

The World's Oldest Living Civilization:
An Investigation through the Five Eras of Chinese History

About this lesson: The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with the opportunity to learn about the five eras of Chinese history through research. The five eras of Chinese history include the following:
Ancient China
The First Imperial Age
The Second Imperial Age
The Third Imperial Age
The Modern Age

Many scholars note that we are able to learn much about the history of China based on the over 3500 years of written history. In addition, China is known for many inventions (e.g., paper money, insurance, moveable type printing press) as well as natural wonders (e.g., highest mountain, longest river, largest plateau, and longest wall.

Working in groups, students will be randomly assigned one of the five eras of Chinese history. Students will locate credible resources (i.e., using the CRAP method) to inform their research. Students will be required to locate resources relative to the era organized around geography, religion, achievements, politics, economy, and social structure. Students will be charged with creating a historically accurate representation of their era that will be shared with the class. Students will need to vette their resources to ensure what they have selected affords them knowledge necessary to complete their charge.

Grade level: 9-12

Classroom time: Approximately 4 hours

Resources:

Students will need access to computer or other device in which they can utilize for research

Historical Photographs of China and
https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2019/may/29/chinas-modern-history-in-pictures
(websites to be utilized by teacher and students to procure historical pictures)

Ancient China: History, Dynasties & Inventions
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzT-f25FGi0
13 minutes

The Animated History of China | Part 1
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YP1qjTzxQNE
10 minutes

All China's dynasties explained in 7 minutes (5,000 years of Chinese history)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFNzX3tYTXU
7 minutes

The History of China: A Concise Introduction to Chinese History, Culture, Dynasties, Mythology, Great Achievements, and More of the Oldest Living Civilization
History Brought Alive (2022)

Evaluating resources using the CRAP method https://www.uen.org/lessonplan/view/42812
+Slide presentation available for educators
+Checklist can be used by students evaluate the quality of the resources they procure
+ Video on Evaluating Sources https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyMT08mD7Ds via CRAPP method

That's interesting! (located at end of lesson plan)

Note-taking guide (located at end of lesson plan)

Depending on the final assessment students select, they may need access to additional materials (e.g., poster boards, art paper, etc).

Objectives:

- Students will research the assigned era of Chinese history.
- Students will analyze the quality of resources utilized in their research.
- Students will work in collaboration with one another to create a final product to demonstrate their understanding of the assigned era

- Note, students could complete this lesson working independently or with a partner depending on contextual variables.

Standards:

Standards include 6-8 and 9-12 grade bands to ensure the range of students served in contemporary educational milieus.

Content Area: Social Studies Inquiry Practices and Processes (Inq) Standard SS.Inq2: Wisconsin students will gather and evaluate sources.

Learning Priority K-2 (e) 3-5 (i) 6-8 (m) 9-12 (h) Inq2.a: Gather diverse sources (electronic, digital, print, and other mass media) applicable to the inquiry

6-8th SS.Inq2.a.m Explore evidence from multiple reliable sources representing a range of perspectives and media that have been selected through research to guide the inquiry.

9 - 12th SS.Inq2.a.h Explore evidence discovered through personal research through a variety of disciplinary lenses (e.g., economics, history, political science) and multiple perspectives (e.g., race, gender, ethnicity, language, ability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income) with a variety of sources including primary and secondary sources and media resources.

Inq2.b: Evaluate sources
6 - 8th SS.Inq2.b.m Determine credibility and applicability of a source by considering a variety of factors through the lens of a social studies strand.

9 - 12th SS.Inq2.b.h Analyze and weigh relevance of a source through a disciplinary lens to determine how the author, context, audience, and purpose affect the reliability, limitations, and usefulness of a source.

Lesson Sequence

Opening/ hook:

- Post historical pictures of China around room or scatter on student work stations.
- Ask students to view and select one that “speaks to them.”
- Request students to share why they selected the picture they did.
- Ask students to predict what might be the topic of exploration based on the pictures shared.

- Share the title of the lesson in writing in the room.
- Share the standards and learning priorities of the lesson.

- Ask students to brainstorm why locating accurate sources are important.
- Explore the concept of international-mindedness and the importance of learning about other people, cultures, communities, countries, etc.

Build background knowledge relative to History of China:

- Watch a couple videos on the history of China and/or engage in readings relative to the history of China.
- Students should utilize *That's Interesting* sheet to capture ideas/thoughts during the videos or readings.
- Discuss some of the ideas/thoughts captured by the students.
- Assign students to groups and randomly assign an era.

Build background knowledge relative to the CRAP method:

- Explore CRAP method to evaluating sources (e.g., use video, sample CRAP sheet)
- Teacher models the utilization of this method using a source of choice
- Working with their group, students practice using the CRAP method using a silly topic (e.g., mole rat, frilled lizard, pufferfish, axolotl, giant panda, red squirrel, blob fish)

Provide students with access to technology, copies of CRAP sheets, and copies of note-taking sheet. Remind students they will be submitting these documents with the final product.

As students engage in research, teacher meets with each group to discuss options for the final lesson product.

Students will share their final product with the class on completion. During share out time, each group should note a question or two they will pose at the end of the share out.

Options for assessment/ final product:

Informational travel brochure: Create an informational travel brochure advising travelers what it would be like to visit China during the assigned era.

Children's book: Create a children's book highlighting the main aspects of the assigned era.

Microlecture: Write out a 5 minute microlecture on the assigned era.

Stand alone presentation: Using technology, create a stand alone presentation that could be viewed by others.

Other options are based on negotiation between teacher and students.

Post lesson activities: The following optional, post-lesson activities are available for students.

Research an additional era individually or with a partner.

Present final product to an outside audience.

Offer the final product as a resource in school library or local library.

Compile all of the eras explored into one resource to be shared with others.



Your charge

- Listen and watch the videos
- Write down five details that you find interesting

Name:
1.
2.
3.
4.

5.
Other thoughts, questions, musings, etc.



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Note-taking guide

Names of group members	
Name of your era	
Geography	
Religion	
Achievements	

Politics	
Economy	
Social Structure	
Other notes, questions, etc.	