

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Ancient China

The earliest Chinese dynasty was the Shang.  
Yeah, and their rule was long—  
From 1600 BCE  
All the way to 1046 BCE.  
See, they set up near the valley of the Yellow River,  
Where the soil was fertile and sure to deliver.  
It was the Bronze Age of China, where artisans stepped in  
And made bronze armor, ritual vessels, and weapons.  
The times must have been exciting.  
Historians say they developed Chinese writing.  
But in 1046 BCE,  
The Shang was overthrown by the Zhou dynasty.  
The Zhou introduced the concept of the Mandate of Heaven—  
A belief the emperor's right to rule was god given.  
This would become central to their ancient governments.  
And for a long while, it was the Zhou running it.  
Most say they're the longest reigning of all,  
But in 256 BCE, they would fall.  
Then the Warring States Period is what would unfold,  
Where rival states waged war for control.  
In these perilous times, philosophies were born.  
Confucianism and Daoism would take form.  
They brought a lot of rules and rituals to the table,  
In hopes for a society that was more stable.  
From the Shang to the Zhou, to the Qin, to the Han,  
Dynasties ruled ancient China, y'all—come on!  
They each contributed to Chinese society

And left a lasting cultural legacy.  
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The Qin state emerged with the win.  
In 221 BCE, their dynasty would begin.  
Their leader, Qin Shi Huang,  
United the different Chinese states under one  
Centralized government, and China changed. How much?  
Significantly during his reign.  
You know the Great Wall? That was his vision,  
And he standardized the Chinese writing system.  
But the Qin Dynasty was short-lived—  
Overthrown by the people for being oppressive.  
In 206 BCE, they formed the Han Dynasty.  
And it was a period of stability,  
Cultural achievement, and territorial expansion.  
And Emperor Han Wudi introduced some enhancements,  
Like the civil service examination system  
To select the best candidates for official positions.  
Plus, Confucianism was made  
The official ideology of the state.  
As the dynasty expanded, it also opened trade.  
And the foundation of the Silk Road was laid,  
Facilitating the exchange of goods, ideas,  
Languages, and religions. It was all right there.  
But in 220 CE, the Han Dynasty collapsed.  
Now China was three kingdoms, fighting over the scraps.  
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