

THE SHANG DYNASTY

YEAR THREE

SPRING I



游繪殿誅王振煙上圖

哥川豐春画

永壽堂
西村屋印

LESSON ONE

*HOW DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE SHANG
DYNASTY?*

YEAR 3 | THE SHANG DYNASTY | SPRING ONE

Timeline		
1	2400 BCE	The Bronze Age begins in China.
2	1600 BCE	King Tang overthrows the last emperor of the Xia dynasty. The Shang Dynasty begins.
3	1300 BCE	The capital of the Shang Dynasty moves to Yin
4	1250 BCE - 1192 BCE	Emperor Wu Ding reigns over the Shang Dynasty
5		General Fu Hao leads lots of successful military campaigns.
6	1250 BCE - 1150 BCE	The 'I-Ching' (Book of Changes), a Chinese classic, is written.
7	1046 BCE	The Shang Dynasty is defeated
8	1898	Antique dealers notice Chinese writing on Oracle Bones.
9	1928	Excavations begin in Anyang; many Shang artefacts are found.
10	1976	The tomb of Fu Hao is discovered in

Important People		
1	Tang	First emperor of Shang. Very popular and successful.
2	Fu Hao	A great military leader and warrior. Also, wife of Wu Ding.
3	Wu Ding	A very successful emperor, who ruled for 58 years.
4	Zhou	The last emperor of the Shang Dynasty. A tyrant. Born 'Xin'.
5	Daji	The cruel wife of Zhou, who made up awful punishments.



Vocabulary		
1	archaeologist	Someone who finds and studies buried objects to find out about the past.
2	artefacts	An object created by a human, usually found much later after it was made.
3	bronze	The first metal widely used by humans, made by melting and mixing copper and tin.
4	cowrie shells	Small sea shells which were used by the Shang when trading as a kind of money.
5	dynasty	A family that rule a country or state for many generations.
6	Emperor	A king or ruler of an empire or country.
7	general	The leader of an army.
8	jade	A mineral (rock) that is green in colour. Used in lots of Asian art.
9	oracle bones	Animal bones or turtle shells with Chinese writing, used to try and predict the future.
10	Yellow River	A major river running across the north east of China.

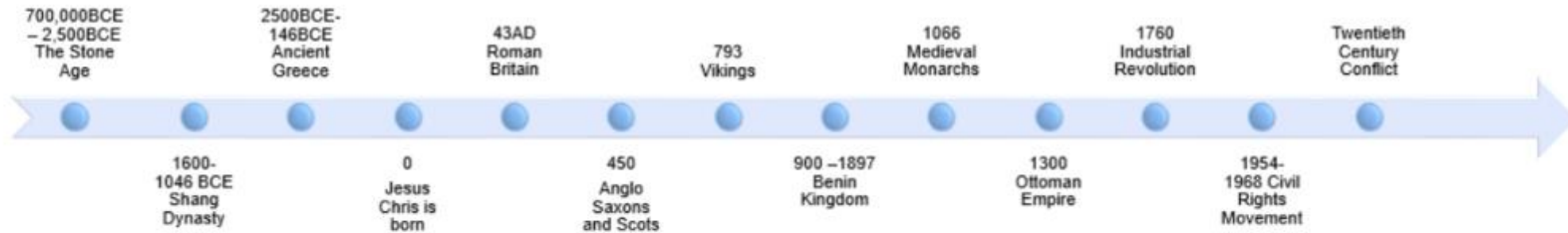


Do you know anything about China already?
Have you heard anything about the Shang Dynasty?



How long ago was the Shang Dynasty?

What came before it? What came after?

