

Early China

Lesson 1 The Birth of Chinese Civilization

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What makes a culture unique?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *How have rivers, mountains, and deserts shaped the development of China's civilization?*
2. *Why did China's Shang rulers become powerful?*
3. *How did the Zhou claim the right to rule China?*

Terms to Know

warlord a leader who has his own army

aristocrat a person who belongs to the highest class of society

ancestor a family member who is no longer living

pictograph a symbol in a writing system based on pictures

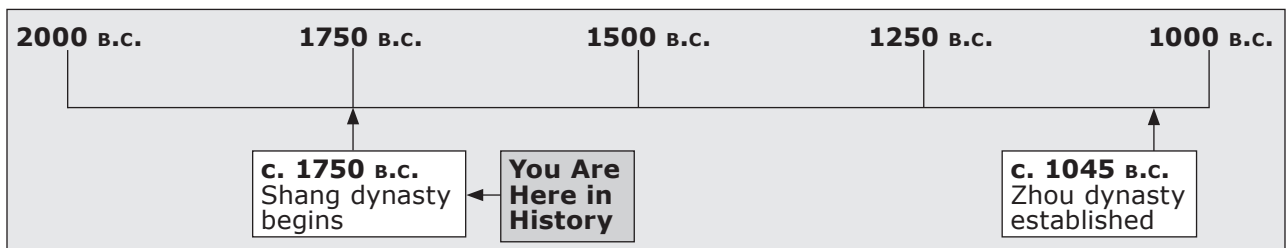
ideograph a symbol in a writing system that represents a thing or an idea

bureaucracy a group of non-elected government officials

Where in the world?



When did it happen?



Early China

Lesson 1 The Birth of Chinese Civilization, *Continued*

The Land of China

Two powerful rivers have helped shape Chinese history. The Huang He, or Yellow River, flows across China. As it flows, it carries large amounts of rich soil. The soil spreads along the banks of the river. This makes the land more fertile, or a high quality for farming. Farmers along the Huang He are able to grow more food. However, the Huang He often floods. Millions of people have died because of these floods.

The Chang Jiang, or Yangtze River, is another important waterway in China. Like the Huang He, the Chiang Jiang provides rich soil for farming. It also serves as a way of trade and transportation.

Mountains and deserts cover much of China. They were difficult to cross, acting like walls around the country. These natural barriers limited contact between China and other civilizations. The high mountains and vast deserts helped China develop a unique culture. Chinese civilization was different from other civilizations.

Geographic Feature	Effect on Chinese Civilization
rivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• provided rich soil for Chinese farmers• caused many deaths by flooding• used as waterways for trade and transportation
mountains	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• formed a barrier around the country making it difficult for invaders to enter• made it possible for China to develop a unique culture and civilization
deserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• created a barrier around the country, like the mountains did

The First Chinese Dynasty

A dynasty is a line of rulers who belong to the same family. Historians believe the first Chinese dynasty was the Shang. The Shang dynasty began about 1750 B.C.

Ruins of walls and buildings show that the Shang built the first cities in China. One was the royal capital at Anyang. A palace and temple stood at the city's center.



Explaining

1. How did mountains and deserts affect China's civilization?



Reading Check

2. How did rivers help civilization develop in China?



Marking the Text

3. In the text, circle the name of what historians believe to be the first Chinese dynasty.

Early China

Lesson 1 The Birth of Chinese Civilization, *Continued***Defining**4. What is a *warlord*?

**Identifying**

5. Which group of people made up most of Chinese society?

**Contrasting**

6. What is the difference between a pictograph and an ideograph?

**Reading Check**

7. Why did Shang kings have questions scratched on oracle bones?

**Defining**8. What does *hereditary* mean?

Public buildings and the homes of government officials were nearby. Beyond these stood workshops and other homes.

The king was the political, religious, and military leader of Shang China. Over time, the Shang conquered nearby areas. Kings began to rule more land and people. Warlords helped the Shang kings control territories throughout the country. A **warlord** is a military leader who has his own army.

