

Chapter 7 – Ancient China



Section

- 1 Geography and Early China
- 2 The Zhou Dynasty and New Ideas
- 3 The Qin Dynasty
- 4 The Han Dynasty
- 5 Han Contacts with Other Cultures

Notes



Video

Ancient China and Modern China



Maps

China: Physical
Shang Dynasty, c. 1500-1050 BC
Zhou Dynasty, c. 1050-400 BC
Qin Dynasty, c. 221-206 BC
Han Dynasty, c. 206 BC-AD 220
The Silk Road



Quick Facts

Zhou Society
Main Ideas of Confucianism
Emperor Shi Huangdi
Chapter 7 Visual Summary



Images

Chinese Writing
The Warring States Period
Guardians of Shi Huangdi's Tomb



Geography and Early China



6.6.1
6.6.2

The Big Idea

Chinese civilization began with the Shang dynasty along the Huang He.

Main Ideas

China's physical geography made farming possible but travel and communication difficult.

- Civilization began in China along the Huang He and Chang Jiang rivers.
- China's first dynasties helped Chinese society develop and made many other achievements.



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Physical Geography

Varied Landscape

- China covers an area of almost 4 million square miles.
- The Gobi desert lies in the north.
- Low-lying plains in the east make up one of the world's largest farming areas.
- Mountain ranges lie in the west, including the Plateau of Tibet and the Qinling Shandi. There was limited contact between people in the east and west.
- The weather and temperature vary from cold and dry to wet and humid, and monsoons can bring up to 250 inches of rain each year.



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Two Rivers of China

Huang He

- Also called the Yellow River
- Nearly 3,000 miles long across northern China
- Often floods, and has been referred to as “China’s sorrow” because of the destruction


Chang Jiang

- The longest river in Asia; also called the Yangzi River
- Flows across central China from Tibet to the Pacific Ocean




Civilization Begins

Farming

- Frequent flooding made the land fertile around the Chang Jiang and Huang He rivers. 
- Along with farming, the Chinese people hunted, fished, and domesticated animals.

Early Settlements

- Some small villages along the rivers grew into larger cities.
- Separate cultures developed in the north and the south. Over time people learned to dig wells and use potter's wheels. 
- Findings at burial sites suggest that the ancient Chinese believed in an afterlife and had a complex social order.



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Xia dynasty

- The Xia dynasty might have been founded around 2200 BC, by Yu the Great.
- Tales say that Yu dug channels to drain floodwaters and created the major waterways of North China.
- Archaeologists have no firm evidence that tales about the Xia dynasty are true.



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Shang dynasty

- Established by 1500 BC, the Shang was the first dynasty that there is clear evidence to support.
- The Shang reorganized the social order in China: the top ranking was the royals, then nobles, warriors, artisans, farmers, and slaves.
- Most citizens lived within the city walls.
- Many cultural advances were made, including China's first writing system, complex tools, metal pots, and ornaments.



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The Zhou Dynasty and New Ideas



6.6.3

6.6.4

The Big Idea

The Zhou dynasty brought political stability and new ways to deal with social and political problems in ancient China.

Main Ideas

- The Zhou dynasty expanded China but then declined.
- Confucius offered ideas to bring order to Chinese society.
- Daoism and Legalism also gained followers.



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The Zhou Political System

- The Zhou people worked with other tribes to overthrow the Shang dynasty in the 1100s BC.
- Zhou leaders believed that their rulers were mandated by heaven, and that heaven would find another leader when necessary.
- A new political order was established: the king granted plots of land to lords, who in turn provided soldiers and paid taxes to the king. Poor farmers were granted land as well, and remained under the rule of the lords.
- The lords helped Zhou rulers keep control of the dynasty.



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Decline of the Zhou Dynasty

- As the lords' power grew, they became uninterested in serving Zhou rulers. Many refused to fight against Zhou enemies.
- In 771 BC, the Zhou suffered a loss to invaders. The dynasty survived, but morale weakened, and the Zhou began to fight among themselves.
- The Warring States Period marked power struggles between the ruling-class families.
- Problems within the government paralleled problems within large family systems, which were breaking down. Bonds of loyalty weakened within even small families, and disorder fell upon China.



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Confucianism

Moral Values

Disgusted with the rude and insensitive nature of the people around him, Confucius pushed for a return to **ethics**, or moral values.



The *Analects*

This code of ethics was passed down and written in a book. These stories focused on morality, family, society, and government.



Leading by Example

One of the major ideas Confucius put forth for the success of both family and government was leading by example. Confucius believed that when people behaved well and acted morally, they were carrying out what heaven expected of them.



Two Schools of Thought

Daoism

- Daoism comes from *Dao*, meaning “the way.”
- Daoists believed that people should avoid interfering with nature or each other.
- Laozi wrote *The Way and Its Power*, a book teaching that power and wealth are unnecessary.

