History Stage 4 depth study 3 – The Asian world (China)

This resource has been designed to support teachers by providing a range of tasks based on syllabus content. Tasks can be incorporated into context driven teaching and learning programs in full or can be used to supplement existing programs. All content is textbook non-specific to ensure equity. Specifically targeted teaching activities to support critical and creative thinking in the history classroom have been embedded throughout – they are highlighted by the light blue cloud icon.

## Outcomes

A student:

* **HT4-2** describes major periods of historical time and sequences events, people and societies from the past
* **HT4-3** describes and assesses the motives and actions of past individuals and groups in the context of past societies
* **HT4-6** uses evidence from sources to support historical narratives and explanations
* **HT4-9** uses a range of historical terms and concepts when communicating an understanding of the past
* **HT4-10** selects and uses appropriate oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate about the past

## Historical concepts

* Continuity and change: some aspects of a society, event of a development changes over time or remains the same
* Cause and effect: events, decisions and developments in the past that produce later experiences
* Empathetic understanding: the ability to understand another’s point of view, way of life and decisions made in a different period of time or society
* Significance: the importance of an event, development, group or individual and their impact on their times or later period
* Contestability: how the historians may dispute a particular interpretation of an historical source, historical event or issue

## Historical skills

* Comprehension: chronology, terms and concepts
  + read and understand historical texts
  + sequence historical events and periods
  + use historical terms and concepts
* Analysis and use of sources
  + locate, select and use information from a range of sources as evidence
  + draw conclusions about the usefulness of sources
* Perspectives and interpretations
  + identify and describe different perspectives of participants in a particular historical context
* Empathetic understanding
  + explain why the behaviour and attitudes of people from the past may differ from today
* Research
  + identify and pose questions to inform an historical inquiry
  + identify and locate a range of relevant sources to support an historical inquiry
* Explanation and communication
  + develop historical texts, particularly narratives and descriptions, which incorporate source material
  + use a range of communication forms (oral, written, graphic) and digital technologies.

## Key terms

archaeology, aristocrat, artisan, Buddhism, Confucianism, conflict, conquest, contact, dynasty, Emperor, empire, filial piety, funerary customs, hierarchy, legacy, merchant, nobility, official, peasant, philosophy, plateau, provenance, reliability, Taoism, trade, usefulness, warfare, Yin-Yang

Outcomes and other elements of syllabus references in this document are from [the [History K-10 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/hsie/history-k-10)](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/hsie/history-k-10) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2020.

## Learning sequence 1

### Content

The physical features of the ancient society and how they influenced the civilisation that developed there (ACDSEH006, ACDSEH005)

**Students:**

* describe the geographical setting and natural features of the ancient society
* explain how the geographical setting and natural features influenced the development of the ancient society

### Geography of ancient China

**Teacher note** — prior to this task, explicitly teach the basic parameters of this topic regarding context, chronology and scope. Brainstorm prior knowledge of China. Students should be familiar with key terms, dates and names before beginning this learning sequence. Provide students with a [blank map of China](https://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=168&lang=en) that includes rough boundaries of neighbouring countries.

* Watch the clip about the [Geography of ancient China](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSp3DeNdDzU) (duration 10:04)
* Use the clip and the map provided by your teacher, to identify and highlight the key geographical features that influenced the development of ancient Chinese society. These should include:
  + Huang He (Yellow) River
  + Chang Jiang (Yangtze) River
  + Himalaya Mountains
  + Tibetan Plateau
  + Kunlun Mountains
  + Mongolian Plateau
  + Taklamakan Desert
  + Gobi Desert
  + Yellow Sea
  + Pacific Ocean.

### Influence of geography

As a class, discuss the possible impacts of each identified geographical feature and outline findings in a table as below:

Table of geographic features of China

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Feature | Description of the physical characteristics of the feature | Effect of this feature on the development of Chinese civilisation |
| Huang He River (Yellow River) |  |  |
| Yangtze River |  |  |
| Mountains |  |  |
| Deserts |  |  |
| Tibetan Plateau |  |  |

Watch ‘[Geography of China](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6IrkUvJxio)’ (duration 11:02)

* As you watch, add to your notes on the impact of geographical barriers on China as a developing society.

