China Coordinates

Some maps use coordinates, or a set of numbers and letters, to make it easier to locate an area. Look at the map of China. Notice that if you start at E and move your finger over to 6, you will find Hong Kong. Fill in the blanks below using the coordinates as clues.

1. Name the city located at B6.
2. Name the coordinates that help to locate Wuhan.
3. Name the sea located at B7 and B8.
4. Name the coastal city located at D7.
5. Name the country that borders China at E5.
6. Name the river that flows through D3 to D6.
7. Name the city located at E6.
8. Name the coordinates that help to locate Mt. Everest.
9. Name the coordinates that help to locate the Great Wall.
10. Name the country that borders China at B3, B4, and B5.
11. Name China’s capital located at C6.
12. Name the coordinates that help to locate Urumqi.
13. Name the coordinates that help to locate North and South Korea.
14. Name the country to the east of the Formosa Strait.
15. Name the city to the east of Beijing.
Confucianism

Confucius is the Latin name for Kung Fu Zi, who lived around 500 B.C.E. He was a scholar who stressed the importance of duty, honor, and public service. He said that the world would be peaceful and harmonious if people were loyal and trustworthy, worshiped their ancestors properly, and respected and obeyed their elders. His teachings greatly influenced Chinese customs and ethics.

Read the 10 quotations below from Confucius. Choose one that you like. In the scroll below, write a paragraph of at least six sentences explaining what the quotation might have meant to the Chinese people in 500 B.C.E and what it means to you.

- It is better to light one small candle than to curse the darkness.
- Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.
- Only the wisest and the stupidest of men never change.
- When we see persons of worth, we should think of equaling them; when we see persons of a contrary character, we should turn inward and examine ourselves.
- When anger arises, think of the consequences.
- Real knowledge is to know the extent of one’s ignorance.
- Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated.
- It does not matter how slowly you go, so long as you do not stop.
- A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.
- To put the world in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must cultivate our personal life; and to cultivate our personal life, we must first set our hearts right.
In ancient China, the family was the most important unit in society. The members of a family were expected to take care of each other and to be loyal to each other. The family members were also expected to honor their ancestors.

The grandparents, parents, and children lived together. The younger members of the family always had to show respect and obedience to their elders. Children thought of themselves first as members of their family, and secondly, as individuals. Chinese names were even written with the family name first and the individual name second.

Everyone in the family was responsible for the behavior of each family member. Any member of the family could bring honor or dishonor upon the entire family.

A son had to obey his father and even marry the bride his father picked for him. It was a son's duty to carry on the family name and manage the worship of the family's ancestors. A daughter could not do these duties because she became part of her husband's family when she married. A woman was expected to be obedient first to her father, then to her husband, and even to her adult sons if she was a widow.

In wealthy families, the men were responsible for the income of the family. The women spent most of their time at home managing household affairs. The women also raised silkworms to make silk. They wove cloth and made clothing. In poor families of farmers, shopkeepers, craftsmen, and other trades, the men, women, and children all worked together.

In wealthy families, boys learned reading and arithmetic, and the girls learned homemaking skills. In very wealthy families, boys also learned writing, history, and other subjects that would prepare them for official careers. In poor families, the boys and girls learned to do the kind of work their parents did. They had little or no schooling.

1. How is your family similar to families in ancient China?

2. How is your family different from families in ancient China?
Paper and Printing

Paper was invented as early as C.E. 105 in China. The raw material for the first paper came from silk rags. Later, paper was also made from bamboo, hemp, and mulberry bark. It took several steps to make a sheet of paper. First, the rags were soaked in water, then boiled, and next pounded to form a pulp. A thin bamboo screen was then dipped into the pulp and became covered with a thin film of fiber. The screen fit inside a mold, which was used to press out the excess water. Finally, the screen was left to dry on a heated wall. After it was dry, a sheet of paper could be peeled off the screen.

The paper was rolled into long scrolls to form the first Chinese books. Scholars wrote the text on the paper in vertical columns. The reader read each column downward from right to left.

During the Han dynasty (202 B.C.E.—C.E. 220), civil servants—people who worked for the government—needed large quantities of paper, so it was mass-produced in factories.

By the ninth century, woodblock printing was being used in China. To prepare the woodblock, scholars would paste a thin manuscript over it and then cut through the paper onto the wood. The characters had to be carved in reverse. A print was made by inking the surface of the woodblock, then placing a sheet of paper over it and rubbing it gently with a dry brush. The first woodblock-printed books in China were Buddhist texts and prayers. Woodblock printing made reading material available in China and influenced literacy (the ability to read and write). By the end of the Tang dynasty (C.E. 618–907), there were bookshops in every Chinese city.

Moveable type was invented later in the Song dynasty (C.E. 960–1279), but it did not entirely replace woodblock printing because at least 80,000 separate type characters were needed.

Number the steps for making paper in the correct order.

_____ A thin bamboo screen was dipped into the pulp.
_____ The rags were pounded.
_____ The screen became covered with a thin film of fiber.
_____ The rags were boiled.
_____ The rags were soaked in water.
_____ Excess water was pressed out of the fiber.
_____ The screen dried on a heated wall.

DID YOU KNOW?