Legalism

- Legalism is the political philosophy that people need to be controlled.
- It is unconcerned with religion or individual thought, and prepared always for war.
- Legalists put their ideas into practice throughout China.



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The Qin Dynasty

The Big Idea

The Qin dynasty unified China with a strong government and a system of standardization.

Main Ideas

- The first Qin emperor created a strong but strict government.
- A unified China was created through Qin policies and achievements.



Shi Huangdi

- The Legalist Qin king Yin Zheng took the throne in 221 BC and gave himself the title Shi Huangdi, which means "first emperor."
- He burned all books and writings that dealt with any practice other than Legalism.
- He created a strict government with harsh punishments.
- He used his armies to expand the empire and ensured that there would be no more revolts in the new territory.
- He claimed all power and took land away from the lords. Commoners were forced to work on government building projects.
- China was divided into districts with their own governors.



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Unified China

Politics

- Shi Huangdi took complete control of the land and the people.
- There was a strict chain of command.
- Taxes and building projects were introduced.

Culture

- Shi Huangdi set up a uniform system of law.
- Rules and punishment, writing styles, and money were consistent across China.

Finance

- Gold and copper coins were standardized.
- Uniform weights and measures help standardize trade and other legal issues.



Qin Achievements

Building Projects

- Massive government building projects gave jobs to many poor workers.
- New roads were built and maintained to provide easy access to and from these buildings.



Water Systems

- Canals were built to connect rivers and keep trade fast and efficient.
- Irrigation systems that are still in use today watered the fields and made more land good for farming.



The Great Wall Of China

- The Great Wall was built to protect the country from invasion
- The Great Wall linked previously built walls across China's northern frontier.
- The building of the wall required years of labor from hundreds of thousands of laborers.



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The Fall of the Qin: The Oppressed Rise Up

- Many scholars, peasants, and nobles grew resentful of Shi Huangdi's harsh policies and complete control.
- Upon the death of Shi Huangdi, the country began to unravel.
- Rebel groups fought among themselves, and eventually the Qin capital was burned to the ground.
- With no authority present, the country fell into civil war.



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The Han Dynasty

The Big Idea

The Han dynasty created a new form of government that valued family, art, and learning.

Main Ideas

- Han dynasty government was based on the ideas of Confucius.
- Family life was supported and strengthened in Han China.
- The Han made many achievements in art, literature, and learning.



The Rise of a New Dynasty

- Liu Bang, a peasant fighting in a rebel army, became emperor due to the Chinese belief in the mandate of heaven.
- He was the first emperor of the Han dynasty.
- Well liked by both warriors and peasants, Liu Bang released the country from strict Legalistic practices and focused on people's immediate needs.
- Liu Bang lowered taxes, gave large plots of land to supporters, and set up a government that expanded on the ideas of the Qin.



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Wudi's New Government

- In 140 BC, Emperor Wudi took the throne and shifted the country's focus back to a strong central government.
- Confucianism became the official government philosophy.
- Wudi built a university that taught Confucian ideals, and awarded his officials with higher rank if they were familiar with Confucian principles.



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Four Social Classes under the Confucian System

- Upper Class: The Emperor, his court, and his scholars
- Second Class: The peasants, who made life work on a daily basis
- Third Class: The artisans, who produced items for daily life and some luxury goods
- Fourth Class: The merchants, who bought and sold what others made



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Family Life

Social Classes and Wealth

- Social rank did not reflect prosperity.
- Hard work and heavy labor did not reflect prosperity.
- A strong family was stressed so that people would obey the emperor.

Men

- Men were the head of the household.
- Rulers had to obey their elders too; it was a crime to disobey.
- Some men gained jobs based on the respect they showed to elders.

Women

- Women were taught to obey their husbands.
- Girls were not valued as highly as boys.
- Women could influence their sons' families.



Han Achievements

Art

The Han created realistic scenes from everyday life, advanced figure painting, and depictions of religious figures and Confucian scholars.



Literature

Fu style: combination of prose and poetry
Shi style: short lines of verse that could be sung



Invention of Paper

The Han Chinese made paper by grinding plant fibers into a paste and then setting the paste out to dry in sheets. Later they rolled the dried pulp into scrolls.



Han Achievements

Sundial

A device for telling time, the sundial uses the position of the shadows cast by the sun to tell the time of day.



Seismograph

This device measures the strength of an earthquake. Chinese scientists believed that the movement of the earth was a sign of evil times.



Acupuncture

Acupuncture is the practice of inserting needles into the skin to cure disease or relieve pain. This practice is still widely used today.



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6.6.8

Han Contacts with Other Cultures

The Big Idea

Trade routes led to the exchange of new products and ideas among China, Rome, and other peoples.

