

## Lesson 3: Chinese Culture

### A. Chinese Writing

One of the signs of a highly sophisticated \_\_\_\_\_ is the development of a system of writing. Historians are not sure when Chinese writing began, but there is evidence of writing as early as the \_\_\_\_\_ dynasty. During that time, writing was carved into turtle shells or bones. It was used mainly for religious purposes.



Ancient Chinese writing on an ox bone  
Credit: Gary Todd, Wikimedia

As time went on, Chinese writing was written using ink and brushes. By the year 1 BCE, the Chinese invented paper, which became widely used by the year 3 CE.



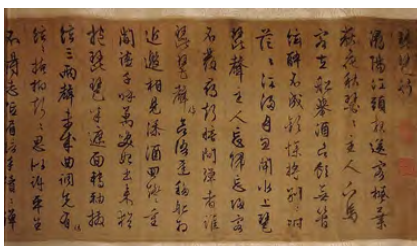
The Chinese invented paper by combining mashed mulberry bark, hemp, and water. They left thinly pressed sheets out in the sun to dry.

### B. The Method

Like most early cultures, the Chinese used a form of \_\_\_\_\_ to create their first words. Unlike other modern writing systems, modern Chinese writing still has its roots in ancient Chinese.



Ancient Chinese writing on paper  
Credit: Eric & Chun-Chih Hadley-Ives, Historylines



This poem was written on silk during the Ming Dynasty.  
Credit: Editor at Large, Wikimedia

The Chinese consider writing a work of art. Artful writing is called calligraphy. The scribe would use a brush and inkstone to write. First, a stick of ink would be ground into a fine powder on the **inkstone**<sup>1</sup>. Next, water would be added to form an \_\_\_\_\_. The more water added, the lighter the color of ink. The scribe would then use a brush to write in a clear and artistic form.

<sup>1</sup> **Inkstone:** a polished stone made into a platter with a shallow bowl.

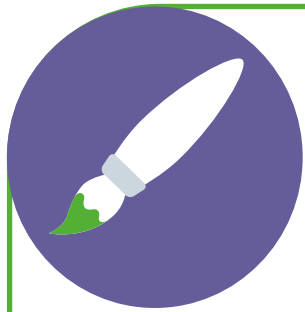


The inkstick, inkstone, brush, and paper were called the “Four Treasures of the Scholar’s Studio.”

Ancient Chinese writing was composed of over \_\_\_\_\_ characters, and each Chinese dialect had its own form of writing. In order to unify China, **standardized**<sup>2</sup> writing was created and used throughout China. This way, even if different \_\_\_\_\_ were spoken, all people of China understood each other through its written language. Attempts have been made many times to \_\_\_\_\_ the writing system into simpler forms with fewer characters. Even in modern times, there are those who resist these attempts and want Chinese writing to remain in its complex, artistic form.



Ancient inkstone  
Credit: 고려, Wikimedia



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Using paint, copy the Chinese symbols that appear above onto a separate paper. Then write a paragraph comparing writing in Chinese with paint to writing in English with a pen.

### C. Confucius

The end of the era of the Zhou dynasty was a time of war and chaos. Many **philosophers**<sup>3</sup> arose during this time to teach a better and more proper way of living. The most famous of all Chinese \_\_\_\_\_ was a man of noble birth named Confucius (551–479 BCE).

<sup>2</sup> **Standardize:** to regulate something so that everyone conforms to one style.

<sup>3</sup> **Philosopher:** a person who thinks about the truth of life and moral behavior.



Portrait of Confucius  
Credit: Cold Season, Wikimedia

Confucius had strong ideas about human nature as it applies to relationships and government. Confucius had a deep respect for the traditional \_\_\_\_\_ way of life and traveled around China, teaching his ideas to others.



This statue of Confucius stands in Bangkok, Thailand.

**D. Respectful Relationships**

Confucius believed that people were inherently good and that they “should be kind, faithful, and honest.” He believed there were five basic relationships within society. The lower person in the relationship should give honor and respect to the one above him. In addition, the person at the higher level must demonstrate ethical and proper behavior towards the lower level.



