

Student

Directions:

Read each sentence from the passage. Use clues in the sentence and word structure to infer the meaning.

Write your best guess for what the word means.

1. Dynasty

"For thousands of years, China was ruled by a dynasty that controlled the government and passed power to the next ruler."

A dynasty is: _____

2. Bureaucracy

"The emperor relied on a bureaucracy that helped organize the government and keep it running."

A bureaucracy is: _____

3. Scholar-official

"Only the most successful test-takers became scholar-officials who worked in important government positions."

A scholar-official is: _____

4. Merit System

"Because of the merit system, a person could rise to a high position through skill instead of family background."

A merit system is: _____

5. Urbanization

"During this time, China experienced rapid urbanization as more people moved from farms to crowded cities."

Urbanization means: _____

6. Despot

"People feared the emperor would become a despot if he ruled with cruelty instead of fairness."

A despot is: _____

7. Tribute

"Some regions sent yearly tribute to show respect to the powerful empire."

Tribute is: _____

8. Khan

"The Mongols were led by a khan who commanded their armies."

A khan is: _____

9. Confucianism

"Many leaders followed Confucianism by using its teachings to guide their decisions."

Confucianism is: _____

Teacher

Inquiry Vocabulary Routine With Progressive Reveal Supports

Each word includes:

1. Context sentence (not definitional)
2. Teacher prompts guiding the student toward the meaning
3. Small "truth-bites" that increase clarity without revealing the definition
4. A final student inference question

Use one prompt at a time, slowly revealing more information.

12/10

Day 1

Day 1
Vocab

Day 2 - 4
repeat read
1 time

★ 1. Dynasty

A series of rulers from the same family

Sentence:

"For thousands of years, China was ruled by a dynasty that controlled the government and passed power to the next ruler."

Teacher Prompts With Truth-Bites

1. "Who is ruling here — one ruler or rulers over time?"
Truth-bite: dynasty lasts across multiple rulers.
2. "The sentence says they 'passed power to the next ruler.' What does that show?"
Truth-bite: power moves from one ruler to another in order.
3. "Does this sound like random rulers or a connected line of rulers?"
Truth-bite: rulers are connected across time.
4. "If rulers follow one another in an ordered line, what might dynasty mean?"

★ 2. Bureaucracy

System of many govt officials who carry out govt rules & regulations

Sentence:

"The emperor relied on a bureaucracy that helped organize the government and keep it running."

Teacher Prompts With Truth-Bites

1. "Is this describing one helper or a group that helps?"
Truth-bite: bureaucracy is a group, not a single person.
2. "What does this group help with — government laws or farming?"
Truth-bite: they organize and support government functions.
3. "Does the emperor do everything by himself, or does this group assist?"
Truth-bite: bureaucracy assists leadership.
4. "So, if a bureaucracy is a group that helps the government run, what might it mean?"

★ 3. Scholar-Official

highly educated person who passed civil service exams & worked in the govt.

Sentence:

"Only the most successful test-takers became scholar-officials who worked in important government positions."

Teacher Prompts With Truth-Bites

1. "What clue do you see about how someone becomes a scholar-official?"
Truth-bite: they must pass difficult tests.
2. "If someone passes difficult tests, what does that tell us about them?"
Truth-bite: they are highly educated.
3. "Where do scholar-officials work?"
Truth-bite: in important positions in government.
4. "So what might a scholar-official be?"

★ 4. Merit System

System in which people are hired & promoted based on talent & skills, rather than wealth & social status

Sentence:

"Because of the merit system, a person could rise to a high position through skill instead of family background."

Teacher Prompts With Truth-Bites

1. "What two things are being contrasted — skill or family?"
Truth-bite: system focuses on skill.
2. "The root word *merit* means 'to earn' or 'to deserve.' How does that help?"
Truth-bite: positions are earned, not inherited.
3. "Does this system reward ability or birth status?"
Truth-bite: skill and hard work matter.
4. "So what might the merit system be?"

