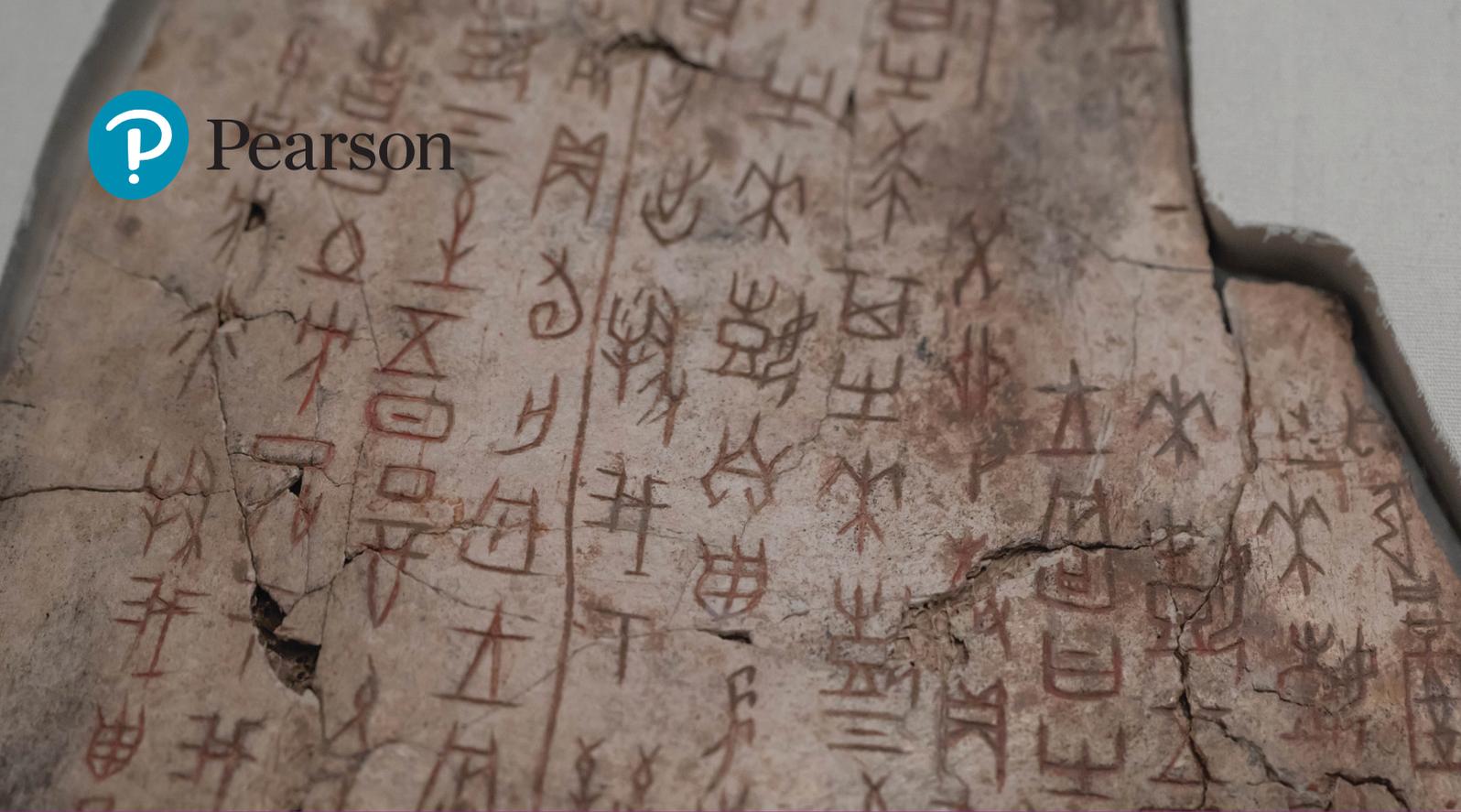




Pearson



# Primary History

## The Shang Dynasty

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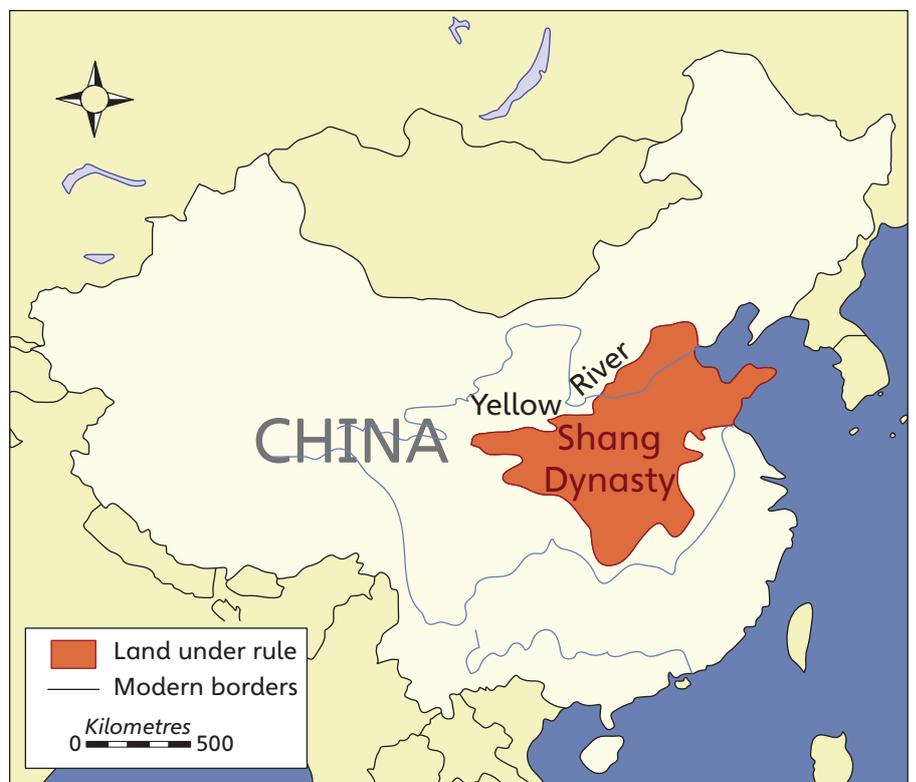
Class:

# Knowledge organiser

Timeline	
2400 BCE	The Bronze Age begins in China
1600 BCE	King Tang overthrows the last emperor of the Xia Dynasty; the Shang Dynasty begins
1250 BCE–1192 BCE	Emperor Wu Ding reigns over the Shang Dynasty
1250 BCE–1192 BCE	General Fu Hao leads many successful military campaigns
1046 BCE	The Shang Dynasty is defeated
1898	Antique dealers notice Chinese writing on oracle bones
1928	Excavations in Anyang; many items from the Shang Dynasty are found
1976	The tomb of Fu Hao is discovered near Anyang

Vocabulary	
Archaeologist	Someone who studies the past by looking at objects, buildings and remains
Artefact	An object created by a human, usually found a long time after it was made
Bronze	A metal made by melting and mixing copper and tin
Dynasty	A family that rules a country for a long time
Emperor	The ruler of a country or empire
General	A leader in an army
Jade	A green rock that is used in a lot of Asian art
Oracle bones	Animal bones with Chinese writing on, used in Ancient China to try and predict the future
Tomb	an underground monument to a dead person
Yellow River	A major river running across the north east of China

Important people	
Tang	First emperor of Shang; very popular and successful
Fu Hao	A great military leader and warrior; wife of Wu Ding
Wu Ding	A very successful emperor; ruled for 58 years
Zhou	The last emperor of the Shang Dynasty; a tyrant; born 'Xin'
Daji	Cruel woman (wife of Zhou), who made up awful punishments