**The Five Relationships:**

- Ruler and subject
- Father and son
- Husband and wife
- Older sibling and younger sibling
- Friend and friend



*“If I am walking with two other men, each of them will serve as my teacher. I will pick out the good points of the one and imitate them, and the bad points of the other and correct them in myself.” — Confucius*

Restate the quote said by Confucius in your own words.

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### E. Confucius's Ideas about Government

Confucius believed that strict laws and punishments were not necessary to maintain a peaceful society. Instead, he felt that the key to a successful ruler and his kingdom would be the example the ruler set. If the ruler would be like a good father and set an example of \_\_\_\_\_, the nation would follow his path.



*"Promote the upright, place them above the crooked, and the people shall be obedient."— Confucius*

Restate the quote said by Confucius in your own words.

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Give an example of a virtuous leader in history whom the people obeyed. Support your answer.

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Confucius also felt that government positions were granted through **nepotism**<sup>4</sup> rather than through \_\_\_\_\_. Confucius believed that government jobs should be awarded to the most capable people. The \_\_\_\_\_ should be educated and talented in order to receive a government position.



Portrait of Han Feizi  
Credit: FastilyClone, Wikimedia

<sup>4</sup> **Nepotism:** giving high positions to relatives or friends.

## F. Legalism

There were other Chinese philosophers of the time who believed differently than \_\_\_\_\_. The next dynasty that succeeded the Zhou was the Qin \_\_\_\_\_. They firmly adhered to a philosophy called Legalism. Legalism was developed by the philosopher Han Feizi ( c. 280–233 BCE) who influenced the emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang.



Two other opponents of Confucius's philosophy were the Maoists and the Daoists.

Contrary to Confucius's belief that men are inherently good and that a leader will be successful if he acts as a good \_\_\_\_\_, the Legalists believed that man is inherently bad. They believed a government will succeed only by having strict laws and harsh punishments and that the king or emperor must have complete control. They felt that if a person leads with love and compassion, the people will become spoiled.

**Review****Key Terms**

Define each term using complete sentences.

Calligraphy	
Inkstone	
Nepotism	
Philosopher	
Standardize	

**People of Interest**

Confucius	
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Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

**1. Support the concept that Chinese writing is an art form as much as a writing system.**

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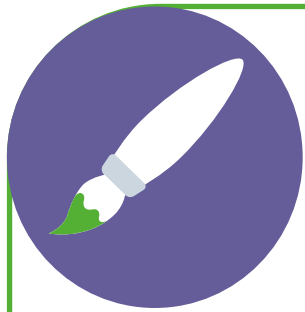


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kind, faithful, and honest.” He believed there were five basic relationships within society. The lower person in the relationship should give honor and respect to the one above him. In addition, the person at the higher level must demonstrate ethical and proper behavior towards the lower level.



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**2. Compare and contrast Confucius's philosophy with the philosophy of Legalism.**