Warlords and other royal officials were aristocrats. **Aristocrats** are people in an upper class of society. Their wealth comes from the land they own. Most Chinese people, however, were farmers. They farmed the land owned by aristocrats. A small number were merchants, artisans, and enslaved people.

People in Shang China:

- worshiped many gods
- believed the gods could bring good or bad fortune
- honored their **ancestors**, or long-dead family members.
- believed their ancestors would bring them good luck
- made offerings to the gods and their ancestors

Kings looked to their ancestors for help in making important decisions. They had priests scratch questions on oracle bones such as, "Will I win the battle?" Priests heated the bones until they cracked. Answers were found in the pattern of the cracks.

Early Chinese writing used pictographs and ideographs. **Pictographs** are characters that represent objects. **Ideographs** are another kind of character. They link two or more pictographs to express an idea.

The Zhou: China's Longest Dynasty

According to legend, the last Shang ruler was a wicked tyrant. Rebels overthrew the Shang government and declared a new dynasty called the Zhou. The Zhou ruled China for more than 800 years. The king led the government. He was helped by a **bureaucracy**. A bureaucracy is a group of selected officials who do different government jobs.

Early China**Lesson 1** The Birth of Chinese Civilization, *Continued*

Under Zhou rulers, China grew larger. The king divided the country into territories. Each territory was ruled by an aristocrat. When an aristocrat died, his son or another member of his family governed the territory. This means these positions were hereditary.

Zhou kings believed that the gods gave them the right to rule to China. This idea is known as the Mandate of Heaven. The Mandate said that the king must rule by the proper "Way," known as the Dao. The king's duty was to honor and please the gods.

During the Zhou dynasty, new technology helped farmers. The Chinese developed better ways to bring water to their fields. With a better irrigation system, farmers were able to grow more food than ever before. Under the Zhou, China's trade expanded also. Silk from the Zhou dynasty has been found as far away as Greece.

The aristocrats became more powerful under the Zhou. They began to ignore the king. They each took control of their own territory, or states. Aristocrats began to fight each other for power. These battles lasted for nearly 200 years. This time in Chinese history is known as the "Period of the Warring States."

Check for Understanding

List two different landforms and explain how each one helped shape Chinese history.

1. _____

2. _____

List one accomplishment of the Shang dynasty and one accomplishment of the Zhou dynasty.

3. _____

4. _____

Reading Check

9. What technology was developed in China during the Zhou dynasty?



10. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover the Check for Understanding. Label the tabs—*Shang Dynasty* and *Zhou Dynasty*.

Use both sides to list facts about each family of Chinese kings, their beliefs, and how they governed the people. Use this Foldable and the chart on Geographic Features to complete the lists in the Check for Understanding.

Early China

Lesson 2 Society and Culture in Ancient China

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do new ideas change the way people live?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *How did Chinese thinkers influence society and government?*
2. *How was early Chinese society organized?*

Terms to Know

Confucianism a system of beliefs based on the teachings of Confucius; duty is central idea

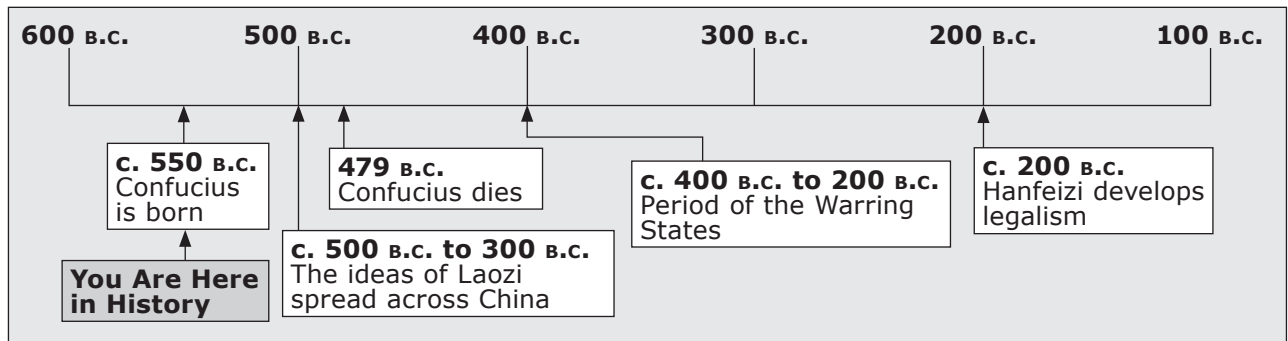
Daoism a Chinese philosophy focused on obtaining long life and living in harmony with nature

