**Rising from the Ashes:**

The Growth and Power of the Byzantine Empire

A Thematic Unit

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**Part I: Introduction and Preface**

A. Introduction:

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A. Introduction:

The class this unit is for is an average, homogenous, sixth grade social studies class. The class is a general education class has students with a mixture of abilities. It will accommodate the needs of 134 students in 53 minute class periods. In terms of diversity students have a great range of differences. There are several students with IEPs, 504s and also some AG students. Accommodations for those particular students will be made on a case by case basis. The course, throughout the year, will cover major ancient civilizations across the world up until the age of exploration. Every student will be able to enter the seventh grade having efficiently learned about the major parts of the growth and strength of the Byzantine Empire.

B. Organizational Theme:

For my theme, I have chosen to use the theme of the Phoenix rising from the ashes, as in the Byzantine Empire rising from the ashes of Rome. After all, the Byzantine Empire rises again after the collapse of the Roman Empire and remains powerful for nearly a millennium. I feel that this theme will entice students because of the mythological aspect of the Phoenix. The Phoenix was a majestic and mysterious creature and will captivate my audience. I feel that I will be able to relate this theme to a great number of topics that are a part of this unit. I could possibly use this theme throughout the whole year or a quarter because in ancient time one civilization would often sprout from the fall of another. In my class I could hand out Phoenix feathers as rewards for great work. The "What if you were there?" idea will really, I think, pull students in because it will be asking them what their thoughts and opinions are and I think the group of students I will be working with will be really responsive to this idea.

C. Subject Matter:

I will be teaching the Byzantine Empire. I will be basing my unit around the requirements set forth by the CCSS. This basically entails three major parts: Economy, Government and Culture. The Byzantine Empire is full of rich culture and tradition. I will be using a couple really excellent websites that give really detail information worded specifically for the use of grade school students. We will look at maps of the area and talk about the geographical features that helped or hindered rulers of this great Empire. We will do some crafts and listen to music representative of that of the time period. We will discuss the rein of Justinian, his achievements and some of his other endeavors. We will end with the fall of Constantinople and the rise of the Arabs. It is important for students to know about this Empire because there were several big events that influenced things that are still relevant in our everyday life.

D. Organizing questions:

* The questions I have used below are strongly influenced by the topics put forth by CMAPP. Those that I have taken directly from CMAPP are marked with an asterisk. However, I have modified some of them to better suit my unit.

1. Can individuals truly affect the development of civilizations?\*
2. What can our governments and people learn from the fall of Rome and the development of the Byzantine Empire?
3. What impact did the location of the Byzantine Empire have on its economy, and cultural development?
4. Did the location affect anyone outside the Empire?
5. How were the values of Byzantium reflected in their art, religion, and culture? How have these spread through civilizations, societies, and regions?\*

E. Goals/SWBAT:

1. Compare and contrast why did the Eastern Empire survived when the Western part faltered.
2. Identify the major players were in the Byzantine Empire
3. Find the Byzantine Empire is on a map
4. Know how the economy worked and what influenced its development
5. Relate the government and how the rulers made decisions to today
6. Imitate some of the crafts that were popular at this time.
7. Discuss what brought about the decline of the Empire.

F. Objectives:

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly. (CCSS)
2. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text (CCSS ELA).
3. Recognizes and determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies (CCSS SS).
4. Integrate visual information from the map with other information in print and digital texts (CCSS SS).
5. Identify important geographical features and sites of the Byzantine Empire.
6. Identify important neighbors and their influence to the Byzantine Empire.
7. Compare and Contrast the Roman Empire with the Byzantine Empire.
8. Discuss the affect of Religion on government
9. Describes the Byzantine society.
10. Relates the government of the time to current governments.
11. Create a piece of art reflecting the art of the BE
12. Participates in class and group activities to reflect understanding
13. Constructs a final product that demonstrates knowledge
14. Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments (CCSS ELA).

