

Ellie's Ancient China Expedition: The Great Invention Sort

Learning objective: To understand the significant contributions of Ancient Chinese civilisation, including the invention of paper, the compass, and the cultivation of silk.

Ellie the elephant has travelled back in time to Ancient China. She has collected a trunk full of discoveries, but she needs your help to sort them. Categorise each item into one of three groups: 'Everyday Life', 'Important Inventions', or 'Trade and Treasures'. For each item, justify why it fits into that category using your historical knowledge.

Word bank: Silk · Paper · Compass · Gunpowder · Tea · Calligraphy · Great Wall bricks · Porcelain

1. Choose one item from the 'Important Inventions' category. Explain why this invention was a turning point for the Ancient Chinese people compared to life before it existed. (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast how 'Silk' was used in Ancient China versus how it is perceived as a luxury item in modern trade. Why was it so valuable? (2 marks)

3. Justify your choice for placing 'Tea' into the 'Everyday Life' category. How might this have supported social interaction in Ancient Chinese society? (2 marks)

4. What might happen if the Ancient Chinese had never invented the compass? How would this have changed their ability to explore the world? (2 marks)

5. Looking at the 'Great Wall bricks', explain why the construction of the Great Wall was considered a monumental task of organisation and labour for the emperors. (2 marks)

6. If you were a merchant on the Silk Road, which three items from our list would you pack to trade, and why would they be highly sought after by people in other countries? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene from an Ancient Chinese market stall showing one of the inventions from our word bank. Include details about what the people are wearing and the patterns they might use to decorate their items.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are an advisor to an Ancient Chinese Emperor. Write a short persuasive speech (50–80 words) suggesting which invention the empire should focus on improving next to ensure their civilisation remains the most advanced in the world.