

Ancient China: Dynasties and Discoveries

Learning objective: To analyse the significance of the Shang Dynasty and understand how Ancient Chinese innovations shaped the world.

Read each question carefully and use your knowledge of Ancient China to provide detailed answers. Think about how the inventions and social structures you have studied influenced the lives of people living thousands of years ago.

Ellie the elephant has been digging through the archives of history to learn about the Shang Dynasty. She discovered that the Ancient Chinese civilisation flourished along the banks of the Yellow River. The people developed incredible skills in bronze casting, created a unique system of writing on oracle bones, and were the first to produce silk. These advancements helped China grow into a powerful and organised society led by an Emperor.

Word bank: Dynasty · Oracle bones · Bronze · Silk · Yellow River · Emperor · Ancestors · Invention

1. Explain why the Yellow River was essential for the development of the early Chinese civilisation. Consider the needs of farmers and settlers. (2 marks)

2. Describe the purpose of 'oracle bones' during the Shang Dynasty. Why were they important to the leaders of that time? (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the use of bronze in Ancient China with how we might use metals in our modern world today. (3 marks)

4. Justify why the invention of silk production was such a significant achievement for Ancient China's economy. (2 marks)

5. What might happen if the Ancient Chinese had not developed a system of writing? Explain the consequences for their history and governance. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene showing life by the Yellow River. Include a bronze vessel, a scroll with early Chinese writing, and a field of mulberry trees used for silk production.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are an advisor to an Emperor in the Shang Dynasty. Write a short proposal (5-8 sentences) explaining which new invention you believe will be the most valuable to the kingdom and why. Use high-level vocabulary to justify your choice.