Life in Ancient China

THINK ABOUT AS YOU READ

1. How was ancient China ruled?
2. What was the Great Wall of China?
3. What kinds of things did the ancient Chinese know how to make?

NEW WORDS PEOPLE & PLACES

Dynasties    Silk    Beijing
Invaded      China    Han Dynasty
Soldiers     Civil service system    Great Wall of China
Respected    Huang He    Confucius

China is a very large country in eastern Asia. The ancient civilization of China began around 3000 B.C. It began near a very long river called the Huang He. Huang He means "Yellow River."

Chinese people farmed the fertile soil along the Huang He. They used the Huang He to irrigate their farms. The Huang He often flooded the land. The floods sometimes destroyed farms, houses, and even whole villages. When this happened, the people called the river "China's Sorrow." The Chinese began to work together to stop the floods. They built strong dirt walls near the river. Sometimes these walls stopped the floods from destroying their farms.

China was ruled by dynasties for thousands of years. A dynasty is a family of kings. When the ruling king died, his oldest son became the new king. When that king died, his oldest son became the next king.

Many people visit the Great Wall in China each year.

The first dynasty began its rule around 1700 B.C. Some dynasties ruled China for hundreds of years. Many dynasties ruled from the city of Beijing.

The Han Dynasty was one of the greatest dynasties. The Han family became rulers in 202 B.C. They ruled ancient China for more than 400 years. China became strong and rich during the Han Dynasty. The Han Dynasty conquered much of Asia. During this time China began to trade with people to the west. They even traded with people as far away as Europe.
Sometimes people from the north invaded China. In 221 B.C. the Chinese began building a tall, strong wall. The Great Wall of China was about 1,500 miles long. It was about 20 feet high and very wide. It took many years to build the wall. The wall helped keep out people that were invading from the north. Soldiers stood on top of the Great Wall to watch for invading people. The wall helped keep the Chinese people safe. Many years later the Chinese made the wall much longer. The Great Wall is still standing in China today.

Many people in ancient China followed the ideas of Buddha. The Chinese also followed the ideas of another great teacher. His name was Confucius. Confucius lived about 2,500 years ago. He taught many important ideas about people, government, and family.

Confucius believed that people should be helpful, kind, and honest. He told people to obey their rulers. He said that rulers must be fair to their people. Confucius also taught that the family was the most important group in Chinese life. He said that family members should take care of one another. He taught that older members of the family should always be respected.

Family life was very important in ancient China. Children obeyed their parents. After a man and a woman were married, they lived in the house of the husbands parents. As the family grew bigger, they built new rooms onto the house. In some families one hundred people lived in one home. The large families worked together on farms. Family life is still very important in China today.

The Chinese created their system of writing. Their writing had thousands of signs. The Chinese had a sign for every word. A Chinese person had to learn thousands of signs in order to read and write. Chinese writing today still has thousands of signs.

The Chinese knew how to make many things. They could make strong metal tools. They made carts that had wheels. These carts were pulled by horses. Almost 5,000 years ago, Chinese people began to make beautiful soft cloth called silk. For hundreds of years, the Chinese would not tell anyone how to make silk cloth. China made a lot of money by selling silk to other countries. Chinese people traveled on a long road to trade their silk in lands west of China. Around A.D. 600 the Chinese began to make thin, delicate dishes out of white clay. Today these fine dishes are called china.

The Chinese were the first people to make paper as we know it today. They made paper from rags. Then the Chinese learned how to print paper books. People in Europe did not begin printing paper books until hundreds of years later. The ancient Chinese found ways to do many things that people in other areas of the world did not yet know how to do. Today we still use many of the ideas we learned from the ancient Chinese.
Confucius was teaching in China at about the same time that people in India were learning from the Buddha. Confucius taught all students that wanted to learn. He gave people rules about how to behave. He taught that people should treat others the same way they would want to be treated. Confucius said, "What you do not want done to you, do not do to others."

Confucius lived during a time of much war in China. Rulers in different parts of China often fought with each other. Confucius believed that there could only be peace if there was a good government. He believed that a ruler should be good and honest to the people. Then the people would obey the ruler.

