

Lesson Title: A Closer Look at China's Dynasties

Country: China

Class: History (There is also a math component)

Grade level(s): 6th Grade

Goals and Objectives

The student will:

- be able to identify China's ten main dynasties
- be able to identify main achievements of each dynasty
- strengthen sequential reasoning skills
- strengthen cooperative group work skills

Time required/class periods needed: Two 45 minute class periods

Primary source bibliography:

- The Art of Asia – History and Maps <http://www.artsmia.org/art-of-asia/history>
- Chinese Dynasties Maps <http://www.chinahighlights.com/map/ancient-china-map/>
- World Heritage Sites, The Great Wall of China, Terracotta Warriors, <http://www.great-wallofchina.com/terracotta-warriors.html>
- World History Atlas, 2003 Maps.com, Santa Barbara, CA

Other resources used:

- History Grades 4-6; Ancient China, by Maria Backus, 2002 Milliken Publishing co.

Required materials/supplies:

- Copies of *The Dynasties of China* chart (ex. <http://www.sacu.org/histchart.html> or <http://robbbolar.cmswiki.wikispaces.net/file/view/ChinaDynastyChartKEY.pdf>)
- Copies of *Dynasties Question & Answer* sheet (below)
- Construction paper, glue, scissors, pencil
- Calculators (optional)

Vocabulary:

- Dynasty – series of rulers from the same family
- Standardized – to make the same; uniform
- Calligraphy – art form of beautiful handwriting that originated in China but is also a western art. See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calligraphy>
- Calligraphy instructional video: <http://ceas.ku.edu/instructional-videos>

Procedure:

- Note: Before beginning this activity in class, I prepare the dynasty envelopes (or have a student aid do this). For each class, cut up one chart into long strips and place it into a

long envelope. I make about 5-6 of these for each class for a total of about 25-30 envelopes. I re-use the envelopes every year.

1. Before starting this activity, share several maps of China displaying some of the different dynasties and their history (refer to primary source bibliography above).
2. Additionally, share some of the colored overhead transparencies from Milliken's History Grades 4-6: Ancient China. (This helps the student's "brain juices" get flowing!)
3. Discuss the definition of *dynasty* and how China was ruled by ten different dynasties in ancient times with each dynasty making unique contributions. Compare the length of China's history- about 30 centuries - with that of the United States to help students appreciate the length and depth of China's ancient civilization.
4. Assign students to teams of 4-5 members to on this activity. Give each group the Dynasty strips, a long envelope, a piece of construction paper on which to glue strips, glue stick and the *Dynasties Q & A* sheet.
5. Each group will put the dynasties in sequential order from the first (Shang) to the last (Qing). Hint: Suggest that they arrange the slips first before they glue them onto the construction paper.
6. Students will then answer the questions on the *Dynasties Q & A* sheet. The first question asks them to determine how many years each dynasty was in power. (You may want to give out calculators for this part of the activity) Each team may choose to answer their questions directly on the construction paper or write them on the Q & A sheet.
7. After the teams have answered all the questions (use discretion to allow a specific amount of time for this – some groups will work faster than others), review the order of the dynasties and review answers to questions.
8. Allow discussion time for students to share observations.
9. Optional: Teach Dynasty Song (below).

Assessment/evaluation

- Teacher observation of group work – in particular, how the students determine the sequential order of the dynasties.
- Dynasties Q & A sheet
- Follow-up discussion

Dynasty Q & Q

Class: _____

Group Members:

When your group has finished putting the dynasty timeline together, answer the following questions. You may answer on this sheet or your dynasty sheet. If you choose your dynasty sheet, please be sure to number each answer. You may work as a group to answer these questions.

1. How many years did each of the 10 dynasties rule? Write the number right next to each dynasty.
2. How many total numbers of years were dynasties in control of China? How many centuries is that?
3. Which dynasty ruled for the longest time? Which one ruled for the shortest?
4. During the Qin Dynasty coinage, weights and measures were standardized. What does that mean?
5. Name one of the influential Chinese philosophers of the Zhou Dynasty.
6. It is said that during the Ming Dynasty commerce flourished. What does that mean?
7. The height of trade along the Silk Road occurred during which dynasty?
8. In which dynasty did printing, poetry and calligraphy flourish?
9. During the Han Dynasty what religion was started?
10. During which dynasty did Marco Polo visit China?
11. What was created to link the Huang and Chang rivers during the Sui Dynasty?
12. During which dynasty were oracle bones used?

Bonus: During which dynasty did the United States become an independent nation? Explain your answer.

Chinese Dynasties Song (sung to the tune of Frere Jacques)

Shang, Zhou, Qin, Han
Shang, Zhou, Qin, Han

Sui, Tang, Song
Sui, Tang, Song

Yuan, Ming, Qing, Republic
Yuan, Ming, Qing, Republic

Mao Zedong
Mao Zedong