Main Ideas

- Farming and manufacturing grew during the Han dynasty.
- Trade routes linked China with the Middle East and Rome.
- Buddhism came to China from India and gained many followers.



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Technological Advances during the Han Dynasty

Farming

- Iron plow could till more land and raise more food
- Wheelbarrow able to haul more products

Manufacturing

- Iron swords
- Iron armor
- **Silk**: a soft, light, highly valued fabric



Trade Routes

- Chinese goods became highly valued in other lands, so trade routes began opening up.
- Trading Chinese silk for strong Central Asian horses became a primary goal under the rule of Emperor Wudi.
- Central Asians could then take the silk and trade it for products in other lands.



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The Silk Road

The Silk Road was a network of routes stretching more than 4,000 miles across Asia's deserts and mountain ranges, through the Middle East and stopping at the Mediterranean Sea.



Chinese traders only used the road until they reached Central Asia, and then sold their goods to local traders.



Travelers banded together for protection along the many miles of difficult terrain.



China grew rich from trading silk with other lands.



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Buddhism Comes to China

Contact with New Cultures

- When the Han dynasty began to fail, people looked to old religions to find answers, but were disappointed.
- After coming into contact with Indian Buddhists on trade routes, many Chinese brought the teachings home to China.

Impacts on China

- In hopes of relieving the suffering of human life, both rich and poor people began to embrace the teachings of the Buddha.
- The popularity of Buddhism in China is an example of diffusion: the spread of ideas from one culture to another.



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Chinese Writing

	Writing from Shang Period	Current Chinese Writing
sun		
rain		
field		
moon		



Like other early forms of writing, Chinese writing developed from pictographs—symbols that look like what they represent. Over time, the symbols became more complex and looked less like real objects. Many examples of early Chinese writing are carved into bones like this turtle shell.



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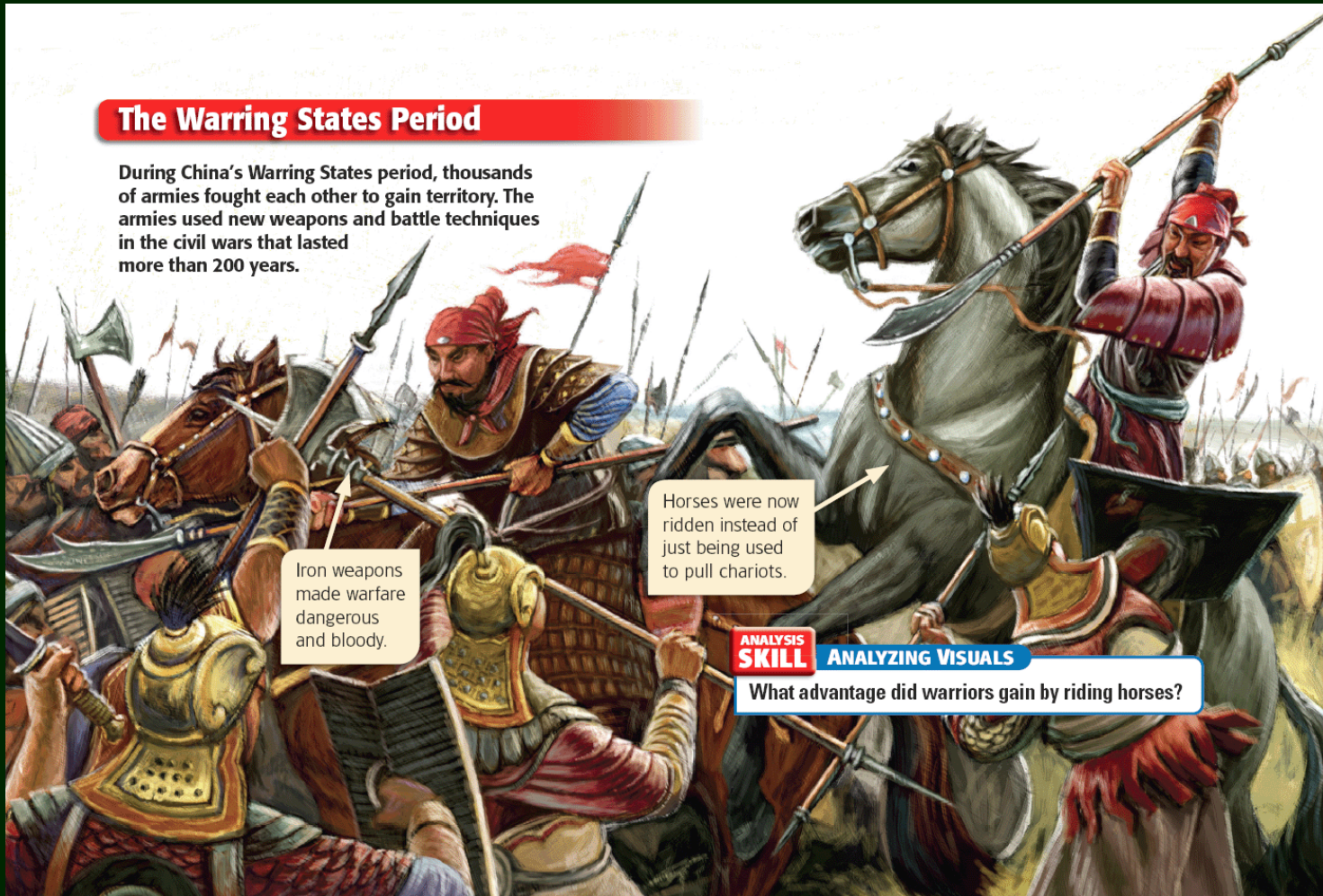
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The Warring States Period