Confucius wanted an important position in the government. Then he could teach his ideas to kings and to many more people. But he never got the job he wanted. After Confucius died, some of his students continued to teach his sayings to other people. They also wrote his ideas and sayings in books.

More than 300 years after Confucius died, rulers in the Han Dynasty began to study his ideas. Confucius had believed that government workers should earn their jobs by doing good work. This is why the Han Dynasty set up a civil service system. Through the civil service system, people could get government jobs. To get a government job, a person had to first pass a civil service test about the ideas of Confucius.

Confucius was a great thinker and a wise teacher. His ideas about government and how to behave are studied all over the world today.
USING WHAT YOU LEARNED

Using Vocabulary

Match Up   Finish the sentences in Group A with words from Group B. Write the letter of each correct answer on the blank line.

Group A

1. Families of kings called _________________________ ruled China for thousands of years.

2. China was attacked when people from the north _________________________ the country.

3. One way a person might show _________________________ for the older members of a family is to listen to their ideas.

4. A test for a government job in China was a _________________________ test. were people

5. The Chinese whose main job was to protect China. _________________________

Read and Remember

Finish the Paragraph   Use the words in dark print to finish the paragraph below. Write the correct word on the blank lines.

China       silk       Huang He       Great Wall

The people of ancient China knew how to make many things. They built dirt walls to stop the floods of the _______________ from destroying their farms. To help keep China safe, they built the _______________ The people of ancient China made beautiful _______________ cloth. They also used white clay to make dishes called _______________. The Chinese also knew how to make paper and strong metal tools.

Write the Answer   Write one or more sentences to answer each question.

1. What are two changes that occurred during the Han Dynasty?

2. What was family life like in ancient China?

3. Why did Confucius want an important position in the government?

4. Why did the Han Dynasty set up the civil service system?
Journal Writing

Write a few sentences about some of the important ideas of Confucius.

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Think and Apply

Fact or Opinion  A fact is a true statement. An opinion is a statement that tells what a person thinks.

Fact  The Han Dynasty ruled ancient China for more than 400 years.

Opinion  The Han Dynasty was the greatest dynasty in the history of China.

Write F next to each fact below. Write O next to each opinion. You should find two sentences that are opinions.

_____ 1.  The Great Wall was about 1,500 miles long.
_____ 2.  People should study the ideas of Confucius.
_____ 3.  Ancient Chinese writing had thousands of signs.
_____ 4.  Buddha was a better teacher than Confucius was.
_____ 5.  Many dynasties ruled from the city of Beijing.
China is one of the world's largest countries. It is located in eastern Asia. Like India, China is surrounded by natural barriers. Mountains and deserts lie to the north, south, and west of China. To the east lies the Pacific Ocean. Natural barriers helped to protect ancient China from invasion. The barriers also limited China's contacts with other civilizations.

**The Huang He**

As in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and India, civilization in China arose in the valley of a great river. That river was called the **Huang He**. Yellow soil called *loess* washes into the Hwang He as it flows toward the sea. The soil turns the river a yellow color. Hwang He means "Yellow River." The Hwang He is usually a slow, lazy river. But sometimes the river overflows its banks. In ancient times, great floods destroyed villages and farms along the river. For that reason, the Hwang He became known as "China's Sorrow."

**The Earliest Settlers**

Thousands of years ago, people began to settle along the Hwang He. The earliest settlers left no written records, so little is known about them. But archeologists believe that by about 2500 B.C., some early peoples had learned to farm. Those people built villages surrounded by thick walls. Like other peoples, the Chinese have legends about their earliest people. Some legends say the earliest people were led by wise and powerful kings. Those kings taught the people to farm. They also taught the people music and writing.

The legends say that a king named Yu found a way to control the flooding rivers. "Without Yu," the Chinese say, "we would all have become fish."

**Looking Back**

1. What natural barriers protected China?

2. Where did civilization begin in China?

3. What do legends say about the earliest people?
The Shang Dynasty

Chinese civilization began about 1500 B.C., about 1000 years after the beginning of civilization in India.

