

## Ancient Civilisation: Greece, Egypt and China

Definitions	
Diversity	A range of different things.
Social	Relating to society.
Cultural	Relating to the ideas, customs and social behaviour of a society.
Ethnic	Relating to a population subgroup with a common national or cultural tradition.
Artefacts	An object made by a human being, typically one of cultural or historical interest.
Democracy	Control of an organisation or group by the majority of its members.
Era	A long and distinct period of history.
Philosophy	Study of some of the most basic questions about human life.

Important Figures	
Archimedes	One of the greatest scientists in Ancient Greece.
Socrates	One of the founders of western philosophy.
Alexander the Great	Considered one of the greatest warriors of all time.
Khufu (Pharaoh)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pharaoh. Responsible for the building of the Great Pyramid of Giza.
Tutankhamun (Pharaoh)	Second youngest Pharaoh, ruling from the age of 9-18.

Timeline	
<b>3500 BC</b>	Early settlers in the Nile valley.
<b>3100 BC</b>	Hieroglyphic script developed.
<b>2700 BC</b>	First stone pyramid built.
<b>2600 BC</b>	Pyramids of Giza built.
<b>1400 BC</b>	Tutankhamun became Pharaoh.
<b>1200 BC</b>	The Trojan war.
<b>776 BC</b>	The first Olympic games were staged.
<b>146 BC</b>	Greece became part of the Roman empire.



Egypt is a country in the continent Africa.

Greece is a country in the continent Europe.



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### China

It is difficult to be sure about China's early ancient history. Most historians agree that civilization occurred sometime around 2000 BCE around the Yellow River. China was home to one of the four early civilizations found around the world. However, China is different from the other civilizations. The culture that developed in Ancient China became the nation of China that exists today. Of course there have been changes along the way, but the same culture has continued. The other three civilizations have faded away or been completely overtaken by new people. For this reason, people say China is the oldest continuous civilization in the world. In China, the powerful families that controlled land became leaders of family-controlled governments called **dynasties**. Chinese history from ancient times until about 100 years ago is divided by different dynasties.



**The Xia Dynasty** (2000 BCE-1600 BCE) was the first dynasty in Chinese history. It lasted around 500 years and included the reigns of 17 **emperors**--an emperor is similar to a king. The Xia people were farmers, with bronze weapons and clay pottery. One artifact called a "bi" (pictured on right) seems to be a burial artifact. Bi's have been found throughout Chinese history. **Silk** is one of the most important products China has ever created.

Most historians agree that the Xia Dynasty was producing silk clothing, though silk production may have started much earlier.



**The Shang Dynasty** (1600 BCE-1046 BCE) was originally a **clan** living along the Yellow River during the Xia Dynasty. A clan is group of very close families that are often viewed as one big family. The Shang conquered Xia land and gained control of Chinese civilization. The Shang Dynasty lasted over 600 years and was led by 30 different emperors. The Shang were the oldest Chinese civilization to leave behind written records, called **oracle bones**--turtle shells, cattle shoulders or other bones on which were written important clues to Chinese history. Oracle bones were often used to determine what the gods/nature wanted. If the kingdom needed to know something such as '*will the king have a son*' or '*should we go to war*', it would be carved into bone or shell. They would then heat the bone until it cracked. The crack lines would reveal the wishes of the gods--this process of learning what the

gods want is called **divination**. During the Shang Dynasty people worshipped many gods. Ancestor worship was very important since they believed their family members became god-like in the after life. Shang government invented new ways to make bronze crafts. Thousands of bronze artifacts have been found including some that weigh nearly 2000 pounds. Its important to understand that other smaller cultures existed in the same time as the Shang in different parts of China, but the Shang left written records and seem to be the most advanced. Eventually, the Shang were defeated by the Zhou clan.



Silk is made by unraveling the cocoons of Silk Worms. Each cocoon is made from a single silk thread. Not all historians agree that the Xia was a real dynasty. Some believe the story of the Xia were just a mythical story because the stories sound embellished and they don't match exactly with the archeology that has been discovered so far. The Xia stories come from written history from the next dynasty, but there are some artifacts to support the existence of the Xia Dynasty.