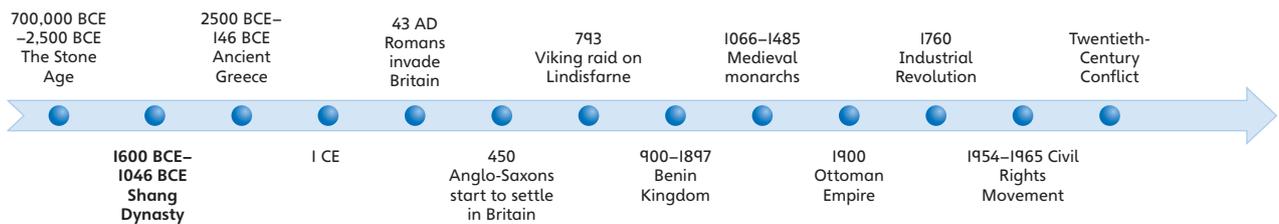


# Learning review

Lesson	Lesson question	You will learn...	Learning review
1	How did the Shang Dynasty begin?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the Shang Dynasty was located.</li> <li>• How the Shang Dynasty was created.</li> <li>• Why Emperor Tang was popular.</li> </ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
2	Who was Fu Hao, and how do we know about her?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who discovered the tomb of Fu Hao.</li> <li>• What was in the tomb of Fu Hao.</li> <li>• Who Fu Hao was and what she did.</li> </ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
3	How did the Shang Dynasty end?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the Shang Dynasty achieved.</li> <li>• Who King Zhou of Shang and Daji were.</li> <li>• How the Shang Dynasty ended.</li> </ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
4	How did the Shang Dynasty create and use Chinese writing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When Chinese writing was invented.</li> <li>• How Chinese characters are written.</li> <li>• What oracle bones were.</li> </ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
5	What was life like for people in the Shang Dynasty?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The kinds of artefacts we find from the Shang Dynasty.</li> <li>• How historians and archaeologists use these artefacts.</li> <li>• What these artefacts tell us about how people lived in the Shang Dynasty.</li> </ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
6	Assessment: What do we know about the Shang Dynasty?		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

# Lesson 1

## How did the Shang Dynasty begin?

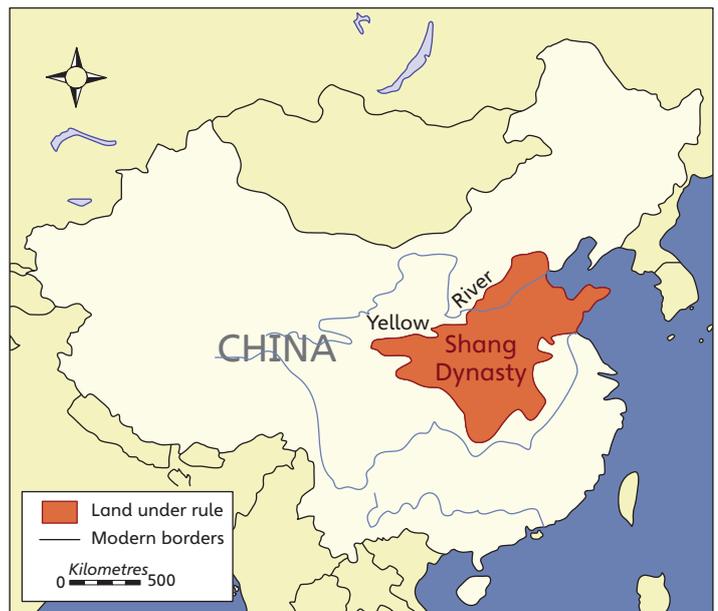
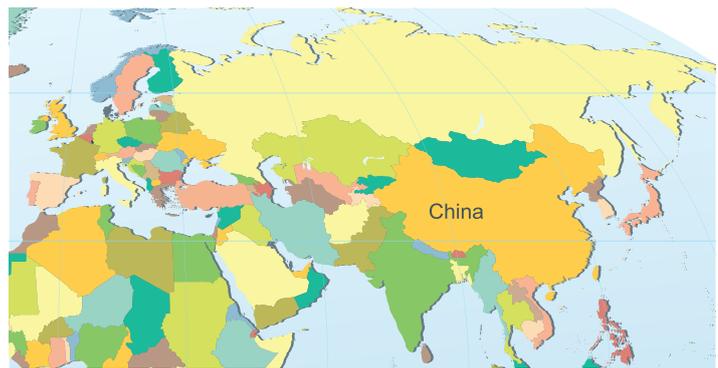


## Where was the Shang Dynasty?

The **Shang Dynasty** was an ancient civilisation in China. Today, China is the third-biggest country in the world, and has the largest population of any country: 1.4 billion people live there.

