The Shang Dynasty

Autumn Term Year 5 – Half Term 1

Literacy

The Boy Who Met A Whale by Nizrana Farook

Independent study of an endangered animal – non-fiction

Cogheart by Peter Bunzl

PE

Gymnastics and Basketball

Languages

French

Geography

How the Earth was formed. Continents and countries, longitude and latitude

Computing

Purple Mash - Online Safety - coding

Numeracy

Place Value

Addition and Subtraction

Multiplication and Division

Roman Numerals

Times Tables Rock Stars – please encourage your child to practise at home.

Art

Using clay to make tiles to look like authentic Shang Dynasty artefacts.

History

The Shang Dynasty – When was it and how do we know? When it began – daily life. The impact of the Shang Dynasty on the wider world

Music

Charanga Music School

Singing Assembly

RE & PSHE

New Beginnings

Exploring British Values

Sikhism

The Shang Dynasty of China

UKS2

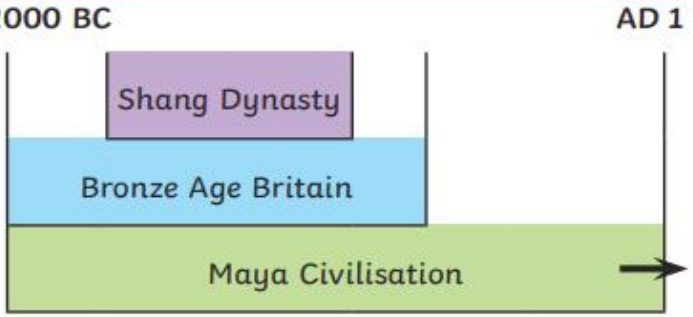
Key Events

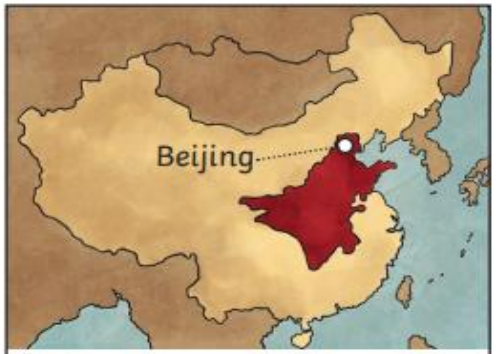
1600 BC	The Shang dynasty is founded when Cheng Tang overthrows the Xia dynasty. He has the support of 40 other kingdoms.
1400-1200 BC	The earliest found examples of Chinese writing are dated to this period.
1250 BC	King Wu Ding begins his reign.
1200 BC	Fu Hao, one of the wives of King Wu Ding, dies. Her tomb is the only intact Shang tomb that has been found to date.
1075 BC	The last Shang king, Di Xin, begins his reign.
1046 BC	Slaves revolt in protest against cruel treatment and increasing taxes. The Shang dynasty is overthrown and replaced by the Zhou dynasty.

Crafts

Shang craftsmen used a variety of materials, including bronze, jade, clay, wood, stone and bone. Many of the artefacts that have been found were buried with their owners when they died.

Timeline





Fu Hao's Tomb

In 1976, archaeologists discovered the tomb of Fu Hao at the site of the ancient Shang capital, Yinxu. Because the tomb and its contents were intact, the discovery had a significant impact on our knowledge of the Shang dynasty and some of its people.

The tomb consisted of a large pit with a wooden chamber inside containing the coffin. Evidence was found above ground of a building where memorial ceremonies and rituals were probably held in honour of Fu Hao.

Thousands of items were found in Fu Hao's tomb, demonstrating how wealthy and powerful she was. Many artefacts were from an earlier period in history, suggesting Fu Hao collected antiques.

The skeletons of six dogs and 16 humans were also found in the tomb. These were probably Fu Hao's pets and advisers, sacrificed to accompany her into the afterlife.



Jade figure found in the tomb of Fu Hao

The Shang Dynasty of China

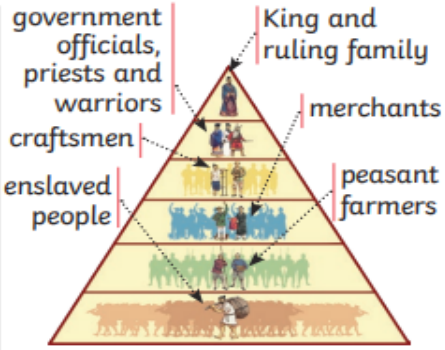
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Key Vocabulary

oracle bones	Usually the shoulder bones of animals or the belly shells of turtles. Dug up centuries later by farmers, they were thought to be dragon bones and were ground up to be used in traditional Chinese medicine. In 1889, Wang Yirong and his friend Liu E worked out that the 'dragon bones' had been used in ancient ceremonies.
Fu Hao	Not only the first known female military leader, but also the most influential military leader of her time, either male or female, responsible for leading 13,000 soldiers into battle. She was also a high priestess, which was very unusual for a woman at the time.
intact	Complete, not robbed by looters.
jade	A hard mineral stone, usually green.
bronze	A metal made from a mixture of copper and tin.
cowrie shells	Small, flat, yellowish seashells, used like coins in trading.

Religion and Oracle Bones

Family was very important to the Shang people and they worshipped their ancestors after they had died. Their supreme god was called Shang Di, whom they believed communicated only with the king through his royal ancestors. Priests, or the king himself, would write questions for the ancestors on oracle bones, which were then heated until they cracked. The king would interpret the cracks to work out the answers.



Shang Social Hierarchy

Shang Society

The King and Ruling Family

- lived in palaces in the capital city
- fine clothes and best food
- made all important decisions; owned all the land

Priests and Government Officials

- comfortable lifestyle within city walls
- carved the oracle bones
- kept important records for the king

Noble Warriors

- lived in palaces outside city walls
- skilled fighters
- rented land from the king and collected tax from farmers

Craftsmen and Merchants

- lived in mud huts outside city walls
- used cowrie shells for currency
- paid in foods like grain and vegetables

Peasant Farmers

- largest group
- lived in poor conditions - holes in the ground
- grew millet, wheat, barley and rice
- allowed only a small share of crops

Slaves

- prisoners of war or convicted criminals
- treated harshly; forced into hard work, like building tombs
- sometimes sacrificed or buried alive