 **Critical and creative thinking activity**

* Using the SIT questioning model:
  + write one thing you found **surprising** about the impact of geographical barriers on China as a developing society
  + write one thing you found **interesting** about the impact of geographical barriers; on China as a developing society
  + write one thing you found **troubling** about the impact of geographical barriers on China as a developing society.
* Discuss responses to the SIT questions as a class.
* Consider the geography of Australia – what comparisons can be made to the geography of China regarding social development?

## Learning sequence 2

### Content

Roles of key groups in the ancient society in this period (such as kings, emperors, priests, merchants, craftsmen, scholars, peasants, women), including the influence of law and religion (ACDSEH044, ACDSEH041)

**Students**:

* outline the main features of the social structures and government of the ancient society, including the role of law and religion
* describe the roles of key groups in the society
* describe the everyday life of men, women and children in the society

### Social structure and daily life

* Draw a hierarchy triangle in your book, similar to these [examples](https://www.google.com/search?q=hierarchy+triangle+blank&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwj4wLGDyLTnAhWqJ7cAHQRcAyAQ2-cCegQIABAA&oq=hierarchy+triangle+blank&gs_l=img.3..0.8800.9663..9927...0.0..0.285.1239.0j5j1......0....1..gws-wiz-img.......0i30j0i5i30.fH9HMIg0UZM&ei=4qM3XvjHFKrP3LUPhLiNgAI&bih=823&biw=1570&rlz=1C1CHBF_en-GBAU874AU874).
* Fill in your social hierarchy, outlining the key aspects of the social structure in ancient China.
* Research each of the social groups in ancient China.
* Write a paragraph detailing the daily life, responsibilities, and issues for each group.

### Source analysis

**Teacher note** – select a range of artefacts/sources from the [China Online Museum](https://www.comuseum.com/) or the [National Museum of China](https://theculturetrip.com/asia/china/articles/a-tour-of-beijings-national-museum-of-china-in-20-artefacts/) and print the images with accompanying citation/origin information.

* Your teacher will provide you with images of artefacts and sources from ancient China.
* Work individually or in groups (as directed by your teacher) to analyse the sources through the lens of social class and roles.
* Create a table like the one below and fill it in.

Artefact analysis table

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Artefact name, description and provenance | Who would have used the item? | What was it used for? | What can it tell us about social structure and life in ancient China? |
| 1 |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |

### Everyday life of men, women and children

* Using the information gathered in the first two tasks, write a one-page description of life in ancient China for one of the following:
  + child
  + woman
  + man
* Your description should include a daily schedule, details about rights and responsibilities and key issues for that person in their life.
* Before you begin, you must decide which social class the person would have belonged to, as this will have an impact on everything about their life. Ensure you provide details and refer to the sources from the previous task to add depth to your response.

**Teacher note** – provide students with a physical copy of the ‘satisfactory’ [student work sample from the Australian Curriculum website](https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/work-samples/samples/letter-life-in-ancient-china-at/).

*  **Critical and creative thinking activity**
* Read the student work sample provided by your teacher. Based on the research you have conducted:
  + provide three detailed comments that praise this student’s work
  + provide three detailed comments that would help this student improve their description of a typical peasant’s day.

## Learning sequence 3

### Content

The significant beliefs, values and practices of the ancient society, with a particular emphasis on at least ONE of the following areas: warfare, or death and funerary customs (ACDSEH042)

**Students**:

* explain how the beliefs and values of the ancient society are evident in practices related to:
  + death and funerary customs

### Religion

**Teacher note** – Show students an image of a [Yin and Yang](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yin_yang.svg) symbol on the board. Ask students to look at the image and consider what it might mean, using what they already know and reflecting on the image itself. Explain the history of the symbol and its significance in ancient Chinese culture, connecting to the religious beliefs at the time.