Confucianism	Same	Legalism

**3. List the names of the four different Chinese philosophies of the time.**

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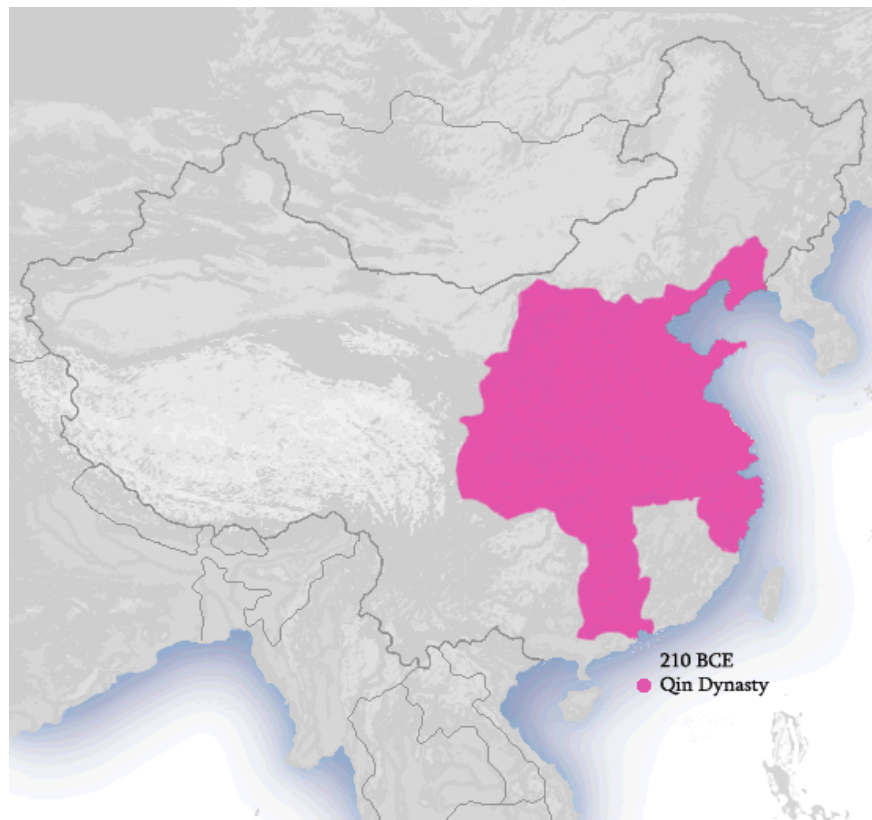
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## Lesson 4: The Qin Dynasty

### A. The Warring States

As mentioned earlier, the end of the Zhou dynasty was one of \_\_\_\_\_ and war. The nobility fought against each other, and the different sections of China battled for supreme power.

One feudal state, the Qin, was able to topple the Zhou dynasty. They continued to fight for 25 years with the other states until the king of Qin captured and controlled all of China.



Map of Qin Dynasty, shown in dark pink. Black lines show the current borders between countries. Note the size of China's current borders compared to during the Qin dynasty. Credit: Ian Kiu, Wikimedia

### B. Qin Shi Huang

Zheng was the first king of the \_\_\_\_\_ dynasty who conquered the warring states. When he conquered all of \_\_\_\_\_, he declared himself "Qin Shi Huang." This name

gave him the title of the “first emperor.” Qin Shi Huang’s plan was to unite all of China into one \_\_\_\_\_. He planned to rule the whole country as emperor. He also intended for his dynasty to last for 10,000 generations.



Until now, all leaders of Chinese dynasties had been called kings. This meant they had control of small kingdoms. An emperor, such as Qin Shi Huang, controlled an entire region of people, called an empire. All the former diverse kingdoms would now be ruled by one leader, the all-powerful emperor.

In order to carry out his plan, Qin Shi Huang knew that he must \_\_\_\_\_ the people into one land, the land of China.



The name China comes from the name Qin, which is pronounced *chin*.

### C. Standardizing China

One important step in uniting China was making sure that the people used the same common \_\_\_\_\_. For example, until now, the system of measuring sizes and weights differed from state to state. This impeded trade and business between the different areas of \_\_\_\_\_. Under the Qin dynasty, all weights and measurements were standardized and became the same throughout the empire.

Different states used different forms of money. This caused confusion when people from different areas \_\_\_\_\_ goods. Therefore, Qin Shi Huang unified China by having standardized money, which means the same **currency**,<sup>1</sup> throughout China.

One of the most significant ways China was unified was the standardization of Chinese writing. People throughout China spoke different \_\_\_\_\_ of Chinese. This impeded communication



Portrait of Qin Shi Huang  
Credit: Yuan, Zhongyi,  
Wikimedia

<sup>1</sup> **Currency:** the system of money in a country.

among the Chinese people. Even though the Chinese continued speaking differently, by standardizing the writing system, they could now communicate clearly through writing.

