

Ancient China: Dynasties and Discoveries

Learning objective: To assess knowledge and understanding of Ancient Chinese civilisation, including the significance of the Yellow River, the role of dynasties, and major inventions.

Read each question carefully. Use your historical knowledge to provide detailed answers. Ensure your explanations are clear and use historical terminology where appropriate.

Ancient China is one of the world's oldest civilisations. It developed along the banks of the Yellow River, where fertile soil allowed farming to flourish. Over thousands of years, China was ruled by various dynasties—families who held power for generations. These rulers commissioned grand projects, such as the Great Wall, and oversaw inventions that changed the world, including papermaking, the compass, and gunpowder. Trade routes like the Silk Road connected China to distant lands, allowing goods and ideas to travel across continents.

Word bank: Dynasty · Emperor · Yellow River · Silk Road · Terracotta Army · Invention · Ancestor · Philosophy

1. Identify two reasons why the Yellow River was essential for the development of early Chinese civilisation. (2 marks)

2. What is a 'dynasty' and how did the dynastic system affect the leadership of Ancient China? (2 marks)

3. Explain the significance of the Silk Road. How did it benefit both China and the countries it traded with? (3 marks)

4. Name two major inventions from Ancient China and explain how they might have changed daily life for the people living then. (4 marks)

5. Ellie the Elephant is researching the Terracotta Army. Explain why an Emperor might choose to be buried with thousands of clay soldiers. (3 marks)

6. Compare and contrast the life of a peasant farmer with that of a high-ranking official in Ancient China. What might have been their biggest differences in daily routine and status? (3 marks)

7. Extended Writing Task: Justify why Ancient China is considered a 'cradle of civilisation'. In your answer, discuss the impact of their inventions, their social structure, and their connection to the wider world. (5 marks) (5 marks)

Draw: Draw a map of the Silk Road showing how it connected China to other regions, or illustrate the invention of the compass and explain how it helped ancient travellers.



Extension challenge: Total: /25. Greater Depth Challenge: Imagine you are an advisor to the Emperor. Propose one new policy to protect the borders of the empire or improve trade. Justify your answer by explaining the potential risks and benefits of your choice. What might happen if your policy was ignored?