

Dynamic Dynasties

Name



These activities are for you to do at home. You can do all of them or choose the ones that you find most interesting.

Activities

1. Use your existing knowledge and research skills to match the names of the dynasties to the correct information.

Useful words

- Xia Dynasty (c2070–c1600 BC)
- Han Dynasty (c206 BC–cAD 220)
- Qin Dynasty (c221–c207 BC)
- Western Zhou Dynasty (c1046–c771 BC)
- Shang Dynasty (c1600–c1046 BC)
- Eastern Zhou Dynasty (c771–c256 BC)

This dynasty first lived to the west of the Shang state for many years. They defeated the tyrant king, *Di Xin*. After conquering the Shang Dynasty, rulers of this dynasty lived in a capital city in western China. In this period, metalworkers began using iron to make stronger weapons and tools.

This dynasty settled in the fertile Yellow River valley. They grew crops in the silty soil along the river's banks. Religion was important, and their main deity was called Shangdi. Priests and kings used oracle bones to communicate with their deceased ancestors and deities. They were the first people in China to make bronze weapons and ritual objects.

This is believed to be the first (unrecorded) Chinese dynasty, and also the first organised government. Legend says that King Yu the Great founded this dynasty. He supposedly built canals to stop destructive floods.

A policeman called Liu Bang, who served the Qin Dynasty, established this dynasty. He disagreed with the cruel rules of the Qin Dynasty's emperor. He led a rebellion against the emperor and defeated his army, taking control of the empire for himself.

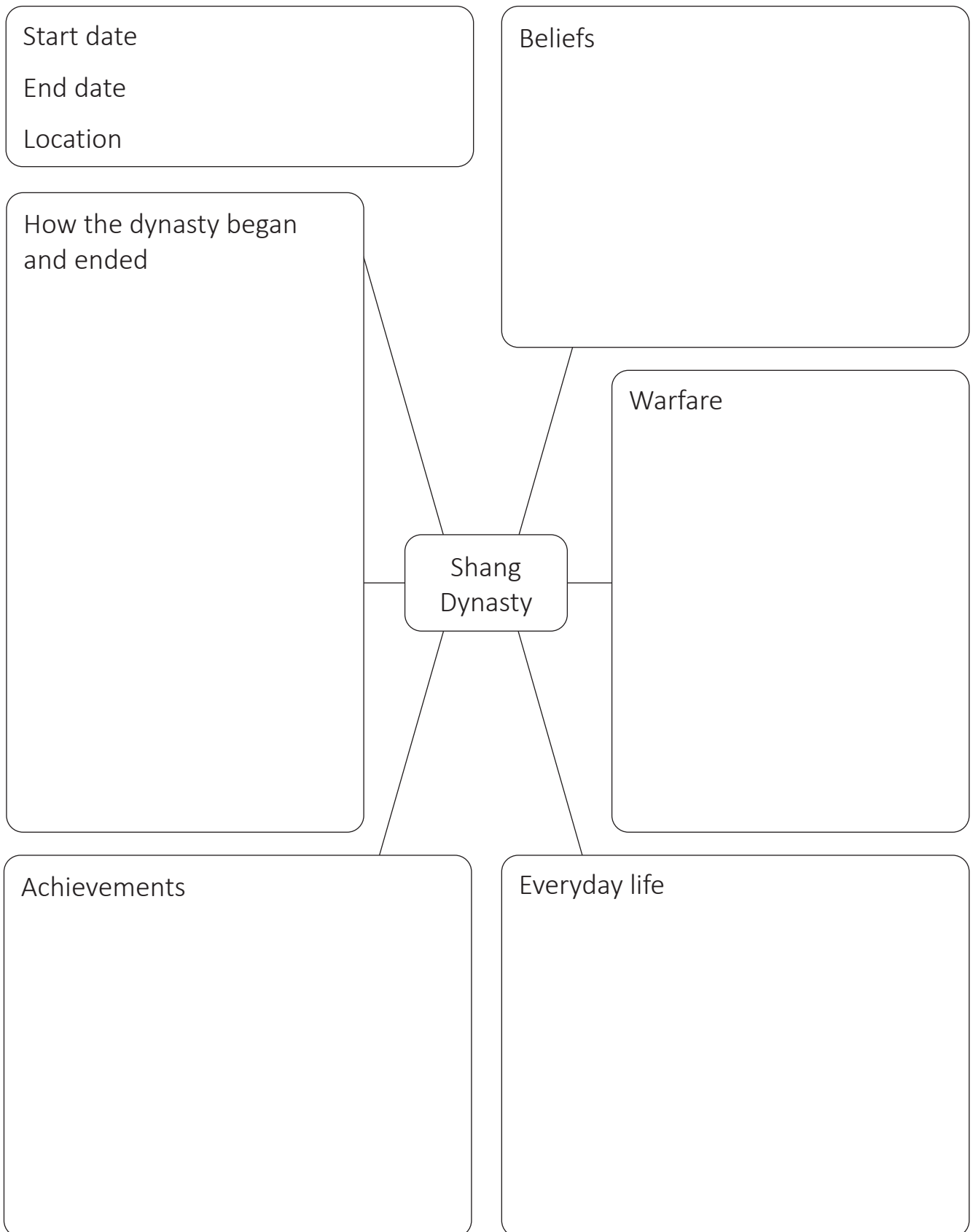
This dynasty united the seven warring states and took control of the whole country, establishing the first Chinese empire. They introduced a new government system. Lords lost their power, and the emperor gained absolute power. The Chinese writing system was standardised, and construction began on the Great Wall of China.

