New bridges, public baths, parks, roads, and hospitals were built. In addition, the Hagia Sophia, a grand cathedral, was built.

3. How has Justinian’s Code affected the modern world?

Justinian’s Code is the basis for many legal codes in the western world.

6.4 The Eastern Orthodox Church
1. What was the relationship between religion and government in the Byzantine Empire?

Religion and government were closely linked. The emperor was believed to be both the head of the government and the living representative of Jesus Christ.

2. How did the Eastern Orthodox Church play a central role in the daily life of Byzantines?

Most people attended church regularly and received sacraments at every stage of their lives. Monasteries and convents cared for the poor and sick.
Medieval Europe Timeline Challenge

Overview
This activity challenges students to analyze a historical timeline. Working in pairs, students respond to a series of questions that lead them to complete and analyze a timeline of key dates from the unit they just studied.

Objectives
Students will
• complete a historical timeline to show how major events are related to one another in time.
• identify and add key events, people, and periods from the unit to their timelines.
• answer timeline challenge questions by analyzing their completed timelines.

Materials
• History Alive! The Medieval World and Beyond
• Interactive Student Notebooks
• Timeline Challenge Transparency 1

Timeline Challenge
1 Place students in mixed-ability pairs. You may want to prepare a transparency to show them where they will sit and with whom they will work.

2 Have students open their Interactive Student Notebooks to Timeline Challenge 1. Review the directions with them and answer any questions. Complete Item A as a class to make sure students understand the directions. Circulate as pairs complete their timelines. (Note: Students should not refer to their textbooks as they work on their timelines.)

3 Have students correct their timelines. Have students open to the Medieval Europe Timeline on pages 68 and 69 of History Alive! The Medieval World and Beyond. Review the items one at a time, and have students check their timelines against the one in the book.

4 Have students add one or two more key items from the unit to their timelines. Allow them to look through the chapters in this unit and find one or two more key items to add to the timeline. For each item, students must include the following:
• the date(s) and a short written description of the item
• a simple visual symbol for the item, drawn inside the appropriate geometric shape
• a dot or color bar representing the appropriate date or dates
• a line connecting the dot or bar to the geometric shape

5 Reveal the first question on Timeline Challenge Transparency 1: Medieval Europe Timeline Challenge Questions. Allow pairs to analyze their timelines and discuss the question. Select a Presenter for each pair, and have several Presenters share their answers with the class. Repeat the process for each question, rotating the role of Presenter.
Guide to Timeline Challenge Questions

The timeline challenge questions appear on Timeline Challenge Transparency 1.

1. The Roman Empire reached its height in 117 C.E. How many years passed before Charlemagne’s scholars began to use lowercase letters instead of just capital letters like the Romans? Why was the introduction of lowercase letters an important development?

   There were about 683 years between the height of the Roman Empire and the time Charlemagne’s scholars began to use lowercase letters. Lowercase letters made words easier to read.

2. How many years were there between William the Conqueror establishing feudalism in England and King John accepting the Magna Carta? How did this act of King John’s affect feudalism in England?

   There were 149 years between William the Conqueror establishing feudalism in England and King John accepting the Magna Carta. King John’s acceptance of the Magna Carta contributed to feudalism’s decline.

3. How many years were there between the time of the schism and the beginning of the construction of the present-day Chartres Cathedral? Why are cathedrals such as Chartres considered a symbol of the Catholic Church’s power in medieval Europe?

   There were 140 years between the schism and the beginning of the construction of the present-day Chartres. Cathedrals were the largest buildings in medieval towns. They were centers of spiritual life and political power during the Middle Ages.

4. How many years were there between the fall of the western Roman Empire in 476 and the Battle of Crecy during the Hundred Years’ War? How did this war contribute to the decline of feudalism and the Middle Ages in Europe?

   There were 870 years between the fall of the western Roman Empire and the Battle of Crecy. The Hundred Years’ War changed the nature of warfare by making castles and knights obsolete. It also increased the importance of the common people, both in England and in France.

5. Which event on the timeline do you think was the most significant? Why?

   Answers will vary.