legalism a Chinese philosophy based on the importance of laws

social class a group of people at a similar cultural, economic, or educational level

filial piety the responsibility children have to respect, obey, and care for their parents

When did it happen?



What do you know?

In the first column, answer the questions based on what you know before you study. After this lesson, complete the last column.

Now...		Later...
	Who was Confucius?	
	What is legalism?	
	Who owned most of the land, farmers or aristocrats?	
	Were wealthy merchants respected?	
	What did Chinese philosophy say that children owed to their parents?	

Early China

Lesson 2 Society and Culture in Ancient China, *Continued*

Chinese Philosophies

Between 500 B.C. and 200 B.C. Chinese thinkers developed three major philosophies. They were Confucianism, Daoism, and legalism. The philosophies were different from each other. However, they had the same goal. Each philosophy aimed to create a well-run and peaceful society.

	Confucianism	Daoism	Legalism
Founder	Confucius	Laozi	Hanfeizi
Key Ideas	People should put the needs of their family and community first.	People should give up worldly desires in favor of nature and the Dao, the force that guides all things.	Society needs a system of harsh laws and strict punishment.

Confucius was born about 550 B.C. to a farming family. He lived during a time when kings were often fighting each other. Confucius believed people should follow the beliefs of their ancestors. He also taught that everyone had a duty. Rulers had a duty to lead their people wisely. Children had a duty to respect their parents. Parents had a duty to love their children.

Confucius believed that if everyone did their duty and followed traditional beliefs, there would be peace. He also believed that all men should be able to serve in the government. This led to a system of examinations to choose government officials.

Confucius was honored as a great teacher. After his death, his teachings, called **Confucianism**, spread across China.

Like Confucianism, **Daoism** aimed to create a peaceful society. It began with the ideas of Laozi. Confucius thought people should work hard to make the world better. Daoism taught people to turn away from society and live in harmony with nature. Dao means "the Way." Laozi and his followers believed Daoism was the way, or path, to a better life. Many Chinese followed both Confucianism and Daoism.



Marking the Text

1. In the text, circle the names of the founders of each Chinese philosophy. Underline the name of the philosophy they founded. Draw an arrow from the name of the founder to his philosophy.



Explaining

2. Why is a system of examinations a good way to choose government officials?

Early China

Lesson 2 Society and Culture in Ancient China, *Continued***Explaining**

3. Why did aristocrats and kings like legalism?

**Reading Check**

4. How are the ideas of Confucius and Laozi similar? How are they different?

**Summarizing**

5. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover the chart titled *Chinese Society*. Cut the tabs in half to form four tabs. Write *Chinese Social Classes* on the anchor tab. Label the tabs: *Aristocrats*, *Farmers*, *Artisans*, and *Merchants*. Write on both sides what you learn about the four social classes.

Hanfeizi introduced the ideas of **legalism** during the 200s B.C. Unlike Confucius and Laozi, he believed that humans are naturally evil. He thought only strict laws and harsh punishment would get people to do what they should do.

Many aristocrats supported legalism because it emphasized force. Under legalism, rulers did not have to think of the needs or wishes of their people. The ideas led to harsh punishments for even small crimes.

Chinese Life

Chinese society was made up of four social classes. A **social class** is a group of people in a society with the same economic and social position.