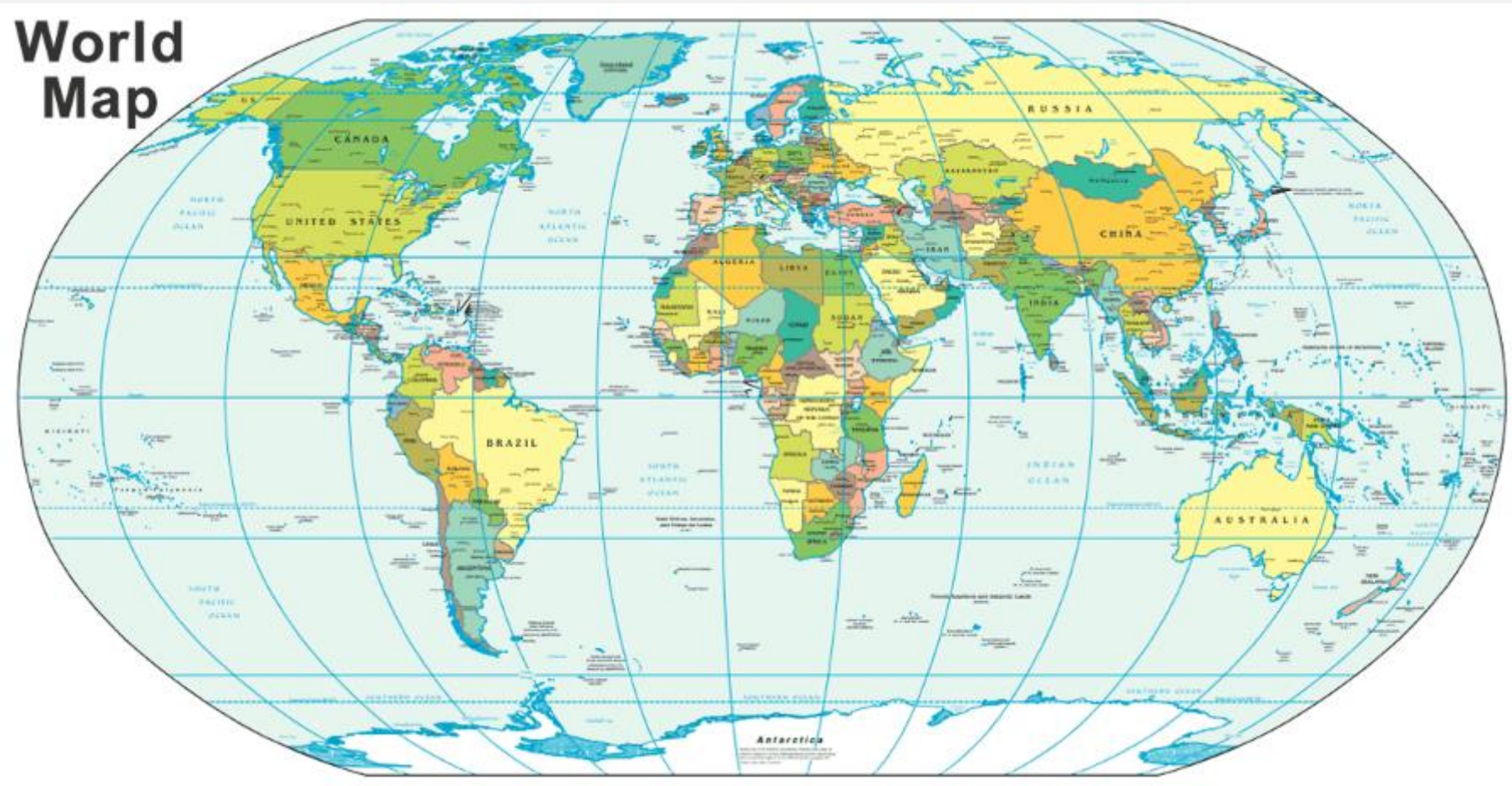


WHAT IS A DYNASTY?

- A dynasty is when one family rules a country or region over a long period of time. Generally, the head of the family will be the ruler of the land, like an emperor or king. When that ruler dies, another member of the family will take power, usually the oldest son. When a new family takes control, then a new dynasty begins.

WHERE WAS THE SHANG DYNASTY?

Can you find China on this map? Why do you think we say that China is in the far East?



The Shang Dynasty did not rule the whole of China.



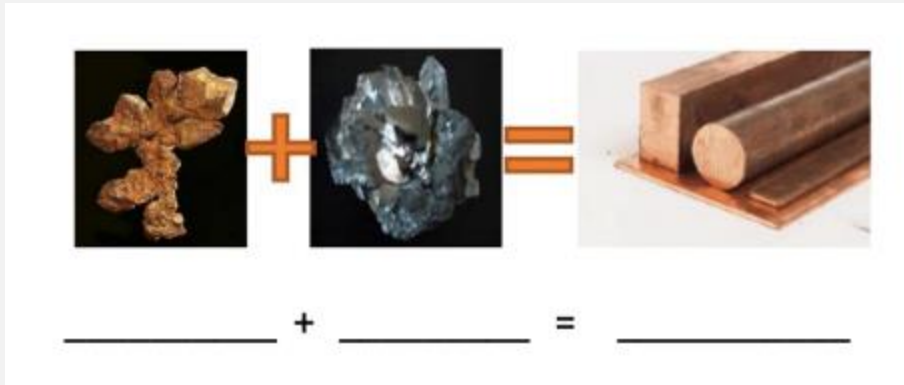
A BRONZE AGE CIVILISATION

The Stone Age came to an end when humans discovered metal. The first metal widely used by humans was called bronze. You can make bronze by melting and mixing two other metals: copper and tin. Melting and mixing metals is called smelting. It is difficult to do because you have to get the metal very, very hot. In Britain, we started to use bronze about 4000 years ago, in the year 2000 BCE.

