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
- hereditary having title or possession by reason of birth
- Mandate of Heaven belief that the Chinese king’s right to rule came from the gods
- Dao Chinese system of beliefs that describes the way a king must rule

Where in the world?

When did it happen?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2000 B.C.</th>
<th>1750 B.C.</th>
<th>1500 B.C.</th>
<th>1250 B.C.</th>
<th>1000 B.C.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>c. 1750 B.C.</strong> Shang dynasty begins</td>
<td><strong>c. 1750 B.C.</strong> Shang dynasty begins</td>
<td><strong>You Are Here in History</strong></td>
<td><strong>c. 1045 B.C.</strong> Zhou dynasty established</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Feature</th>
<th>Effect on Chinese Civilization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| rivers             | • provided rich soil for Chinese farmers  
|                    | • caused many deaths by flooding  
|                    | • used as waterways for trade and transportation  |
| mountains          | • 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            | • 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.
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?

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. __________________________________________

---

**Defining**

8. What does *hereditary* mean?

   __________
   __________
   __________

**Reading Check**

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

   __________
   __________

**Foldables**

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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>600 B.C.</td>
<td>Confucius is born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>550 B.C.</td>
<td>Confucius is born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 B.C.</td>
<td>Confucius is born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>479 B.C.</td>
<td>Confucius dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 B.C.</td>
<td>C. 400 B.C. to 200 B.C. Period of the Warring States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 B.C.</td>
<td>C. 200 B.C. Hanfeizi develops legalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 B.C.</td>
<td>C. 200 B.C. Hanfeizi develops legalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 B.C.</td>
<td>C. 200 B.C. Hanfeizi develops legalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Now...</th>
<th>Later...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who was Confucius?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is legalism?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who owned most of the land, farmers or aristocrats?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were wealthy merchants respected?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did Chinese philosophy say that children owed to their parents?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

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

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?

_______________
_______________
_______________

_______________
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aristocrats</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• small number of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• wealthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• owned large plots of land and lived on large estates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farmers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• most people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• worked on land owned by aristocrats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• paid rent in the form of crops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• paid taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• served as soldiers in wartime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• worked one month per year on public projects, such as roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Artisans</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• skilled workers who made useful objects, such as tools and silk cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• learned skills from fathers and taught them to sons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Merchants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• shopkeepers and traders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• lived in towns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• provided goods and services to aristocrats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• some wealthy, but not respected because merchants made money only for themselves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Foldables®

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?

300 B.C. 200 B.C. 100 B.C. A.D. 1 A.D. 100 A.D. 200

C. 221 B.C. Qin dynasty established
C. 202 B.C. Han dynasty established
C. 100 B.C. Silk Road links China with Middle East
C. A.D. 100 Buddhism spreads from India to China
C. A.D. 190 Han capital of Luoyang is destroyed

You Are Here in History

Key
- Qin empire
- Han empire
- Great Wall in Qin period
- Great Wall in Han period

Map showing the Qin and Han dynasties and their capitals.
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.
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

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
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?
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

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.