



The Shang Dynasty



The Shang Dynasty is the earliest ruling dynasty of China to be established in recorded history, though other dynasties predated it. The Shang ruled from 1600 to 1046 B.C. and heralded the Bronze Age in China. They were known for their advances in math, astronomy, artwork and military technology. The Shang Dynasty should best be remembered for introducing writing systems to China. The earliest Chinese writing is found on tortoise shells.

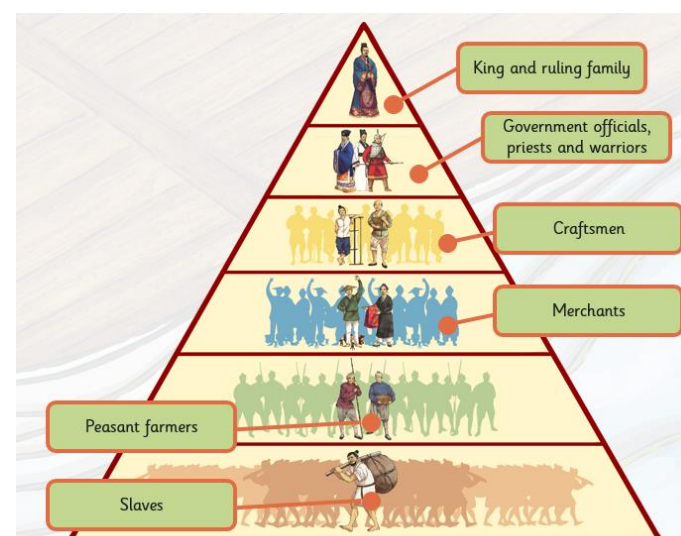
Key Knowledge

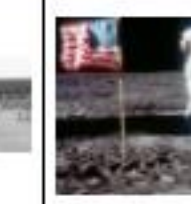
	Oracle Bones Oracle bones were used by kings to find out the future. Firstly, holes were made in the bone. A diviner would then engrave a question onto the bone. Next, a hot poker was applied to the holes in the bone. The heat from the poker would make the bone crack. Depending on what side of the bone the crack appeared, the diviner would know if the answer to the question was 'yes' or 'no'.
	Jade Jade was regarded as the most precious stone in ancient China, and it symbolised purity and moral integrity. Jade was mined, carved and then used to make ritual objects. It was used to make sculptures and was prized for its hardness, durability and beauty.
	Bronze Shang dagger blades were made from bronze. The bronze turned a greenish colour when it reacted with the oxygen in the air. Often, they had a dragon head pattern inscribed on them in the place where it would have been attached to a handle. Daggers were used by a Shang warrior in battle, or in ritual ceremonies.
	Pottery Vases and storage vessels were made from white pottery. This kind of pottery was used only by the royal family and not a lot of it has survived to this day. Vessels would have been used for decoration and maybe in ritual ceremonies too. They often had geometric patterns carved into them.

Key Vocabulary

archeology	the study of the past by looking for the remains and objects left by the people who lived long ago. These remains can include old coins, tools, buildings, and inscriptions.
aristocracy	the highest class in certain societies.
bronze	a yellowish-brown alloy of copper with up to one-third tin.
craftsmen	a worker skilled in a particular craft.
ding	a Chinese cauldrons, standing upon legs with a lid and two facing handles. They were used for cooking, storage and ritual offerings.
divination	seeking knowledge of the future or the unknown by supernatural means.
dynasty	a line of hereditary rulers of a country.
jade	a hard, typically green stone used for ornaments and implements made from minerals.
jue	a Chinese ritual cup made from bronze, a tripod vessel or goblet used to serve warm wine.
nobility	belonging to the aristocracy.
oracle bones	pieces of ox or turtle bones, which were used for pyromancy - a form of divination - in ancient China.
peasants	a poor smallholder or agricultural labourer of low social status.
pottery	pots, dishes, and other articles made of fired clay.
priests	a religious leader.
ruling family	the immediate family of a king or queen.
slave	a person who is the legal property of another and is forced to obey them.
social hierarchy	the categorization of people into groups based on economic factors like wealth, income, race, education, gender, occupation, and social status.
warrior	a brave or experienced soldier or fighter.
Yellow River	the second longest river in China and the sixth longest river system in the world.
zun	an ancient type of Chinese bronze or ceramic wine vessel with a round or square vase-like form, and sometimes in the shape of an animal.

Social Hierarchy



												
Ancient Egypt	The Shang Dynasty	Romans and Celts	Anglo-Saxons	Riotous Royals	St Nicholas Church	Queen Elizabeth I	The Great Fire of London	Florence Nightingale	The arrival of the railways	Queen Elizabeth II Coronation	Pyrford School opened	Moon Landing
3,100BC	1766 BC	750BC	AD449	1066	1140	1559	1666	1820	1825	1953	1950	1969
Year 3	Year 4	Year 3	Year 4	Year 4	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1