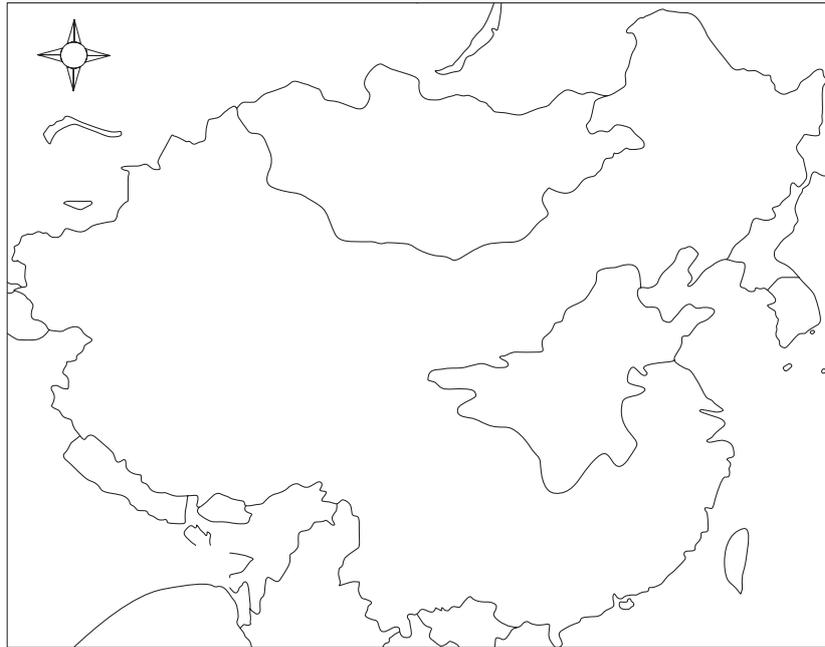
However, ancient China had many different civilisations, and the Shang Dynasty occupied a much smaller area than the country of China does today.

Most of the main cities in the Shang civilisation were near the **Yellow River**.





I. Shade in the area of the Shang Dynasty on this map of China.



## The Yellow River

The Shang Dynasty grew around the Yellow River, the second-longest river in Asia. It is called the Yellow River because there is a lot of sand and mud in the water, which makes it appear yellow. The river often overflows, which destroys people's homes and can even sweep people away. This is why it is sometimes called the River of Sorrow.

Although the Yellow River can be dangerous, its banks are also good for growing crops (plants for food). Most people living in the Shang Dynasty were farmers, and they grew wheat, millet and barley on the banks of the river. They turned the wheat into flour to make bread to eat.



The Yellow River

## The Shang Dynasty



2. Why is the Yellow River yellow? Tick the correct answer.
- a. Pollution has made it change colour.
  - b. It picks up lots of small bits of gold.
  - c. It carries a lot of mud and sand.
  - d. It is not yellow – it is just a name.

## The end of the Xia Dynasty

People in ancient China believed that the gods gave **emperors** the right to rule over them: this was called the 'Mandate of Heaven'.

The civilisation before the Shang Dynasty was the Xia Dynasty. Its final ruler was Emperor Jie. People believed he was so cruel that he lost the Mandate of Heaven.

Around 1600 BCE, a man named Cheng Tang started a war with Emperor Jie. Emperor Jie lost at the Battle of Mingtiao. Cheng Tang then became the first emperor of the Shang Dynasty.

## Emperor Tang of Shang

Emperor Tang built his civilisation along the Yellow River. Tang was a popular emperor. He reduced the amount of tax (money) that people had to pay him.

After Tang became emperor, there was a drought, meaning it did not rain for a long time. People struggled to grow crops and they were beginning to starve.

Ancient legends say that Tang went to a temple and offered his life to the gods. He believed that by doing this, the gods would make it rain. The rain came soon after and crops began to grow again. The people praised Tang for offering to end his life so that they could live.



Emperor Tang



3. Name two things that Emperor Tang did which made him popular with the people of ancient China. Write your answer.

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4. Read the statements about Tang's rise to power. Number each statement from 1 to 7 to put them in the right order. I has been done for you.

	Cheng Tang, leader of the Shang people, defeats cruel Emperor Jie.
1	Jie is the last emperor of the Xia Dynasty.
	Tang offers his life to the gods.
	The Shang Dynasty begins.
	There is a terrible drought.
	Tang lowers people's taxes.
	The drought ends as lots of rain falls. Crops can grow again.

# Lesson 2

## Who was Fu Hao, and how do we know about her?



### Quiz

1. Who was the last emperor of the Xia Dynasty? Tick the correct answer.

- a. Emperor Jie
- b. Emperor Xie
- c. Emperor Tang
- d. Emperor Shang

2. In what year did the Shang Dynasty begin? Write your answer.

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3. Read the statement below. Tick 'True' or 'False'.

Cheng Tang was a popular leader who looked after his people.

True  False

4. Which river was the Shang Dynasty located on? Write your answer.

---

5. What did people in ancient China believe gave a person the right to rule? Tick the correct answer.

- a. The Order of the Sky
- b. The Permission of the Gods
- c. The Mandate of Heaven
- d. The Command of the Clouds

## The tomb of Fu Hao

In 1976, the **archaeologist** Zheng Zhenxiang was part of a team digging in an area near Anyang, the Shang capital. They found **artefacts** and ancient buildings. Zheng was sure that there was a **tomb** buried deeper.