A people called the Shang built the first civilization in China. The Shang were one of the ancient peoples living along the Hwang He. They learned to use chariots and conquered the entire river valley.

The Shang started China's first dynasty. When a Shang king died, his son became the new king. In that way, the Shang kept power in one family. The Shang dynasty ruled China for over 400 years.

Shang Cities

The Shang built China's first cities. Their largest city was Anyang, the capital. Anyang and other cities were protected by thick walls.

The Shang divided their cities into sections for different crafts workers. Potters lived in one section. They made beautiful pottery from fine white clay. Weavers lived in another section. They wove silk thread into cloth.

Shang Farmers

Most Shang were farmers who lived outside the city walls. Farmers grew wheat, rice, and millet in fields along the river. (Millet is a grass-like grain.)

Shang farmers had no plows. They used wooden sticks to work the soft loess soil of the valley.

Shang Religion

The Shang worshiped many gods. Like their ancient peoples, they tried to please their gods. They sometimes sacrificed, or killed, animals and human beings as gifts in the gods.

The Shang believed that when people died, they became spirits. They believed the spirits of dead people could help their living relatives. The Shang tried to please the spirits of their ancestors with prayers and gifts. That practice became known as ancestor worship.

Shang Writing

One of the great accomplishments of the Shang was their system of writing. Like the Egyptians, the Shang first used pictures to stand for words. Later they developed symbols to stand for both words and ideas. The Shang developed several thousand different symbols.

People in China today still use the system of writing developed by the Shang. It is the oldest system of writing still in use. Other peoples, such as the Koreans and the Japanese, borrowed the Shang system.

Looking Back

1. How did Shang kings keep power in one family?

2. What is ancestor worship?

3. Describe Shang writing.
Confucius lived over 2000 years ago. Yet his teachings are still followed by people today. What other teachers of the past are still influencing people today?

Around 1122 B.C., a people called the Zhou conquered the Shang. The Zhou dynasty ruled China for over 800 years. During that time, a great teacher was born in China. His name was Confucius. The teachings of Confucius had a lasting influence on Chinese life.

The Zhou claimed the king had lost the support of Heaven. They overthrew the king and conquered the Shang kingdom. In time, the Zhou built a large empire in China.

Zhou Government

To govern their empire, Zhou kings divided it into hundreds of small states. Each state was ruled by a local noble, or rich and powerful landowner. Each noble promised to obey the king's orders and send the king troops in time of war.

For a time, the Zhou kings controlled the nobles. But by about 700 B.C., the kings' power had declined. Nobles no longer obeyed the king. Instead of sending troops to the king, they built their own armies.

Powerful nobles used their armies to take over smaller states. Between about 400 and 221 B.C., the states were almost constantly at war. The Chinese call that period the Time of the Warring States.

As time went on, Zhou kings had less and less power. The real power was held by the leaders of the warring states.

Looking Back

1. How did the Zhou govern their empire?

2. What happened to the Zhou government by about 700 B.C.?
Confucius

During the Time of the Warring States, a great teacher appeared in China. His name was **Confucius**. Confucius was born in eastern China about 551 B.C. That was a few years after the birth of the Buddha in India. At about the age of 22, Confucius began a school in his home. Later, he left his school to travel around China and teach.

Confucius was saddened by the war and sorrow he saw during his travels. In his teachings, he tried to show people how to live together in peace.

**The Five Relationships**

Confucius taught that there are five important relationships in life. They are the relationships between ruler and people, parent and child, older brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and between friend and friend.

In each relationship, people have certain duties. If people carry out their duties, there will be order and **harmony** (peace) among people. These are the duties of the five relationships:

- A ruler should care for the people he governs. The people should obey a ruler who rules well.
- Parents should love and care for their children. Children should respect and obey their parents.
- Older brothers should care for younger brothers. Younger brothers should respect and obey older brothers.
- Married people should live in harmony. Wives should obey their husbands.
- Friends should trust each other and treat each other well.

**Other Teachings of Confucius**

Confucius taught that people should honor their ancestors and respect ancient **traditions**. (Traditions are ideas, beliefs, and ways of living that are handed down from the past to the present.) "I believe in the old teachings and honor them," he said.

