Name: _____ Date: _____

Why the Hanseatic League Linked Northern Ports

Circle group

In the Middle Ages, a merchant who sailed the Baltic or North Sea faced risks. Storms wrecked ships. Pirates attacked them. A foreign ruler could charge unfair fees at a harbor. So merchants from towns in northern Europe agreed to work together. Historians call this group the Hanseatic League, or the Hansa.

The League was not one country. It was a loose network of trading towns, like Lubeck, Hamburg, and Bergen. From the 1200s into the 1400s, the towns shared rules about weights, measures, and fair dealing. Delegates met to settle disputes. They also decided what to do about a harbor that treated its merchants badly. If a town broke its promises, other towns might stop trading with it.

The goods that moved through the ports show what people needed. Merchants carried timber, furs, grain, wax, and salted fish. They brought back cloth, metalwork, and wine. A wide, strong ship called a cog could carry big loads. That made trade cheaper. The League also kept offices in far cities where its merchants stayed and stored goods.

Over time, the Hansa grew weak. Rulers grew stronger and built their own trade systems. New sea routes changed how goods moved. But the old harbor towns kept their warehouses and their history. Some are proud of it today.

Questions

1. What risks did merchants face at sea?

_____

_____

2. What was the Hanseatic League?

_____

_____

3. What goods did the merchants carry?

_____

_____

4. What kind of ship carried big loads?

_____

_____

5. Why would a town keep its promises to the League?

_____

_____

6. Why did the League grow weak?

_____

_____

Words to know

delegates: people chosen to speak and act for a group
disputes: arguments or disagreements

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Why the Hanseatic League Linked Northern Ports

Triangle group

In medieval Europe, a merchant who sailed across the Baltic or North Sea faced real risks. Storms wrecked ships, pirates attacked them, and a foreign ruler might charge unfair fees at any harbor. To protect their business, merchants from towns across northern Europe agreed to work together. Historians call this alliance the Hanseatic League, or the Hansa.

The League was never a single country. It was a loose network of trading towns, including Lubeck, Hamburg, and Bergen, that were joined by common interests. From the 1200s into the 1400s, member towns shared rules about weights, measures, and fair dealing. Delegates met to settle disputes and decide what to do about a harbor that treated its merchants badly. If a town broke its promises, other members might refuse to trade with it.

The goods that moved through these ports show what people needed. Merchants carried timber, furs, grain, wax, and salted fish from the north and east, and brought back cloth, metalwork, and wine. A wide, sturdy ship called a cog could carry large loads, which made trade cheaper. The League also kept offices in far-off cities where its merchants lived and stored their goods.

Over time, the Hansa weakened. Rulers grew stronger and built their own trade systems, and new sea routes changed how goods traveled. Yet the old harbor towns kept their warehouses and their sense of history, and some are proud of this heritage today.

Questions

1. What risks did merchants face on the Baltic and North Seas?

_____

_____

2. What was the Hanseatic League?

_____

_____

3. What kinds of goods did the merchants carry?

_____

_____

4. What kind of ship carried large loads?

_____

_____

5. Why would a town want to keep its promises to the League?

_____

_____

6. Why did the League weaken over time?

_____

_____

Words to know

medieval: from the Middle Ages, long ago in Europe
alliance: a group joined together for a shared goal
delegates: people chosen to speak and act for a group
disputes: arguments or disagreements
heritage: traditions and history passed down from the past

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Why the Hanseatic League Linked Northern Ports

Square group

In medieval Europe, a merchant who sailed across the Baltic or the North Sea confronted genuine hazards. Storms wrecked vessels, pirates preyed on them, and a foreign ruler might impose unreasonable fees at any harbor. To safeguard their livelihoods, merchants from towns throughout northern Europe agreed to cooperate with one another. Historians refer to this alliance as the Hanseatic League, or simply the Hansa.

The League was never a single nation. It was a loose network of trading towns, among them Lubeck, Hamburg, and Bergen, that were bound together by shared interests. From the 1200s into the 1400s, member towns observed common rules concerning weights, measures, and honest dealing. Delegates gathered in order to settle disputes and to determine how to respond when a harbor treated its merchants unfairly. If a town broke its promises, the other members might refuse to trade with it altogether.

The goods that flowed through these ports reveal what people of the time required. Merchants transported timber, furs, grain, wax, and salted fish from the north and east, and they returned with cloth, metalwork, and wine. A broad, sturdy vessel called a cog could carry enormous loads, which made commerce less expensive. The League additionally maintained offices in distant cities where its merchants resided and stored their cargo.

Gradually, the Hansa lost its strength. Rulers became more powerful and established trade systems of their own, and new sea routes altered the way goods traveled. Nevertheless, the old harbor towns preserved their warehouses and their sense of history, and some take considerable pride in this heritage today.

Questions

1. What hazards did merchants confront on the Baltic and North Seas?

_____

_____

2. What was the Hanseatic League?

_____

_____

3. Which goods did the merchants transport and bring back?

_____

_____

4. Which kind of vessel could carry enormous loads?

_____

_____

5. Why would a town be careful to keep its promises to the League?

_____

_____

6. Why did the Hansa lose its strength over time?

_____

_____

Words to know

medieval: from the Middle Ages, long ago in Europe
alliance: a group joined together for a shared goal
delegates: people chosen to speak and act for a group
disputes: arguments or disagreements
heritage: traditions and history passed down from the past

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Why the Hanseatic League Linked Northern Ports

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Why the Hanseatic League Linked Northern Ports

Easier · 215 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.3

1. Storms, pirates, and unfair fees at foreign harbors.
2. A loose network of trading towns in northern Europe.
3. Timber, furs, grain, wax, and salted fish, plus cloth, metalwork, and wine.
4. A cog.
5. Other towns might stop trading with it if it broke them.
6. Rulers grew stronger and built their own trade, and new sea routes changed trade.

Triangle: Why the Hanseatic League Linked Northern Ports

This passage · 238 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7

1. Storms, pirates, and unfair fees at foreign harbors.
2. A loose network of trading towns in northern Europe that worked together.
3. Timber, furs, grain, wax, and salted fish, along with cloth, metalwork, and wine.
4. A cog.
5. Other members might refuse to trade with a town that broke them.
6. Rulers grew stronger and built their own trade systems, and new sea routes changed trade.

Square: Why the Hanseatic League Linked Northern Ports

Harder · 261 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 9.7

1. Storms, pirates, and unreasonable fees at foreign harbors.
2. A loose network of trading towns in northern Europe that cooperated with one another.
3. Timber, furs, grain, wax, and salted fish, and then cloth, metalwork, and wine.
4. A cog.
5. The other members might refuse to trade with it altogether if it broke them.
6. Rulers became more powerful and set up their own trade systems, and new sea routes altered trade.