Many tombs nearby had already been robbed of artefacts. After weeks of digging, Zheng discovered a tomb from the Shang Dynasty that had not been robbed. Inside were **jade** artefacts, precious stones and jewellery, **bronze** weapons, cowrie shells (small sea shells, which the Shang used as money), six dog skeletons and 17 human skeletons. It was the tomb of Fu Hao.

## The contents of the tomb

The items that people are buried with can tell us about their lives. These were the items found in Fu Hao's tomb:

- 755 jade objects
- 564 bone objects (including 500 hairpins and 20 arrowheads)
- 5 ivory objects
- 63 stone objects
- 11 pottery objects
- 468 bronze objects, including:
  - 130 weapons
  - 23 bells
  - 4 mirrors
  - 4 tiger statues
- 6,900 cowrie shells



Kneeling jade figure



Two bronze wine pourers



## The life of Fu Hao

The Shang civilisation was surrounded by smaller groups of people called tribes. Fu Hao was a general from a neighbouring tribe. Wu Ding married her to keep her tribe loyal. He also married one woman from each of the other neighbouring tribes to keep them loyal too, and he had over 60 wives.

Fu Hao was Wu Ding's most important wife. She did several things that were unusual for women at the time.

As a general, Fu Hao led the Shang armies. She beat the Tu Fang tribe, who the Shang had fought for hundreds of years.

As a priestess, she offered animals to the gods and carried out religious ceremonies.

As a politician, Fu Hao helped the emperor rule the kingdom.



Fu Hao

## The Shang Dynasty



3. Why did the emperor marry a woman from each tribe near his kingdom? Write your answer.

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4. What three things did Fu Hao do that were unusual for women at the time? Write your answer.

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5. Unscramble these sentences about Fu Hao. Rewrite them so that they make sense.

a. Fu Hao was a / military general / very successful

b. Wu Ding married / from different tribes / over 60 women

c. were found in Fu Hao's tomb / Almost 6,000 / cowrie shells

d. as a military leader / as well / a priestess / Fu Hao was

e. was found untouched / Fu Hao's tomb / Everything in

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# Lesson 3

## How did the Shang Dynasty end?



### Quiz

1. What was the name of the emperor who married Fu Hao?  
Write your answer.

W \_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which tribe did Fu Hao defeat in battle? Tick the correct answer.

- a. Tu Fang       c. Fu Hang   
b. Fu Tang       d. Fu Song

3. What was Fu Hao buried with? Write down as many things as you can remember.

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4. In what year did Zheng Zhenxiang discover the tomb of Fu Hao?  
Write your answer.

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5. Which dynasty came before the Shang Dynasty? Tick the correct answer.

- a. Song Dynasty   
b. Han Dynasty   
c. Xia Dynasty   
d. Zhou Dynasty

## The achievements of the Shang Dynasty

The Shang Dynasty was a very successful civilisation. It lasted for over 500 years, and the position of emperor passed down through 17 generations.

During this time the Shang people started to use writing. They made bronze containers and weapons. They created jade and stone art objects and statues. They mapped the stars, the moon and the planets, and learnt that a year is exactly  $365 \frac{1}{4}$  days long.

The Shang Dynasty built a powerful army with horse-drawn chariots. This meant that the Shang era was mostly a time of peace and safety because no one else in China could easily attack them. The Shang Dynasty created Chinese culture as we know it today.



1. Read the statements about the achievements of the Shang Dynasty. Number each statement from 1 to 5 to rank them from most to least impressive. 1 should be the achievement you think is most impressive.

	Inventing Chinese writing.
	Learning to craft items out of bronze.
	Making statues and artwork out of jade and stone.
	Mapping the movement of the stars, moon and planets.
	Maintaining peace by building a strong army.

## The fall of the Shang Dynasty

The Shang Dynasty did not last forever. The Xia Dynasty had ended with a cruel emperor, and so did the Shang Dynasty. The last emperor of the Shang Dynasty was King Zhou of Shang.

King Zhou had several names: he was also called Wu Deng and Di Xin.

At first, King Zhou was a successful emperor. He won new land for the Shang Dynasty, and the people he ruled were contented.

