The Mongols

Chronology Group I: Chenggis Khan
Chronology Group II: the Mongolian Empire itself
Chronology Group III: after Chenggis Khan

- The Mongols left few permanent records and marks, but they did leave a lot of genetic material
- The Mongols made trade safe with passports, way stations, and a sort of supply-message-checkpoint system, the "yam".
- Chenggis Khan died in 1227 and had expanded the empire all the way to the Caspian Sea
- Mongol conquered more land in 25 years than the Romans got in 400.
- In 1206, Chenggis Khan became the Great Khan leader of all Mongols
- After Khan's death, the empire divided and eventually fell apart
- Mongols created the first huge free-trade zone, a Pax Mongolica, reinvigorating the Silk Road
- No one could beat Mongol warriors at their height, and everyone was terrified of them
- In 1279 a Khan grandson conquered the Song Chinese
- Their adaptability made them masters of warfare
- Mongols had more powerful rivals including the Tatars but fought harder and longer to win
- Chenggis Khan made the Mongols by uniting Mongol confederations through war
- There are 16 million Khan descendents today
- There was great religious tolerance among the Mongols, who welcomed people with many skills

What factors led to the rise of the Mongols?
What factors led to its decline?
China’s Asian Sphere
What countries are described below?

1. ________ Odd country out in Asia, and a thorn in China’s side then and now. Buddhism from India, not Chinese form. Never influenced much by Chinese art or culture. Never used Chinese alphabet. Resisted Chinese rule and so went in and out of Chinese sphere. Maintained strong separate cultural identity and own language.

2. ________ Populated by people ethnically related to Manchurians, Japanese, and Siberians. Early adoption of bronze and iron technology from China. Parts of this nation were Chinese colonies and/or military outposts. Where there was not direct Chinese control, the culture of China penetrated deeply, especially in the language, the writing, the Buddhism. Three rival kingdoms in this nation: Silla, Koguryo, and Paekche based on warrior aristocracies. After many Chinese attacks, the Silla allied with the Tang Dynasty vs. the other two and this country unified for the first time under Chinese domination with the Silla a vassal state. Major borrowing from China ensued, especially for monastic architecture and in lavish statuary of Buddha.

3. ________ relative isolation of this area allowed for relatively independent development from China. Said to have an imperial family of divine origins who created the land and the other gods on it. Strong nature-based religion native to this country based on beauty of nature, festivals with wine, song, cheerfulness to celebrate the Way of the Gods. Early development tied to (2) above as many people, objects, and ideas from China filtered in through (2). Warrior aristocracies based on clans, but war wiped out many clans until 5th century when chief of Sun Goddess clan became pre-eminent, and a council of chieftains kept the peace. By 5th century, Chinese writing and recordkeeping adopted, as were Chinese style bureaucracy, art, literature, history, and written philosophy. Pro-Buddhist reformers fought their way to power in 587 and wrote a constitution in 604 that established right of ruler, bureaucracy, and Buddhism. Copied China openly—in Tang, outlawed private land ownership, established per capita taxes—but smallpox epidemic in 735-7 reduced population by 30 percent.

4. ____________ Had strong ties to China, which influenced language so today the languages are distantly related. People originated in S. China and moved south. Brought technology of using tide irrigation in rice fields. At collapse of Qin dynasty, a Qin general set up a new kingdom. After 100 years of freedom, in 111 BCE, conquered by a Chinese emperor who was tolerated by local elites, though Chinese rule was never popular. Chinese ideas and officials were brought in; Confucianism became official state philosophy, Chinese language and bureaucrats replaced locals. Roads, waterways, harbors, art, architecture, music all patterned on China’s. Many revolts vs. China, one successfully led by two sisters, but China with its military might held on through Tang dynasty. Then this kingdom enjoyed 908 years of peaceful prosperous independence until new invaders came.