### D. Changes in the Government

One of the biggest challenges in ruling a large empire is its size. How can an emperor control and be aware of what is happening in a vast empire? Qin Shi Huang devised a plan to govern the vast land. He divided the empire into 36 **provinces**.<sup>2</sup> Each of these \_\_\_\_\_ had two officials in charge. In addition, the provinces were further divided into districts. Everyone would report back to the person above him, until the information would reach the emperor.

This type of government is called a \_\_\_\_\_, which means a government that has one person on the top of the government controlling lower levels, and a supervisor in charge of any of the workers below them. The higher the \_\_\_\_\_, the fewer people at that level (similar to the hierarchy of social levels in ancient Egypt). By dividing the country into provinces, the emperor gained control of this large empire.

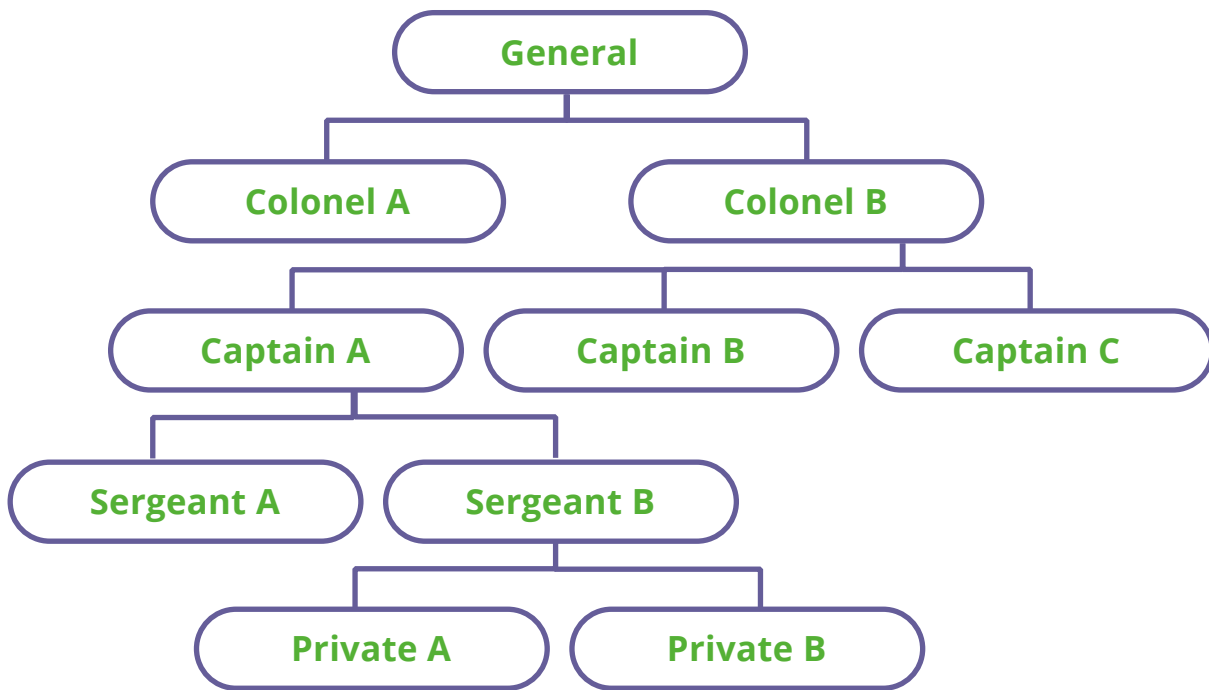
### E. The End of Feudalism

Qin Shi Huang knew that if the \_\_\_\_\_ system continued, the nobles may rebel against him. Qin abolished the feudalistic system and distributed the land among all the people. Now, anyone could own land, as long as they paid \_\_\_\_\_ to the emperor. This gave total control of the land to the government.



*Ancient Chinese coins  
Credit: Gary Todd, Wikimedia*

<sup>2</sup> **Province:** a division of certain countries or empires.