But over time King Zhou stopped looking after his people. He enjoyed a life of luxury and excess, and once ordered a lake to be filled with alcohol and a tree in the middle to be covered in roasted meat. This cost a lot of money and he made the people pay for it.



King Zhou of Shang

## Cruel and unusual punishments

Many people blamed King Zhou's wife for his worst actions. Her name was Daji.

She was famous for her cruelty. Legend says she once dug a huge pit, filled it with spiders and snakes, and threw people into it who had upset her.

She also invented monstrous punishments. In one, a prisoner had to stand on a slippery cannon. The cannon was put on hot coals to make it hotter and even harder to stand on. Eventually, the prisoner would fall and burn to death.

King Zhou's uncle tried to stop this cruelty, but King Zhou had him killed.



Daji



2. What were the three names of the last emperor of the Shang Dynasty? Write your answer.

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3. Give two reasons why King Zhou was considered a terrible king. Write your answer.

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## A change of dynasty

One of the tribes ruled by the Shang was the Zhou.

The king of the Zhou people, King Wu of Zhou, sent an army to the Shang capital to bring down the emperor. Many of the Shang soldiers gave up straight away or joined King Wu because they did not want to fight for their cruel ruler.

King Zhou of Shang realised that he was going to lose. He gathered his treasures and set his palace on fire while he was still inside. The Shang Dynasty was over, and the Zhou Dynasty had begun.



4. Read the statements below. Tick 'True' or 'False' for each one.

a. King Zhou of Shang was a cruel ruler. True  False

b. The Shang soldiers wanted to fight for King Zhou of Shang. True  False

c. Many Shang soldiers joined and fought for King Wu. True  False

# Unit progress check in

1. Why is the Yellow River yellow? Write your answer.

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2. At which battle did Cheng Tang defeat the Xia Dynasty?  
Tick the correct answer.

- a. The Battle of He Fei
- b. The Battle of Anyang
- c. The Battle of Mingtiao
- d. The Battle of the Yellow River

3. Why did Emperor Wu Ding have so many wives? Write your answer.

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4. What were the three main jobs Fu Hao did? Tick the correct answer.

- a. general, politician and farmer
- b. general, priestess and doctor
- c. scientist, politician and teacher
- d. general, priestess and politician

5. Read the statement below. Tick 'True' or 'False'.

King Zhou of Shang's wife, Daji, was known for her kindness.

True  False

6. What happened when the army of King Wu approached the capital of the Shang Dynasty? Write your answer.

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7. Which dynasty came after the Shang Dynasty? Write your answer.

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# Lesson 4

## How did the Shang Dynasty create and use Chinese writing?

### Quiz

1. Roughly how long did the Shang Dynasty last? Tick the correct answer.

- a. 750 years
- b. 500 years
- c. 350 years
- d. 1,000 years

2. Describe two punishments that Daji carried out. Write your answer.

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3. Read the statement below. Tick 'True' or 'False'.

Fu Hao defeated the Tu Fang tribe, who the Shang had been fighting for over 100 years.

True  False

4. What were King Zhou of Shang's other names? Tick the correct answer.

- a. Di Xin and Wu Deng
- b. Fu Hao and Zheng Zhenxiang
- c. Cheng Tang and Xia Jie
- d. Wu Ding and Zhou Yu

