

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Hour: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scenario #1:** The hot sun beats down on you as you stand beside the great river that flows through this desert land. The air smells like flowers and wet mud mixed together. Huge stone buildings rise up from the sand like mountains, their sides covered with strange pictures and symbols carved deep into the rock.

The river is busy with boats of all sizes. Some have white sails that catch the wind, while others are small and made from woven reeds. Fishermen throw nets into the water, and children splash and play near the shore. Women wash clothes while palm trees sway overhead, giving some relief from the burning heat.

In the city, people crowd the streets and markets. Merchants sell gold jewelry, colorful pottery, and spices that make your nose tingle. Workers chip away at giant stone statues, their hammers ringing out across the plaza. Everyone wears white clothes that seem to glow in the bright sunlight.

The people here are fascinating. Both men and women paint dark lines around their eyes, making them look mysterious and wise. Rich people wear fancy headdresses and lots of jewelry, while regular folks dress more simply but still look clean and neat.

Sacred birds walk through the marshes, and cats lounge everywhere – clearly they are special animals here. The sound of singing comes from huge temples where priests in animal skins perform ceremonies you don't understand.

This is a civilization at its zenith, where human achievement reaches toward the heavens while remaining deeply rooted in the life-giving rhythm of the great river that sustains it all.

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1. Highlight 4 - 5 words or short phrases which seem like they could be important clues as to WHEN and WHERE you are in this scenario. {Example: "cats lounge everywhere - clearly they are special animals here."}
  2. Discuss the words or phrases you've highlighted with your partner or small group. What might each one mean OR what might it tell you about when and where you are? (Don't worry about being wrong - that's often an essential step toward being right. Help each other and talk it out.)
  3. AFTER you've figured out as much as you can on your own, use your Chromebooks, phones, or textbooks to help you narrow down WHERE and WHEN you must be.
  4. So... WHERE and WHEN are you in this scenario? Why do you think so? (A good response should offer at least 3 - 4 specific bits of evidence from the passage as support.)

**Scenario #2:** The caravan bells jingle as we approach another trading post, dust swirling around hundreds of camels loaded with precious cargo. I've been traveling these routes for months now, my face wrapped against the desert winds that never seem to stop blowing.

Our pack animals carry rolls of the finest silk that shimmer like water in sunlight - fabric so smooth and light it feels like holding clouds. We also transport spices that make my mouth water just thinking about them: cinnamon bark from distant tropical lands, black pepper that's worth its weight in silver, and saffron more valuable than gold.

At each oasis town, merchants from every corner of the world gather in bustling marketplaces. I hear languages I can't understand - some musical and flowing, others harsh and choppy. Dark-skinned traders from the south offer ivory tusks and exotic birds, while pale northerners bring thick furs and amber stones. Everyone gestures wildly while haggling, testing coins between their teeth and examining goods with suspicious eyes.

The journey is dangerous but profitable. We've survived sandstorms that buried landmarks, bandits who shadow our movements, and mountain passes so narrow one wrong step means death. At night, we camp in circles around flickering fires, sharing stories and watching for wolves.

But when I finally reach the great western markets and see Roman gold coins filling my purse, I know the months of hardship were worth it. Tomorrow, I'll load up with glassware and wine for the long journey home.

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**Scenario #3:** The sun beats down on this vast landscape where towering mountains scrape the sky and desert stretches meet rushing rivers. I stand on a narrow strip of land between an endless blue ocean and peaks so high they're capped with white snow even in this heat.

Along the coast, small groups of people have built simple shelters from reeds and mud bricks. They're skilled fishermen, using nets woven from plant fibers to catch silvery fish from the crashing waves. I watch them work together, their dark skin bronzed by constant sun exposure. Some carry beautifully carved bone hooks, while others tend to crops of beans and squash in small patches near freshwater streams.

Inland, where the mountains begin their dramatic rise, other communities have learned to grow potatoes and quinoa on terraced slopes. The air grows thinner as elevation increases, but these hardy people move with ease across the rocky terrain. They keep llamas and alpacas, strange woolly creatures that carry heavy loads and provide warm fiber for clothing.

The landscape is harsh but stunning - snow-capped peaks pierce cotton-white clouds, while below, green river valleys cut through otherwise barren hillsides. In the distance, I can see smoke rising from cooking fires where families gather around simple clay pots, sharing meals and stories as darkness settles over this ancient land where ocean, desert, and mountains meet in dramatic contrast.

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**Scenario #4:** The morning mist clings to the temple courtyard as I adjust my saffron robes and prepare for another day of teaching. Since arriving from the western lands months ago, I've discovered that sharing the message here requires patience I never knew I possessed.

Some locals gather eagerly around me, their eyes bright with curiosity as I speak of the Four Noble Truths and the path to enlightenment. Yesterday, a merchant's wife wept with relief when I explained how suffering comes from attachment, and how letting go can bring peace. Several young scholars have begun joining our morning meditations, sitting cross-legged and struggling to quiet their busy minds.

But others view me with deep suspicion. Confucian officials frown when I speak of abandoning worldly concerns, arguing that duty to family and emperor must come first. "How can a man achieve virtue by renouncing his responsibilities?" they challenge. Some even whisper that foreign teachings threaten the natural order of things.

The Daoist masters present different problems - they nod politely at my words about emptiness and non-attachment, then smile knowingly as if I'm merely restating what they already know. "We call it wu wei," one elderly sage told me, "acting without forcing."

Local farmers and craftsmen seem most receptive, perhaps because their daily struggles make them hunger for hope. When I explain that enlightenment is possible for everyone, not just the educated elite, their faces light up with possibilities they'd never imagined.

Each day brings new challenges, but slowly, the dharma takes root in this ancient soil.

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