Assignment: Judging the Mongols

Task:
Complete the attached activity.

Mongol Impacts: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
Source: worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu, edited by Erik Andracek

The impact of the Mongol conquest on the conquered peoples included:
Death
Destruction
Extortion of wealth
Displacement

It also included:
the increase of activity on the trade routes connecting East Asia with the Mediterranean lands and Europe,
the further spread of Islam in Asia and the advancement of Tibetan Buddhism in China.

Death:
The Mongols were responsible for the deaths of millions of people. In battle, their powerful bows caused heavy enemy casualties. Also, The Mongols often massacred the defeated enemy soldiers and civilians. They would sometimes destroy an entire city as a way of striking fear in their enemies.

The total death toll inflicted by the Mongols during the period of their conquests was in the tens of millions of people. Some estimates place it as high as 17% of the world population. This includes the deaths by hunger and disease that were by-products of Mongol military operations and rule.

But:

More urban populations were spared than were massacred. Often spared were artisans, clerics of all religions, scribes, scholars, merchants, young women, and often officers, nobles, and administrators. In other words, the people that were spared were the people that usually had some valuable skill to the Mongols.

The Mongols were not the only civilization to massacre civilians. In taking a little Song Chinese town in 1218, the Jin general had 15,000 of the inhabitants put to the sword. In 1291, King Edward of England slew nearly 10,000 people of Berwick.

In China, the Mongols revision of the Chinese law code reduced the number of offenses that carried the death penalty. This meant that less people were put to death for breaking minor laws.
**Destruction:**
The Mongols often destroyed the towns they attacked. Sometimes on purpose and sometimes as a result of the battle. Mongols traditionally had no use for towns and so they had no interest in sparing a town. They were so destructive that in some places they made large areas of farmland unusable which decreased populations for generations.

*But:*

There was a great deal of construction initiated and supported by the Mongols. Many of the towns the Mongols destroyed were rebuilt a few years later with Mongol help.

In China under Khubilai Khan, the postal relay system came to include 1400 way stations 14-40 miles apart. Roads and bridges built originally to service the Mongol military became trade and travel routes. The extension of the Grand Canal to Beijing by the Mongols allowed cheap transport of rice from southern to northern China. Many people throughout the empire and Afro-Eurasia benefited from the roads and bridges the Mongols created and protected.

**Extortion of wealth:** After plundering and stealing the wealth of conquered people, the Mongol leaders typically demanded additional payments and taxes. Sometime these taxes were incredibly unfair to the people and destroyed the wealth of cities.

*But:*

Some of the wealth that flowed to the Mongols was redistributed. Only part made its way to Mongolia. Much of the money went back to conquered areas where Mongols lived as administrators, governors and soldiers.

From about 1250, the Mongols undertook many reforms. Some people’s lives actually improved because of increased profits from the trade promoted and supported by the Mongols. The Mongols also enforced law and order in their territories. The poorest classes received something like government welfare assistance: food, clothes, and money.

**Displacement:** During the Mongol campaigns of conquest there was large-scale enslavement and forced movement of populations. Many fled in terror when news reached them of an approaching Mongol army.

In conquered territories, the Mongols usually rounded up the craftspeople, and assigned them to Mongol princes and commanders. These captives, who could number tens of thousands in a single city, were carried off to Mongolia or other parts of the growing empire and never return to their homes.

*But:*

Although captive artisans and young women (destined to be slaves, concubines, prostitutes, and entertainers) often remained in their masters’ hands for the rest of their lives, some gained their freedom.
and married locally, some eventually returned to their homelands. Although people were forcibly moved, their movement around Afroeurasia contributed to the exchanges of technology and ideas. Some examples are:

- Egyptian experts were called in to improve Chinese sugar-refining techniques.
- Muslim medical and astronomical sciences became known in China.
- Chinese medical works were translated into Persian.
- Buddhist monks built Chinese style pagodas in Persia.
- A Mongol version of the traditional stories about Alexander the Great was produced.
- Columbus owned a copy of Marco Polo’s book, and on his first voyage he took with him a letter from the Spanish king to the Great Khan.
- Islam’s spread among the peoples of the Mongol empire
- Many of the Turkic groups that allied with the Mongols had converted to Islam.
My Question: Can the murder and destruction of conquest be balanced out by the good that comes out of it?

My Hypothesis: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart:</th>
<th>Left side- negative effects</th>
<th>right side-positive effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>● The Mongols were responsible for the death of millions of people</td>
<td>● They revised the law code in China which meant that less people were put to death for minor offenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● They would often...</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other useful information that does not fit in the chart:
● The Mongols were not the only civilization to massacre civilians. Other leaders did the same thing
● More urban populations...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destruction</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● They often destroyed...</td>
<td>● In China...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● They were so destructive...</td>
<td>● Many people throughout the empire and Afro-Eurasia...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other useful information that does not fit in the chart:
● Many of the towns the Mongols destroyed were...
### Extortion of wealth

- After plundering and stealing...

### Displacement:

- 
- 
- 

Other useful information that does not fit in the chart:
Now that you have done the research, what do you know to be true?

My Thesis Statement:___________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

Thesis Statement explained: Your thesis statement should be a one sentence summary of your main idea or argument that you know to be true, based on your research. If you were to write the essay, you would spend the rest of the essay presenting your research to the reader to convince them that your thesis statement is true.