* You are to research the three main religions of ancient China:
  + Taoism
  + Confucianism
  + Buddhism
* Use the resources below as well as your own research:
  + [Taosim](https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/taoism/#:~:text=Taoism%20(also%20spelled%20Daoism)%20is,Taoism%2C%20the%20Tao%20Te%20Ching.)
  + [Confucianism](https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/confucianism/#:~:text=Confucianism%20is%20an%20ancient%20Chinese,Confucian%20philosopher%20after%20Confucius%20himself.)
  + [Buddhism: basic beliefs](https://www.uri.org/kids/world-religions/buddhist-beliefs)
* For each religion, you should outline the following:
  + key beliefs
  + origin of the religion
  + important people within the religion
  + links to other ancient Chinese religions
  + important symbols, items or gods
  + afterlife beliefs.
* Write a summary of the key message of each religion.
* Share your summary of each religion with the class.
* Under your teacher’s direction, work together as a class to create a shared summary for each religion.
* The Vinegar Tasters is a traditional subject in Chinese art and shows the three founders of the major religions – Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism, tasting a pot of vinegar. The reaction on their faces represents their attitudes towards life (the vinegar):
  + Confucius has a sour look, as life is sour and needs rules in place to correct the errors of people. He views the vinegar (present life) as polluted wine (the more wholesome life of the ancestors).
  + Buddha has a bitter look on his face, as life is dominated by pain and suffering due to the attachment to physical things. The vinegar (life) is polluting the body of its desired state of bliss.
  + Lao Tzu (the founder of Taoism) has a sweet look on his face. Despite the vinegar being sour, he embraces this taste as it is just being what vinegar is supposed to be.
  + Some interpretations suggest that as the three men are gathered around a single pot of vinegar, the three teachings are in fact best combined into one more complete view.
* View the picture of the [Three Vinegar Tasters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vinegar_tasters#/media/File:The_Three_Vinegar_Tasters_(cropped).jpg) and write an explanation of which of the three has the ‘correct’ view of the vinegar.

### Terracotta warriors

* View ‘[The incredible history of China’s terracotta warriors](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mP5p4QbvPtc)’ (duration 4:31).
* Blue circle with cloud icon. **Critical and creative thinking activity –** [think, pair, share](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/645?clearCache=1352b5a5-a68-a2fc-dea2-eb083e37d7e7)
* After watching the video, use a [think, pair, share](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/645?clearCache=1352b5a5-a68-a2fc-dea2-eb083e37d7e7) to write answers to the [accompanying TedEd questions](https://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-incredible-history-of-china-s-terracotta-warriors-megan-campisi-and-pen-pen-chen/review_open#question-3):
  + What insights can the Terracotta Warriors provide us about Chinese history?
  + Why would some emperors wish to have ‘company’ in the afterlife?
  + What does this reveal about their beliefs about life and the world?
  + What might the emperor have been considering in burying more than just soldiers in the tombs?
* Discuss responses to each question as a class.
* Create a ‘key facts’ outline about the Terracotta Warriors as a class, using the information from the video and teacher/student knowledge.

## Learning sequence 4

**Teacher note** – In this sequence, students will use the question ‘how did contacts and conflicts change ancient China?’ as a base for a short historical inquiry, undertaking some independent research. Brainstorm a possible response to the question before undertaking further research and reading. The ‘[contact and conflict](https://sites.google.com/a/parra.catholic.edu.au/tsc-year-7-ehr/rags-to-riches/contact-conflict)’ resource is an excellent starting point for teachers to provide students, in part or full, to support this inquiry.

### Content

Contacts and conflicts within and/or with other societies, resulting in developments such as the expansion of trade, the rise of empires and the spread of philosophies and beliefs (ACDSEH043)

**Students**:

* identify contacts and conflicts of peoples within the ancient Asian world
* outline significant contacts with other societies, e.g., trade, warfare and conquest
* explain the consequences of these contacts with other societies, e.g., developments in trade, the spread of philosophies and religious beliefs and the emergence of empires
* explain the legacy of the chosen Asian society

### Contacts with others – the Silk Road

**Teacher note** – Provide students with a map of the [Silk Road](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Silk-Road-trade-route) and discuss the key aspects of the ancient trade route. A useful resource to start them off is [Silk Road for students](https://www.ducksters.com/history/china/silk_road.php).