*This is a sample hierarchy of a military bureaucracy. In China, the emperor was at the top, followed by three dukes, and so on.*

## F. Legalism

Qin Shi Huang was strongly influenced by the teachings of \_\_\_\_\_. He promoted a system of government based on Legalism which required strict rules and harsh punishments to those who disobeyed.

In order to control the people, Qin Shi Huang required people to spy on one another. He told people to report anything that was said or done against the government. The person who was reported would be harshly \_\_\_\_\_.

In addition, any philosophy contrary to \_\_\_\_\_ was forbidden. This included books containing the philosophy of \_\_\_\_\_. Any books the government deemed useless were burned.



In the 1930s in Nazi Germany, all books contrary to Nazi philosophy were burned.

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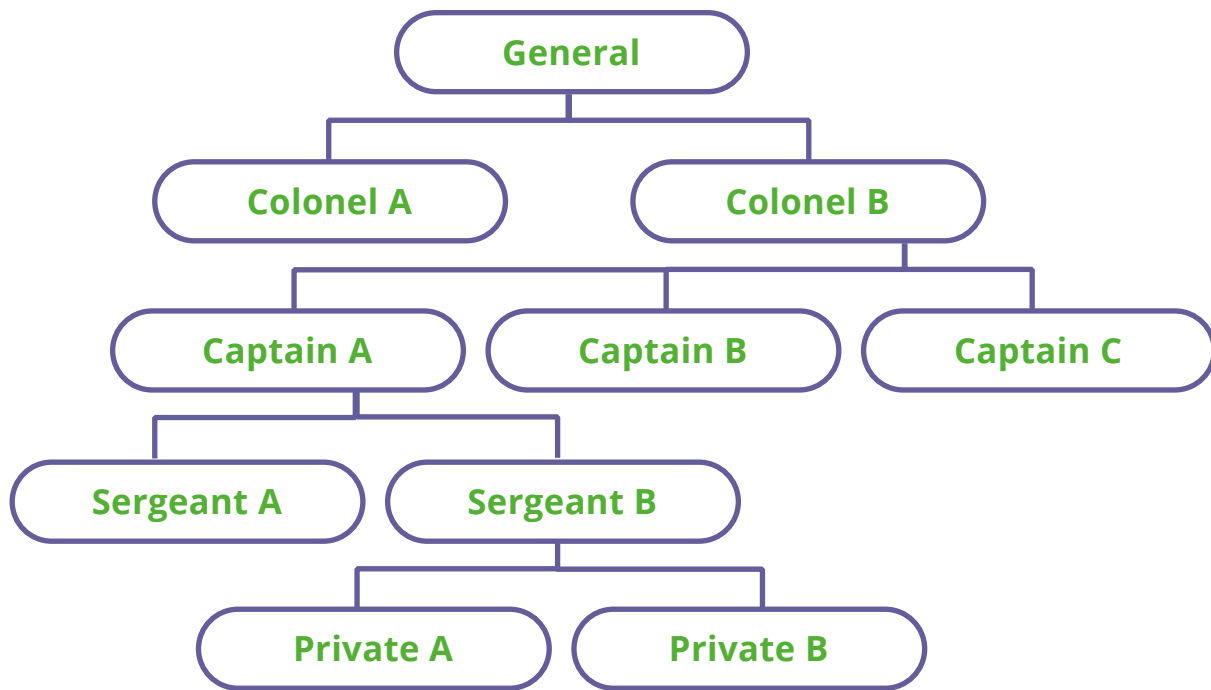
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The Great Wall of China  
Credit: Peter Dowley, Wikimedia

### G. The Great Wall of China

Qin Shi Huang wanted to fortify his people against \_\_\_\_\_ from invading enemies from the northwest. Even though the great mountain ranges offered natural protection, Qin Shi Huang wanted additional protection. He embarked on a huge project to build a wall on top of the mountain \_\_\_\_\_.

