

## The Qin and the Han Dynasties of China

1. Read the passage and answer the questions that follow:

In 221 B.C., Shih Huang-ti began a new dynasty, the Qin (or Ch'in). Shih Huang-ti was the first Chinese ruler to call himself "emperor". Shih believed that people were not always good and required a strong ruler to keep control. His beliefs were part of Legalism, a Chinese philosophy based on the belief that people were selfish and required strong rulers to control them. Shih Huang-ti established a strong central government, built roads, and introduced a uniform system of writing and measurement throughout the empire. He also joined together several existing walls to form the Great Wall of China. The Great Wall protected China from nomadic peoples to the northwest. Stretching over 1,500 miles, it stood 22 feet high and 15 feet thick and took thousands of laborers many years to complete. Shih Huang-ti's rule was so harsh that his dynasty came to an end just after his death.

Questions:

A- Who was Shih Huang-ti?

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B- Describe the Chinese philosophy known as Legalism.

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C- What were the most significant accomplishments of Shih Huang-ti?

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D- Why did the Chinese build the Great Wall of China?

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E- Describe the Great Wall of China.

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2. Read the passage and answer the questions that follow:

The next dynasty, the Han (206 B.C. -220 A.D.), kept China unified for over four hundred years. Han emperors established examinations to select candidates for government service. Candidates were tested on Chinese history and Confucian philosophy which became the official philosophy of dynastic China during the Han dynasty. Examinations were open to all and viewed as a way for a few talented commoners to improve their social position. During the Han Dynasty, merchants established overland trade routes to other centers of civilization. The Silk Road went through Central Asia, connecting China to the Middle East and Rome. Over these routes, China exported silk, iron, and bronze in exchange for gold, linen cloth, glass, ivory, animal hides, horses, and cattle. Contacts with India led to the introduction of Buddhism to China, which became popular during the Han Dynasty.

Questions:

A- The Han dynasty is frequently compared to the Roman Empire. Using the passage above and your knowledge of Social Studies, why is the Han dynasty frequently compared to the Roman Empire?

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B- The Chinese were the first to create a civil service examination to select candidates for government service. What is the advantage of a civil service examination?

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C- What was the Silk Road and why was it important?

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D- Provide an example of cultural diffusion from the passage above.

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E- From a previous lesson, explain the beliefs of Confucius.

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3. Read the passage and answer the questions that follow:

For many years, Asian and European traders burned a trail across the deserts and mountains of Eurasia just to trade with China. Cathay -- as it was then known -- had plenty to offer, including spices, ivory and medicine. But it was "silk" that made the "Silk Road" worth the risks. At the time, this beautiful fabric could be had only in China. Today, China still produces 70 percent of the world's silk.

The Chinese have been plucking silk worms from the green leaves of the mulberry tree for more than 4,000 years. Each spring, peasants collect the milky-white centipedes, lay them out in bamboo baskets and separate them with fine feather brushes to prevent bruising. Over a period of several days, the larvae spin cocoons by moving their heads in figure eights while ejecting a continuous stream of silk from two sacs running along the sides of their bodies. The worm farmers today then sell these cocoons to companies like the Wujiang Zhen Feng Silk Spinning Mill, which transform the worm pods into beautiful outfits.

Why was silk so valuable? The law of supply and demand was what made silk so valuable. There was a great demand for this fabric and the only people who knew the secret of how to produce it were the Chinese. They were able to protect the secret for more than two thousand years. Today, the world knows that silk is produced with fibers spun from the cocoon of the silk worm, but the ancients were mystified with regard to its source.

Questions:

A- Why did so many travelers risk starvation, dehydration, and death to travel the Silk Road?

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B- Where does silk come from?

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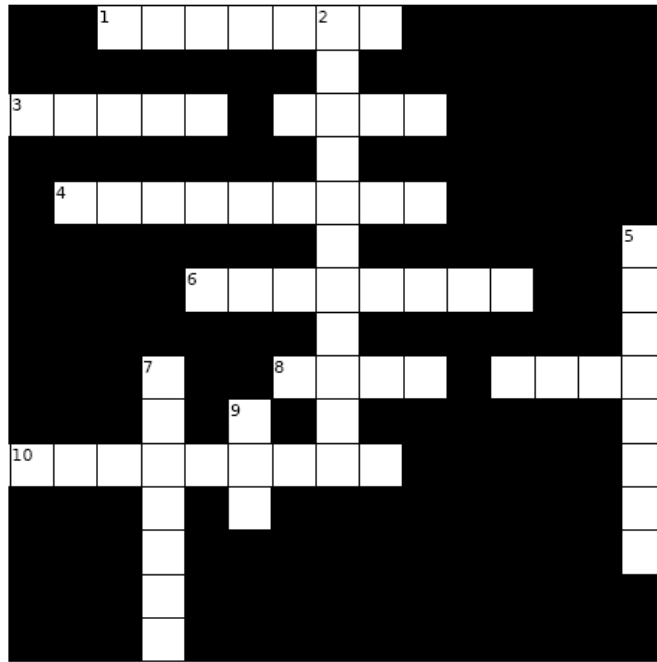
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C- Why was silk so valuable?

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| <p>1 Across<br/>Han rulers _____ China<br/>for over four hundred<br/>years.</p> <p>3 Built to protect China from<br/>nomadic invaders</p> <p>4 Believed in maintaining<br/>order and the Five<br/>Relationships</p> <p>6 Chinese philosophy that<br/>encouraged harsh<br/>punishments and strong<br/>rulers</p> <p>8 An important trading route<br/>that connected China to<br/>the Middle East and<br/>Europe</p> <p>10 A geographic feature that<br/>isolated China</p> | <p>2 Down<br/>To work in government<br/>service, a person had to<br/>pass it</p> <p>5 A religion that entered China<br/>from India</p> <p>7 A ruling family</p> <p>9 Chinese dynasty frequently<br/>compared to the Roman<br/>Empire</p> |
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Word Bank:

Dynasty, Examination, Great Wall, Unified, Legalism, Buddhism, Han, Silk Road, Mountains, Confucius

Bonus Question: What was the Mandate of Heaven?

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