Genghis Khan (c. 1162–1227)

Genghis Khan was the leader of a nomadic Mongol clan in Central Asia. Ambitious and charismatic, he steadily extended his power within Mongolia during the late 1100s. Sometimes he gained allies through force of personality, but he was better known for killing leaders of rival clans along with many of their supporters. In 1206 he was elected ruler of all the Mongols. Genghis Khan used his new power to expand his territory. His troops conquered northern China as well as much of present-day Iran, Pakistan, and Russia. His armies were disciplined and ruthless, and his soldiers were feared throughout Asia and even into Europe. Upon Genghis Khan’s death, his empire was divided among his sons, who extended the Mongol holdings even further in the years to come.

More About the Image: This monument of Genghis Khan is located in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

1. **Comparing and Contrasting** Choose another emperor or world leader you have studied. In what ways are that person’s life and works similar to what Genghis Khan did? In what ways are they different?

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2. **Making Inferences** Genghis Khan often massacred people who were loyal to rival clan leaders even after he had killed the leaders and defeated the leaders’ armies. Why do you think he did this?

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