During China's Warring States period, thousands of armies fought each other to gain territory. The armies used new weapons and battle techniques in the civil wars that lasted more than 200 years.



Iron weapons made warfare dangerous and bloody.

Horses were now ridden instead of just being used to pull chariots.

ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING VISUALS

What advantage did warriors gain by riding horses?



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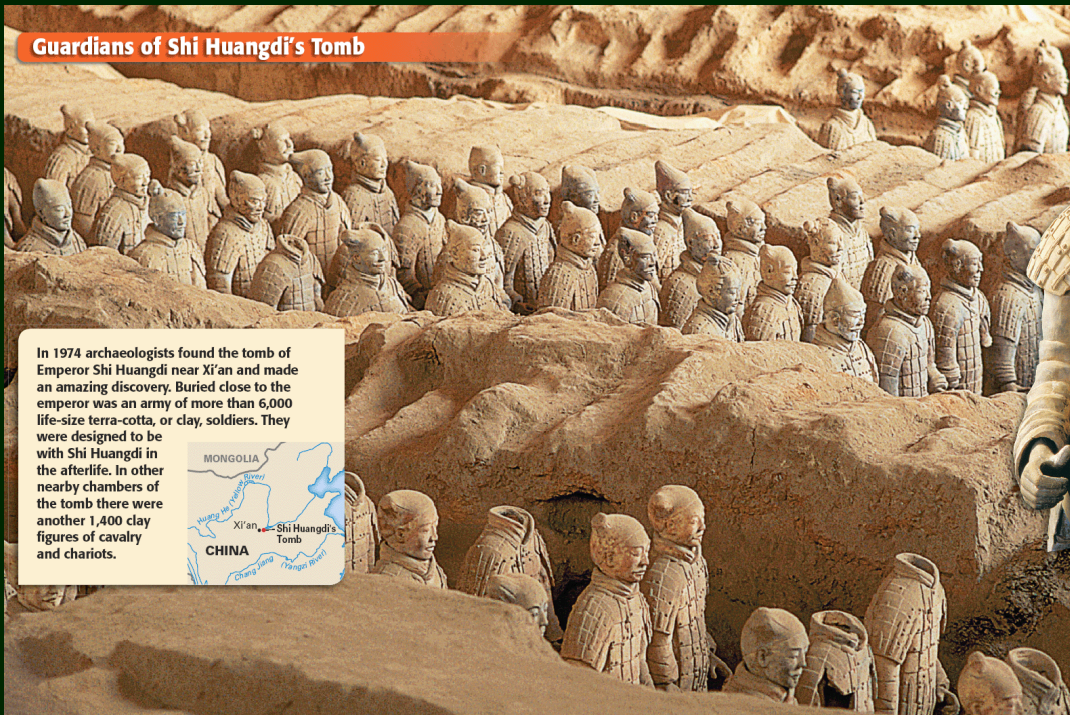
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Guardians of Shi Huangdi's Tomb

In 1974 archaeologists found the tomb of Emperor Shi Huangdi near Xi'an and made an amazing discovery. Buried close to the emperor was an army of more than 6,000 life-size terra-cotta, or clay, soldiers. They were designed to be with Shi Huangdi in the afterlife. In other nearby chambers of the tomb there were another 1,400 clay figures of cavalry and chariots.



Each terra-cotta soldier was different, with its own facial features, hairstyle, and unique expression. Here, a computer model shows what a soldier might have looked like when it was created.