Like the Buddha, Confucius taught that people should treat each other with kindness. "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others," he said, Confucius also believed in the power of love. In time of war, he said, "Love offers peace." He believed that, "a heart set on love can do no wrong." Confucius taught that rulers should be honest and wise. If a ruler lived a good life, the people would follow the ruler's example.

**The Spread of Confucianism**

Confucius died in 479 B.C. But his students kept his teachings alive. They traveled across China teaching people the wisdom of Confucius. Those teachings became known as **Confucianism**.

Later, Confucianism spread throughout much of Asia. Today, people in China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, and other Asian lands follow the teachings of Confucius. Many of the sayings of Confucius are known around the world.

**Looking Back**

1. What did Confucius say was the duty of a leader to the people? Of the people to a leader?

2. Why did Confucius say a ruler should lead a good life?

3. **Thinking Deeper**: Confucius said, "Bad government is worse than a fierce tiger." What do you think those words mean?
Name ____________________________

The Chin Dynasty

You read that during the Zhou dynasty, China was torn apart by warfare among the states. In 221 B.C., the state of Chin conquered the other states. The first ruler of the Chin dynasty called himself Shi Huang Ti, or the First Emperor.

Chin Government

Shih Huang Ti wanted to unite China under his rule. To do that, he divided the states into provinces. He sent his own officials to rule over each province. He forced the nobles who had ruled over the states to live near him at the capital. There he could watch and control them.

Before Shih Huang Ti, each state had its own code of laws. Shih Huang Ti set up one code for all of China. He also built good roads connecting the provinces to his capital. The code of laws and system of roads helped to keep the empire united.

Shih Huang Ti took steps to prevent rebellions in his empire. He ordered all the people, except his soldiers, to turn their weapons over to the government.

The Chinese built the Great Wall along their northern border as protection against invaders. Chinese guards watched for invaders from watchtowers along the wall.

Burning China’s Past

Some Chinese spoke out against the changes of Shih Huang Ti. They wanted to go back to the way things were before he came to power. Shih Huang Ti came to believe that knowledge about the past was dangerous. It caused unrest and might lead to rebellion. He decided to destroy all record of China’s past.

Around 213 B.C., the emperor ordered books about China’s past to be burned. All books on history, except those praising Chin rule, were destroyed. Scholars who had memorized ancient works were killed. Others were banished, or forced to leave the empire.

Since Confucius honored the past, books about him and his teachings were also destroyed. But a few copies of those works were hidden away and survived.

The Great Wall

The Huns and other nomads often attacked China along its northern border. In earlier times, the Chinese had built some walls for protection from invaders.

Shih Huang Ti had workers repair the old walls. Then he had them connect the walls into one long wall. When the work was done, the wall stretched for over 1400 miles along northern China. It became known as the Great Wall of China. Parts of the Great Wall still stand today.

Looking Back

1. How did Shih Huang Ti unite China?

2. Why did he destroy books about China's past?

3. What was the purpose of the Great Wall?
The Han Dynasty

Shih Huang Ti once said that his dynasty would last for 10,000 years. Instead, it lasted for only a few years. Soon after he died, the Chinese rebelled against his government.

In 202 B.C., a new dynasty began. It was called the Han dynasty. The Han dynasty ruled China for over 400 years.

At the same time the Romans were building an empire in the Mediterranean, the Han were building a great empire in Asia. Under the Han, China became one of the largest empires in the world.

Choosing Officials

In the past, government officials were chosen because they came from powerful families. Some officials chosen in that way were dishonest. Others had little education or skill.

Han emperors wanted honest and educated officials in government. For that reason, they set up a civil service system. People who wanted a government job had to pass a test. They had to show that they knew something about law, ethics, and good government.

Confucianism and Buddhism

The Han emperors admired Confucianism. They ordered that boys study Confucianism in school. Government officials followed the teachings of Confucius in carrying out their duties.

Late in the Han dynasty, Buddhist missionaries came to China from India. The Chinese liked the new religion. Buddhism spread quickly in China.