G. Materials:

* The Byzantine Empire, The Kids Know It Network
  + http://www.kidspast.com/world-history/0142-byzantine-empire.php
* Byzantine Medalions: Dick Blick Holdings Inc.
  + http://www.dickblick.com/lesson-plans/byzantine-medallions/
* Explore Byzantium: Chris Ambrose Brent Ostrowski\
  + <http://byzantium.seashell.net.nz/index.php>
* Common Core Standards
  + <http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf>
* Mongols for Kids
  + <http://mongols.mrdonn.org/dailylife.html>
* History for Kids
  + <http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/medieval/history/earlymiddle/vikings.htm>
* Wake County Public School System Curriculum CMAPP
  + <https://files.pbworks.com/download/tFKksBt5b5/mssocialstudies/55269000/6th%20Grade%20Week%2017%20Draft.pdf?ld=1>
* NC Laws
  + <http://www.dumblaws.com/laws/united-states/north-carolina>
* Work sheets compiled by me:
  + Map of the Eastern Rome Empire and Surrounding Area
  + Journal Entry/Letter Essay
    - Rubric
    - Instructions
    - Guided Outline
  + Silly NC Laws

H. List of Activities:

* Journaling
* K-W-L Chart
* Labeling and coloring in a map
* Compare and Contrast
* Designing the perfect strong hold
* Relating current laws to old laws
* Silly NC Laws
* Creating mosaics and medallions
* Listening to cultural music
* Class conquest activity
* Journal Entry/Letter Essay

I. Unit Day-by-day Narrative:

**Day One: Bridge and Intro-- Rising from the Ashes**

* Journal:
  + Write a short list of things you know about the Byzantine Empire to share with the class.
* Bridge:
  + Activate prior knowledge about the Roman Empire and make relative connection to the Byzantine Empire.
* Lesson:
  + We will be discussing what people know, want to know, this will take the form of a KWL chart. Through this activity I will suggest things that we will be learning during this unit.
  + Give out any preparatory materials (I.E. Vocabulary sheets and table of contents) all of which would be kept in a three ring binder that will be used for evaluation purposes during and at the end of the unit.
* Exit Slip: What are three things you personally want to learn about this topic?
* Relation to theme: Because it had become so large and difficult to control the Empire had to be cut into two: East and West. Here, we can see the East rising up and coming out of the ashes that are the remnants of the Roman Empire.

**Day Two: Know Thine Enemy**

* Journal:
  + Why would it be important to know who your neighbors are when creating your Empire?
* Bridge:
  + Map Activity One: Labeling neighboring civilizations
* Lesson:
  + This will be about identifying the neighboring people around the Empire. Identify the Goodies and the Baddies: Competition, Allies and Subordinates: To include: Kiev, Mongols, Slavs, Russia, Vikings, Vladimir the Great and the Ottoman Turks. Color code by level of hostility. Where is Constantinople in relation to Rome. What are some major differences in relations?
* Exit Slip:
  + Briefly describe one group we talked about today.
* Relation to theme:
  + The Pheonix was a strong and powerful being and would have known who his allies were.

**Day Three: Finding a Suitable Nesting Area**

* Journal:
  + If you were to design your own strong hold what are some important geological features you would look and how would you design the city?
* Bridge:
  + Map Activity Two: Labeling location and geological features, this will include: The Black Sea, The Aegean Sea, Constantinople, trade route and the peninsula. Where is Constantinople in relation to Rome. What are some major differences in location and surrounding?
* Lesson:
  + Using Constantinople as a reference. Design your own stronghold, labeling important structural and geographic features. Finish designing your stronghold as homework if needed.
* Exit Slip:
  + Name two types of defense utilized in the creation of Constantinople
* Relation to theme: Even a Phoenix needs a roost in which to rest.