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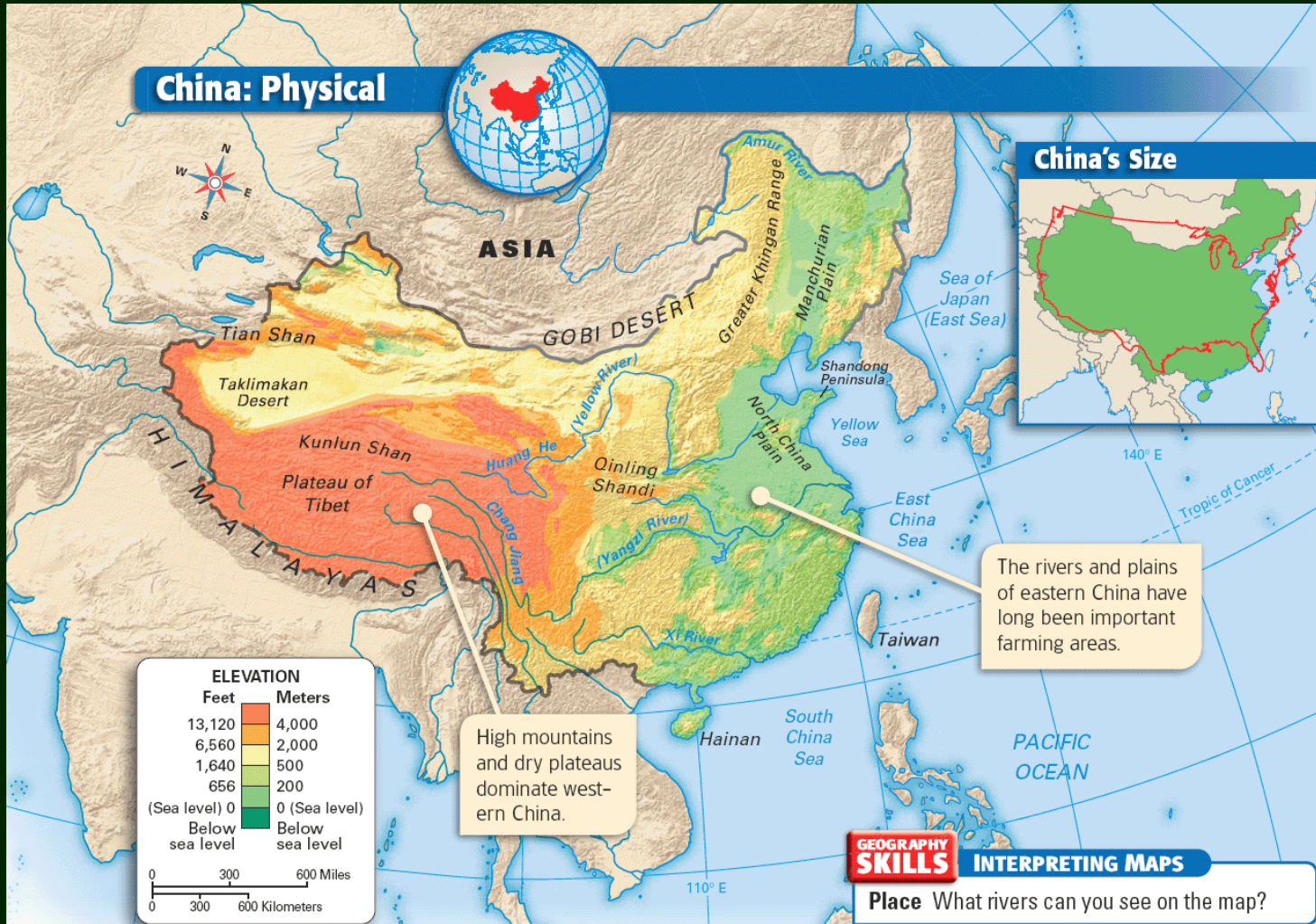


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China: Physical



The rivers and plains of eastern China have long been important farming areas.

High mountains and dry plateaus dominate western China.

ELEVATION	
Feet	Meters
13,120	4,000
6,560	2,000
1,640	500
656	200
(Sea level) 0	0 (Sea level)
Below sea level	Below sea level

GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

Place What rivers can you see on the map?

Shang Dynasty, c. 1500–1050 BC



GOBI DESERT
ASIA

Huang He (Yellow River)

Anyang

Luoyang

Yellow Sea

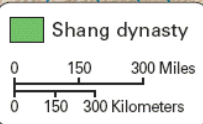
PACIFIC OCEAN

East China Sea

Chang Jiang (Yangzi River)

Xi River

South China Sea



This bronze Shang container is shaped like a tigress.

