Name: _____

Date: _____

Genghis Khan

From Eastern Europe to Mongolia, a vast grassland known as the steppe stretches for thousands of miles. ew people would choose to live there. Bitter winds sweep across the open plains. Summers are hot, winters are brutally cold, and a rider can travel for days without seeing a forest or a city. The people who survived on this harsh land had to be hardy, self-reliant, and brutal.

Temujin

In 1162 CE, the leader of a small band of Mongol nomads and his wife had a son named Temujin. When the boy was nine years old, his father was poisoned, leaving behind a widow and six children. On the steppe, every extra mouth to feed was a burden. Although Temujin's father had been its leader, the tribe abandoned the young family. Temujin and his brother kept the family alive by scavenging for roots, berries, and bark. The struggle for survival taught Temujin a lesson he would never forget.

The Leader

Temujin became a man at an age when most boys were still playing games. As a teenager, he attracted a small group of loyal followers. Together they hunted, fought, and stole what they needed to survive. Temujin rewarded loyal followers regardless of their family background. As his reputation grew, more warriors joined him. Before long, he commanded hundreds of mounted warriors who were loyal to him rather than to their clans.

Temujin married a young woman named Borte, but early in their marriage, a rival tribe kidnapped her. Having been abandoned by his own people after his father's death, Temujin refused to abandon the woman he loved. Lacking the strength to rescue her on his own, he turned to childhood friends and local chiefs, convincing them to lend him warriors.

The daring rescue was a complete success, but it brought far more than a returned bride. By organizing a successful military alliance from scratch, the young outsider proved he could inspire loyalty and unite rival factions behind a single goal.

Universal Ruler

The rescue strengthened Temujin's reputation across the steppe. He rewarded loyal followers regardless of their family background. As word spread, more warriors joined his growing army. Although often outnumbered, Temujin's horsemen repeatedly defeated larger forces through discipline, speed, and superior tactics. By 1206, Temujin had united most of the Mongol tribes. At a gathering of tribal leaders, he was proclaimed Genghis Khan, or "Universal Ruler."

Genghis Khan never learned how to read, but he was a military genius. He organized the Mongols into a disciplined fighting force that could move faster and strike harder than its enemies. He also understood the value of fear.

Brutal Threats

As Mongol horsemen approached a city, they often offered a simple choice: surrender peacefully or face destruction. Stories of Mongol brutality spread quickly. There were tales of pyramids of skulls, rivers running red, and survivors forced to walk among the dead. Whether every story was true is almost beside the point. Genghis Khan wanted the next city to hear those stories and surrender without a fight.

The Legacy of Genghis Khan

By the time he died in 1227 CE, Genghis Khan had conquered territory stretching from the Pacific Ocean to Central Asia. His successors expanded the empire into the largest land empire in history, stretching from Korea to Hungary and as far south as Vietnam. Then, nearly fifty years after his death, Genghis Khan's grandson would conquer China, the wealthiest and most populous civilization on Earth.

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Name: _____

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Fill in the Blanks

The Mongols lived on the s__e__pe, a vast g__a__s__a__d stretching from Eastern E__r__pe to M__n__o__ia. It was in this h__r__h environment that T__m__j__n was born in _____ CE. After his f__t__er was p__i__o__ed, his tribe a__a__d__n__d the family, forcing them to survive by s__a__e__g__ng. As a young man, T__m__j__n gained loyal followers and built a growing ar__y. When a rival tribe k__d__a__p__d his wife, Temujin organized an a__l__a__ce and r__s__u__d her, demonstrating that he could u__i__e different groups. He rewarded l__y__l__y rather than *f__m__ly background. By 1206, Temujin had u__i__ed most of the M__n__ol tribes and was proclaimed G__n__h__s K__an, or "U__i__e__s__l Ruler." Genghis Khan never learned how to r__ad, but he was a military g__n__us. He organized the Mongols into a d__s__i__l__n__d fighting force. As they expanded their empire, Genghis Khan's w__r__i__rs often offered cities a clear choice: s__r__e__d__r peacefully or face d__s__r__c__i__n. When Genghis Khan died, his empire stretched from the P__c__f__c Ocean to C__n__r__l Asia.

Answer in Complete Sentence

1. Why does the text argue that it was necessary for the Mongols to be self-reliant and brutal?

*2. How did an event that occurred when Temujin was nine-ears-old influence the rest of this life?

3. What does Genghis Khan mean? Was that an appropriate title for Temujin?

*4. In your opinion, was Ganghis Khan a good leader? Was he a good person? Use facts from the article to defend your answer.

*Higher order learning question. Any reasonable answer will be accepted.

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