COMPARISON: WOMEN IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE AND SONG CHINA

Purpose

By zooming in on the stories of women in specific societies, we can better understand the challenges women faced throughout history and, in many parts of the world, continue to face today. Through comparing the experiences of women across different regions and time periods, we can see how societies constructed the roles and status of women within them, and perhaps learn to question the ways in which women's roles are defined today.

Process

1. Read "Medieval Women in Western Europe, c. 1000–1350 CE" and "Women in the Song Dynasty of China, 960–1279 CE." (Note: Your teacher might have you read just one article, and then ask you to work with a partner who has read the other.)

2. Working alone or with your partner, use the information in these articles to complete the Comparison Tool below.

Comparison Tool

Topic of comparison

| |
| |

Part 1: Identifying and describing

Cases you're comparing		
Time period		

COMPARISON: WOMEN IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE AND SONG CHINA

Location		

P&D How did women of different classes contribute to the economic well-being of their families and society?		**Similarities** **Differences**	
Community How were women's status and roles in their communities defined or limited by laws?		**Similarities** **Differences**	

COMPARISON: WOMEN IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE AND SONG CHINA

Belief systems		Similarities	
How did belief systems impact women's lives in these regions?			
		Differences	

Part 2: Analyzing

You can use the acronym **ADE** to determine the **historical significance** of similarities and differences you identified.

Amount—Think about how *many* people were impacted by the similarities/differences.

Depth—Think about how *strongly* people were impacted by the similarities/differences.

Endurance—Think about how *long* these similarities/differences impacted people.

Claim 1: Similarities	
What was the most significant similarity between women's experiences in medieval Europe and Song Dynasty China?	

COMPARISON: WOMEN IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE AND SONG CHINA

Claim 2: Differences *What was the most significant difference between women's experiences in medieval Europe and Song Dynasty China?*	

3. Considering the roles of women in these societies, which society was the most desirable for women? Why?

4. If we compare medieval Europe and Song China to today's society, how have women's roles changed and how have they stayed the same?