★ 5. Urbanization

Sentence:

"China experienced rapid urbanization as more people moved from farms to crowded cities."

Teacher Prompts With Truth-Bites

1. "Where are people moving — to farms or to cities?"
Truth-bite: urbanization involves movement into cities.
2. "What happens to cities when many people move there?"
Truth-bite: cities become larger and more crowded.
3. "What does the ending -tion often mean?"
Truth-bite: -tion = the process of something happening.
4. "So what might urbanization be?"

★ 6. Despot a tyrant or dictator

Sentence:

"People feared the emperor would become a despot if he ruled with cruelty instead of fairness."

Teacher Prompts With Truth-Bites

1. "Is cruelty positive or negative?"
Truth-bite: a despot is associated with cruelty.
2. "How might people feel under someone who rules with cruelty?"
Truth-bite: people fear a despot.
3. "Is a despot someone fair or someone harsh?"
Truth-bite: harsh rulership is the key idea.
4. "So what might a despot be?"

★ 7. Tribute payment or gift to a stronger power

Sentence:

"Some regions sent yearly tribute to show respect to the powerful empire."

Teacher Prompts With Truth-Bites

1. "Is tribute something given once or every year?"
Truth-bite: it is given regularly.
2. "Is the region showing power or showing respect?"
Truth-bite: tribute shows respect to a stronger power.
3. "Is tribute taken by force, or is it something they give?"
Truth-bite: tribute is something given.
4. "So what might tribute be?"

★ 8. Khan Mongol Ruler

Sentence:

"The Mongols were led by a khan who commanded their armies."

Teacher Prompts With Truth-Bites

1. "Who is giving orders — the khan or someone else?"

Truth-bite: the khan commands the armies.

2. "Does this sound like a leader or a follower?"

Truth-bite: the khan is clearly the leader.

3. "If someone commands armies, what kind of position do they have?"

Truth-bite: the khan holds high authority.

4. "So what might a khan be?"

★ 9. Confucianism

A belief system based on the ideas of the Chinese thinker Confucius.

Sentence:

"Many leaders followed Confucianism by using its teachings to guide their decisions."

Teacher Prompts With Truth-Bites

1. "What is guiding the leaders — objects or teachings?"

Truth-bite: Confucianism involves teachings.

2. "The word ends in -ism. What does that usually mean?"

Truth-bite: -ism = belief system or philosophy.

3. "What name do you see inside the word?"

Truth-bite: Confucius → the ideas come from him.

4. "So what might Confucianism be?"

Passage 1: Life and Power in Imperial China

Word Count: 292 words

For thousands of years, China was ruled by a **dynasty**, which is a series of rulers from the same family. Each dynasty shaped the government, culture, and daily life of the people. Many rulers followed the teachings of **Confucianism**, a belief system based on the ideas of Confucius. Confucianism teaches that a good government should act with honesty, fairness, and respect.

To support the emperor, China developed a large **bureaucracy**, which means a system made up of many government officials who carried out laws and made sure the empire ran smoothly. Many of these officials were **scholar-officials**, highly educated men who passed difficult civil service exams. Because China used a **merit system**, people could earn government jobs through talent and hard work rather than wealth or family status.

As cities grew, China experienced **urbanization**, the movement of people from rural villages into busy urban centers. Trade expanded, ideas spread, and cities became centers of learning and art.

However, not every leader ruled with kindness. A ruler who used power harshly was sometimes called a **despot**, meaning a dictator or tyrant. China also faced threats from outside its borders. The Mongols, led by powerful rulers called **khans**, conquered large parts of Asia, including China. Some areas were forced to send **tribute**, or payments, to show obedience to Mongol power.

Affixes

- **com-** / **con-** = *together or with*
- **-tion** = *the act of or process of*

Through changing dynasties, rulers, and ideas, China built government systems and beliefs that shaped its long history.

★ Vocabulary Practice

Match each word to the correct meaning.