Day Four: A Safe Glorious to Live

* Journal:
  + When creating a powerful empire what are some things you would do to ensure the success and harmony of your subjects?
* Bridge:
  + Now that a site has been chosen and defenses have been built-up, what needs to happen next to create a successful capital.
* Lesson:
  + Today is the day we will talk about Constantinople. How the Byzantines decided to use Greek as their main language and how the Church developed into something a little bit different than Roman Catholicism. Students will begin to create a Empire profile for Byzantium that will include: Name, Capital city, important social information such as language type, and religious ideals. This will be added to in future lessons. Will resemble a profile similar to those in the CIA: World Fact Book
* Exit Slip:
  + What do you think is the most important aspect of developing a successful empire?
* Relation to theme:
  + The safety of self is the most important aspect of survival, generally living 1000 years the Phoenix would have to have a certain amount of security.

**Day Five: Trade of the Byzantine Empire**

* Journal:
  + What do you think would be important trade items for Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire as a whole?
* Bridge:
  + Now that there is a successful capital city how will the empire support its citizens? Revisit choice in location.
* Lesson:
  + We will talk about the reasons the area that Constantine chose to put his city where he did. We will talk about the significances of the ports and the roads used for trade. Also, we will discuss the main staples of trade. Add trade info to Empire profile.
* Exit Slip:
  + If you were in charge where would you focus your efforts in regards to the economy?
* Relation to theme: Shows a rise in the strength, important to surviving for so many years.

**Day Six: Creating a Rich Culture**

* Journal:
  + What would you promote in your Empire: sports... art...music…?
* Bridge:
  + Now that the economy is strengthened how will the Emperor keep his subject happy?
* Lesson:
  + Introduce Emperor Justinian.
  + Discuss what he spent his money on. Talk about his generosity considering he commissioned new roads, bridges, aqueducts, baths, and a variety of other public works. One of his greatest building projects was a church in the heart of Constantinople which he named Hagia Sophia. This massive cathedral still stands today as one of the largest churches in the world. Also, show the main form of entertainment, the Hippodrome.
  + Add info to appropriate areas of Empire profile
* Exit Slip: Check Empire Profile progress.
* Relation to theme: Shows a rise in the strength, important to surviving for so many years

**Day Seven: You must respect the rules**

* Journal:
  + What is the silliest rule that your parents have for you?
* Bridge/Hook:
  + Look at some of North Carolina’s out dated laws.
* Lesson:
  + Discuss Justinian’s Code, compare and contrasts some of the old Roman Laws with the new laws derived from them.
* Exit Slip: Why do you think laws made so long ago still remain today
* Relation to theme: Attesting to the longevity of the Phoenix

**Day Eight: The Council of Nicaea**

* Journal:
  + What is the difference between mythology and religion?
* Bridge:
  + Constantine’s efforts to promote Christianity. The Byzantine Empire was created before the fall of Rome and then became an independent Christian Empire.
* Lesson:
  + Discuss the Council of Nicaea, how it changed Christianity. In talking about the Council, I am going to ask students to look back at how we had been interpreting mythology in the past for societies such as Egypt and Ancient Greece.
  + Then I will ask them to respond to the idea of how The Council of Nicaea caused them to feel. If they had been there how would have reacted to hearing about such an event.
* Exit Slip:
  + Who creates Religion?
* Relation to theme: Beginning to spread their own wings.

Day Nine: The Eastern Orthodox Church

* Journal:
  + Why do you think there are so many different types of Christian churches?
* Bridge:
  + Now we know about the Council of Nicaea let’s talk about just what the differences are.
* Lesson:
  + Compare and Contrast the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church.
  + Discuss the Iconoclasts, who they were and what their message was.
  + Talk about the clash of the east and the West and how the Church officially split into two separate and different churches.
  + Add the relevant information to the Empire profile. (Eastern Orthodox and Iconoclasts)
* Exit Slip:
  + Empire Profile Check –Finish sections that need to be done for homework; completed Profile due on day fifteen.
  + REMINDER: Bring a picture of something important to you that you would want to make last forever.
* Relation to theme:
  + This doesn’t really fall in the realm of the Phoenix but it is a part of the history the students need to know

**Day Ten: Art and Culture**

* Journal:
  + What would you want to immortalize in music or art?
* Bridge:
  + The Byzantine Empire was proud of their culture and they often depicted important people or events in mosaics or statues many can still be seen today in What use to be Constantinople.
* Lesson:
  + Discuss the art (mosaics, medallions and religious relics) and music of the Byzantine people.
  + We will discuss the types of art that were popular during that time. We will make mosaics and also decretive medallions.
  + While the students do this I will play Byzantine music in the background.
* Exit Slip:
  + Turn in the Medallion and or mosaic
* Relation to theme:
  + The Phoenix is a beautiful creature proud of it. Everyone wanted some his beautiful feathers.

