

**Impact of the Environment on Eurasian Steppe Nomads**  
**by Damon Jasperson**

**Rationale:** Sometimes students think that cultural developments are random, just a collection of weird customs that they have to learn about for no apparent reason. I want them to see that environment is a catalyst for culture. I also want students to look at the Braudelian “long duree” and get away from the “great man” theory of history.

**Objective:** Students will be able to demonstrate how the steppe environment of Eurasia impacted the lifestyle of steppe nomads.

**Lesson Procedure:** Students will use a variety of primary and secondary sources in order to construct a chart showing the environmental impact on

- Clothing
- Housing
- Trade
- Transport
- Religion
- Foods
- Culture in General
- View of nature

Students will survey their written sources as individuals and hypothesize about the connection between environment and culture on the steppes. After that, they will be grouped together in 3's or 4's to complete the chart.

**Summative Activity:** Students will draw on their prior knowledge of Native Americans to compare steppe lifestyles to that of Native Americans on the plains, hopefully drawing the connection between environment and culture.

**Major Resource:** *The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives* Author: Joseph Fletcher Source: Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Jun., 1986), pp. 11-50