

Genghis Khan

Today many people think of Genghis Khan as a tyrant and bloodthirsty villain. However, his accomplishments were nothing short of extraordinary. During his lifetime he conquered more territory than any other leader in history. His successors went on to establish the largest empire that the world had ever seen. No matter how he is viewed, Genghis Khan was a charismatic and dynamic leader whose influence can be felt today throughout Asia and even in parts of Europe.

That Genghis Kahn could have earned such a prominent place in history is remarkable given that the first three decades of his life were fraught with hardship. Genghis Khan was the son of a Mongol chief. He was born in 1167 and was given the name Temujin which means "iron". Legend says that when Temujin was born he was clenching a blood clot in his fist. The Mongols believed that symbol meant he was destined to be a great warrior.



Temujin's childhood was full of hardships. His father was poisoned by enemies from another tribe. Without a leader his tribe broke apart and Temujin's mother was forced to raise him alone. At the age of 13, Temujin became engaged to a young girl from another tribe. However, she was kidnapped and it was years before he saw her again.

Despite misfortune, Temujin slowly gathered allies to his side. With the help of his father's supporters Temujin avenged his father's death. He reunited his tribe and won a series of skillful victories. One by one more tribes pledged their support and allegiance to him. In 1206, Temujin attended a *khuriltai*, a traditional Mongol meeting of tribal leaders. There they elected him as their leader and gave him the title Genghis Khan which means "Universal Ruler".

Genghis Khan had now united the Mongol people into one tribe. From there he began a series of military campaigns that created an empire that eventually stretched from Poland and Hungry in Europe all the way to Korea and China in Asia. He had a huge appetite for war and destruction. "Life's greatest joy, Genghis Khan remarked, "is in victory: to conquer one's enemies, to pursue them, to deprive them of their possessions, to make their beloved weep, to ride on their horses and embrace their wives and daughters." Genghis Khan's horsemen were feared throughout the world.



Name:

Genghis Khan Assignment

Task: Read the passage on the other side of this page entitled “Genghis Khan” and use the information to answer the following questions. This assignment is worth 10 points.

1. The passage says that Genghis Khan's childhood was full of hardship and misfortune. List TWO events that support that statement.
 2. Genghis Khan's empire spread across what two continents?
 3. What does the title "Genghis Khan" mean?
 4. *Think Question* - Do you think that "Temujin" was an appropriate name for Genghis Khan? Why or why not?
 5. *Think Question* - The passage begins by saying that "many people think of Genghis Khan as a tyrant". Do you think this reputation is deserved? Support your answer.