Some civilisations learnt how to make bronze before us. In China, for example, they learnt how to make bronze in 2400 BCE, about 400 years before us!

A BRONZE AGE CIVILISATION

Which metals were used to make bronze? What was the process called?



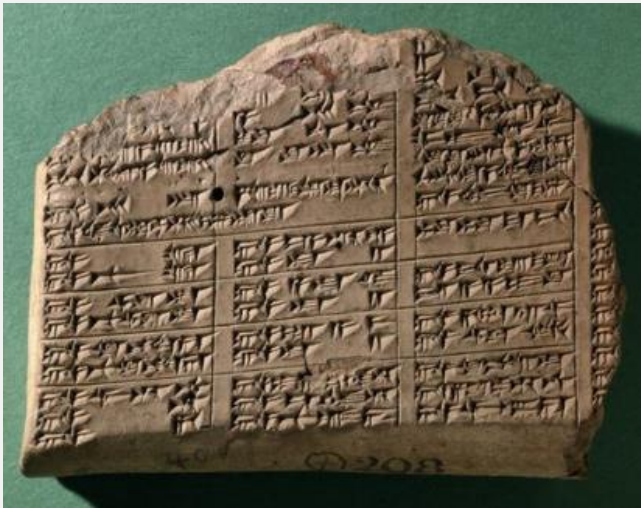
So, the Shang dynasty was a Bronze Age civilisation and was very skilled at bronze craft. Like other metals, bronze doesn't rot away or break down very easily. That means that archaeologists can dig up bronze items and learn more about how people in the Shang Dynasty lived. These different objects that we find are sometimes called artefacts.

ANCIENT WRITING

This isn't the only evidence that historians have about the Shang Dynasty. They were also the first people to use Chinese writing, which was sketched onto bones! Archaeologists also found these bones which tell us about what the Shang people might have believed. Amazingly, we have found most of the artefacts from the Shang dynasty in the last hundred years. Archaeologists are still finding more and more artefacts every day, and each time they learn a bit more about the Shang Dynasty.

ANCIENT WRITING

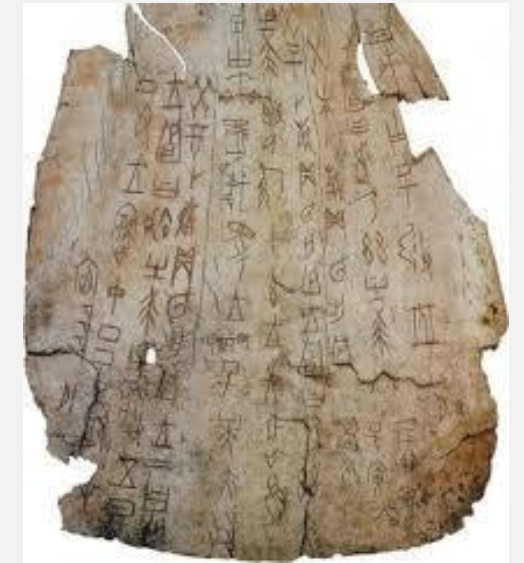
Although the Shang were the first people in China to invent writing, the Chinese weren't the first civilisation to start writing. We have evidence that in Mesopotamia the ancient Sumerians started writing around 3,500 BCE. That's two thousand years before the Chinese! The ancient Egyptians started writing sentences using hieroglyphics in 2,800 BCE. We don't know when people in Britain first started writing because nobody has found any written records from before the time that the Romans were here. In England today, we have an alphabet, and we combine the letters to make words. Chinese writing isn't like that, they use a picture to represent a word. These pictures are called characters, and many of the characters used by the Shang are the same as those used in China today. The Shang would write down all sorts of things on animal bones and turtle shells, called dragon bones or oracle bones. They would write about the emperors and wars, as well as how different people lived. This gives historians lots of useful information.



