The Opium Wars

I. A collision of cultures
   A. As much as China tried to keep out "barbarians", it became an impossible task.
   B. Western Civilization wanted what China had . . . spice, tea, and SILK!!!

II. SILK . . . the important commodity
   A. Rome & Greece were willing to pay its weight in gold.
   B. People wanted so badly they made the Silk Road
      1. 4000 miles long . . . and that's one way
      2. Stretched through plains, mountains, and deserts
      3. The trip took decades
   C. Emperors closed the road down for decades at a time to keep out "hairy barbarians" who might pollute Chinese society
   D. So, in the 1500s the Europeans started sending ships hoping for trade
   E. The problem was, there wasn't much that Europe had that China wanted.
      The only thing was
      1. Gold
      2. Silver
      3. Horses . . . the European models were so big!
   F. By the 1800s, China once again closes down trade . . . they had enough gold and horses.
      1. All the seaports were closed at once . . . again not wanting to be polluted by Western barbarians.
      2. The West was dismayed . . . they could no longer get their goodies!

III. How the west got what they wanted
   A. Europe was spending gold in China, but China was not spending gold in Europe.
   B. This caused a severe economic imbalance
   C. So Queen Victoria looked high and low throughout her mightily British empire for a project that the Chinese would want.
   D. What does she come up with? Poppies! (Opium) . . . Poppies would put China to sleep!
   E. So Victoria approves the harvesting of opium in India and selling it to the Chinese

IV. Opium in China
   A. Opium was not new to China, but it was scarce so it cost a lot.
   B. Britain was now selling it at K-mart prices
C. Now any poor slob with a few bucks can get it and forget his miserable existence for awhile.
D. So 80% of the working class is addicted, depressed, lethargic, and craving their next fix.

V. The Chinese Government's response → Manchu emperors want it stopped.
A. They realized that they had a population of zombies to deal with. It's pretty hard to work and be productive if you're wasted.
B. Plus, now the economic imbalance was to the West's benefit . . . they were going broke!
C. They decide to execute all drug dealers publicly.
D. Users were at first publicly lashed, the second time they were imprisoned.
E. Finally, in 1839, the Chinese navy (a few "junkets") managed to take out a British trading ship.

IV. The Opium War begins
A. Britain responses to the sinking of one of their merchant ships by sending in a large fleet from their Navy . . . which happened to be the Big Sea Dog of the Day.
B. Up against the Chinese Navel Fleet (a few ricocheting ships and junkets) it was a lost cause.
C. It was over before it began . . . the British capture the seaports of Shanghai, Nanking, and 1/2 dozen other cities.
D. The emperor is forced to surrender.

V. The harsh British terms
A. China had to pay over 10 million to Britain in fines.
B. They were forced to open up several seaports to British trade, including Opium.
C. Britain took Hong Kong under an unusual "lease" for 140 years. They turn it into one of the world's largest trading centers.

VI. The rest of the world's reaction
A. Western nations join in by prying open several seaports.
B. They set up their own government rule in sections of these seaports. This is called Extraterritoriality.
   1. Chinese must follow foreign laws in these sections.
   2. Foreigners ignore Chinese laws . . .
C. The opium trade explodes . . . even though it's illegal in China.