Chinese Society

Aristocrats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small number of people • wealthy • owned large plots of land and lived on large estates
Farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most people • worked on land owned by aristocrats • paid rent in the form of crops • paid taxes • served as soldiers in wartime • worked one month per year on public projects, such as roads
Artisans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skilled workers who made useful objects, such as tools and silk cloth • learned skills from fathers and taught them to sons
Merchants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shopkeepers and traders • lived in towns • provided goods and services to aristocrats • some wealthy, but not respected because merchants made money only for themselves

Early China

Lesson 2 Society and Culture in Ancient China, *Continued*

Aristocratic families in China were wealthy. They lived on estates with walls surrounding their homes for protection. They owned large amounts of land. After a father died, his estate was divided equally among his sons. This meant that sons and grandsons ended up with much less land.

Most Chinese were farmers. They lived in villages surrounded by mud walls. Outside these walls were the fields that farmers rented from aristocrats. They paid rent by giving some of their harvest to the aristocrats.

Artisans are skilled workers who make useful objects. Merchants provided goods and services to the aristocrats. Some merchants grew wealthy, but they were not respected. People believed that merchants acted only for their own gain and not for the good of society.

The family was at the center of Chinese society. Chinese families practiced filial piety. **Filial piety** is the responsibility children have to respect, obey, and take care of their parents.

Men and women had very different roles in early China. Men grew crops, ran the government, and fought wars. Women raised children and saw to their education. They also managed the household and family finances.

Check for Understanding

What is a major difference between Confucianism and Daoism?

1. _____

List the four classes of early Chinese society.

2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

**Marking the Text**

6. Underline the work done by men. Circle the work done by women.

**Reading Check**

7. Why were merchants not respected in ancient China?
- _____
- _____
- _____



8. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line. Label the anchor tab *Philosophies*. Label the top tab *Confucianism* and the bottom tab *Daoism*.

Make a memory map by drawing three arrows below each title. Write words or phrases you remember about each. Use these notes and the *Chinese Social Classes* Foldable to help you answer the questions under the tabs.

Early China

Lesson 3 The Qin and the Han Dynasties

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do governments change?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *How did the Qin Emperor unite China?*
2. *What improvements did the Chinese make under Han rulers?*
3. *How did the Silk Road benefit China and the rest of the world?*
4. *Why did Buddhism become a popular religion in China?*

Terms to Know

censor an official who made sure that government workers did their jobs

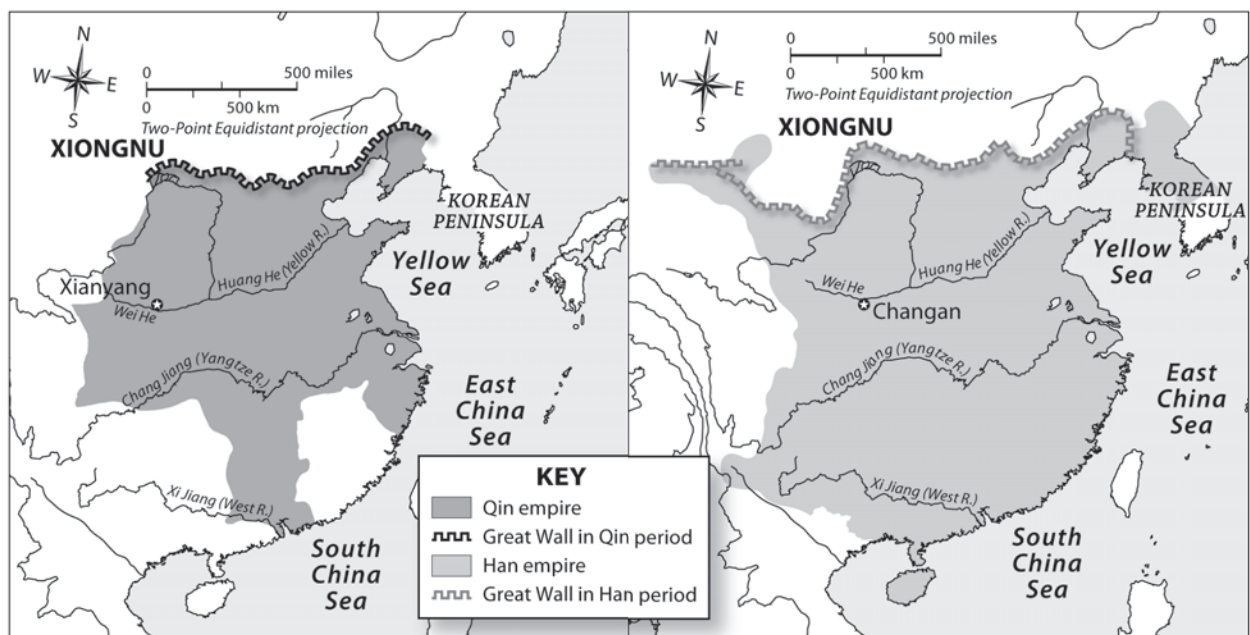
currency something that is used as money