It was not until the 1430s that printing was “reinvented” by Johannes Gutenberg in Europe. He may have learned about printing from travelers who had visited China.
The Silk Route

During the Tang dynasty (C.E. 618–907), China reached a high point in power and culture. Silk cloth, with its fine texture, lightweight quality, beauty, and strength, was highly valued and used as a kind of money. Silk clothing was also in demand in the West where it was a symbol of wealth and luxury. Chinese merchants and government officials from Chang’an, in eastern China, formed long caravans to take the silk fabric to the West. The route from Chang’an to Byzantium was more than 6,000 miles long, and it became known as the “Silk Route.” Most of the merchants did not travel the entire route. Instead, the silk passed through many hands before it reached Byzantium. In addition to the silk, merchants from China also brought along porcelain, dried rhubarb, tea, and herbal medicines to trade.

Along the route, the caravans stopped at the oasis town of Dunhuang, which was an important religious center for Buddhism. The Buddhist religion had made its way from India east to China via the Silk Route. Some merchants traded silk for horses at Dunhuang and then returned to Chang’an. Next, the caravans crossed the Taklamakan Desert, one of the driest deserts in the world. The caravans continued on to the oasis city of Kashgar, which was famous for its fruits. Merchants traded silk for dried dates, raisins, jade, and other local products to take back to China. In the next part of the journey, caravans had to cross the treacherous Pamirs, a high mountain range in eastern Afghanistan. The route wound through high-walled valleys above raging waters. Many men and animals died from falls or from sudden storms.

In Tashkent, merchants exchanged silk for Persian metal work, glass, and musical instruments. In Transoxiana, the caravans were sometimes suddenly attacked by bandits who killed and wounded merchants in fierce fights. In the Persian city of Herat, merchants interacted with Arabs from Baghdad and Damascus, traders from India, Muslim imams, Christian priests, and Buddhist monks. Ideas and technologies, such as papermaking and glass making, were also exchanged. In Baghdad, the merchants traded silk for African ivory, gold, and spices, printed cotton cloth from India, pearls from the Persian Gulf, and precious stones from Ceylon. In Damascus, Arab merchants took the silk cloth on to Byzantium, where it was sewn into garments of silk brocade and worn by wealthy people. From Byzantium, the silk reached Rome and other Western cities.

Answer the following questions on another sheet of paper. Use complete sentences.

1. Besides silk, what else did merchants from China take along to trade?
2. What did the Chinese merchants receive in return for the silk?
3. Why would merchants travel together in long caravans along the Silk Route?
4. What part of the Silk Route would you have most liked and least liked to journey across? Why?
5. What dangers were there for merchants who journeyed across the Silk Route? Why do you think they were still willing to make the trip?
_Imperial rule_ refers to the time when emperors ruled China. At that time, there were four main social classes of people in China.

The emperor was at the top of the four classes.

- Scholars were the most highly respected people because they had the ability to read and write the complicated Chinese writing system. Scholars often worked for the government as civil servants.

- The peasants were the next most important people because they were the ones who produced the food for the entire country.

- The artisans were next in line. Artisans are people who make things with their hands. In ancient China, artisans worked in government-run factories to mass-produce goods. The artisans would apply their crafts to different stages of the manufacturing processes. They made decorated tableware and fine silk cloth, as well as tools, cooking utensils, and weapons for the army.

- The merchants were least respected because they simply traded goods rather than produced anything. They were forbidden from wearing silk clothing. The merchants could not take on civil service jobs and were forced to pay heavy taxes. When the Mongols came into power much later in C.E. 1279, their lives improved for a while. Some merchants became quite rich because they could trade freely throughout the empire. The Mongols also protected the Silk Route from bandits.

Career soldiers were not highly regarded and did not have a class of their own.

On the lines next to the pagoda below, write the words _soldiers, peasants, emperor, merchants, artisans, and scholars_ to show how they ranked in ancient China.
Most of the people in ancient China lived in rural areas and worked as farmers. Although they lived on family-owned plots, they still had to pay taxes, serve in the army, and work part of each year on public projects such as building roads and canals.

The life of the peasants was hard because all their work had to be done by hand. Just keeping the crops watered was a major chore in northern China. This mountainous region is covered with a rich yellow soil called loess. To take advantage of this fertile land, Chinese farmers cut terraces into the hillsides to create long narrow fields in which they grew millet and wheat. Water had to be raised up to the terraces by human-powered irrigation machines.

Unlike the rural areas, the towns were centers of trade and of government. Each town was divided into sections called wards with walls surrounding them. At night, drums would warn the people that the gates were being locked for the night. An eye was kept on the residents of the town by authorities in watchtowers.

Poor people lived far away from the wealthy people in the town. Their homes were crowded together and were made from mud or bricks. The roofs were constructed from reeds and grasses. Official buildings and the homes of wealthy people were ornamented with pottery figures and decorated tiles. Markets were held along one of the main streets of the town. Peasant farmers would bring their produce and also their grain tax to be collected by the officials. Musicians and jugglers often performed near the market. Artisans also had shops in the town where they made tools, jewelry, and other items. Potters made pots and jars. Street vendors walked through the town selling food or other goods.

1. What would be an advantage and a disadvantage of living in the countryside and working as a farmer?

2. What would be an advantage and a disadvantage of living in a walled town?

Did You Know?

Sites for new towns were carefully chosen so that they would be in harmony with nature. The walls surrounding a town were built in a square shape to symbolize the “four corners” of the earth.