

CHAPTER
12

Section 1

GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: MOVEMENT

The Opium Wars

Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the map carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.

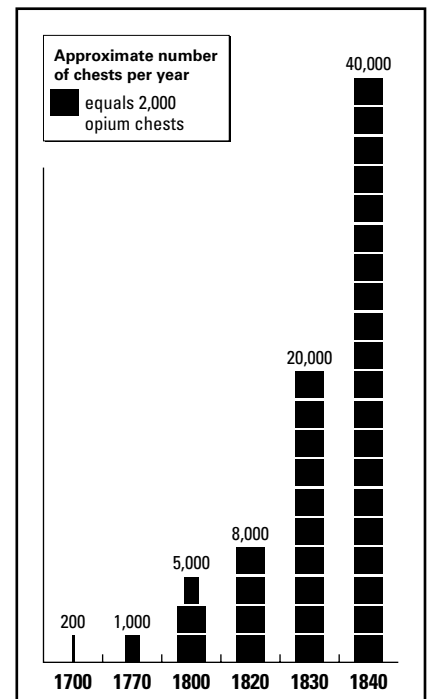
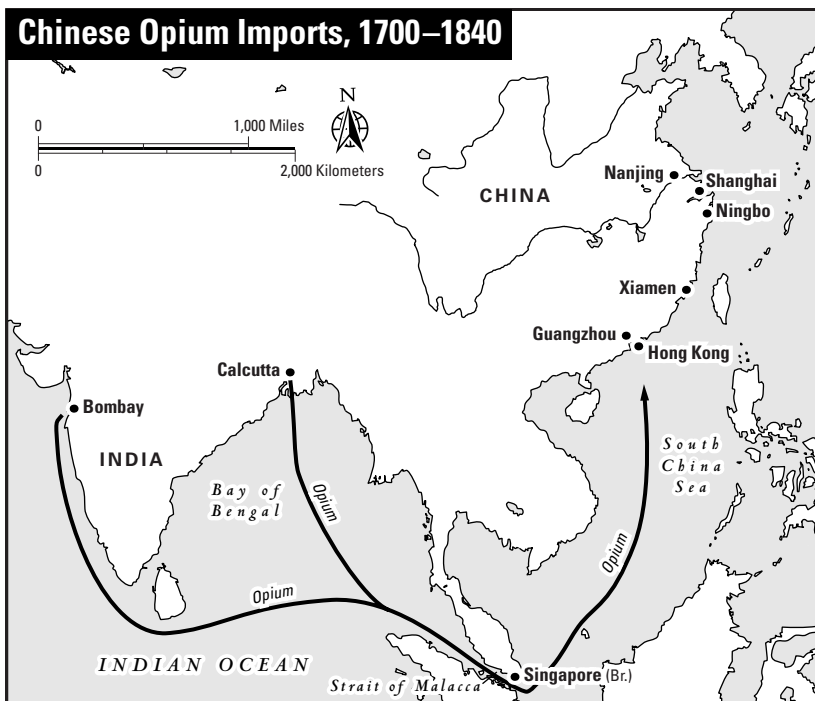
In the 1700s, Britain began smuggling from India into China a narcotic known as opium in order to open Chinese trade markets. The English had been desperate to find a product the Chinese would buy. Opium became that product.

The East India Company, the English company chartered to trade in Asia, opened Chinese trade markets by addicting the Chinese to opium. In the beginning, the Company kept the distribution of the narcotic to a small amount in order to increase the price. At that time, opium was a drug used only by wealthy Chinese—it was not yet a drug of the common people. However, in 1819, the British began distributing massive amounts of opium in order to eliminate the competition. Though flooding the market temporarily dropped the price, the cheaper price of the drug increased the amount of

users. Opium became a recreational drug and created a vast market of opium addicts.

The British government had a vested interest in not only maintaining, but increasing the amount of opium sold in China. Silver gained from the sale of opium helped purchase Chinese tea, which the English drank by the millions-of-gallons every year. The tax on this tea provided the British government with ten percent of its revenue.

Britain's expanding sales of opium to China caused the Opium War of 1839. China wanted sales stopped and destroyed an opium shipment at Guangzhou. The British responded by attacking the port cities shown on the map. The war ended in 1842 with a treaty favorable for the victorious British.



Interpreting Text and Visuals

1. In the graph what does each box represent? _____

2. How many chests were imported by China in 1820? _____

3. By how many chests did the annual opium imports increase between 1770 and 1800? between 1830 and 1840? _____

4. Describe the route by which opium reached China. _____

5. What is the approximate sailing distance from Bombay to Guangzhou? _____

6. How do you think British control over India and Singapore supported and protected its opium trade? _____

7. Why did the British government encourage the opium trade? _____

8. Describe the cycle of silver from Britain to China and back to Britain again. _____

