

The Dynasties of Ancient China

Learning objective: To understand the structure and significance of ancient Chinese dynasties, specifically focusing on the Qin and Han periods.

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions below using full sentences. Use your best handwriting and check your spelling.

Ellie the elephant has been exploring the ancient scrolls of East Asia. She discovered that for thousands of years, China was ruled by a series of families known as dynasties. The first emperor to unite the country was Qin Shi Huang. He was a powerful and ambitious leader who began the construction of the Great Wall to protect his borders. He also ordered the creation of a vast army of terracotta soldiers, crafted with incredible detail, to guard his tomb for eternity. Following the Qin dynasty, the Han dynasty rose to power. This period is often considered a golden age for China. The Han leaders expanded trade routes, most famously the Silk Road, which allowed merchants to exchange silk, spices, and ideas with distant lands. They also developed a complex system of government and invested in paper-making, which transformed how history was recorded. Ellie notes that these ancient innovations laid the foundation for the sophisticated culture of modern China, leaving a legacy of art, engineering, and philosophy that still influences the world today.

Word bank: Dynasty · Emperor · Terracotta · Standardise · Geography · Bureaucracy

1. Identify two specific things that Emperor Qin Shi Huang ordered to be built during his reign. (2 marks)

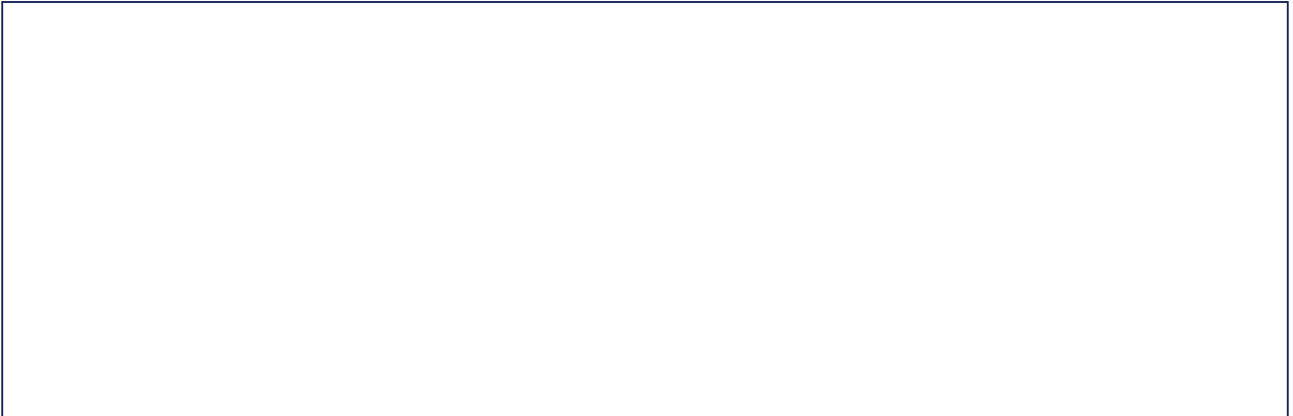
2. What was the name of the famous trade route that flourished during the Han dynasty? (1 mark)

3. Why might the invention of paper have been a significant turning point for the Han dynasty? (3 marks)

4. Explain why the Han dynasty is often described by historians as a 'golden age'. (3 marks)

5. Do you think the construction of the Great Wall was worth the cost and effort involved? Justify your answer using evidence from the text. (4 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene from the Silk Road, showing a merchant with goods and a backdrop of the mountainous landscape of ancient China.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are an advisor to an ancient Emperor. Write a short paragraph explaining one new invention you would propose to improve the lives of the people in your dynasty. Consider how this invention might impact trade, education, or defence.