

# MING CHINA AND ZHENG HE

## Additional Reading Organizer

Tomorrow, at the start of class, there will be a news-style panel discussion, set in Ming China in the year 1504, 75 years after the voyages of Zheng He, on whether or not the Chinese Imperial government made the right decision to adopt an isolationist policy and end all overseas expeditions. Your group will be assigned one of the four panelists, and you will be given your panelist's profession and position on the issue. Tonight, you will prepare for all four possible positions by reading more about Zheng He and using what you learn to determine what each panelist would think about the topic. Although you can only choose one member of your group to play the assigned role in tomorrow's panel, you all must work together as a team, to prep your panelist for the media appearance.

Directions: Read your additional reading, and using it together with the classwork reading, respond to the following questions with as many strong points and examples as you can. The more arguments you prepare, the better chance your group has of shining on the panel!

What additional information did you learn about Zheng He and his voyages from the second reading that you did not already know from the first reading?

Geographers of the past did not have satellite imagery or other modern technology. They had to rely on firsthand accounts and physical measurements and calculations to gain an increased understanding of the physical and cultural world. If you were a Chinese geographer, would you have supported Zheng He's voyages? Why or why not?

Confucian scholars were known for believing in the cultural superiority of China. They were often isolationist, favoring the preservation of Chinese customs over the introduction of new ideas. If you were a Confucian scholar, would you have supported Zheng He's voyages? Why or why not?

Military concerns are a top priority of stable states. Defense decision making is often about where to focus your attention. For instance, based on an assessment of major threats, it may be more important to put more money into the army (land-based) or the navy (water-based). If you were a Ming General, would you have supported Zheng He's voyages? Why or why not?

New goods, new technologies, and new ideas are developing all the time around the world, especially in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. In order to prosper economically, it's important to be on the cutting edge of these big changes. If you were a Eunuch Merchant, would you have supported Zheng He's voyages? Why or why not?