Looking Back

1. What happened after the death of Shih Huang Ti?

2. How did the Han emperors rule China?

3. How did the Han civil service system work?
Chinese Achievements

The ancient Chinese were skillful crafts workers and inventors.

Chinese crafts workers often made everyday items, such as cloth and clay pots, into beautiful works of art. Chinese inventors gave the world many practical, or useful, inventions.

Silk

The Chinese were the first people to discover how to make silk cloth. They kept the discovery secret for thousands of years.

Silk is made from the fibers spun by silkworms. The Chinese learned to twist the fibers into silk thread. They then wove the thread into a cloth that was beautiful and comfortable to wear.

During the Han dynasty, people in India and the Roman Empire paid high prices for Chinese silk.

Chinese Inventions

The Chinese invented many things that are still used today. One of those inventions was the wheelbarrow. Wheelbarrows helped Chinese workers carry heavy loads. For that reason, the Chinese called the wheelbarrow the "wooden ox."

Earthquakes often caused death and destruction in ancient China, as they do in China today. During the Han dynasty, the Chinese built the first seismograph. That is a machine that shows the location of an earthquake.

Paper

One of the most important Chinese inventions was paper. According to Chinese history, an inventor named Tsai Lun made the first paper around A.D. 100.

The invention of paper helped to spread learning in China. Before paper, the Chinese wrote on bamboo wood or silk cloth. Paper was easier to use than bamboo or silk. It was also less costly. More people could afford books made of paper.

The Chinese found other uses for paper. In time, they were making paper napkins, paper money, and wallpaper.

Looking Back

1. What are some Chinese inventions?

2. How did the invention of paper help to spread learning in China?

3. Thinking Deeper: Why do you think the Chinese kept their method for making silk cloth a secret?
A. As You Read

Directions: As you read Section 1, complete the statements below.

1. To survive in the dry land in northern China called the , people have always depended on rivers.
2. The Huang He, or ________________, begins in the highlands of Tibet.
3. Early Chinese civilization started around 5000 b.c., when the people gave up their wandering way of life and began_______________________________.
4. In ancient China, the most important part of society was not the state but the _________________.
5. A household in ancient China might contain as many as ________________ generations living together.
6. According to tradition in ancient China, men had a higher status than _________________.
7. When a father died, all his lands were divided among his _________________.

B. Reviewing Key Terms

Directions: In the blanks provided, write the definitions for the following key terms.

8. Loess

9. Dike

10. extended family
Ancient China
SECTION 2
Confucius and His Teachings
GUIDED READING AND REVIEW

As You Read

Directions: As you read Section 2, fill in the table below with information about Confucianism.

The Teachings of Confucius

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Person's Place in the Family and Society</th>
<th>1.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Golden Rule</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Directions: As you read Section 2, explain how the teachings of Confucius helped shape Chinese government. Use the spaces provided below.

3. ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________

Reviewing Key Terms

Directions: Complete each sentence by writing the correct term in the blank provided.

4. A group of people who carry out the day-to-day work of the government is the _________________.

5. A system of beliefs and values is also known as a ________________________.
A. As You Read

*Directions*: As you read Section 3, fill in the table below with facts about China's dynasties.

**Some Facts About China's Dynasties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ruler</th>
<th>Dynasty Name</th>
<th>Main Accomplishments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shi Huangdi</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Bang</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wudi</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>6.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Reviewing Key Terms

*Directions*: In the blanks provided, write the definitions for the following key terms.

7. Currency

8. Warlord
A. As You Read

Directions: As you read Section 4, fill in the table below with information about the legacy of ancient China. Under each main idea, write two supporting statements.

Main Idea A

China became known to the West as a result of the Silk Road.

1) 

2) 

Main Idea B

The Chinese inventions of the Han dynasty are still with us today. 3.

3) 

4) 

B. Reviewing Key Terms

Directions: Complete the sentence by writing the correct term in the blank provided.