1. Bureaucracy
2. Scholar-official
3. Merit system
4. Urbanization
5. Khan
6. Tribute
7. Despot
8. Dynasty
9. Confucianism

Word Bank

- A movement of people from rural to urban areas
- Payment or gift to a stronger power
- A tyrant or harsh ruler

- D. A belief system based on the ideas of Confucius
- E. System of many officials who carry out government rules
- F. Mongol ruler
- G. Person who passed civil service exams and works in government
- H. System of hiring based on talent and skills
- I. A series of rulers from one family

★ Comprehension Questions (With Sentence Frames)

Literal Questions

1. What is a dynasty?
A dynasty is _____.
2. What does Confucianism teach about government?
Confucianism teaches that a government should _____.
3. What is a bureaucracy?
A bureaucracy is _____.
4. Why were scholar-officials important in China?
Scholar-officials were important because _____.
5. What is urbanization?
Urbanization is _____.
6. Who were the khans?
The khans were _____.

Inference Questions

7. Why might the merit system have made China's government stronger?
The merit system may have made the government stronger because _____.
8. Why would some areas feel pressure to send tribute to Mongol rulers?
Some areas felt pressure to send tribute because _____.
9. How might life change for a farmer who moves to a city during urbanization?
Life might change for a farmer moving to a city because _____.
10. Why could a despot be dangerous for the people of China?
A despot could be dangerous because _____.

★ TEACHER ANSWER KEY

Day 2+

Vocabulary Answers

- 1 → E
- 2 → G
- 3 → H
- 4 → A
- 5 → F
- 6 → B
- 7 → C
- 8 → I
- 9 → D

Comprehension Answers

Literal

1. A dynasty is a series of rulers from the same family.
2. Confucianism teaches that a government should be honest, fair, and respectful.
3. A bureaucracy is a system of many government officials who carry out rules and regulations.
4. Scholar-officials were educated men who passed exams and helped run the government.
5. Urbanization is the movement of people from rural areas to cities.
6. Khans were Mongol rulers.

Inference

7. The merit system likely made the government stronger because officials were chosen for their skills, not their family status.
8. Areas sent tribute because they feared Mongol power and wanted protection or peace.
9. Life might become busier, with more job opportunities, trade, noise, and crowds.
10. A despot could abuse power, harm people, or rule unfairly.

★ PASSAGE 2 (Student Version)

The Growth of Trade and Technology in Song China

Word Count: 257 words

During the Song dynasty, China entered a period of great growth and creativity. The government continued to follow Confucian ideas, and the merit system remained important. Scholar-officials filled government jobs, helping the bureaucracy stay organized and effective.

Trade expanded across China and into other regions. Farmers grew more rice than ever before, which allowed more people to live in cities. This helped urbanization increase rapidly. Markets filled with goods

such as tea, silk, tools, and ceramics. Because merchants traveled long distances, they sometimes had to give tribute to powerful rulers they met along the way.

The Song dynasty also improved technology. One major invention was movable-type printing, which made books easier and cheaper to produce. This helped spread knowledge and ideas. Another invention was gunpowder, which changed warfare around the world. Even the compass, which helped sailors navigate the seas, became widely used during this time.

Not every ruler used power wisely. Some leaders acted like despots, using fear to control the people. Others were open to new ideas and encouraged learning and invention.

Affixes

- com- / con- = *together or with*
 - Example: **compass** helps bring directions *together* for navigation.
- -tion = *the act of or process of*
 - Example: **communication** means *the process of sharing information*.

The Song dynasty's changes in trade, government, and technology helped shape China for centuries.

Teacher Vocabulary Key

1. Urbanization → A. A movement of people from rural to urban areas
2. Tribute → B. Payment or gift to a stronger power
3. Despot → C. A tyrant or harsh ruler
4. Confucianism → D. A belief system based on the ideas of Confucius
5. Bureaucracy → E. System of many officials who carry out government rules
6. Khan → F. Mongol ruler
7. Scholar-official → G. Person who passed civil service exams and works in government
8. Merit System → H. System of hiring based on talent and skills
9. Dynasty → I. A series of rulers from one family