**Day Eleven: Reconnecting the East and the West**

* Journal:
  + Please explain briefly, that when thinking of an Empire, bigger is or isn’t always better.
* Bridge:
  + Now that the Empire is rich and thriving Justinian wants to expand and regain the lost land of the Western empire.
* Lesson:
  + Revisit our maps and color in the progression of the territory of the Byzantine Empire over the centuries.
  + Discuss what challenges would be faced in terms of people and resources.
  + Activity: Everyone stands in a group around the room and places their hands out to their sides. The Emperor and his allotted group of soldier being to “concur” new lands and being connecting the hands of the “countries” they concur. As time goes on and the chain gets bigger and bigger, the other countries will start to get “life cards” that cause realistic challenges that the Emperor must then deal with and we will see the Emperor and Empire start to falter.
  + Observe what ultimately happens to the wealth and power of the Byzantine Empire
* Exit Slip:
  + What would you have done if you had been in Justinian’s position?
* Relation to theme:
  + This is the beginning of the end and a new life is on the horizon and quickly approaching.

**Day Twelve: Trouble in the Neighborhood**

* Journal:
  + After yesterday’s activity and discussion, how well do you think the empire is able to defend itself?
* Bridge:
  + Now that Justinian has exhausted his Empire’s wealth there is trouble at home in addition to abroad.
* Lesson:
  + Explain how the Vikings influenced early Russia.
  + Understand how the interaction with Constantinople changed Russia.
* Exit Slip:
  + List three important things that happen when the Vikings interacted with Russia
* Relation to theme: The downward cycle the Phoenix’s feathers are falling off and the birds is becoming tired and lame. I would tell students that they should hand in their Phoenix feathers soon because they will be no good when the phoenix is gone.

**Day Thirteen: The Neighbors Start a Fire**

* Journal:
  + How would you react if confronted by an invasion to your home country?
* Bridge:
  + Through the Viking’s interaction with the Constantinople the area known as Rus’ (Russia) changed.
* Lesson:
  + Identify the Slavic area known as Kievan Russia
  + Explain why the Mongols invaded Kievan Russia.
  + Determine the positive and negative ways the Mongols affected Russia.
* Exit Slip:
  + Hand out the instructions for the essay assignment and rubric. Homework is to fill out the outline provided so that in class students can begin writing their essay. The Essay will include: The differences between the Mongols and Keivan Russia, two positive and two negative effects of the invasion.
* Relation to theme:
  + The Phoenix is dying and a new age is on the Byzantine Empire

**Day Fourteen: Journals/ letter Essays (Work Day)**

* Journal: No journal today
* Bridge:
  + Talk about the Mongol invasion and what is happening to the people of the Byzantine Empire.
* Lesson:
  + We are going to work on the Essay through peer and teacher feedback
* Exit Slip:
  + Write down something you will improve in your paper tonight.
* Relation to theme: The end.

**Day Fifteen: Present and Hand in Work.**

* Journal:
  + What was your favorite part of learning about the Byzantine Empire?
* Bridge:
  + Revisit KWL Chart from first day
* Lesson:
  + Students will hand in their final essays, with a reflection and rubric
  + Also, students will be handing in their Empire profile if final touched need to be added, ensure to it that they are complete.
  + If any want to read there essay, allow for three or four (time dependant)
* Exit Slip:
  + All completed work in to designated student folder:
    - Table of Contents
    - Vocabulary sheet
    - Essay
    - Rubric with reflection
    - Complete Empire Profile