The wall was more than 15,000 miles long. It had watchtowers where soldiers could view the attacking enemy. The soldiers would signal to other soldiers with flags and fires. Those \_\_\_\_\_ could then join their fellow soldiers to stop the foreign troops from attacking. The wall was 30 feet high, and at some points, it was wide enough to allow five soldiers to ride **abreast**.<sup>3</sup> It took over \_\_\_\_\_ citizens to build this wall. These citizens had no choice; regardless of whether they wanted to work on the wall or not, they were **drafted**<sup>4</sup> into the job. Many Chinese peasants died while working on this project.

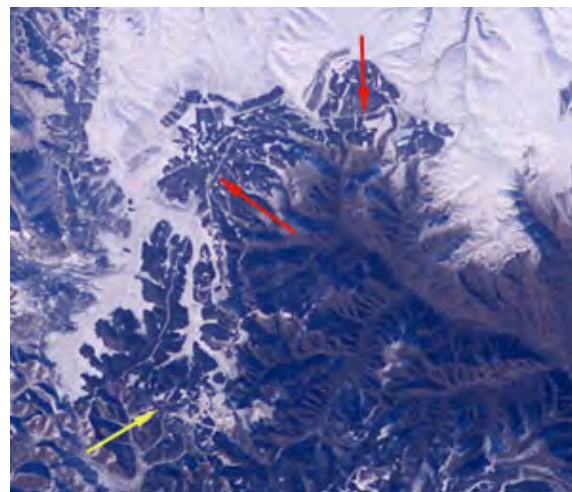


Qin was not the only emperor who worked on the Great Wall. Many other later dynasties continued the construction. The final and most extensive work was done by the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644).

The Great Wall of China can still be visited today. It is one of the most popular tourist sites in the world. Over 10 million people a year visit this site. It has been named one of the Seven Wonders of the Medieval World as well as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World.

### H. The Terracotta Soldiers

Qin Shi Huang wanted to live forever. He was advised by his doctors to take mercury pills to extend his



There is a well-known claim that the Great Wall of China is visible from outer space. This claim isn't strictly correct because of how thin the wall is. However, in 2004 the above image was taken from outer space using a highly focused camera. The arrows point to spots where the wall is visible in the original full-sized image. Credit: NASA

3 **Abreast**: side by side and facing the same way.

4 **Draft**: choose a person for a certain job.

life. Unfortunately for him, mercury is poisonous and causes not only an early death but also \_\_\_\_\_ and mental illness. Qin died in 210 BCE, \_\_\_\_\_ after he united China.

Qin Shi Huang had much to \_\_\_\_\_ in his life. His cruel treatment of others created many enemies. Qin believed that these people would continue to \_\_\_\_\_ him in the afterlife.

Throughout his lifetime he had artisans build an army of **terracotta**<sup>5</sup> soldiers. The Terracotta Army was buried with him in his \_\_\_\_\_.

The army lay buried under the ground for thousands of years. In 1974, two farmers uncovered some \_\_\_\_\_ soldiers, which led archaeologists to explore the site.

The archaeologists discovered a great deal of information on how the Chinese lived during that time.

## I. The End of the Qin Dynasty

\_\_\_\_\_ planned for his dynasty to last for thousands of years, but as is the case for many cruel leaders, the dynasty fell shortly after his death. The new dynasty, called the \_\_\_\_\_, was a government that respected the human rights of others. It would be a progressive government, and many great achievements would be accomplished in its time.



Through modern technology, archaeologists were able to determine that no two figures looked alike; each had a unique face.



*The Terracotta Army discovered in Xian, China  
Credit: David Stanley, Flickr*



*This is a close-up view of the terracotta soldiers. No two soldiers had the same face.  
Credit: foursummers, Pixabay*

<sup>5</sup> **Terracotta:** unglazed, typically brownish-red earthenware.

## Review

### Key Terms

Define each term using complete sentences.

Currency	
Abreast	
Draft	
Province	
Teracotta	

### People of Interest

Han Feizi	
Qin Shi Huang	

## Essay

**Identify three changes that took place in China during the Qin dynasty. Discuss which changes were beneficial and which changes were harmful.**

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