5) A valuable cloth made only in China in ancient times was ___________________.
VOCABULARY ACTIVITY

Ancient China

Directions: Match the key terms in the box with the definitions below. Write the correct letter in each blank. Then, write a sentence in the space provided that uses that term or the plural form of the term. If necessary, look up the terms in your book's glossary, or see how they are used in Chapter 5.

A. Civil service                  D. Extended family                G. Silk
B. Currency                      E. Loess                          H. Warlord
C. Dike                          F. Philosophy

_____ 1. a protective wall that holds back water
_____ 2. a system of belief and values
_____ 3. yellow-brown soil
_____ 4. the group of people whose job is to carry out the work of government
_____ 5. a leader of an armed local band
_____ 6. closely related people, such as children, brothers and sisters, parents, uncles and aunts, and so on
_____ 7. a valuable cloth originally made only in China from threads spun by caterpillars
_____ 8. a type of money
Recognizing Cause and Effect

Directions: Read the passage. Then complete the chart by listing the effects of each invention.

Agricultural Inventions and Their Effects

The ancient Chinese developed new ways of farming and invented more efficient farming tools. Among the many new things they introduced was the iron plow, and row cultivation, or growing crops in rows.

The ancient Chinese grew crops in rows and hoed between rows. The ancient Chinese had learned that row cultivation and hoeing led to higher yields, or more crops. An ancient Chinese book states: "If crops are grown in rows they will grow faster because they will not interfere with each other's growth." The ancient Chinese also had a proverb that said: "There are three inches of moisture on the end of a hoe." The proverb refers to the fact that hoeing helps keep the soil wet. Hoeing kills weeds, which take water away from the crops, in addition, rain water soaks into loose soil more quickly than into hard-packed soil. Saving water in the soil was especially important in northern China, where the weather was often dry.

One of the most important farming inventions of the ancient Chinese was the iron plow. The Chinese developed the first iron plows in the world. Iron plows were stronger than the older wood, stone, and bronze plows. With iron plows, fields could be plowed faster and with less effort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Invention</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Row Cultivation</td>
<td>1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoeing Between Rows</td>
<td>2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Plows</td>
<td>3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ancient China

Directions: Use the information in Chapter 5 of your book to help you complete each.

1. The Huang He, the river along which ancient Chinese civilization grew, is called "China's Sorrow" because ____________________________________________________________________________________

2. The center of early Chinese society was the extended family, which included ____________________________________________________________________________________

3. Confucius believed that his role was to pass on ____________________________________________________________________________________

4. Confucius summarized his ideas in a simple sentence, often called the Golden Rule, which states: ____________________________________________________________________________________

5. Confucius's ideas changed the government in two basic ways: ____________________________________________________________________________________

6. Shi Huangdi, emperor of the Qin dynasty, helped unify ancient China by ____________________________________________________________________________________

7. The Han dynasty was a time when ____________________________________________________________________________________

8. The Silk Road was important to China because ____________________________________________________________________________________
1. What did Confucius say was the problem with China during his time?

2. Why were the librarian, the head gardener, and the chief cook seized and brought before the duke?

3. How did the scribe (the narrator of the story) know that the gardener had taken the prized jade bird?

4. In what way did Confucius say knowledge is gained?

5. **Essay Question**

Confucius once said, "Learn as if you were chasing something you could not quite reach, and were always afraid of losing." What did he mean?
People and Terms to Know

This page lets you check your knowledge of the people and the terms used in "Confucius Says ...."
Find the best answer for each item. Then circle that answer.

____ 1. Who was the duke of Lu?
   A. famous philosopher who lived at the time of Confucius
   B. Chinese king
   C. narrator of the story
   D. ruler of a province of China during the sixth century B.C.

____ 2. Which term is associated with Confucius?
   A. king
   B. duke
   C. philosopher
   D. soldier

____ 3. He founded the Chinese moral philosophy called Daoism.
   A. duke of Lu
   B. Laozi
   C. Confucius
   D. Gautama

____ 4. Jade is a
   A. gem
   B. kind of flower
   C. hard metal
   D. green bird

____ 5. The duke of Lu ruled over a province. A province is
   A. a division of a country
   B. an independent kingdom
   C. a city
   D. an enemy nation