

Lesson 1 The Birth of Chinese Civilization, *Continued*



Defining

4. What is a **warlord**?



Identifying

5. Which group of people made up most of Chinese society?



Contrasting

6. What is the difference between a pictograph and an ideograph?



Reading Check

7. Why did Shang kings have questions scratched on oracle bones?



Defining

8. What does **hereditary** mean?

Public buildings and the homes of government officials were nearby. Beyond these stood workshops and other homes.

The king was the political, religious, and military leader of Shang China. Over time, the Shang conquered nearby areas. Kings began to rule more land and people. Warlords helped the Shang kings control territories throughout the country. A **warlord** is a military leader who has his own army.

Warlords and other royal officials were aristocrats. **Aristocrats** are people in an upper class of society. Their wealth comes from the land they own. Most Chinese people, however, were farmers. They farmed the land owned by aristocrats. A small number were merchants, artisans, and enslaved people.

People in Shang China:

- worshiped many gods
- believed the gods could bring good or bad fortune
- honored their **ancestors**, or long-dead family members.
- believed their ancestors would bring them good luck
- made offerings to the gods and their ancestors

Kings looked to their ancestors for help in making important decisions. They had priests scratch questions on oracle bones such as, "Will I win the battle?" Priests heated the bones until they cracked. Answers were found in the pattern of the cracks.

Early Chinese writing used pictographs and ideographs. **Pictographs** are characters that represent objects. **Ideographs** are another kind of character. They link two or more pictographs to express an idea.

The Zhou: China's Longest Dynasty

According to legend, the last Shang ruler was a wicked tyrant. Rebels overthrew the Shang government and declared a new dynasty called the Zhou. The Zhou ruled China for more than 800 years. The king led the government. He was helped by a **bureaucracy**. A bureaucracy is a group of selected officials who do different government jobs.



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NAME _____ DATE _____ CLASS _____

networks

Early China

Lesson 1 The Birth of Chinese Civilization, *Continued*

The Land of China

Two powerful rivers have helped shape Chinese history. The Huang He, or Yellow River, flows across China. As it flows, it carries large amounts of rich soil. The soil spreads along the banks of the river. This makes the land more fertile, or a high quality for farming. Farmers along the Huang He are able to grow more food. However, the Huang He often floods. Millions of people have died because of these floods.

The Chang Jiang, or Yangtze River, is another important waterway in China. Like the Huang He, the Chang Jiang provides rich soil for farming. It also serves as a way of trade and transportation.

Mountains and deserts cover much of China. They were difficult to cross, acting like walls around the country. These natural barriers limited contact between China and other civilizations. The high mountains and vast deserts helped China develop a unique culture. Chinese civilization was different from other civilizations.

| Geographic Feature | Effect on Chinese Civilization |
|--------------------|--|
| rivers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provided rich soil for Chinese farmers caused many deaths by flooding used as waterways for trade and transportation |
| mountains | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> formed a barrier around the country making it difficult for invaders to enter made it possible for China to develop a unique culture and civilization |
| deserts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> created a barrier around the country, like the mountains did |

The First Chinese Dynasty

A dynasty is a line of rulers who belong to the same family. Historians believe the first Chinese dynasty was the Shang. The Shang dynasty began about 1750 B.C.

Ruins of walls and buildings show that the Shang built



Explaining

- How did mountains and deserts affect China's civilization?



Reading Check

- How did rivers help civilization develop in China?



Marking the Text

- In the text, circle the name of what historians believe to be the first Chinese dynasty.

Early China

Lesson 1 The Birth of Chinese Civilization

Gr. 6 SS/ HW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What makes a culture unique?

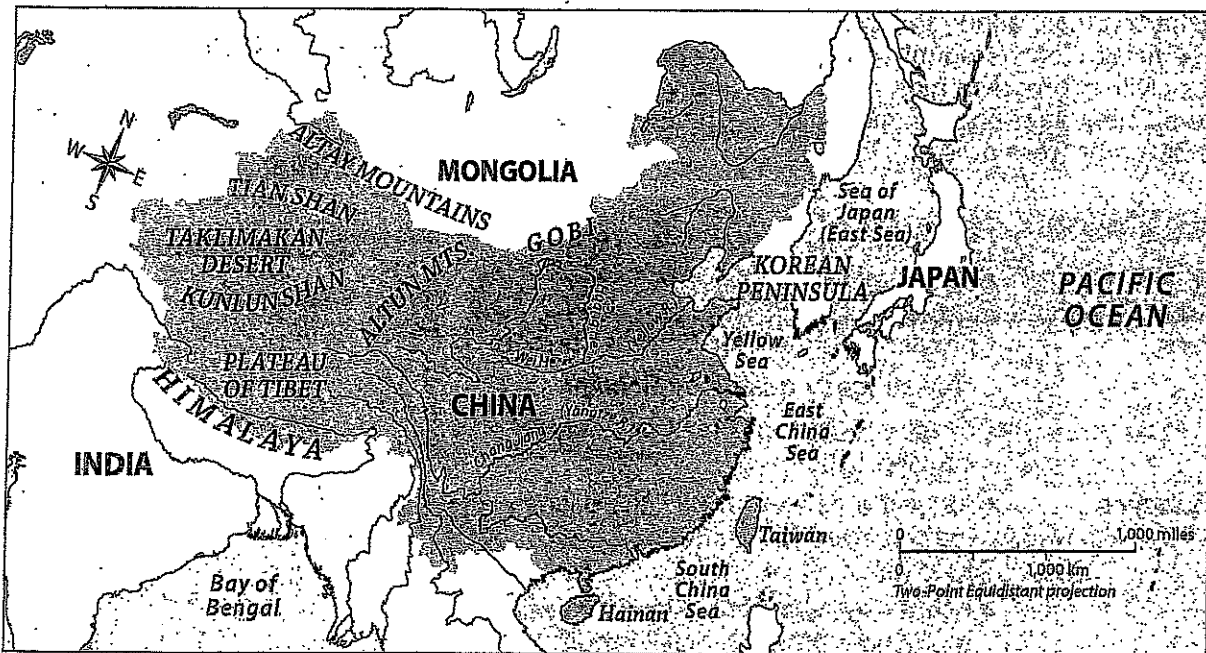
GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How have rivers, mountains, and deserts shaped the development of China's civilization?
2. Why did China's Shang rulers become powerful?
3. How did the Zhou claim the right to rule China?

Terms to Know

warlord a leader who has his own army**aristocrat** a person who belongs to the highest class of society**ancestor** a family member who is no longer living**pictograph** a symbol in a writing system based on pictures**ideograph** a symbol in a writing system that represents a thing or an idea**bureaucracy** a group of non-elected government officials

Where in the world?



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When did it happen?