The rulers of this dynasty lived in a capital city in eastern China. During the Spring and Autumn Period, lords who controlled territory in the name of the king wanted more land and power, which led to the assassination of King Youwang. During the Warring States Period, seven states fought each other for complete control of ancient China. This dynasty's rule ended c256 BC, and one of the warring states, called Qin, gained power c221 BC.

Record the dynasties in chronological order from earliest to latest.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

2. Use a range of sources to complete the mind map about the Shang Dynasty, then use your notes to write a non-chronological report. Include a title, opening paragraph, subheadings, interesting facts, precise topic vocabulary and images with captions. Once complete, share your report with a family member.



3. The image show an oracle bone from the Shang Dynasty. Use your existing knowledge, information books or the internet to answer the questions.

What is an oracle bone?

What were oracle bones used for?

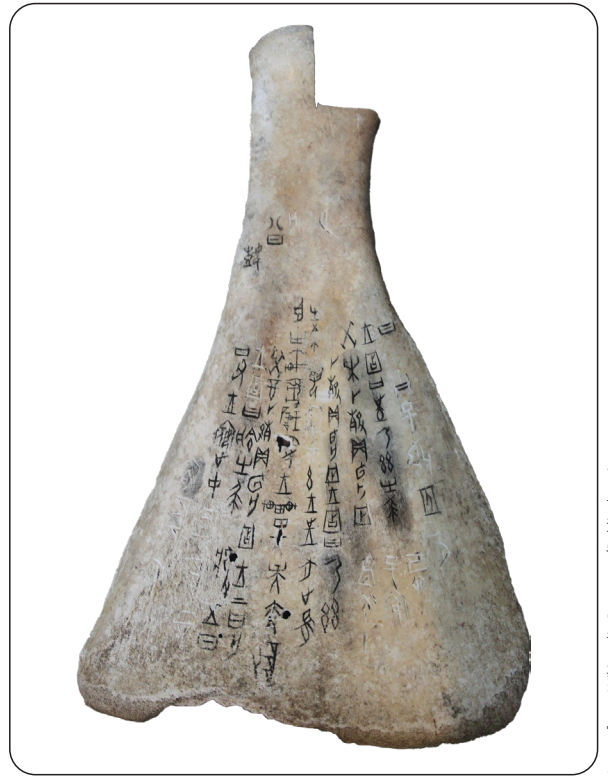


Image from: Wikimedia Commons/Public domain

Why are oracle bones an important source of evidence for archaeologists and historians to learn about the Shang Dynasty?

4. Examine these artefacts from the Shang Dynasty. Record your observations about each artefact in the table.





Artefact	Materials	Description	Use
 <p>dagger-axe</p>	bronze		
 <p>nao (bell)</p>	bronze		
 <p>yu (ritual container)</p>	bronze		
 <p>talisman</p>	jade		

Image from: Art Institute Chicago/Public domain

Image from: Met museum/Public domain

5. Use information books and the internet to find out about one other dynasty. Choose from the Xia Dynasty, Zhou Dynasty, Qin Dynasty or Han Dynasty. Research their beliefs, government, homes, everyday lives, warfare and achievements. Create an information poster to record your findings. Once complete, compare your chosen dynasty with the Shang Dynasty. Record similarities and differences between the dynasties in the table below.

I am comparing the Shang Dynasty with the _____

Similarities	Differences

6. Use a range of sources to find out about an ancient Chinese achievement, invention or innovation that interests you, such as traditional Chinese medicine, metalworking, the Great Wall of China or Chinese writing. Record your findings and include a picture or drawing.

Achievement, invention or innovation



Facts

7. Find images of ancient bronze artefacts from the Shang Dynasty that feature taotie designs. Create a piece of art by copying or tracing one or more taotie designs onto paper. Colour your design using paints, felt pens or crayons, using a combination of black, blue and green colours to recreate the patina of the bronze. Share your art with a family member and explain what you have learned about the taotie motif.



Taotie design on a *ding*, c1600–c1046 BC

8. Use a range of sources to find out about the Silk Road. Complete the table to record your findings.

Facts about the Silk Road	
Purpose	
Length	
Route	
Countries involved	
Items traded	
Origin of the name	

9. Finish your home learning by writing a summary of the topic, explaining what you have learned about the Shang Dynasty, other ancient Chinese dynasties, their ways of life and their accomplishments.

Useful websites

BBC Teach – Introducing the Shang Dynasty – History KS2

Britannica Kids – Ancient China: Beginnings

The British Library – Chinese oracle bone

The Metropolitan Museum of Art – Search the Collection

The Art Institute of Chicago – The Collection – Discover Art & Artists

British Museum – Collection

Britannica – Taotie

DKfindout! – Ancient Chinese Trade – The Silk Road

Good reads

Title	Author	ISBN
Usborne Illustrated Stories from China	Li Weiding	9781474947077
Mulan and other Legendary Stories from China	Barbara Laban	9781510445390
The History Detective Investigates: The Shang Dynasty of Ancient China	Geoff Barker	9780750294195
Why did the Shang write on turtles? And other questions about the Shang Dynasty	Tim Cooke	9781526315366
Discover Through Craft: China and the Shang Dynasty	Jillian Powell	9781445150826
History Hunters: Ancient China Dig up the Secrets of the Dead	Louise Spilsbury	9781474726887