

# Dynamic Dynasties



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

## Activities

1. Use your existing knowledge and research skills to write a few sentences about each of the following Chinese dynasties and periods. Present your sentences on a timeline.
  - Xia Dynasty (c2070–c1600 BC)
  - Shang Dynasty (c1600–c1046 BC)
  - Western Zhou Dynasty (c1046–c771 BC)
  - Eastern Zhou Dynasty (c771–c256 BC) including the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period
  - Qin Dynasty (c221–c207 BC)
  - Han Dynasty (c206 BC–cAD 220)
2. Use a range of sources to create a mind map about the Shang Dynasty. Include the headings: dates, location, how the dynasty began, beliefs, everyday life, warfare, achievements and how the dynasty ended. Use your mind map 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. Look online for pictures of oracle bones 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?
  - 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 for each artefact on a table, including its name, material, description and possible uses.



bronze dagger-axe



bronze *nao* (bell)



bronze *yu* (ritual container)



jade talisman

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 a table.
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 as a list of facts and include a picture or drawing.
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.
8. Use a range of sources to find out about the Silk Road. Record your findings and provide information about the purpose of the Silk Road, its length, the route it took, the countries involved, items that were traded and the 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