* Revisit the original map of China and notes on geography from learning sequence 1. Examine paths in and out of China and list any issues that may been encountered regarding trade opportunities both within and outside the country.
* Use the library and the internet to answer the following questions:
  + What was the Silk Road?
  + Why was it called the ‘silk’ road?
  + Which societies made use of the Silk Road, other than China?
  + What was traded using the Silk Road? Consider both imports and exports.
  + What were the consequences of the Silk Road as a trade route for China? Were they all positive?

**Teacher note** – Read the following excerpt from Peter Frankopan’s, ‘The Silk Roads: A New History of the World’ (Bloomsbury, 2018) aloud to students. Provide students with a print copy of the excerpt.

“We can imagine the life of a gold coin two millennia ago, struck perhaps in a provincial mint and used by a young soldier as part of his pay to buy goods on the northern frontier in England and finding its way back to Rome in the coffers of an imperial official sent to collect taxes, before passing into the hands of a trader heading east, and then being used to pay for produce bought from traders who had come to sell their provisions at Barygaza. There it was admired and presented to leaders in the Hindu Kush, who marvelled at its design, shape and size and then gave it over to be copied by an engraver – himself perhaps from Rome, perhaps from Persia, or from India or China, or perhaps even someone local who had been taught the skills of striking. This was a world that was connected, complex and hungry for exchange.” (p.26)

Your teacher will provide you with a copy of the passage from The Silk Roads.

* Read it by yourself, highlighting unfamiliar words or phrases.
* Find a definition for any terms that are unfamiliar.
* Work through the vocabulary issues to translate the piece as a class.
* Write 3 sentences explaining the key message of this piece of historical scholarship – what does it tell us about trade and contact between different societies via the Silk Road?
* How does this piece of historical writing connect with the study of ancient China?
*  **Critical and creative thinking activity –** [3-2-1](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/3-2-1)
  + What are three things you have learned about the Silk Road?
  + What are two questions you still have about the Silk Road?
  + What is one aspect about the Silk Road you found interesting?

### Conflict

**Teacher note** – Choose a number of relevant excerpts from Sun Tzu’s ‘[The Art of War](http://classics.mit.edu/Tzu/artwar.html)’ and provide to students in pairs.

* Read each excerpt and summarise the key idea about warfare that is being represented.
* Discuss findings as a class.
* Assess the source your teacher has provided to you in understanding ancient Chinese attitudes to war. Consider the following:
  + the usefulness and reliability for a historian studying ancient Chinese attitudes to war
  + limitations of the source and how historians might be able to overcome them.
* Write a paragraph explaining the ancient Chinese attitude towards warfare, using specific reference to the source.

### Task 3

* Watch ‘[how and why the Great Wall of China was really built](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m68zyXyeYG0)’ (duration 4:52) and ‘[what makes the Great Wall of China so extraordinary](https://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-makes-the-great-wall-of-china-so-extraordinary-megan-campisi-and-pen-pen-chen)’ (duration 4:30).
* After viewing the videos, respond to the following questions:
  + Why is the Great Wall one of the most well-known symbols of Chinese history?
  + What purpose has the Great Wall held throughout Chinese past and present?
  + What can historians learn about ancient China’s approach to warfare from the Great Wall?
* Write a research report. This can be presented as a slideshow, speech, feature article or poster. It should outline the key information about the Great Wall of China, including:
  + 5Ws (where, what, when, who, why)
  + a map of China with the Great Wall marked clearly in relation to other landmarks
  + myths and facts about the Great Wall
  + purpose of the wall in relation to conflict and defence
  + current state of the wall and significance to Chinese society.

