

Lesson 1: The Geography of China

Vocabulary

loess a yellowish-brown soil that blows in from the desert

terrace a platform of earth that looks like a stair

levee a wide wall that is built next to a river to keep it from flooding

double cropping a way of farming in which two crops are grown on the same land in the same year

A Land of Differences

Civilizations grew up in China about 3000 B.C. Today China is the largest country in Asia. It is the third largest country in the world. More people live in China than in any other country. Different parts of China have different landforms, climates, and ways of life.

The North China Plain

Historians believe human settlement and culture in China began on the North China Plain. The North China Plain is in eastern China. Many people now live there. It is a center of agriculture and industry. Much of China's food is produced there. Land on the plain has **loess**, or yellowish-brown soil that blows in from the desert. Crops such as soybeans, wheat, and cotton are grown on **terraces**, or platforms of earth that look like stairs. Beijing, the capital of China, is on the plain. The city has been a center of culture and government for a long time.

China's Sorrow

The Huang He, or Huang River, flows through the North China Plain. Early civilizations in China grew in the Huang River Valley in about 3000 B.C. The river picks up and carries yellow silt that turns the water yellow. The river gets its name from this color. *Huang* means "yellow" in Chinese. On the North China Plain, the Huang slows down. Floods happen during heavy summer rains. **Levees** are wide walls that were built next to rivers to help control flooding. The Huang has been called "China's Sorrow" because its floods have destroyed crops and homes.

Guangxi Zhungzu

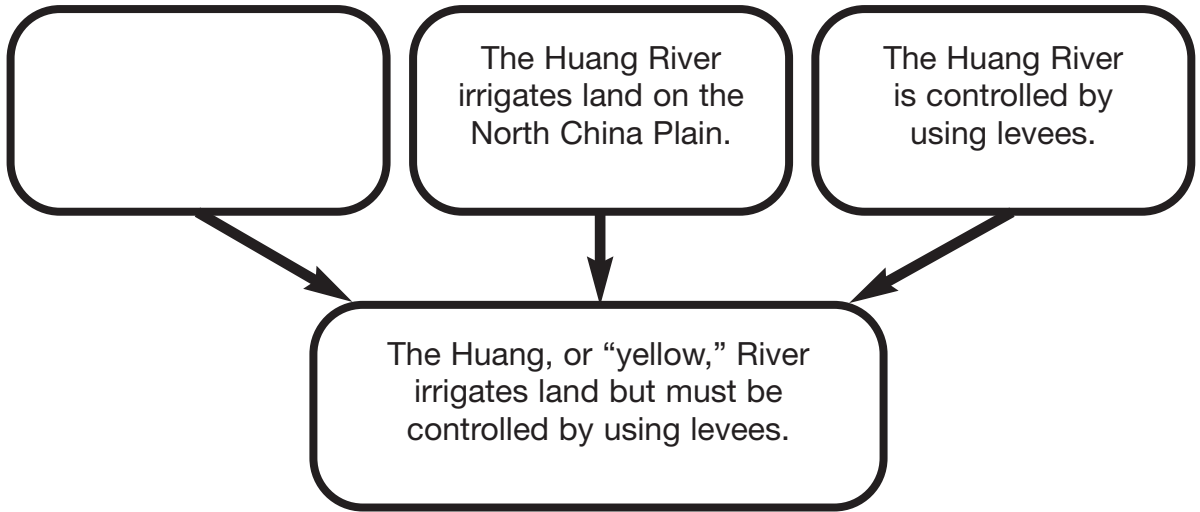
Guangxi Zhungzu is in southeastern China. It has a good climate for farming. Farmers use a type of farming called **double cropping**. Two crops are grown on the same land in the same year. Fishing is also important here. The area has sinkholes, caves, mountains, underground streams, and limestone hills.

The Roof of the World

The Tibetan Plateau is a rocky area of China with mountain ranges. The people who live here are called the Zhuang. Many Zhuang are nomads, or people who travel from place to place. The climate and food are different in different parts of the plateau. The Tibetan Plateau is sometimes called the Roof of the World. The Himalayas, a mountain range that has the tallest peak on Earth, are on the Tibetan Plateau.

Lesson 1: Review

1.  **Summarize** Fill in the missing fact.



2. How has the Huang River affected people living near it? Use the word **levee** in your answer.

3. What gives the Huang River its name?

4. How does China’s geography show differences within the large country?

5. **Critical Thinking: Make Inferences** Is it possible to make generalizations about the people of China based on where they live? Explain.

