

CHINA'S PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

- China is a large country with many different geographical features.
- China is about the same size as the United States. Some geographical features separated groups of people within China, while other features separated China from the rest of the world.
- These features include the Gobi Desert, which spreads over much of China's north, and rugged mountains on the western frontier.

Map: Geography and Living: This map identifies the different geographical regions of China. Number one in the northeast represents the region of rivers. Number two represents the farming region in the south where it rains a lot. Number three represents the high mountain area of the west.



China is a large country with many different types of environments.

GEOGRAPHY AND LIVING

GEOGRAPHY AND LIVING



Southern China receives more rain than northern China, and farmers can grow several crops of rice a year.



In northern China, the Huang He, or Yellow River, has long been the center of civilization. The silt in the river gives it a yellow look.



Western China's high mountains and wide deserts make travel difficult and isolate China's population centers in the east.

CHINA'S PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

- ✘ Low-lying plains in the east form one of the world's largest farming regions.
- ✘ Weather patterns vary widely across China.
- ✘ Two great rivers flow from west to east, the Huang He, or Yellow River, and the Chang Jiang, or Yangzi River.

CIVILIZATION BEGINS

- Like other ancient peoples, people in China first settled along rivers.
- By 7000 BC farmers grew rice in the Chang Jiang Valley.
- Along the Huang He, they grew millet and wheat. Early Chinese also fished and hunted with bows and arrows.
- They raised pigs and sheep. Separate cultures developed along the two rivers.
- As populations grew, villages spread. A social order developed.
- The graves of the rich often contained objects made from **jade**.

CHINA'S FIRST DYNASTIES



- ✘ Societies along the Huang He grew larger and more complex.
- ✘ Around 2200 BC, a legendary emperor called Yu the Great is said to have founded the Xia (SHAH) dynasty.
- ✘ It is believed that the first flood control channels were built during the Xia dynasty.

SHANG DYNASTY

- The first dynasty for which we have clear evidence is the Shang. It was firmly established by the 1500s BC.
- The Shang king and his family were at the top of the social order.
- Nobles and warrior leaders also had high rank.
- Artisans lived in groups depending on what they did for a living.
- Farmers worked hard but had little wealth. Taxes claimed much of what they earned. Slaves provided an important source of labor.

SHANG DYNASTY



SHANG DYNASTY, c. 1500-1050 BC



This bronze Shang container is shaped like a tigress.

Map: Shang Dynasty, c. 1500-1050 BC: This map shows where the Shang Dynasty was in China. It was located in the northeastern part of China. It was bordered by the Yellow Sea on the east side and the Gobi Desert on the northern and western side. The Huang He, or Yellow River, flows through the middle of the Shang Dynasty. The Chang Jiang River runs along the southern part of the dynasty. The cities of Anyang and Luoyang are marked in the area. Credit: © Musée Cernuschi Paris / Dagli Orti/Art Archive

SHANG DYNASTY ADVANCES

- ✘ The Shang made many advances, including China's first writing system.
- ✘ The Chinese symbols that are used today are based on those of the Shang period.
- ✘ Priests carved questions about the future on cattle bones and turtle shells, which were then heated, causing them to crack. The priests believed they could "read" these cracks to predict the future.

CHINESE WRITING

Chinese Writing		
	Writing from Shang Period	Current Chinese Writing
sun		
rain		
field		
moon		



Like other early forms of writing, Chinese writing developed from pictographs—symbols that look like what they represent. Over time, the symbols became more complex and looked less like real objects. Many examples of early Chinese writing are carved into bones like this turtle shell.

SHANG DYNASTY ADVANCES

- For this reason the bones were called **oracle bones**.
- Artisans made beautiful bronze containers for cooking and religious ceremonies.
- They also made ornaments, knives, and axes from jade.
- The army developed war chariots and bronze body armor.
- Shang astrologers developed a calendar based on the cycles of the moon.