### Terracotta Warriors and the Great Wall of China

**Teacher note** – Divide students into two groups to prepare for a class debate.

* Undertake a class debate on the topic: ‘the Terracotta Warriors are more important for historians of ancient China than the Great Wall of China.’
* Use your knowledge from this topic, further reading and research to prepare for the debate.
* Upon completion of the debate, your class will vote on which side won.
* In your book, write a reflection about why both ancient sites are worthy of study and important for historians of ancient China.
* Include relevant information from your class debate.

### Legacy of ancient China

**Teacher note** – Students use the [think, pair, share strategy](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/645?clearCache=1352b5a5-a68-a2fc-dea2-eb083e37d7e7) a definition for the word ‘legacy.’ As a class, create a shared definition of the word legacy.

* **Critical and creative thinking activity** - using your class definition, work in groups to create an [affinity diagram](https://www.sessionlab.com/methods/affinity-map?clearCache=1a415d8f-f1c9-a331-23f-a79690dff2f) of the legacy of ancient China:
  + artefacts
  + sites
  + trade
  + inventions.
* As a class, create an [affinity diagram](https://www.sessionlab.com/methods/affinity-map?clearCache=1a415d8f-f1c9-a331-23f-a79690dff2f), where you contribute your ideas to share with the group.
* Write a report on the legacy of ancient China. Your report should be a maximum of two paragraphs and include a section outlining the key legacy for the people of today.

## Assessment task

### **Outcomes**

**HT4-3** describes and assesses the motives and actions of past individuals and groups in the context of past societies

**HT4-6** uses evidence from sources to support historical narratives and explanations

**HT4-10** selects and uses appropriate oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate about the past

### **Syllabus content**

The role of a significant individual in the ancient Asian world, for example, Confucius or Qin Shi Huang Di. (ACDSEH133, ACDSEH132)

**Students:**

* using a range of sources, including ICT, investigate the role of a significant individual in the ancient Asian world

### Task

**Teacher note** – you may wish to show your class an example of the television program *This is Your Life* to support student understanding. Some Australian examples can be found [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEXr2Wh4fPQ).

* Create a *This is Your Life*-style 5-minute video or podcast answering the question:

Assess the role and importance of the Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi.

* Use the following steps to create the video or podcast:
  + conduct research about Qin Shi Huangdi
  + locate at least 3 primary sources that will allow you to make judgments about the role and importance of Qin Shi Huangdi
  + write the script for your video or podcast, including a description and assessment of the motives and actions of Qin Shi Huangdi
  + record your video or podcast, ensuring you feature Qin Shi Huangdi himself, as well as the authors of the primary sources
  + make a judgment after each source about the role and importance of Qin Shi Huangdi
  + make a final judgment about the role and importance of Qin Shi Huangdi at the end of your show.

### Marking criteria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Criteria | Mark |
| * **Uses evidence from sources to demonstrate extensive knowledge and detailed information about** Qin Shi Huangdi * **Provides logical and sustained judgments about the role and importance of** Qin Shi Huangdi * Effectively communicates complex ideas and information by selecting and using appropriate oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate about the past | A |
| * Uses evidence from sources to demonstrate thorough knowledge and detailed information about Qin Shi Huangdi * Provides logical judgments about the role and importance of Qin Shi Huangdi * Clearly communicates complex ideas and information by selecting and using appropriate oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate about the past | B |
| * **Uses evidence from sources to demonstrate sound knowledge and information about Qin Shi Huangdi** * Provides explanations about the role and importance of Qin Shi Huangdi * **Communicates ideas and information in an appropriate way by selecting and using appropriate** oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate about the past | C |
| * May use sources to demonstrate basic knowledge and information about Qin Shi Huangdi * Provides basic descriptions about the role and importance of Qin Shi Huangdi * Communicates ideas in a descriptive manner **by selecting and using appropriate** oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate about the past | D |
| * Demonstrates elementary knowledge of Qin Shi Huangdi * Provides an outline of the role and importance of Qin Shi Huangdi * Demonstrates elementary skills in communicating ideas and selecting information | E |