

Shang dynasty

As a historian I can....



Why we are learning about the Shang dynasty

You are studying the Shang dynasty because it was the first Chinese civilization in ancient times and one for which we now have detailed evidence. This topic not only shows you how history is reconstructed literally from fragments of bone, it also shows how history has to be constantly re-written in the light of new discoveries. As recently as 150 years ago many scholars thought that the Shang dynasty was actually mythical and did not exist in reality. And, of course, the Shang people deserve their own special place in our memory for their outstanding bronze work -a world leader at the time- as well as their sophisticated system of writing in symbols.



First Shang ruler King Tang comes to power

Bronze objects start to be made such as axes and vessels for ceremonies

Chariots start to be used in battles

First Chinese writing in form of characters on oracle bones

Death of Fu Hao whose important tomb tells us so much

End of Shang dynasty caused by bad behaviour of Di Xin. Land taken over by Zhou dynasty,

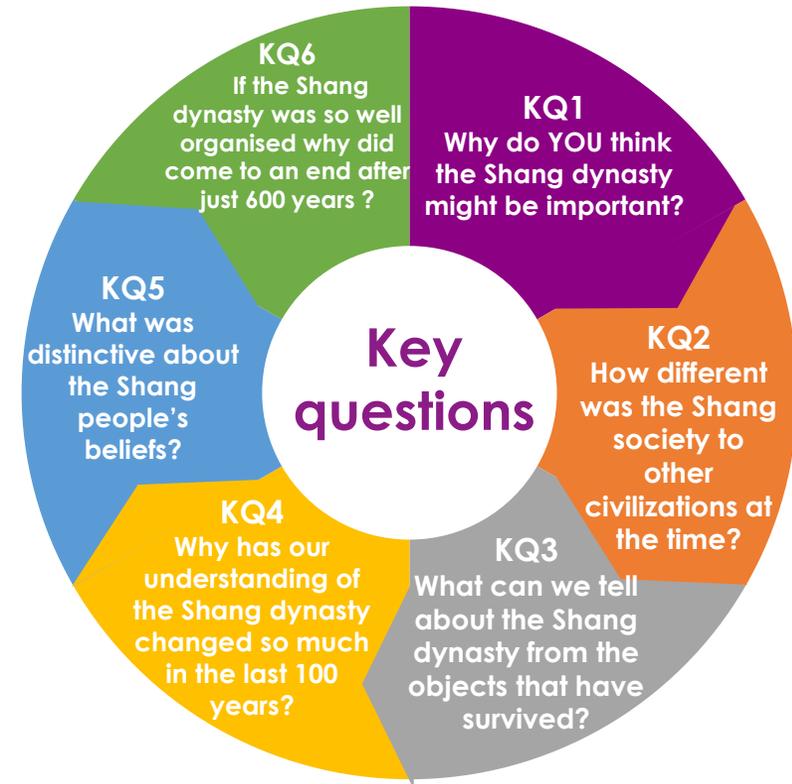


Stonehenge already built 700 years before

Indus civilisation coming to an end

At this time Tutankhamun is ruling in Egypt

As a historian I can....



Key vocabulary

Ancestors	people from the past who came before the Shang
Archaeologist	A person who studies human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites
Bronze	A yellowish-brown metal which is a mixture of copper and tin, that naturally turns to a blue green colour over time
Chariot	A two-wheeled vehicle pulled by horses
Cowrie shells	Used as currency during the Shang dynasty
Ding	Large container made of bronze used in religious ceremonies
Diviner	A person uses omens or magic powers to foretell the future.
Dynasty	Rulers from same family who have power passed down to them
inscription	The act of writing or a small bit of writing
Jade	A green precious stone used for jewellery and decorative items
Millet	Cereal used to make flour
Oracle bones	bone from cattle or tortoises on which were letters which helped tell the fortunes
Tomb	A large structure, usually underground, for burying the dead and their possessions

Top takeaways



In this topic you will learn:

1. The Shang dynasty was China's first civilisation that left evidence. Even then it was only recently that they knew it really did exist and was not made-up.
2. The discovery of oracle bones with their inscriptions provided the best proof that the Chinese could write and they tell us about their kings, religious beliefs and how their society was run.
3. The Shang dynasty survived for 600 years during which time it was constantly at war. Most battles were won because they had better weapons.
4. The Shang worshipped the Shang Di who was the supreme god who ruled other lesser gods of the sun, moon, wind and rain. They also worshipped their ancestors because they thought they still influenced the kings.
5. They invented a system of writing similar to that still used today, they were the best in the world at making bronze and knew how to use chariots in battle, changing completely the way battles were fought,
6. The Shang dynasty came to an end because it was said the king was evil and that heaven no longer wanted him to rule because of the bad way he behaved.



Previous Learning

In Year 1 and Year 2

- Children learn about events beyond living memory, understanding timelines and the past as decades and hundreds of years ago.
- Children compare old/new toys, compare castle life to now. How lives have changed over time.
- Castles and toys are examples of British history. Concepts such as monarchy, society and beliefs.
- Children learn about the simple causes and consequences of Great Fire of London and impact of flight invention.
- Accessible artefacts such as photographs, film, maps, paintings

Future Learning

In Year 4 and 5

- Ancient civilisation of Egypt and Greece.
- Children build a chronological framework of early human civilisations across different parts of the world. They existed at similar times and developed independently.
- Kingship and Government, Religion and beliefs, writing systems, technology and achievements, society.

In Year 6

- How modern societies were shaped by war, empire and migration, political leaders, causes of war, build awareness of underrepresented histories and their relevance today.