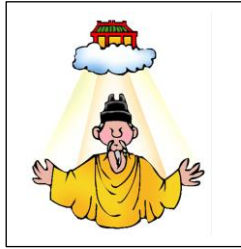


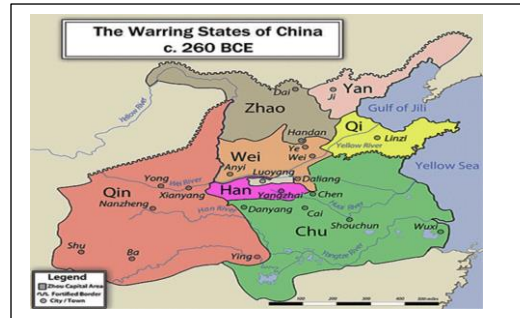
Aim #12: How did geography impact the development of early civilization in China?

NYS SS Framework: 9.3a

Rise of civilization in China



Four Chinese Dynasties				
	SHANG	ZHOU	QIN	HAN
When	1750-1122 B.C.	1045-256 B.C.	221-206 B.C.	202 B.C.-A.D. 220
Important Leaders	Numerous kings with large armies and control over the land; ruled from capital city of Anyang.	Wu	Qin Shihuangdi	Liu Bang



Mini Lecture

- China, located in East Asia, has many geographic features- **Gobi & Takla Makan** deserts, **Himalayas** Mountains, rainforests, **Pacific Ocean**, & **Huang He & Yangtze Rivers**. These barriers made the Chinese feel **ethnocentric**, or superior & called themselves **The Middle Kingdom**
- The earliest civilization in China grew along the **Huang River or Yellow River**. This river carries **loess**, or fine windblown yellow soil, which raises the water level. People suffered from the river's frequent floods. The need to control the water likely led to the rise of government.
- The **Shang dynasty** began about 1766 B.C. Kings ruled along with princes. Shang warriors used leather armor, bronze weapons, & horse-drawn chariots.
- The **Zhou** people overthrew the Shang in 1122 B.C. They promoted the **Mandate of Heaven**, or divine right to rule. This idea later expanded to explain the **dynastic cycle**, or rise and fall of dynasties. If rulers became corrupt, heaven would withdraw support & dynasties would fail.
- The Zhou established **feudalism**, where lords governed their own land but owed military service & support to a ruler.
- In the 600s B.C., iron tools made farming more productive & the population increased. The Zhou dynasty ended when fighting feudal lords could not be controlled.
- One great achievement of early China was **silk-making**. The Chinese kept the technique a secret for many years.
- They also developed a system of writing at least 4,000 years ago. Questions were written on **oracle bones**. After heating the bones, priests interpreted the answers. Later, a writing system evolved that included thousands of characters, or written symbols. The Chinese then turned writing into an art called **calligraphy**.

"Characteristics of Shang & Zhou Dynasties"

	Shang	Zhou
Date	1766 B.C.E.-1046 B.C.E.	1046 B.C.E.-221 B.C.E.
Government	Shang kings controlled small lands; real power was in hands of princes, nobles, and heads of clans.	Set up a feudal state
Society	Royal family- Noble warriors- small artisan/merchant class- majority peasants Noble women may have had high status.	Feudal lords and Peasants
Economy	Artisans made goods for nobles Merchants exchanged goods Peasants farmed and built dikes	Produced more farming led to a population growth Economy grew in 600 B.C.E. because of iron tools Commerce grew, coins introduced, made trade easier
Decline	Overthrown by Zhou	Feudal lords ignored the emperor; Overthrown by Qin

Review Questions:

1. What are the basic geographic features in china?
2. What is the Dynastic Cycle?
3. What achievements did the early Chinese

Resources/Documents:

- Maps

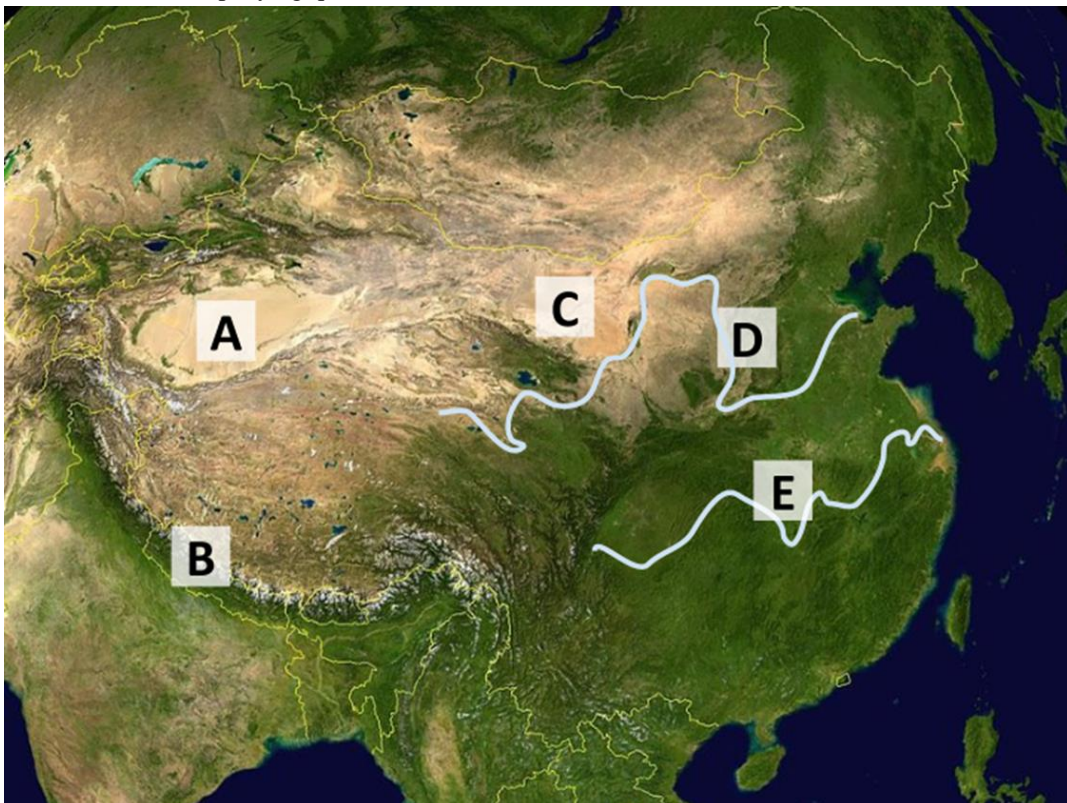
Further Reading: Chapter 3, Section 4

What geographic features exist in China? How might those features have affected the development of classical civilizations in China?



Note: The map below shows the boundaries of the modern-day nation, the People’s Republic of China. The civilizations identified as “China” throughout history did not always have the same borders.

Directions: Examine the map below, then read the descriptions of the corresponding geographic features and answer the accompanying questions.



A. Taklamakan Desert



The Taklamakan desert is a sandy desert located on the western border of China that is bordered by the Tien Shan Mountains to the west. Merchants created trade routes on the northern and southern borders of the desert that became important parts of the Silk Roads during the classical era, connecting China to civilizations in the Middle East and Europe.

1. What effect might this geographic feature have had on trade between China and the west?

B. Himalaya Mountains

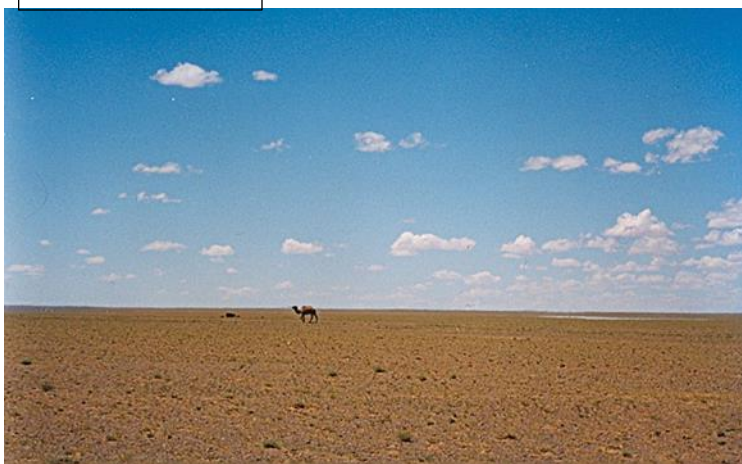


The Himalaya Mountains separate the Indian subcontinent from China and they are the tallest mountain range in the world. Mount Everest is the tallest peak at 29,029 ft. Though there are passes through the mountains, the Himalayas isolated India and China from one another.

2. What positive effects might this geographic feature have had on China?

3. What negative effects might this geographic feature have had on China?

C. Gobi Desert



The Gobi Desert separates China from Mongolia. It is the fifth largest desert in the world and is made up of mostly bare rock rather than sand. Temperatures range from -40°F in winter to 113°F in the summer.

4. How might this geographic feature have affected China's ability to expand its borders to the north?

D. Yellow River



throughout history.

The Yellow River, or Huang He, runs from west to east through China. It is called the Yellow River because it passes through a section of China where the soil is *loess*, a fine, wind-blown dust with a yellow color that blows into the river and is carried downstream.

The river has also been called “China’s Sorrow” because its floods are unpredictable and destructive. The deadliest recorded flood took place in 1332-33 during which seven million people died.

Chinese civilization started in the fertile valley of the Yellow River and major Chinese cities developed on its course

5. How did this geographic feature affect the development of civilizations in China?

E. Yangtze River



The Yangtze River, which runs from west to east through China, is the third longest river in the world. One-third of modern-day China’s population lives in the Yangtze River Valley.

Throughout China’s history the Yangtze has been used for irrigation for agriculture and transportation. Today, the river is a major part of China’s economy.

Ancient civilizations developed around the Yangtze River, but the most successful civilizations in China were established on the banks of the more fertile Yellow River. The Yangtze and the people that lived near it were conquered by the Qin Dynasty during the classical era and became an important part of Chinese civilization in later dynasties including the Han.

6. How did this geographic feature affect the development of civilizations in China?

