Ancient China
SSWH1 Analyze the origins, structures, and interactions of societies in the ancient world from 3500 BCE/BC to 500 BCE/BC.

• 1b. Describe the societies of India and China, include: religion, culture, economics, politics, and technology.
• SSWH2 Identify the major achievements of Chinese and Indian societies to 500 CE/AD.

• 2b. Describe the development of Chinese civilization under Zhou, Qin, and Han.
2100-1700 B.C.

Xia Dynasty emerges as 1st Chinese dynasty

- **Yu**, the leader, designed **flood control projects** to reduce flood damage → helped more permanent settlements grow.

- Yu also designed **irrigation projects** that allowed farmers to grow surplus.
Shang Dynasty 1700-1027 B.C.

- First to leave written records
- Fought many wars
- Lived in walled cities (like Sumerians) for protection
1700-1027 B.C.
Shang Dynasty Culture

• Family
  – Central to Chinese society
  – Respect for one’s parents
  – Women were treated as inferiors

• Social Classes
  – Sharply divided between nobles and peasants
  – Ruling class of warrior-nobles headed by a king

• Religious Beliefs
  – Spirits of family ancestors could bring good fortune or disaster to living family members
  – Polytheistic – worshipped a supreme god and then many lesser gods
Zhou Dynasty
1027 B.C. - Zhou begin rule

- Claimed authority to take over by declaring the **Mandate of Heaven**
  - Rulers had divine approval to be rulers, but a wicked or foolish king could lose the Mandate of Heaven and so lose the right to rule
Zhou Dynasty
The Dynastic Cycle

• Floods, riots, etc. could be signs that the ancestral spirits were displeased with a king’s rule
• In that case, the Mandate of Heaven might pass to another noble family
• This **pattern of rise, decline, & replacement of dynasties** was
Zhou Dynasty
Territorial Control – How

• **Feudalism**
  – Political system where nobles, or lords, are granted the use of lands that legally belong to the king
  – In return, nobles owe loyalty & military service to the king & protection to the people living on their estates
Zhou Dynasty

Improvements in Technology & Trade

• **Roads & canals** built ➔ stimulated trade & agriculture

• **Coined money** introduced ➔ further improved trade

• Blast furnaces developed ➔ produced cast iron
Zhou Dynasty
226 B.C. Decline & Fall

• **Nomads from west & north sacked capital**

• Zhou kings fled, but were powerless to control noble families

• Lords fought neighboring lords
  – As their power grew, they claimed to be kings in their own territory

While Zhou was in decline...
Rise of Chinese Philosophies
Confucianism

• Founder:
  – **Confucius** (551-479 B.C.)

• Ideas About Social Order:
  – Emphasis on **family**
  – Respect for elders (filial piety)

• Ideas About Government:
  – Emphasis on **education**
    • Could change a commoner into a gentleman
  – Trained civil service essential for good
Rise of Chinese Philosophies

Daoism

• Founder:
  – Lao Tsu

• Ideas About Order & Harmony:
  – Understanding **nature is key to order & harmony**
  – Natural Order more important than Social Order

• Ideas About A Universal Force:
  – Universal Force called **Dao (aka “The Way”)** guides all things
Rise of Chinese Philosophies

Legalism

• Founders:
  – Li Si, Hanfeizi

• Ideas About Social Order:
  – Efficient & powerful gov’t is key to social order

• Ideas About Government
  – Gov’t should control ideas & use law & harsh punishment to restore harmony
  – Rewards for people who carry out their duties well
Qin Dynasty
221 B.C. Shi Huangdi Assumes Control

• Established **autocracy** – gov’t that has unlimited power & uses it in an arbitrary (random) manner

• “**Strengthen trunk, weaken branches**”
  – Forced noble families to live in capital under his suspicious gaze
  – Carved China into 36 administrative districts & sent Qin officials to control them
Qin Dynasty
Shi Huangdi Begins Building Great Wall

- Built to **prevent invasions from N & W**
- Enemies would have to gallop halfway to Tibet to get around it
The Great Wall of China

From the Yellow Sea in the east to the Gobi Desert in the west, the Great Wall twisted like a dragon’s tail for thousands of miles. Watch towers rose every 200 to 300 yards along the wall.