civil service government work

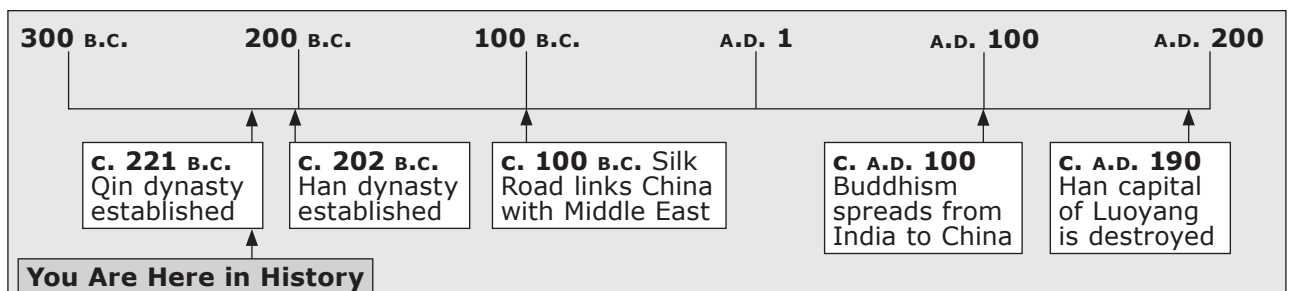
tenant farmer a farmer who works land owned by someone else

acupuncture a Chinese practice of inserting fine needles through the skin to treat disease or relieve pain

Where in the world?



When did it happen?



Early China

Lesson 3 The Qin and the Han Dynasties, *Continued*

The Qin Emperor

In 221 B.C. the ruler of the Chinese state of Qin took control of China and ended the Zhou dynasty. The new ruler called himself Qin Shihuangdi, which means “the First Qin Emperor.” Qin brought many changes to China.

Qin wanted to unify China. He took control of China’s provinces. Before then, the provinces were ruled by aristocrats. The aristocrats passed control to their sons when they died. Instead, Qin now appointed the governors.

Qin’s rule was harsh. Anyone who disagreed with him was punished or killed. He burned writings that did not agree with him. He appointed **censors** to make sure government officials did their work.

Qin's Efforts to Unify China

- He created a single **currency** that everyone had to use.
- He hired experts to simplify and set rules for the Chinese writing system.
- He ordered farmers to build a canal connecting the Chang Jiang River in central China to a city in southern China.
- He began a project to connect a series of walls across northern China to keep invaders out.

When Qin died in 210 B.C., aristocrats and farmers revolted. By 206 B.C., the Qin dynasty was over.

Han Rulers

In 202 B.C. a new dynasty in China called the Han dynasty came to power. The Han dynasty would rule China for over 400 years.

The first strong Han emperor was Han Wudi. Han Wudi ruled from 141 B.C. to 87 B.C. He wanted dedicated and talented people to work in the government. He created schools to prepare students for **civil service** jobs, or government jobs given to people based on their scores on tests. Civil service tests were a way of choosing educated government workers. The tests for the Chinese civil service were very difficult. Some students who passed got jobs as teachers. Others worked for the government. They won great respect because they were well-educated.



