

Name _____ Date _____

Confucianism

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. b'

Confucianism arose during a tumultuous time for China. After hundreds of years of peace and prosperity, the Zhou Dynasty started to collapse in the fifth century BCE. Local feudal rulers vied for control over China and engaged in constant warfare. The following centuries are known as the Warring States Period. Uncertainty during this period created a longing for stability. And amidst the chaos, Confucianism, along with many other schools of thought, emerged as a source of moral guidance.

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Confucianism was founded by Kong Fuzi, whose name was later latinized to Confucius in the 16th century. Most of the information we know about Confucius comes from a book written by his students and followers called Lun Yu, or the Analects. This book not only serves as a record of his life and teachings but also as the main foundation for Confucianism.

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Living in a time of conflict, Confucius contemplated how to establish a more stable society. He didn't believe that strict rules were the answer. Instead, he was convinced that a harmonious society starts with good moral character. Confucius didn't take all the credit for his ideas. He acknowledged that his views were formed from older philosophies and encouraged others to learn from the past and its traditions, as well.

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Confucianism focuses on three main values: education, relationships, and ritual. As a teacher, Confucius was passionate about education and its direct impact on self-cultivation. According to the Analects, he stated, \xe2\x80\x9cEducation breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace.\xe2\x80\x9d

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Confucianism also places a strong emphasis on relationships. There are five key relationships: ruler and subject, parent and child, husband and wife, elder sibling and younger sibling, and friend and friend.

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Except for friendship, which he considered a relationship of equals, Confucius believed that these relationships were based on hierarchy. He stressed the importance of showing respect for elders\xe2\x80\x94a concept called filial piety. Filial piety, according to Confucius, was the foundation for everything. And a harmonious society could only be achieved when everyone fulfilled their roles with compassion and respect.

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3. b'

Mencius and Xunzi were Confucian philosophers during the Warring States Period in China. But they had very different perspectives on Confucianism, especially regarding their understanding of human nature.

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Mencius believed that all people are born inherently good and have innate virtues such as benevolence and righteousness. Xunzi argued the opposite point of view: Human nature is bad, and people need to be taught moral virtues. Xunzi's theory on human nature influenced politics and contributed to the development of Legalism, which the Qin Dynasty adopted as their official state philosophy. Legalism emphasized the importance of strict laws to maintain order in society, which strengthened the rulers' authority.

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Mencius, however, believed that the people were more important than the state or ruler. He argued that rulers should protect the welfare of the people and that their main responsibility is to create a society in which people can flourish. Mencius thought that if a ruler is unable to fulfill their duties, then they should be removed from their position.

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4. b'

The Han Dynasty emerged after the fall of the Qin Dynasty in 202 BCE. During the Qin Dynasty, many Confucian texts and records were either confiscated or burned by Emperor Qin Shi Huang. He feared that they would undermine his authority and power. However, with the start of the Han Empire, Confucianism was revived, and efforts were made to collect any remaining Confucian documents.

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The Han Empire adopted Confucianism as the official state ideology and established Confucian schools. Confucian classics that survived the Qin Dynasty were used as main parts of school curricula. Studying Confucianism was necessary in order to take civil service exams, and many government officials were Confucian scholars.

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