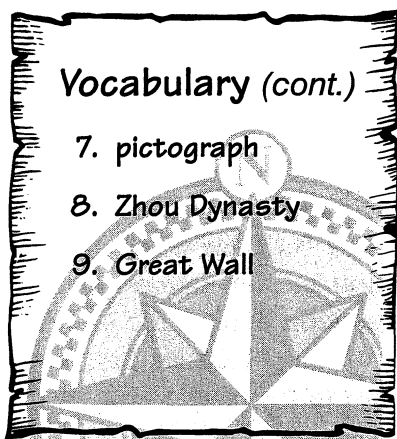


# Ancient Chinese Civilization

## Brief #1 (cont.)



### Dynasties (cont.)

During the Shang Dynasty, people wrote with pictographs. **A pictograph is a picture that stands for a word.** They also used ideograms and phonograms. Archeologists have found ancient deer and turtle bones that have pictographs from the Shang period carved on them. The Shang people were also skilled at making jade carvings.

**The Zhou Dynasty is China's longest lasting dynasty.** It dates from about 1046–256 B.C. That's nearly 800 years! Scholars divide the dynasty into two periods: the Western Zhou (1046–771 B.C.) and the Eastern Zhou (770–221 B.C.).

Like the Shang, the Zhou were farmers. They grew rice, wheat, and fruit. Silk production was also very important to the Zhou. Silk is produced from the cocoons of worms. It is spun into fabric that is used to make clothing and rugs.

The period of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty is often called the “golden age” in China. That's because many important philosophers, like Confucius, lived during this time. The Eastern Zhou made advancements in irrigation. They also began to use iron to make tools and weapons.

Ancient China was divided up into many different states. Often these states would war with each other. In about 221 B.C., a strong leader from one of these states gained control of China. He became China's first emperor under the Qin Dynasty. He was called Shi Huangdi.

Shi Huangdi began construction on the Great Wall. **The Great Wall was built to stop other people from invading China.** Many emperors and dynasties had a part in building the Great Wall. The Great Wall is over four thousand miles in length, and many parts of it are still standing today.

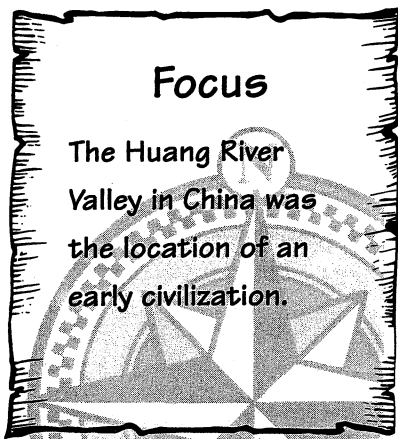
The Han Dynasty (206 B.C.–220 A.D.) was a very influential period in Chinese history. During this period, paper, and ink were invented. Also, the Silk Road, the great trade route which connected China to many other civilizations, saw its beginnings. The Han people kept detailed records so modern scholars know a lot about this period. A Han writer named Sima Qian wrote a history of China that covered the first three thousand years!

### Fast Fact

A single cocoon can produce over 2,000 feet of silk.

# Ancient Chinese Civilization

## Brief #1



### Huang River Valley

Just as the Ancient Egyptian civilization developed along the banks of a great river, so did another early civilization. **The Huang River Valley in China is home to one of the world's earliest civilizations.** Archeologists know that people settled there about 3000 B.C., which is about 5,000 years ago.

The Huang River is about 3,400 miles long. It runs through the North China Plain. Huang means *yellow* in Chinese. The soil on the North China Plain is very fertile. The soil contains loess. **Loess is yellowish soil that blows off the Gobi desert and onto the North China Plain.** Loess also blows into the Huang River and gives it a kind of yellowy color.

One of the earliest settlements was located in Anyang. Anyang is located along the banks of the Huang River. There are no written records from this period in Chinese history, but archeologists have found stone tools and other artifacts in this area. This is how they know people lived there.

Ancient Chinese civilization is slightly different from other ancient civilizations like the ones that existed in Greece or Egypt. That's because Chinese civilization and culture has an unbroken history. Many other ancient civilizations were conquered by other people and their civilizations changed. Some disappeared altogether. But Chinese culture has existed for thousands of years, and exists still.



### Dynasties

**A dynasty means a series of political rulers belonging to the same family. The first dynasty in China was the Shang Dynasty.** The Shang Dynasty existed during a time called the Bronze Age. **The Bronze Age (3300–1200 B.C.) is the time when people made tools, weapons and other things, like jewelry, from bronze.**

The people who lived during the Shang Dynasty made homes of timber. The walls were made with wattle and daub. **Wattle is a kind of wooden frame made from interlacing strips of wood. Daub is a type of plaster that people made from soil, sand, and straw.**

### Vocabulary

1. Huang River Valley
2. loess
3. dynasty
4. Shang Dynasty
5. Bronze Age
6. wattle and daub