In the time of Shi Huangdi, hundreds of thousands of peasants collected, hauled, and dumped millions of tons of stone, dirt, and rubble to fill the core of the Great Wall.

Slabs of cut stone on the outside of the wall enclosed a heap of pebbles and rubble on the inside. Each section of the wall rose to a height of 20 to 25 feet.
Han Dynasty - “Golden Age”
206-195 B.C. Liu Bang was a peasant who led a revolt & became emperor
• Established centralized gov’t
• Lowered taxes
• Eased harsh punishments
• **Brought stability & peace to China**
Han Dynasty - “Golden Age”
195-180 B.C. Empress Lü

- Maintained control by naming one infant after another as emperor & acted as regent for each infant
Han Dynasty - “Golden Age” 141-87 B.C. Wudi

- Expanded Chinese empire by conquering lands & making allies of the enemies of his enemies (the enemy of my enemy is my friend)
- Set up civil service system of training & examinations for those who wanted gov’t careers (Examination System – Confucian idea)
Han Dynasty - “Golden Age”

Paper Invented

- Increased availability of books
- **Spread education**
- Expansion of gov’t bureaucracy – records became easier to read & store
Han Dynasty - “Golden Age”

Agricultural Improvements

• Collar Harness
• Improved Plow
• Wheelbarrow
• Watermills
• Improved Iron Tool

Ability to Feed a Large Population

Population Growth
Fall of Han Dynasty & Their Return
Gap Between Rich & Poor

• Customs allowed the rich to gain more wealth at the expense of the poor
Fall of Han Dynasty & Their Return
45 B.C.-24 A.D. Wang Mang

• Minted new money
• Established public granaries to feed poor
• **Tried to redistribute land from the rich to the poor**
• A.D. 11 – Great flood left thousands dead & millions homeless
  – Revolts broke out – Wang Mang assassinated
Later Han
24 A.D.-220 A.D.

• Encouraged *Silk Road trade* with west
• *Disintegrated in 3 rival kingdoms*
Under the Han Dynasty, the structure of Chinese society was clearly defined. At the top was the emperor, who was considered semi-divine. Next came kings and governors, both appointed by the emperor. They governed with the help of state officials, nobles, and scholars.

Peasant farmers came next. Their production of food was considered vital to the existence of the empire. Artisans and merchants were below them.

Near the bottom were the soldiers, who guarded the empire's frontiers. At the bottom were enslaved persons, who were usually conquered peoples.
Family Organization

- **Patriarchal**
  - Headed by the eldest male (*this was the same way in India*)

- **Role of Women**
  - *Limited roles within the family* at home & on the farm

- **Matriarchal**
  - South India during the Gupta era was matriarchal (headed by the mother rather than father) - property and sometimes thrones were passed through the female line
Cultural Diffusion
India & The Silk Road

• **Indian traders acted as middlemen on the Silk Road** (bought Chinese goods & then sold them to traders on the way to Rome)

• Built trading stations along the Silk Roads

• Traded along the coasts of the Indian Ocean from China to SW Asia (through the Persian Gulf) & to the Mediterranean (through the Red Sea)
Cultural Diffusion
China & The **Silk Road**

• Chinese gov’t made *silk production* techniques a closely guarded secret
• Helped create a worldwide demand for silk
• Expanded Chinese commerce all the way to Rome
From this point, ships carried silk and spices to Rome. The Romans paid a pound of gold for a pound of Chinese silk!

The Silk Road split in two to skirt the edges of the Taklimakan Desert. Both routes had oases along the way.
Notes Quiz

• Which Chinese dynasty was the first and who was the leader?

• What environmental/geographical problems did Chinese civilization have similar to Egypt, Mesopotamia, or India?

• Name one sign that Chinese people might take as meaning that the current dynasty had lost the approval of the gods (mandate of Heaven).

• What was a technological improvement of the Zhou dynasty?
Notes Quiz

• What view did Confucius have about family relationships?
• What was the key to order and harmony according to Lao Tsu?
• How did Shi Huangdi rule during the Qin dynasty?
• What is one way government changed under Liu Bang & the Han Dynasty?
• What was a technological advancement of the Han Dynasty?