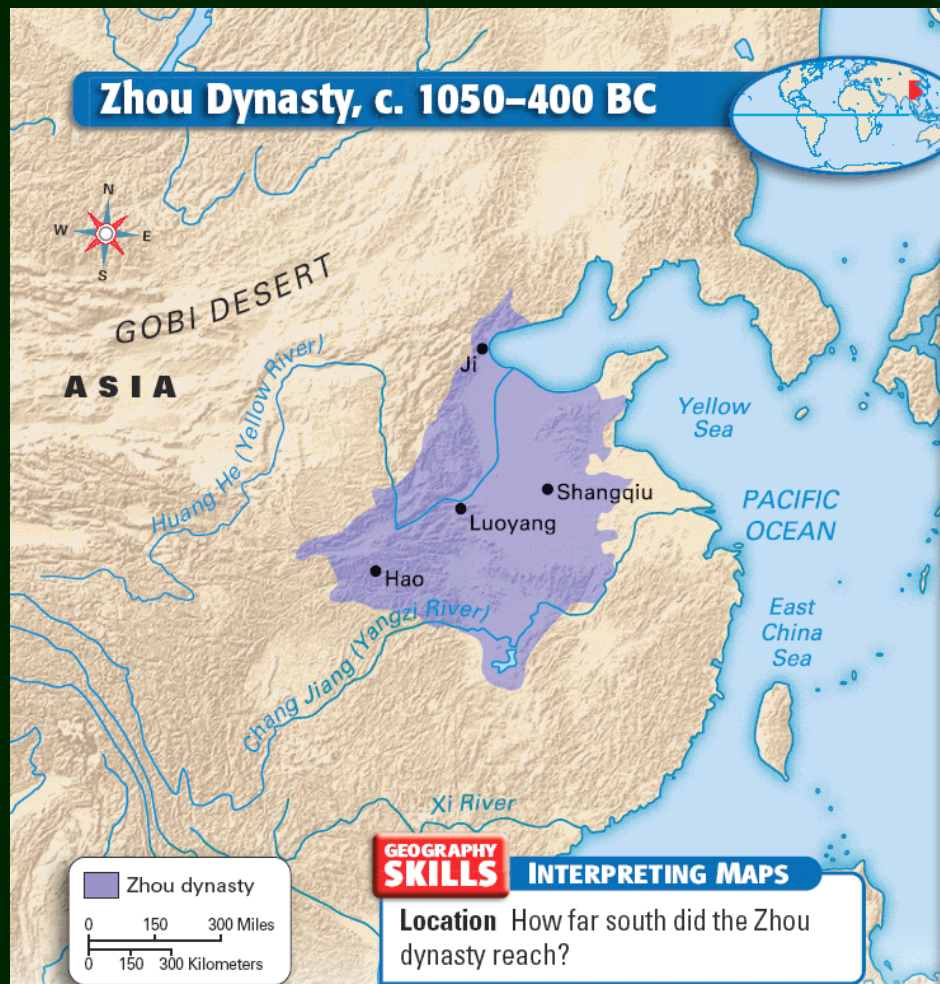
GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

INTERPRETING MAPS

Location What river flowed through the heart of Shang China?



Zhou Dynasty, c. 1050–400 BC



GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

INTERPRETING MAPS

Location How far south did the Zhou dynasty reach?

Zhou Society

QUICK FACTS

King

The king led the government and gave land to lords.



Lords and Warriors

Lords paid taxes to the king and provided warriors to protect his lands.



Peasants

Peasants farmed the nobles' land.



Qin Dynasty, c. 221–206 BC



Legend:

- Qin dynasty
- Great Wall
- WEI Warring state

Scale:

0 150 300 Miles
0 150 300 Kilometers

QUICK FACTS

Emperor Shi Huangdi

Policies

- Strong government with strict laws
- Standard laws, writing system, money, and weights throughout China

Achievements

- Unified China
- Built network of roads and canals
- Built irrigation system to improve farming
- Built the Great Wall across northern China

