

HMDC Presents... MONGOL 1225: Sample Position Paper

HMDC Presents... Sample Position Paper: Historical Crisis: Mongol Empire 1225, Death of Genghis Khan

THIS IS A MODEL TO LEARN FROM, NOT TO COPY. We read this sample to learn the shape of a position paper. Then we write our own paper, in our own words, about our own character.

HOW WE USE THIS SAMPLE

We read this paper to see how the four HMDC parts fit together for a historical crisis, where each of us plays a real person of the Mongol court instead of a modern country. The sample is written for Yelü Chucai, a Khitan statesman who advised the Great Khan. We chose an adviser on purpose, because most of us will play the four sons or their families. After we read it, we close it and write our own paper from the HMDC report and our own character's interests.

THE SAMPLE PAPER

Committee: Historical Crisis: Mongol Empire 1225, Death of Genghis Khan **Topic:** Succession and the Government of the Conquered Lands **Character:** Yelü Chucai, Khitan adviser to the Mongol court

Background of the Topic. Yelü Chucai believes that the greatest danger to the empire in 1225 is not a foreign army but an empty throne. The Great Khan rules the core of the largest connected land empire in history (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Last Accessed: October 2026), yet that empire has no orderly system of succession and no principle other than personal loyalty to one man (Columbia University Asia for Educators, Last Accessed: October 2026). The commanders of ten thousand men are bound to the khan himself, not to an office, so his death would free each of them to choose a new master. The conquests also left deep damage: in Khorasan, cities were razed and the underground water channels, called qanats, decayed as farmers fled (Encyclopaedia Iranica, December 15, 1990). A land with no farmers pays no taxes, and an army with no taxes cannot be fed.

UN and International Action. No United Nations exists in 1225, but the court already holds tools that work. In 1206 a kuriltai, the great assembly of Mongol nobles, gave Temujin the title Chinggis Khan and promised him loyalty (Columbia University Asia for Educators, Last Accessed: October 2026). In 1209 the khan ended a trade dispute with the Tanguts by winning lower tariffs and went home without taking their land, and by 1215 he again returned home once the Jin gave him the trade he wanted (Columbia University Asia for Educators, Last Accessed: October 2026). Relay stations about every twenty miles carry the khan's orders and supply food, horses and lodging to merchants (Columbia University Asia for Educators, Last Accessed: October 2026). When agreements fail, the cost is terrible: the killing of a Mongol caravan and envoy at Otrar in 1218 led to the war with Khwarazm and the sack of Bukhara and Samarkand (Encyclopaedia Iranica, December 15, 1990).

Our Character's Policy. Yelü Chucai's interests, which are not open to compromise, are an empire that outlives its founder and a settled population that lives to pay taxes. His policies, which are open to negotiation, are an heir named early and confirmed by a kuriltai, a regular tax system run by trained officials, and tolerance for every faith, including tax relief for clergy (Columbia University Asia for Educators, Last Accessed: October 2026). He favours Ögedei, whose policies supported trade, merchants and crafts, but he will accept any son the kuriltai confirms, provided the choice is made early and in public.

Proposed Solutions and Expected Opposition. First, Yelü Chucai proposes that the Great Khan name his heir now and make his other sons promise obedience while he still lives, as a ruler may name the son seen as ablest and most acceptable to his brothers (Encyclopaedia Britannica, September 1, 2026). Second, he proposes that the succession rule be written down in the Mongol script the khan ordered in 1204, so that no future assembly can dispute it. Third, he proposes that North China and Central Asia be governed through regular taxation, with every city that surrenders spared. Yelü Chucai expects opposition from traditionalist commanders who see massacre as a weapon that wins quickly (Encyclopaedia Britannica, September 21, 2026). He will answer that terror kills the farmers and craftsmen whose taxes feed the army, and he will offer the house of Jochi its own western domain, with clear duties to the Great Khan, so that the eldest line has a reason to accept the settlement.

HOW THIS SAMPLE IS BUILT

1. **Building the background from the harms:** We took the background from Part 1, Section 1A of the HMDC report, using three of its entries: the size of the empire, the missing succession system, and the destruction of Khorasan. We added the commanders' personal loyalty from the same section, because it explains why a death becomes a crisis.
2. **Replacing the UN with real history:** The UN did not exist in 1225, so we built this part from real history. The trade deals, Otrar and the relay stations come from Part 3, Sections 3A and 3B, and the 1206 kuriltai comes from Section 1B. We left the modern parallels in Part 2 out of the paper, because the report warns us never to cite modern law as if it applied in 1225.
3. **Separating interests from policies:** In a crisis, the HMDC part called "Our Country's Policy" becomes "Our Character's Policy", because we speak for a person, not a state. We drew the character's position from Part 2, Section 2H, the advisers' faction, and from the Yelü Chucai entry in Section 1E. The interests are the goals he will never give up, and the policies are the methods he can trade in caucus.
4. **Choosing three solutions:** The first solution comes from Major Solution 1 (Section 1B), the second from Major Solution 5 (Section 1F), and the third from Major Solution 4 (Section 1E). We picked the three that fit an adviser, who holds influence but commands no army.
5. **Predicting the opposition:** The traditionalists come from Section 2H and the terror entry in Section 1A, and the offer to Jochi's family comes from Major Solution 3 (Section 1D). Answering the opposition with an offer, not only an argument, shows the chair that we can build a bloc.

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