

Key vocabulary

Need to know	Nice to know	Super-specialist
mortal	archaeological	divination
immortal	calligraphy	pyromancy
underworld	hierarchy	scapula
dynasty	Fu Hao	Yinxu
myths	plastron	Renmimbi (Yan)
jade	ding	Jiao
peasants	jue	
bamboo	Wang Yirong	
legends	oracle bone	
culture	Xia Dynasty	
government	Shang Di	

Key China Information and facts:

Population: More than 1.43 billion people live in China (2020). The majority of people live in cities and towns.

Capital: Beijing with 21.7 million inhabitants is not only China's capital city but also the second biggest city after Shanghai.

Languages: Mandarin or Standard Chinese (official language), while Cantonese (Yue) and Shanghainese (Wu) are among other most spoken languages.

Literacy: More than 96% can read and write.

Religion: No main religion, as religious memberships are not supported by the government. Main religions are Buddhist (18%), Christian (5%), Muslim (1.8%), Taoist, Hindu and Folk religions (22%).

Currency: 1 Renmimbi (Yuan) equals 100 Jiao. Converted to pound sterling (UK currency) 1 Yan = £0.11.

National symbols: Dragon and giant panda.



The Shang Dynasty



Chinese Culture

Chinese Values: One of the most apparent values in China is courtesy, which is the act of being respectful to others and to the law. Another important Chinese value is harmony, which is getting along with others and maintaining balance within society and nature. Benevolence is another Chinese value, which stresses the importance of being loyal to your family.

Chinese Arts & Music: As harmony is one of the core values in China, harmony and balance are common themes in Chinese art. It can be seen in sculpture, pottery and painting, like the swirling brush strokes that illustrate the balance within nature or the harmony between old and new techniques. Music is another important piece of Chinese culture, with ancient instruments like the xun (similar to a flute) and guqin (similar to a harp).



Crafts

Shang craftsmen used a variety of materials, including **bronze**, **jade**, clay, wood, stone and bone. Many of the artefacts that have been found were buried with their owners when they died.

Shang Dynasty:

The Shang Dynasty was the first Chinese dynasty for which we have written and archaeological evidence. Most historians now date the dynasty from 1600-1046BC.



Links to prior learning:

Geography: Non-European countries such as Mexico and India.

Science: Weather and climate; States of Matter; Materials; causes and effects (friction).

History: The Maya, Stone age to the Iron age, Ancient Egypt.

Links to future learning:

Geography: Human geography such as the three rivers dam, society.

History: Early civilisations such as Indus valley civilisation.

RE: Belief Systems such as Buddhist and Hindu.

Key texts (recommended books to support teaching of Shang Dynasty).

Shang Dynasty China (Great Civilisations) by Tracey Kelly; **Tales from China** by Cyril Birch; **The Firework Maker's Daughter**, by Philip Pullman; **The history detective investigates: The Shang Dynasty**, by Geoff Barker; **If I were a kid in Ancient China: Children of the Ancient World** by Cobblestone Publishing; **British Museum: Find Tom in Time, Mind Dynasty China** By Fatti Burke; **Daily Life in Shang Dynasty China** by Lori Hile; **Why did the Shang write on turtles?** **And other questions about the Shang Dynasty**, by Ton Cooke; **The Ancient Chinese** by Louise Spilsbury.

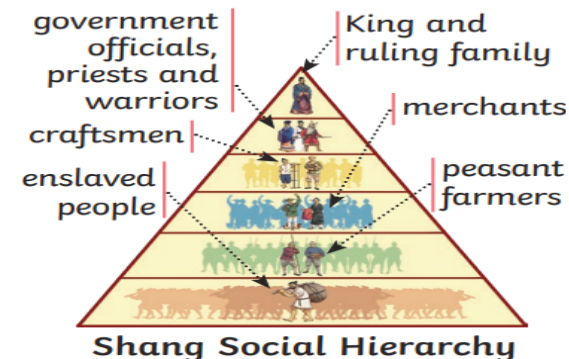
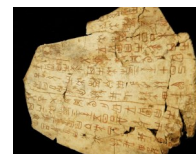
Suggested online resources for learning about the Shang Dynasty:

<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Shang-dynasty/353765>

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/homework-help/shang-dynasty>

https://www.ducksters.com/history/china/shang_dynasty.php

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z39j2hv>



Shang Society

The King and Ruling Family

- lived in palaces in the capital city
- fine clothes and best food
- made all important decisions; owned all the land

Noble Warriors

- lived in palaces outside city walls
- skilled fighters
- rented land from the king and collected tax from farmers

Peasant Farmers

- largest group
- lived in poor conditions - holes in the ground
- grew millet, wheat, barley and rice
- allowed only a small share of crops

Priests and Government Officials

- comfortable lifestyle within city walls
- carved the **oracle bones**
- kept important records for the king

Craftsmen and Merchants

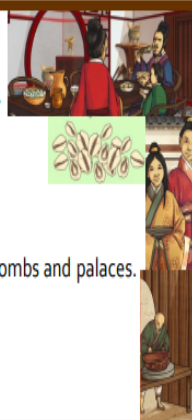
- lived in mud huts outside city walls
- used **cowrie shells** for currency
- paid in foods like grain and vegetables

Slaves

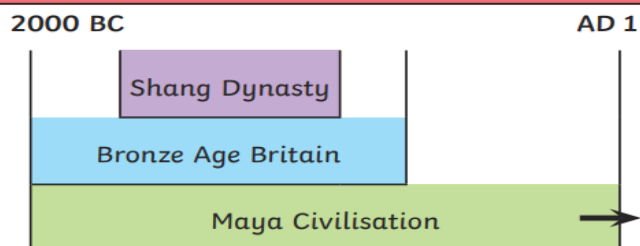
- prisoners of war or convicted criminals
- treated harshly; forced into hard work, like building tombs
- sometimes sacrificed or buried alive

SHANG DYNASTY: DID YOU KNOW.....?

- Girls were not allowed to take the throne. The throne would be passed down to a son or a nephew (if they had no son).
- Craftsmen worked with bronze, jade, pottery, wood, stone or bone.
- Cowrie shells were used by the merchants as a form of currency. They were considered to be very valuable.
- Slaves were usually prisoners of war and sometimes convicted criminals. They undertook hard labour, often building tombs and palaces.
- Dragons are significant in Chinese culture and are recognised as a symbol of power and good fortune.
- The slave revolt in 1122BC was the downfall of the Shang dynasty.



Timeline



Key Events

1600 BC	The Shang dynasty is founded when Cheng Tang overthrows the Xia dynasty. He has the support of 40 other kingdoms.
1400-1200 BC	The earliest found examples of Chinese writing are dated to this period.
1250 BC	King Wu Ding begins his reign.
1200 BC	Fu Hao , one of the wives of King Wu Ding, dies. Her tomb is the only intact Shang tomb that has been found to date.
1075 BC	The last Shang king, Di Xin, begins his reign.
1046 BC	Slaves revolt in protest against cruel treatment and increasing taxes. The Shang dynasty is overthrown and replaced by the Zhou dynasty.