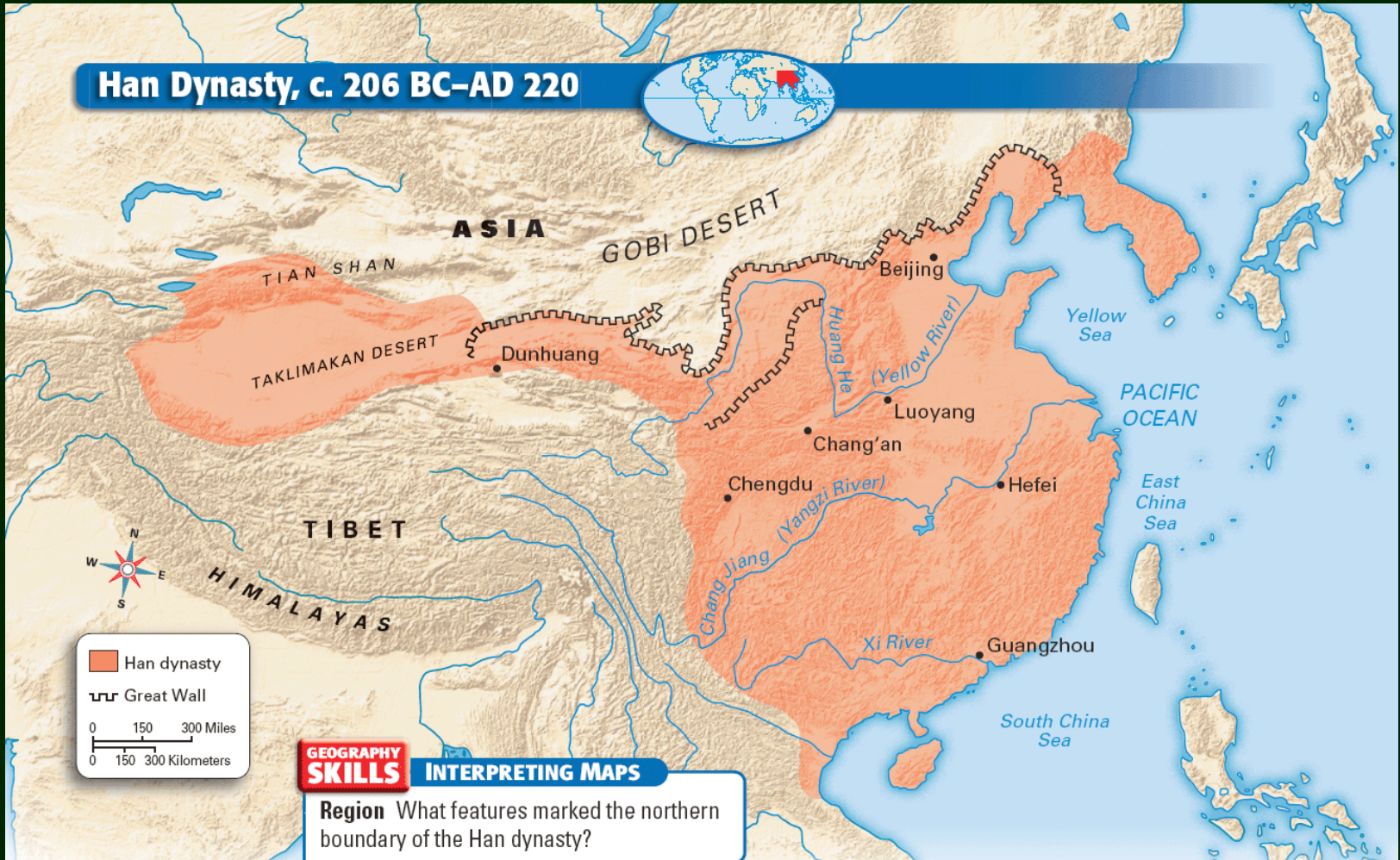
GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

INTERPRETING MAPS

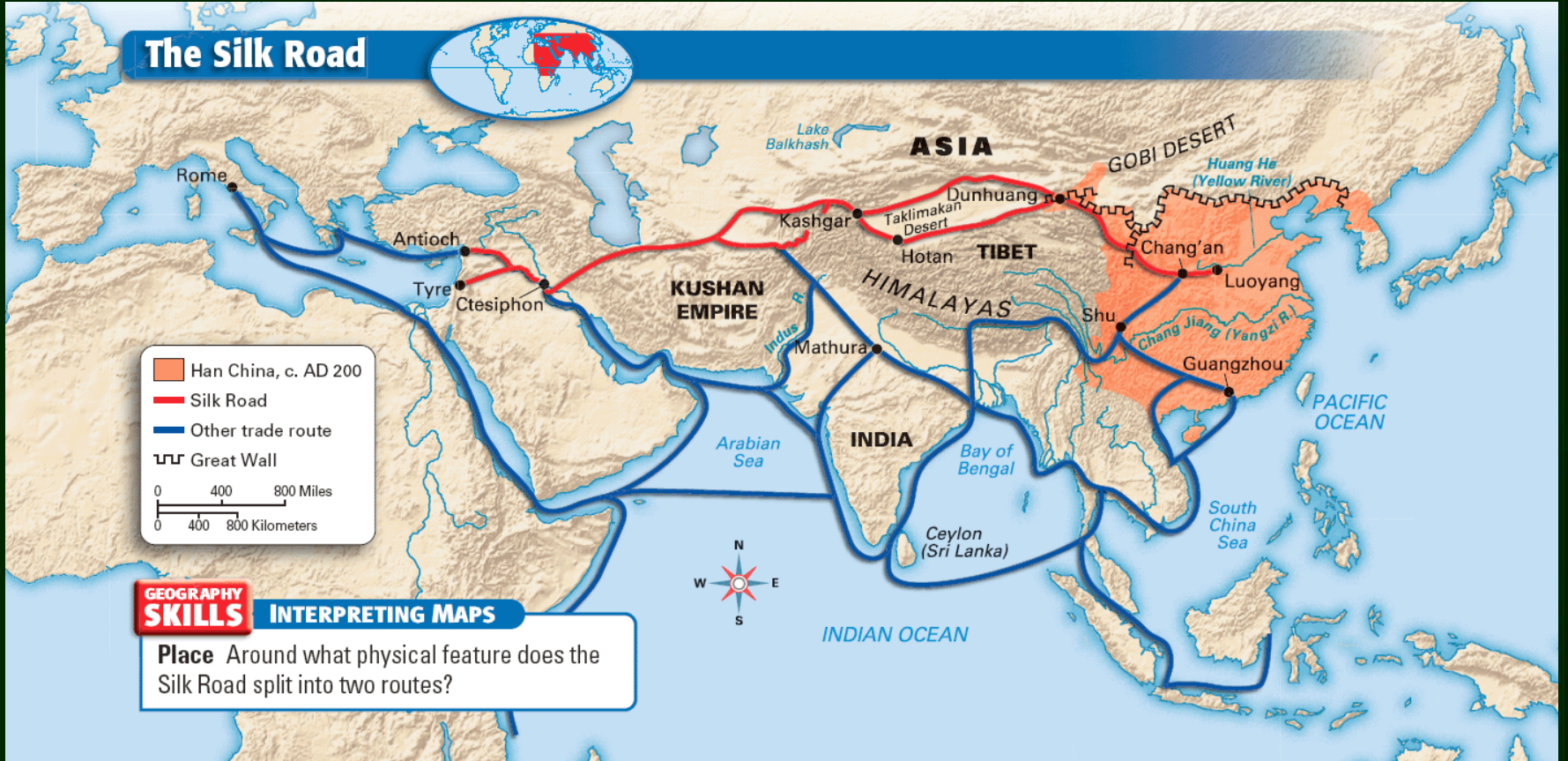
Location Where was the Great Wall located during the Qin dynasty?



