

HISTORY KNOWLEDGE MAT



The Shang Dynasty of Ancient China

Key Vocabulary

- dynasty**– a family that rules a country, one after the other
- ruled**– to be in charge
- BCE** – Before Common Era (before 1 CE)
- archaeology**– study of human history through excavations and analysis of artefacts and remains
- territory** – area of land controlled by a ruler or state
- civilisation** – the society, culture, and way of life of a particular area
- currency**– the system of money being used
- peasants** – a poor member of society with low social status
- craftsmen**– a worker with a specific craft or skill
- tomb**– a monument to the memory of a dead person

What came before

Year 3—Prehistoric Britain (Chinese Bronze Age)

What comes next

Year 4 — Ancient Greece

Key Learning

The Shang dynasty, also known as the Yin Dynasty, ruled the Yellow River valley in the second millennium BCE (1675-1045)

A member of the Shang family was king, and these kings ruled over the Shang Dynasty for over five hundred years.

There were 17 Shang kings during this period.

It is the first Chinese Dynasty for which there is written and archaeological evidence.

The dynasty expanded its territory and moved its capital several times.

The **Yellow River** is where early Chinese civilisation began. This is likely due to the fertile soil and favourable climate.

Shells were used as currency during the Shang Dynasty

Significant People

The King and Ruling Family



Lived in palaces in the capital city. Wore fine clothes and ate the best food. Made all important decisions; owned all the land

Cheng Tang

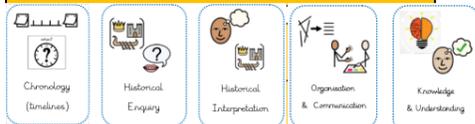


Founded the Shang dynasty in 1600BC after overthrowing the Xia dynasty

Fu Hao



The first known female military leader, but also the most influential military leader of her time, responsible for leading 13,000 soldiers into battle. She was also a high priestess, which was very unusual for a woman at the time.



Life in the Shang Dynasty

Farming, food and 'peasants'



Largest group, lived in poor conditions e.g. holes in the ground. Grew millet, wheat, barley and rice and were allowed only a small share of crops

Writing and oracle bones



Priests, or the king himself, would write questions for the ancestors on oracle bones, which were then heated until they cracked. The king would interpret the cracks to work out the answers.

Shang Craftsmen



Shang craftsmen used a variety of materials, including bronze, jade, clay, wood, stone and bone.

Shang gods



People believed in a range of different gods. Their supreme god was called Shang Di.

Important Places

Yellow River

China

Asia

Yan—first



Key Dates

1600 BCE	1400 BCE	1250 BCE	1200 BCE	1075 BCE	1046 BCE
Shang Founded	Writing is developed	King Wu Ding	Fu Hao dies	Last Shang king, Di Xin	End of Shang Dynasty

