

HISTORY · Y4–Y6

Ancient China

Knowledge Organiser — Y4–Y6

Key dynasties and periods

1

Shang Dynasty (1600–1046 BC)

One of the earliest recorded Chinese dynasties. The first Chinese writing (oracle bone script) appears here. Bronze casting develops.

2

Qin Dynasty (221–206 BC)

The first unified Chinese empire under Emperor Qin Shi Huang. The Great Wall begins. Standardised currency, weights, and writing.

Example: Terracotta Warriors buried with Qin Shi Huang

3

Han Dynasty (206 BC–AD 220)

Expanded the empire; established the Silk Road trade route. Paper, porcelain, and the seismograph invented.

4

Tang Dynasty (618–907)

Often considered China's golden age of arts and culture. Block printing and the world's first banknotes.

5

Song Dynasty (960–1279)

Gunpowder weapons, the compass, and mechanical clocks developed. First government to issue paper money nationally.

Inventions that changed the world

The 'Four Great Inventions'



- 1. PAPER (105 AD, Han Dynasty): Cai Lun developed a method of making paper from bark, rags, and hemp — transforming writing and communication.
- 2. PRINTING (Tang/Song): woodblock printing (7th century) then movable type (11th century, 400 years before Gutenberg in Europe).
- 3. GUNPOWDER (Tang, 850 AD): discovered by Taoist alchemists. Led to rockets, fireworks, and later — weapons.
- 4. COMPASS (Song, 11th century): used for navigation; revolutionised ocean travel worldwide.
- ALSO: silk, porcelain (fine china), wheelbarrow, iron casting, paper money, stirrups.
- THE SILK ROAD: 7,000-mile trade network linking China to Europe. Traded: silk, spices, tea, glass, and ideas.