Han Dynasty, c. 206 BC–AD 220



The Silk Road



Zhou Society

QUICK
FACTS

King

The king led the government and gave land to lords.



Lords and Warriors

Lords paid taxes to the king and provided warriors to protect his lands.



Peasants

Peasants farmed the nobles' land.



Main Ideas of Confucianism

QUICK
FACTS

- People should be respectful and loyal to their family members.
- Leaders should be kind and lead by example.
- Learning is a process that never ends.
- Heaven expects people to behave well and act morally.



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Emperor Shi Huangdi

QUICK
FACTS

Policies

- Strong government with strict laws
- Standard laws, writing system, money, and weights throughout China

Achievements

- Unified China
- Built network of roads and canals
- Built irrigation system to improve farming
- Built the Great Wall across northern China



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Visual Summary

Use the visual summary below to help you review the main ideas of the chapter.

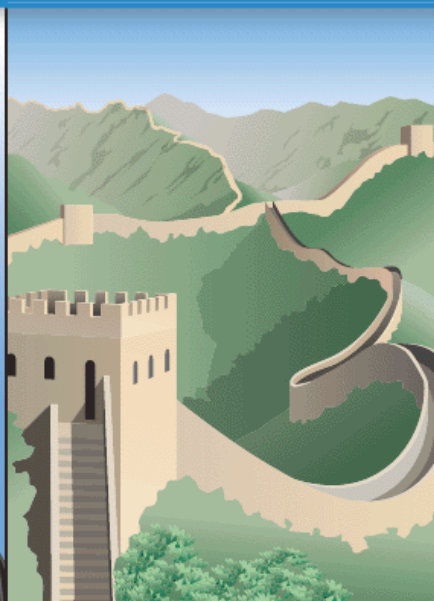
QUICK FACTS



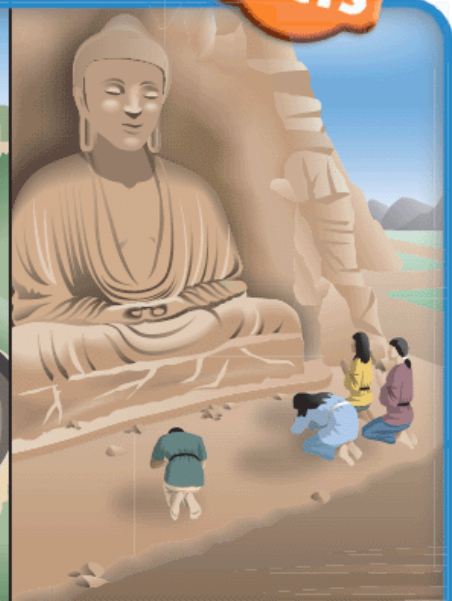
Chinese civilization began along the Huang He (Yellow River).



During the Zhou dynasty, armies fought for power, and the ideas of Confucius spread.



The Qin dynasty unified China with a strong government.



During the Han dynasty, China made advances in learning, and Buddhism spread.



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QuickTime and a
Sorenson Video 3 decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Click window above to start playing.



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