

# Ancient China

The first settlers of China lived in the Yellow River Valley. The farmers grew crops. Men made silk. They used clay to make dishes and pots. Mountains along the borders kept them apart from other nations. So, there was not much trade.

The first culture was under the Xia (she-AH) dynasty (DIE-nuhs-tee). A dynasty is one family. It holds all the power in a nation. The Xia ruled for 400 years.

## The Shang Dynasty

The Shang dynasty came next. It ruled for 600 years. The Shang people worked with bronze. They made tools and wheels.



The oldest Chinese writings come from the Shang. The people carved words on animal shells and bones. These are called oracle (OR-uh-kuhl) bones.

## Long-Lasting Zhou Dynasty

Then, the Zhou (JO) dynasty took charge. It lasted for 900 years. Near its end the rulers became weak. They could not keep control of their land. Small states broke away. Their troops fought each other. Wars broke out. Thousands of men died. These battles ruined farms and towns.

Confucius (kuhn-FYOO-shuhs) lived during this time. He thought about the meaning of life. He said that family was most important. He taught that a person should be honest and work hard. He also said that a person must follow rules.

## Short but Sweet: The Qin Dynasty

The Qin (CHIN) dynasty lasted only 15 years. Yet Emperor Qin Shi Huang (CHIN SHE HWANG) did a lot during this time. First, he stopped the battles. He took charge of all of China. He formed one government.

Other leaders had built walls to keep their areas safe. Emperor Qin chose to join these walls. This was the start of what would become the Great Wall of China. Qin set standard weights and measures. He made writing better. He had roads and canals made. He was a man who got things done.

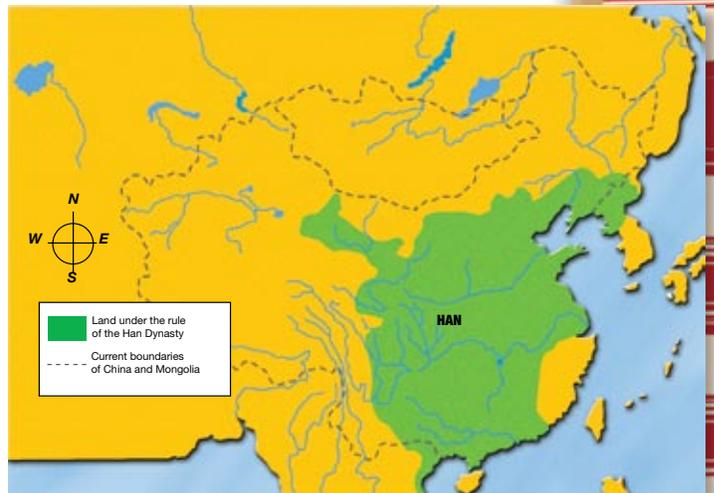


Emperor Qin wanted a great tomb. This tomb would show his power. He had artists make over 7,000 life-sized men. They made these soldiers from red clay. This clay is called terra-cotta (tear-ruh-KAWT-tuh). When Qin died, these troops stood guard over him.

## The Han Dynasty

Emperor Qin died. His sons lost control of China. The Han (HAWN) dynasty took over. It lasted more than 400 years. By then, China was the biggest country in the world. It had 60 million people. The Han built a trade route. It was called the Silk Road. It went from China to Europe. For the first time there was a road between Asia and Europe.

Then the Han rule ended. Wars broke out. Barbarians (bawr-BER-ee-uhnz) took over northern China. These people had no culture (art or writing). Many rulers held parts of southern China.



## Comprehension Question

What is a dynasty?

# Ancient China

The first Chinese settled in the Yellow River Valley. The farmers grew crops. Craftsmen made silk and clay dishes and pots. The mountains along China's border kept it apart from other nations. So there was not much trade.

The first society was the Xia (she-AH) dynasty (DIE-nuhs-tee). A dynasty is one family that holds the power in a nation. The Xia ruled for 400 years.

## The Shang Dynasty

The Shang dynasty held power for nearly 600 years. Its people used bronze. They made tools and wheels. The oldest Chinese writings come from this time. The people carved words on animal shells and bones. These are called oracle (OR-uh-kuhl) bones.



## Long-Lasting Zhou Dynasty

Next, the Zhou (JO) dynasty ruled for 900 years. But near the end of this time, the emperors grew weak. They could not keep control. Small states broke away. Their troops fought each other. Soon civil war began. Thousands of men died. Bloody battles ruined farms and towns.

Confucius (kuhn-FYOO-shuhs) lived during this time. He was a philosopher. He thought about life and its meaning. He said that family was most important. He taught that it was a person's duty to be honest, work hard, and follow rules.