Lesson 2: China's Past

Vocabulary

pictograph a picture that stands for a word

oracle bone a shell or bone used during the Shang dynasty to tell the future

province a region of a country

ancestor a family member who lived before a grandparent did

civil service the practice of using skills and talents to work in the government

middleman a person who goes between buyers and sellers

Picturing Chinese History

Chinese culture is the oldest culture that exists today. Chinese writing, art, and archaeological remains show how much the Chinese culture has stayed the same. The Chinese language is written in **pictographs**, or pictures that stand for words. The written language has stayed similar for centuries.

Ancient Voices

Chinese people told legends about people and the world. The stories show the importance of animals, agriculture, and inventions. Many legends come from the Xia period, about 2000–1700 B.C.

The Shang Dynasty

The first Chinese dynasty was the Shang dynasty, which began between 1760 and 1500 B.C. Most people in the Huang River Valley were farmers. Bronze was used to make tools, cups, weapons, and goods. **Oracle bones** were used to tell the future. The Shang people kept the first written records in China.

The Longest Dynasty

The Zhou dynasty began in 1027 B.C. It lasted more than 800 years. The early part of the Zhou was called Western Zhou. Most people were farmers. Some had slaves. Silk cloth was important to the economy.

Eastern Zhou Dynasties

The second part of the Zhou dynasty, the Eastern Zhou, lasted from about 770 B.C. to 221 B.C. Trade and the economy did well. Projects included flood control, irrigation, and

canal building. Iron was used to make tools and weapons.

The First Emperor

In 221 B.C., the king of the strongest state became Shi Huangdi, or the “first emperor,” under the Qin dynasty. Qin was divided into 36 **provinces**, or states. The Great Wall of China was built to protect the empire from northern invaders. Builders connected defensive walls that had been built earlier. Systems of money and weights and measures were made the same in all regions. Shi Huangdi wanted to control what people talked about and studied. People wanted freedom and they fought against the emperor.


Han Dynasty

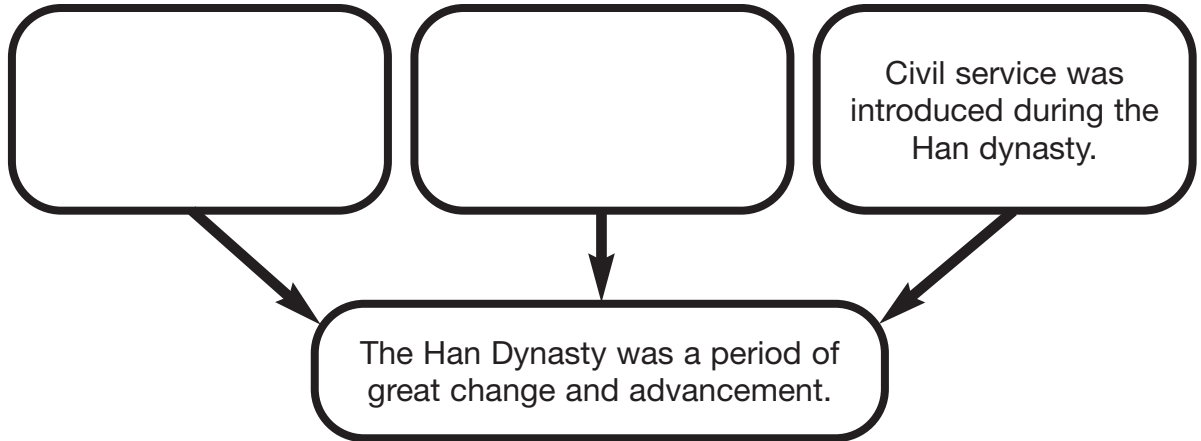
The Han dynasty lasted from 206 B.C. to A.D. 220. The first ruler, Han Gaozu, gave people more freedom. He allowed them to read any books they wanted. Han Gaozu’s name means “High Ancestor.” An **ancestor** is a relative who lived before a grandparent did. During the Han dynasty, roads were built. Trade goods were taxed. The first Chinese history book was written. **Civil service** was started. For the first time, anyone who passed a civil service test could work for the government. These advancements made China more unified.

Inventions

During the Han dynasty, porcelain, paper, and ink were invented. **Middlemen**, or people who go between buyers and sellers, traded these goods on the Silk Road.

