

Ancient China

- Next to rivers (Duh!)
 - Huang He
(Yellow River)
 - Chang Jiang
(Yangtze River)
 - In between those rivers:
the North China Plain

Geographic Barriers

- Water:
 - Pacific Ocean
 - Yellow Sea
 - East China Sea
- Deserts:
 - Gobi
 - Taklimakan
- Mountains
 - Tian Shan
 - Pamirs
 - Himalayas

Dynasties

Rule by generations of one family
(sounds like a monarchy)

There were a gazillion dynasties! China is the oldest continuous civilization in the world.

We are focusing on 4:

Shang ("shong")
Zhou ("joh")
Qin ("chin")
Han ("hahn")

Shang Dynasty

- Rule with gods' permission
- Family & religion connected (spirits of ancestors help the family)
- Development of language (pictographs)

Barely educated: 1,500 characters

Well-educated: 10,000 characters

Can read without speaking → unified the land

Zhou Dynasty

- Adopted many Shang ways
- "Mandate of Heaven"
 - A good ruler had the approval of the gods
 - A foolish ruler begins to lose the approval of the gods
 - Trouble* means the gods' approval has been lost (Time for a new leader!)

* invasions, earthquakes, drought, floods, famine, etc.

- “Dynastic Cycle”:

Rise and fall of dynasties in China

1. New dynasty has gods’ approval
 2. Dynasty’s power inevitably grows weaker
 3. Some kind of disaster
 4. People believe dynasty has
lost the gods’ approval
 5. Dynasty is overthrown
 6. New dynasty comes in (with gods’
approval) and cycle begins again
- Lots of invasions leading to...

...The Time of the Warring States!