Following the end of the Han empire, China had no central government for the next 300 years. Chinese (1) warlords, or military leaders who run a government, fought each other for control. Finally, the Sui dynasty came to power and reunited China. Yangdi, the second Sui emperor, built the Grand Canal. This helped unite China’s (2) economy, an organized way in which people produce, sell, and purchase things.

The Sui dynasty was followed by the Tang dynasty. Tang emperors carried out a number of (3) reforms, or changes that bring improvements. Under Tang rulers, China once again controlled the Silk Road, an ancient and important trade route. Silk, tea, steel, paper, and (4) porcelain, fine clay objects that have been baked at high temperatures, were sold along the route.

Buddhism had come to China from India during the Han empire. Many Chinese people became Buddhists then. As Buddhism grew, many Chinese Buddhists became nuns or monks, living in places called (5) monasteries, where they meditated and worshiped. Eventually, Tang rulers took steps to end Buddhism’s growing power.

After the end of the Tang dynasty, the Song dynasty began a rule of more than 300 years. Painting flourished during this time. Chinese painters often wrote poetry on their works in beautiful (6) calligraphy, or characters made with brush and ink.
China in the Middle Ages

The Song dynasty ended when the Mongols conquered China. The Mongols were made up of (7) ____________, or groups of related families, and lived in an area north of China. They raised animals and followed their herds as they grazed Mongolia’s (8) ____________, or wide, rolling, grassy plains. They used (9) ____________, or violent actions, to scare people into surrendering.

A series of rebellions against the Mongols finally forced them out of China. The country was reunited under the emperor Zhu, who founded the Ming dynasty. He was a cruel leader and killed officials he suspected of (10) ____________, or disloyalty to the government. Other Ming emperors strengthened the government and had their officials take a count, or (11) ____________, of the number of people in China.

Chinese culture blossomed under the Ming. Writers produced long fictional stories called (12) ____________. The navigator Zheng He sailed to India and Africa. But after his death, China tried to shut itself off from the rest of the world. When the Portuguese arrived less than a hundred years later, the Chinese thought the Portuguese were (13) ____________, or uncivilized people.