Lesson 2: Review

1.  **Summarize** Fill in the blank spaces with two details from the summary below.



2. Name some of the things that people may have done in their daily lives during the Zhou dynasty.

3. How did Chinese culture become more unified during the Han dynasty?

4. What inventions were made in China's early history?

5. **Critical Thinking: Make Inferences** Why do you think that Shi Huangdi wanted to connect the defensive walls into what became the Great Wall of China?

Lesson 3: Legacy of Thought

Vocabulary

nobility a high-ranking social class

Master Kung

In China, Confucius is known as Kung Fuzi, or Master Kung. Confucius was born in 551 B.C. His family was part of the **nobility**, a high-ranking social class. He became a scholar, or a very educated thinker and teacher. During his life, the Zhou dynasty was coming to an end. Many people were cruel and greedy. Confucius taught people the difference between right and wrong. He valued order and peace. He was an advisor at a king's court for many years. Many people went to him for advice. It is said that Master Kung had about 3,000 followers by the time of his death in 479 B.C.

The Master's Work

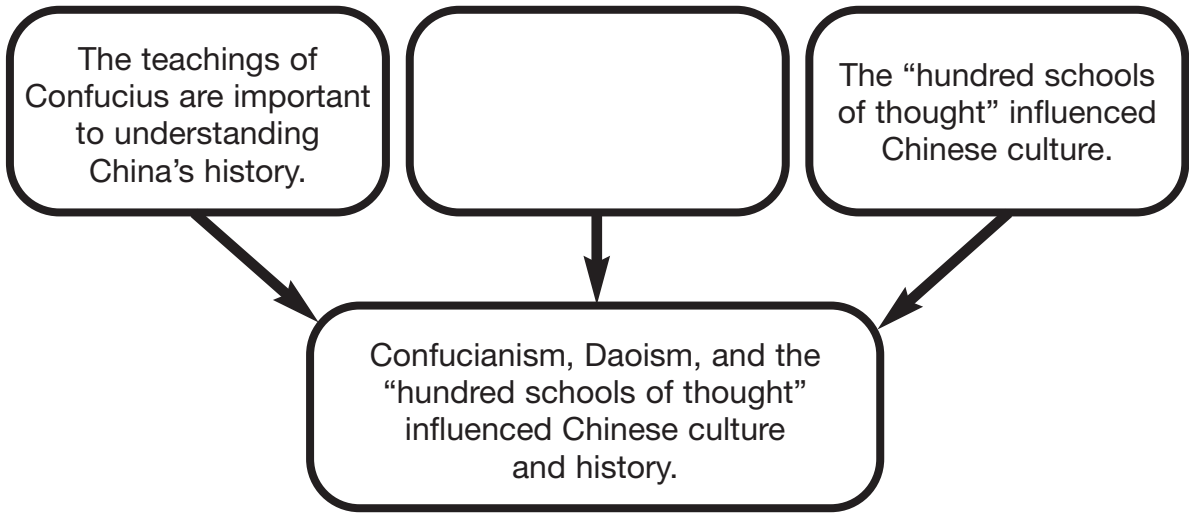
The *Analects* is a collection of sayings by Confucius. These sayings were written down by his students. In the *Analects*, Confucius gives advice on how to do the right thing. The teachings of Confucius are known as Confucianism. Confucianism teaches respect for all people. It also says that people should take the middle way, or make balanced decisions. Confucianism teaches that people should accept their positions in society. Confucius believed that people should treat others the way they would like to be treated. He also felt that children must obey, respect, and honor their parents and teachers. Confucianism taught respect for the ruler. He felt that a ruler had the Mandate of Heaven, or the right to govern for the good of all people. A good ruler brought times of richness and peace. Bad or unwise rulers could be pushed off the throne by the people.

Beyond Confucianism

During Confucius's life there were many other scholars. Because there were so many scholars, this time was called the "hundred schools of thought." Mencius was a follower of Confucius who taught that all people were good. Daoism is the belief in finding the "way," or the dao, of the universe. Daoists believed that people should live in harmony with nature. Confucianism and Daoism both greatly influenced Chinese culture.

Lesson 3: Review

1.  **Summarize** Fill in the missing detail in the blank below.



2. Briefly explain three Confucian principles.

3. What is the *Analects*?

4. Besides Confucianism, what other way of thinking has had much influence in China?

5. **Critical Thinking: Make Generalizations** How have Confucianism and Daoism influenced Chinese culture?