## Short but Sweet: The Qin Dynasty

The Qin (CHIN) dynasty lasted only about 15 years. Yet, Emperor Qin Shi Huang (CHIN SHE HWANG) did a lot in this time. First, he stopped the battles. He took control of all of China.

Over the years, other leaders had built walls to keep their areas safe. Emperor Qin decided to join these walls. This was the start of what became the Great Wall of China.

Qin set standard weights and measures. He made written language the same for all of China. To connect towns, he had roads made and canals dug. He formed a central government.

Emperor Qin wanted a fancy tomb. He wanted it to show his power and importance. So, he had artists make over 7,000 life-sized terra-cotta (tear-ruh-KAWT-tuh) (red clay) troops. After Qin died, they stood guard over his tomb.



## The Han Dynasty

Emperor Qin died. His sons lost control of China. The Han (HAWN) dynasty took over. It lasted more than 400 years. At this time, China was the world's biggest country. It had about 60 million people. The Han built a trade route from China to Europe. This great Silk Road was the first link between Asia and Europe.

Then the Han dynasty fell apart. Wars broke out. Barbarians (bawr-BER-ee-uhnz) took control of the northern part of China. These people had no culture (art or writing). Other rulers held parts of southern China.



## Comprehension Question

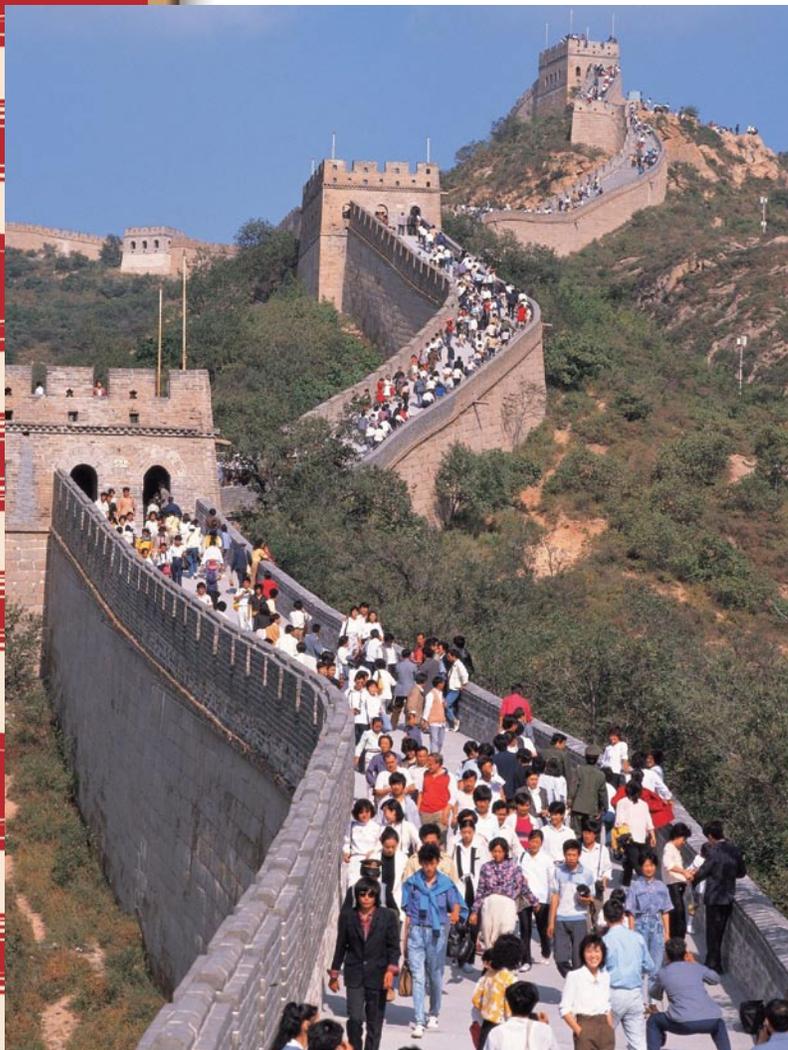
Describe one dynasty.

# Ancient China

The first Chinese settled in the Yellow River Valley. They were farmers and craftsmen. In addition to crops, they made pottery and silk. The first society was the Xia (she-AH) dynasty (DIE-nuhs-tee). A dynasty is one family that holds the power in a nation. The Xia ruled from about 2000 to 1600 B.C. The mountains along China's border kept it separate from other nations, so there was not a lot of trade during this time.

## The Shang Dynasty

The Shang dynasty held power from around 1600 to 1046 B.C. Its people used bronze to make tools and wheels. The oldest Chinese writings come from this time. The people carved words on animal shells and bones. These are called oracle (OR-uh-kuhl) bones.