Marking the Text

1. Underline two examples that show Qin’s rule was harsh.



Analyzing

2. Do you think Qin’s rule helped to unite the country? Why or why not?



Reading Check

3. How would you describe Qin as a ruler?



Marking the Text

4. Circle two jobs that someone could get after passing the civil service examination.

Early China

Lesson 3 The Qin and the Han Dynasties, *Continued***Reading Check**

5. Why did Han rulers create civil service examinations?

**Explaining**

6. Why did Han Wudi encourage trade with the West?

**Listing**

7. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line. Write *Silk Road* on the anchor tab. Label the first tab *to China* and the second tab *from China*. Draw arrows from one tab to the other to illustrate the flow of trade to and from China. On the reverse sides, list facts about the trade routes.

During the Han dynasty, many farmers became tenant farmers. A **tenant farmer** works land that belongs to someone else. Most tenant farmers were very poor. As the population grew, the Han empire took in new areas. Han armies conquered lands to the north, including Korea, and moved south into Southeast Asia. They went west as far as India. The Chinese lived peacefully for nearly 150 years.

During this time, ideas, art, literature, and science blossomed. The ideas of Confucius influenced more people. New paintings and sculptures were created. Writers wrote about current events. They made copies of old works.

New technology helped Chinese farmers produce more food.

- The cast-iron plow was developed. It could break up soil better than wooden plows.
- Waterwheels ground more grain.
- Silk manufacturing improved.
- Paper, a Chinese invention, was used to keep written records.
- The rudder and a new way to move a ship's sails allowed the Chinese to travel farther.

Doctors discovered that certain foods prevented disease. They learned to treat some illnesses with herbs. Chinese doctors relieved their patients' pain with acupuncture.

Acupuncture is the practice of inserting thin, short needles into a patient's skin at certain points to relieve pain.

On the Silk Road

//////////, Glue Foldable here //////////

During the Han period, Chinese traders grew rich by delivering expensive goods to other parts of the world. Both sea and land routes led to an exchange of goods and ideas.

In A.D. 139 Han Wudi sent a general named Zhang Qian to explore areas west of China. Zhang's mission was to find allies to help China fight their enemies. He returned 13 years later. He had not found allies. However, he told about the people and places he had seen.

He told Han Wudi about the strong horses of the West. Han Wudi wanted these horses for his soldiers. To get them, the emperor encouraged trade between China and the West. Chinese merchants traded silk, spices, and other

Early China

Lesson 3 The Qin and the Han Dynasties, *Continued*

luxury goods. This trade route to the West would later be called the Silk Road.

The Silk Road was a network of trade routes. When it was completed, it stretched from China to the Mediterranean. Travel on the Silk Road was difficult and dangerous. Traders had to cross high mountains and vast deserts. Robbers and thieves also traveled the roads. Over the years, China came into contact with other civilizations. Chinese inventions, such as paper, traveled along the Silk Road to civilizations in the West.

Buddhism Reaches China

The Silk Road also served as a way to spread ideas. Buddhism spread from India to China along the Silk Road. At first, Buddhism attracted few followers. However, the long period of unrest after the fall of the Han dynasty helped the spread of Buddhism.

Many of the Han emperors after Han Wudi were weak and dishonest. Greedy aristocrats took over more of the land. They forced many farmers to give up their property. Finally, the people rebelled against the Han rulers. In A.D. 190, rebels destroyed the Han capital city, Luoyang. By A.D. 220, civil war divided China. For the next 400 years, China was divided into many small kingdoms.

The long years of civil war made many Chinese feel unsafe. Many turned to Buddhism. Buddhist ideas appealed to people dealing with fear and worry. By the A.D. 400s, Buddhism had become one of China's major religions.

Check for Understanding

List two acts by Qin Shihuangdi to unify China.

1. _____

2. _____

Name one way in which life for farmers worsened during the Han dynasty and one way in which it improved.

3. _____

4. _____

Reading Check

8. What developments led to the creation of the Silk Road?

Reading Check

9. Why did the fall of the Han dynasty help Buddhism spread in China?



10. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line. Label the anchor tab *Powerful Dynasties*. Label the two tabs—*Qin Dynasty* and *Han Dynasty*. Make a memory map by drawing three arrows below each title. Write three words or phrases that you remember about each on the front of the tabs.