## The invention of writing in China

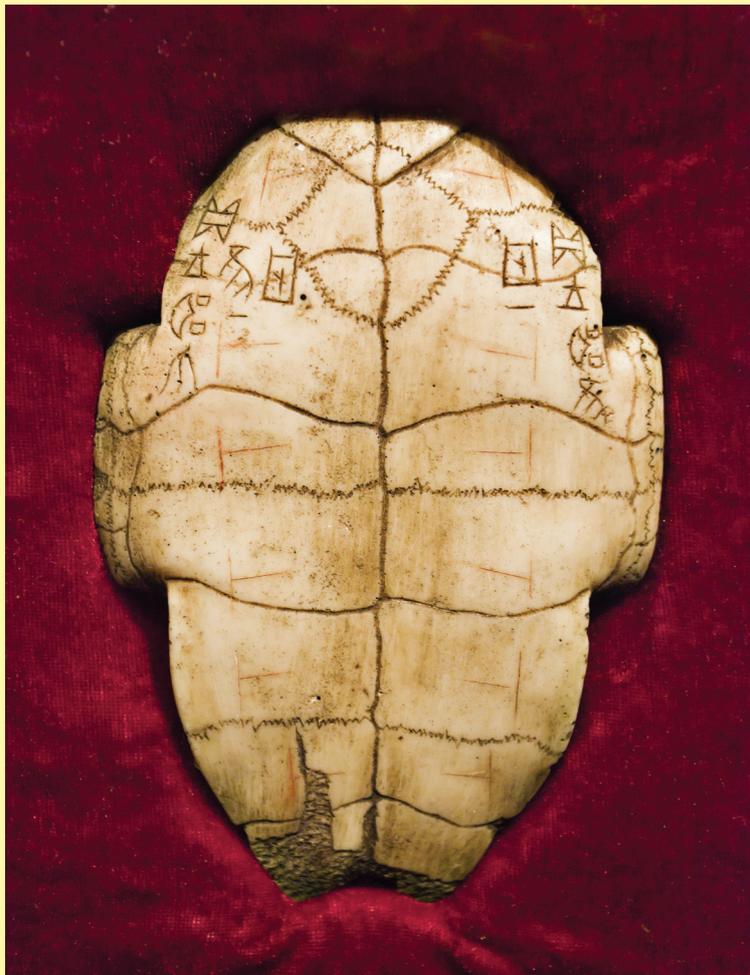
The Shang were the first people in China to use writing, but the Chinese were not the first civilisation to invent writing. Writing was invented roughly 2,000 years earlier and different civilisations created different writing systems.

Many languages, including English, use letters to make words. Other languages, including Chinese, use pictures to represent words. These pictures are called characters, and many of the characters used by the Shang are still used in Chinese today. Chinese writing goes from top to bottom, not left to right like our writing.

Writing was mostly used by rulers, to record events, and by priests, in religious activities. Most people could not read or write.

The Shang wrote on animal bones and turtle shells, called **oracle bones**.

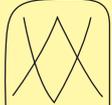
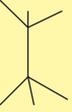
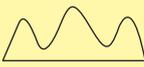
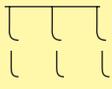
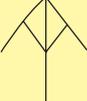
They wrote about emperors, wars and how people lived. This gives historians a lot of useful information.



An oracle bone



1. Look at these Shang characters. Make up your own story using the characters.

<b>Person</b>	<b>Net</b>		
			
<b>Sun</b>	<b>Water</b>		
			
<b>Tree</b>	<b>Mountain</b>	<b>Boat</b>	
			
<b>Cloud</b>	<b>Rain</b>	<b>Umbrella</b>	
			




2. In Chinese, Cheng Tang's name is written like this. Practise writing Cheng Tang's name in Chinese characters in the boxes.

成	成	成	成	成
湯				

## Oracle bones

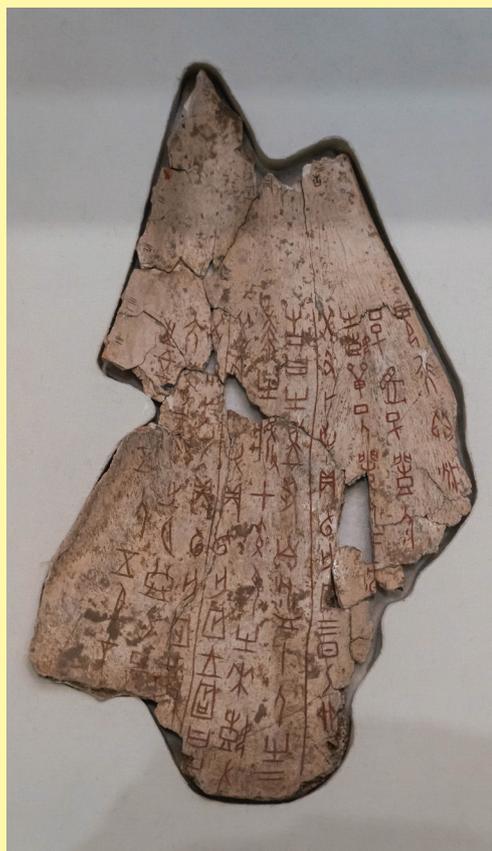
A lot of information about the Shang Dynasty comes from writing found on oracle bones. These often came from the shoulder blade of an ox (a type of large cow) or a turtle shell.

The emperor and his priests carved questions onto the bones, such as:

- Should we go to war?
- How much rain will fall this year?
- Will the royal family be successful?
- Where should we plant crops?