## Long-Lasting Zhou Dynasty

Next, the Zhou (JO) dynasty reigned for 900 years. This dynasty kept written records of what happened on a daily basis. The final Zhou emperors were weak and could not control the people. Many small states broke away. The armies of these states fought one another. Soon civil war erupted. Thousands of men died in bloody battles. The countryside was destroyed.

At this time, Confucius (kuhn-FYOO-shuhs) was a philosopher. Philosophers want to understand life and its meaning. He said that family was of top importance. He taught that it was necessary to be honest, work hard, and obey rules.

## Short but Sweet: The Qin Dynasty

The Qin (CHIN) dynasty came after the fall of the Zhou. It only lasted about 15 years. Yet Emperor Qin Shi Huang (CHIN SHE HWANG) accomplished much in this short time. He ended the constant battling and unified the nation. Qin took control of all of China.

Over the years, other leaders had built walls to protect their territories. Qin decided to join these walls and make them longer. This was the start of what became the Great Wall of China.



Qin set standard weights and measures. He made written language more uniform. To connect towns, he had roads and canals constructed. He formed a centralized government.

Qin wanted a tomb to display his power and importance. He had artists create over 7,000 life-sized terra-cotta (tear-ruh-KAWT-tuh) (red clay) soldiers. These soldiers had wooden weapons. After Qin died, they stood guard over his tomb.

## The Han Dynasty

When Qin died, his sons lost control of the country. The Han (HAWN) dynasty began. Lasting more than 400 years, it was one of the strongest in Chinese history. During this time, China had a population of 60 million people, which made it the world's largest country. The great Silk Road, a trade route from China to Europe, was finished during this time. It was the first link between Asia and European nations.



Once the Han dynasty crumbled, wars followed. Barbarians (bawr-BER-ee-uhnz) controlled the northern part of China. These people had no culture. Different rulers controlled parts of southern China.

## Comprehension Question

Compare and contrast two dynasties.

# Ancient China

The first Chinese settled in the Yellow River Valley. They were farmers and craftsmen. In addition to crops, they produced pottery and silk. The mountains along China's border kept it separate from other civilizations (siv-uh-luh-ZAY-shuhnz), so there was little trade during this time.

When one family holds all the power in a nation, it is called a dynasty (DIE-nuhs-tee). The first society was the Xia (she-AH) dynasty, which lasted from about 2000 to 1600 B.C.

## The Shang Dynasty

The Shang dynasty reigned from around 1600 to 1046 B.C. Its people used bronze to make tools and wheels. They also produced the oldest Chinese writings ever found. The people left records by carving words on animal shells and bones called oracle (OR-uh-kuhl) bones.



## Long-Lasting Zhou Dynasty

The Zhou (JO) dynasty reigned for 900 years—the longest dynasty in Chinese history. This dynasty kept extensive written records. The late Zhou emperors grew weak and could not control the people. Smaller states broke away, and their armies fought against each other. Soon civil war erupted, and thousands of men perished in bloody battles. The Chinese countryside was destroyed.

During this time a man named Confucius (kuhn-FYOO-shuhs) was a philosopher who wanted to understand existence and its meaning. He believed that family was of supreme importance. Confucius taught that everyone should be honest, work hard, and obey rules.

## Short but Sweet: The Qin Dynasty

The Qin (CHIN) dynasty gained power after the Zhou's fall. Their reign only lasted about 15 years, yet Emperor Qin Shi Huang (CHIN SHE HWANG) accomplished much in this time. He ended the constant battling by unifying the nation. Qin took control of all of China. He formed a centralized government.

Over the years, other leaders had built walls to protect their territories. Emperor Qin decided to join these walls and make them longer, forming the basis of what became the Great Wall of China. Emperor Qin established standard weights and measures and made written language uniform. To connect towns, he had roads and canals constructed.

Qin wanted a magnificent tomb that displayed his power and significance. Thus, he had artists create over 7,000 life-sized terra-cotta (tear-ruh-KAWT-tuh) (red clay) warriors to stand guard over his tomb.



## Prosperous Han Dynasty

After Qin died, his sons lost control. The Han (HAWN) dynasty took over. It lasted from 206 B.C. to A.D. 220 and was one of the strongest in Chinese history. During the Han reign, China was the largest country in the world, with a population of 60 million. The great Silk Road, a trade route forming the first link between Asian and European nations, was completed during this time.

Once the powerful Han dynasty crumbled, wars occurred. Barbarians (bawr-BER-ee-uhnz), uncivilized people who had no culture, seized control of the northern part of China. Different rulers controlled parts of southern China.

## Comprehension Question

How did the dynasties impact Chinese history?