CUNEIFORM
MESOPOTAMIA
3,500 BCE



HIEROGLYPHICS
EGYPT
2,800 BCE



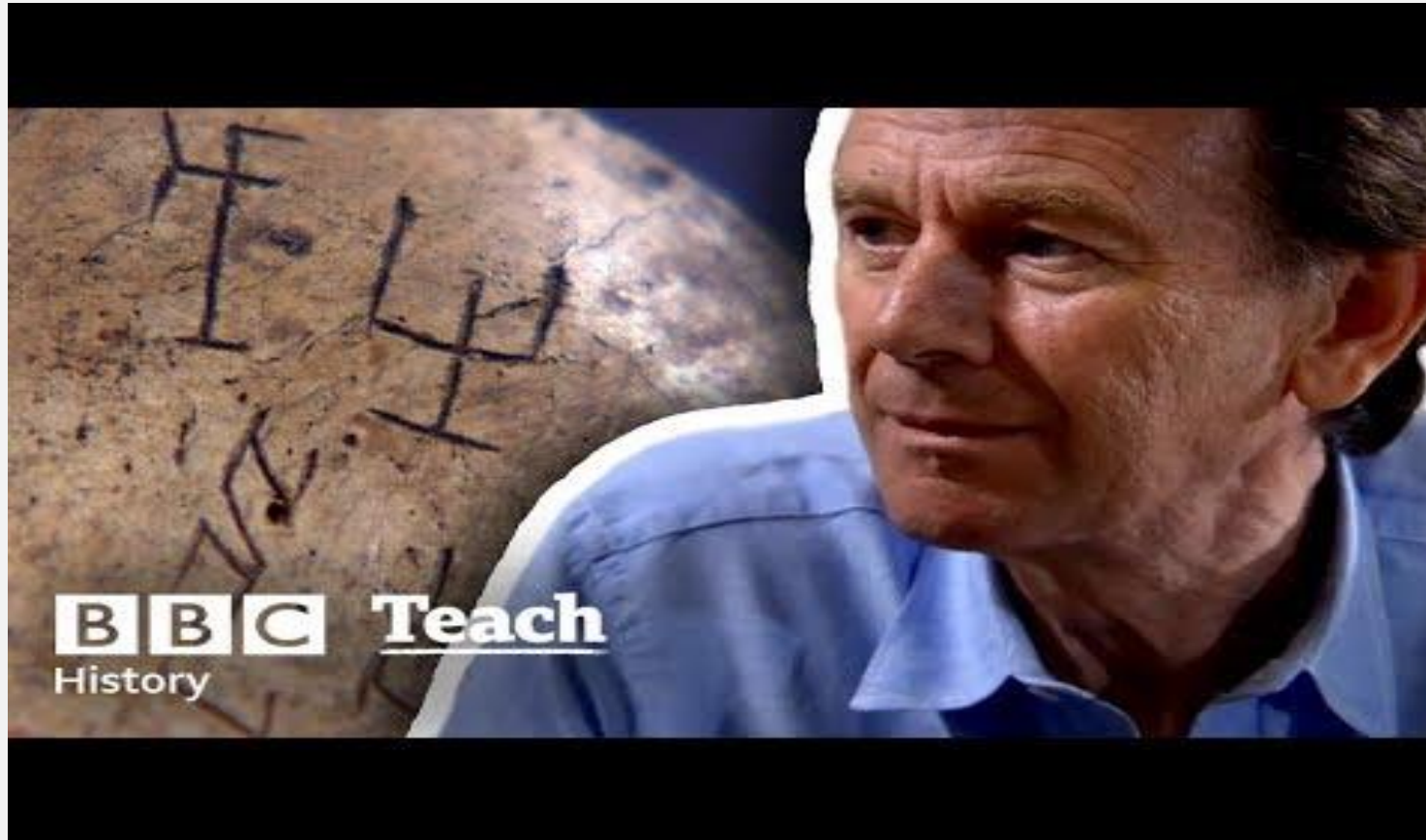
CHINESE
SHANG DYNASTY
1,400 BCE

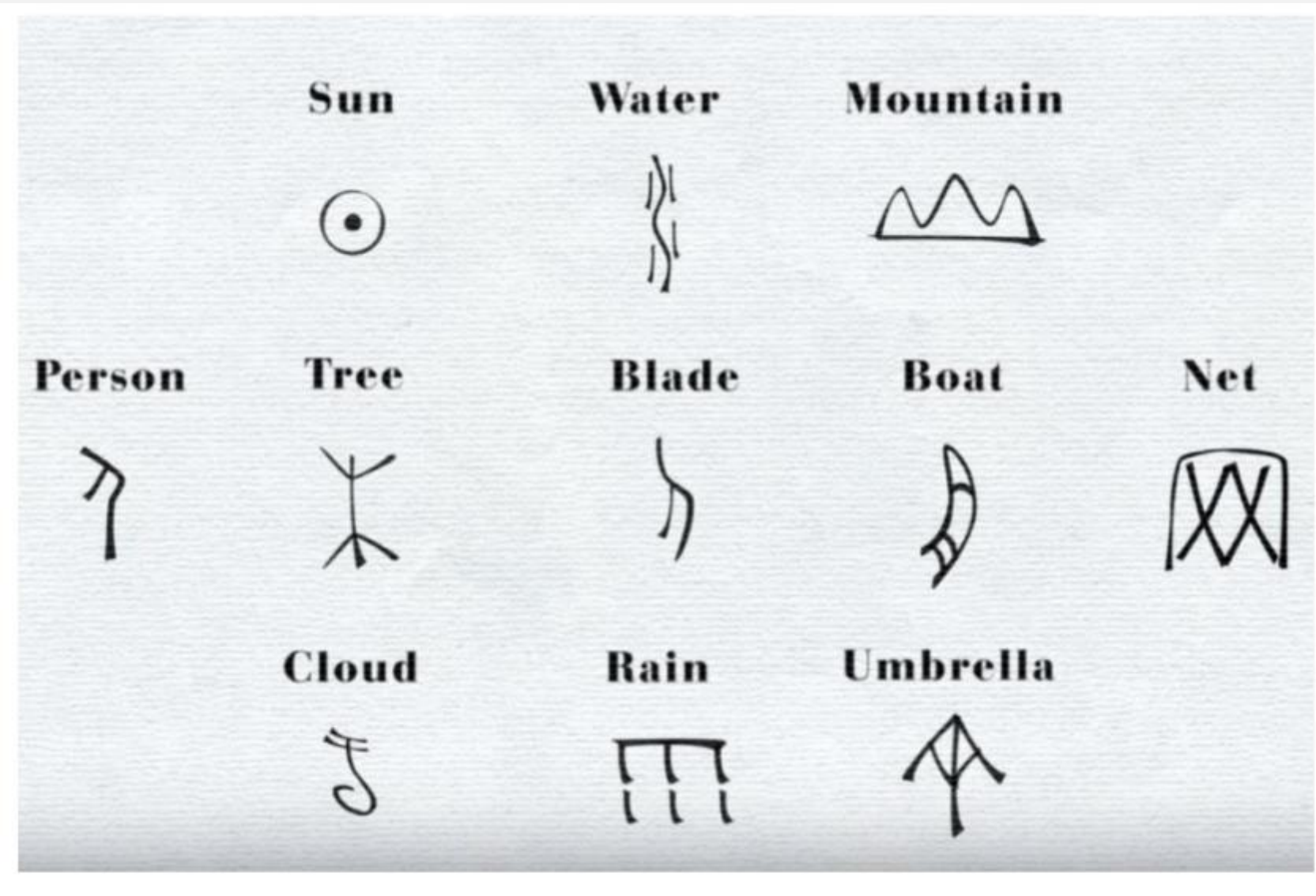
FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ORACLE
BONES HERE

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z39j2hv/articles/zsm6qhv>

THE STORY OF CHINA – HOW THE SHANG INVENTED WRITING

[HTTPS://WWW.BBC.CO.UK/BITESIZE/CLIPS/ZSGJ4J6](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zsgj4j6)





Use the characters to make up your own little story to share with an adult. In Chinese writing the characters go down the page in a list rather than across the page like our writing.



**WHAT DO YOU THINK
THESE ARTEFACTS ARE?
WHAT WERE THEY FOR?
WHO WOULD HAVE USED
THEM?
WHAT ARE THEY MADE
OF?**



Bronze axe head



Jade Statue



Jade pendant



Bronze 'ding'



Bronze wine vessel



Bronze wine vessel



Oracle bone



Dagger axe

**GIVE YOUR ANSWERS A
TICK IF THEY ARE
CORRECT, OR EDIT
THEM.**

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SPRING I

Return to page 3 in your booklet and complete the learning review.

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