A pit in Anyang, the capital of the Shang Dynasty, full of hundreds of oracle bones



Writing carved on turtle shell

After writing the question, the priests would place a hot metal rod into a hole in the bone. The bone would crack, and the priest had to work out what the crack meant to get an answer. Sometimes, they wrote what actually happened on the bone, too.



3. Read the statements below. Tick 'True' or 'False' for each one.

- a. Most people in the Shang Dynasty could read and write. True  False
- b. Oracle bones were made of animal bone or turtle shell. True  False
- c. Oracle bones record what questions Shang priests and emperors asked about the future. True  False

# Lesson 5

## What was life like for people in the Shang Dynasty?

### Quiz

1. Read the statement below. Tick 'True' or 'False'.  
The Shang were the first people in the world to invent writing. True  False
2. What were oracle bones made of? Tick the correct answer.
  - a. dragon scales
  - b. jade tokens
  - c. animal bones and turtle shells
  - d. dried mud
3. In which direction is Chinese written? Write your answer.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the name of a picture that represents a word?  
Write your answer.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Read the statement below. Tick 'True' or 'False'.  
Only farmers in the Shang Dynasty could read and write. True  False

# Archaeology

The first metal widely used by humans was bronze. It was made by smelting (melting and mixing) the metals copper and tin.

The Chinese learnt how to make bronze in 2400 BCE.

The people of the Shang Dynasty were skilled at working with bronze. Like other metals, bronze does not break down very easily. This means bronze objects can last a long time, and years later archaeologists sometimes dig them up. Objects from the past found by archaeologists are called artefacts.

Most of the artefacts from the Shang Dynasty have been found in the last one hundred years. These artefacts give us a lot of information, so historians can try and work out what life was like in the past, and what events took place.



Archaeologists dig for artefacts from the Shang Dynasty



1. Which metals do you need to mix together to make bronze?  
Write your answer.



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## Social classes in Shang China

In the Shang Dynasty, people were divided into different groups called social classes. The things they left behind tell us about their lives.

Rich and important people like priests and army generals were in the noble class. They lived in grand palaces inside big cities with walls around them. Nobles left behind ruined palaces and artefacts like jewellery and weapons.



What a Shang palace might have looked like

Farmers, soldiers and craftspeople were in the working class. The working class did not have much money, and life was hard. They lived in huts of wood and dried mud, which leave little behind. These people left behind metal tools for working with, and ceramic dishes.



2. What were the differences between working-class and noble people in the Shang Dynasty? Write your answers in the table.

Working class	Noble class

# The Shang Dynasty



3. Look at each artefact and match it to the description. Write down the correct answer beneath each image.

- bronze axe-head
- bronze dagger
- bronze pot
- bronze vase
- clay chain ring
- stone figure
- oracle bone
- wine vessel



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# Lesson 6

## Unit check out



Write an answer to this question: What do we know about the Shang Dynasty?

Key words		
archaeologist	emperor	oracle bones
artefact	general	tomb
bronze	jade	Yellow River
dynasty		

<b>Title:</b> What do we know about the Shang Dynasty?	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where was the Shang Dynasty?</li><li>• When was the Shang Dynasty?</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Paragraph 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who was Emperor Tang?</li><li>• How did he become emperor?</li><li>• Why was he popular?</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

<p><b>Paragraph 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why was the Yellow River important?</li><li>• What did the Shang Dynasty achieve?</li><li>• What was life like for people in different social classes?</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Paragraph 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who was Fu Hao?</li><li>• How did Fu Hao's achievements affect the Shang Dynasty?</li><li>• What was found in Fu Hao's tomb?</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Extension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do we know about life in the Shang Dynasty?</li><li>• What were oracle bones?</li><li>• What artefacts have archaeologists found?</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How was life in the Shang Dynasty different to life today?</li><li>• What else might we find out about it, and how?</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>







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# Primary History

## The Shang Dynasty

Pearson Primary History is a proven, intelligently sequenced curriculum that helps every child learn, and remember more. These units will help you become a successful Historian!

These workbooks provide a resource to support teaching and to evidence children's learning through the unit, by providing:

- Knowledge Organisers to support learning substantive knowledge across the unit
- Clear, levelled texts and images to follow teaching material
- Retrieval Practice 'Quizzes' every lesson to build retention
- Mid Unit check-ins - for formative assessment
- End of Unit summative tasks

For more about Pearson Primary History, and the History resources that sit alongside these, please visit:

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