

CHAPTER 7 Section 3 (pages 200–207)

Han Emperors in China

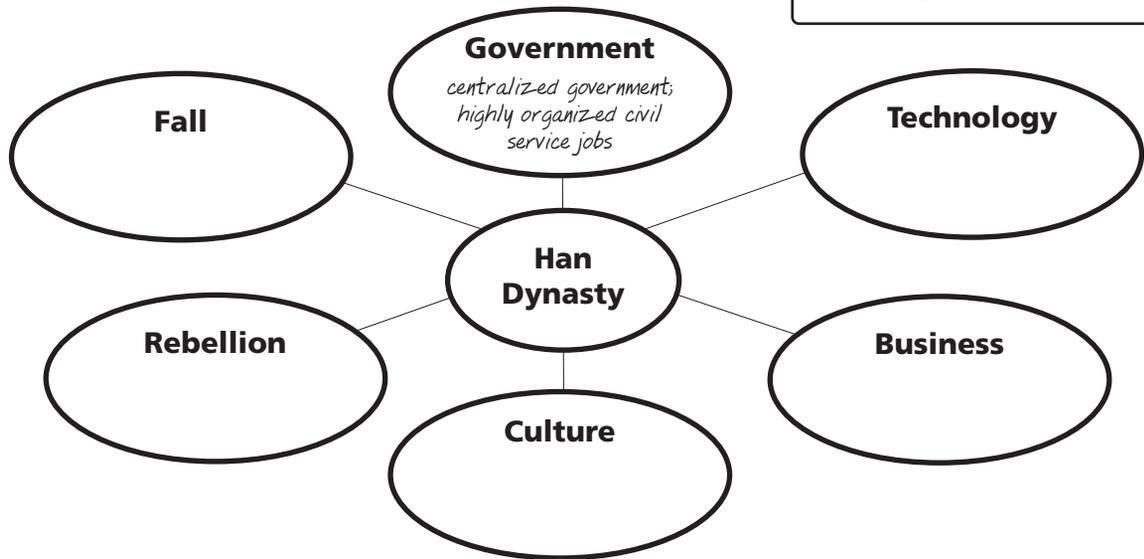
BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read about the spread of Indian religions and culture.

In this section, you will read about the Han Dynasty in China.

AS YOU READ

Use the web below to take notes on the Han Dynasty.



TERMS AND NAMES

Han Dynasty Chinese dynasty that ruled for most of the period from 202 B.C. to A.D. 220

centralized government Government that concentrates power in a central authority

civil service Administrative departments of a government; also, word describing government jobs and employees

monopoly One group's complete control over the production and distribution of certain goods

assimilation Policy of encouraging conquered peoples to adopt the institutions and customs of the conquering nation

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The Han Restore Unity to China

(pages 200–202)

What changes did Han leaders make?

A strong empire also arose in China. The Chinese had been united briefly under the Qin empire. But it fell apart in a period of civil war. In 202 B.C., Liu Bang named himself the first emperor of the **Han Dynasty**. The Han would rule parts of China for the next 400 years. They set many patterns for Chinese culture for centuries to come,

Liu Bang created a **centralized government**. Local officials reported to the emperor. The rule of

the previous emperor had been very harsh. Liu Bang took a different approach. He lowered taxes. He gave lighter penalties for crimes. Life became easier for the Chinese people.

From 141 to 87 B.C., the emperor Wudi ruled Han China. He made his empire almost the size of modern China. He defeated nomads in the north. He moved troops and settlers to the west. He sent soldiers to the north into modern Korea and to the south to modern Vietnam.

1. What changes did Liu Bang make?

A Highly Structured Society; Han Technology, Commerce, and Culture (pages 202–205)

What advances took place?

Chinese society under the Han dynasty was very structured. The emperor was at the top. He had a large number of officials, who reached down to the smallest village. They filled **civil service** jobs. Those who wanted these jobs had to pass an exam. The exam tested them on their knowledge of the writings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius.

To support a large government, the emperor collected taxes. Farmers paid part of the crops they gathered. Merchants paid taxes on the goods they traded. Peasants also had to work one month a year on government projects, such as dams and roads.

Under Han rule, the Chinese created many new inventions. One was paper. Paper made books more available and increased learning.

The Chinese also improved farming by inventing a new two-bladed plow. This change was important because the number of Chinese people had grown greatly. As Han emperors told their people, farming was the most important work. At the same time, several industries became important. The government had a **monopoly** on, or took complete control of, the mining of salt and making of iron, coins, and alcohol. It also made silk, which was in great demand in other lands.

2. Why were changes in farming so important?

The Han Unifies Chinese Culture; The Fall of The Han and Their Return (pages 205–207)

Why did problems develop?

China now included many different peoples. The Han rulers encouraged **assimilation**—making sure that these people learned Chinese ways. They urged the Chinese to marry them.

One group that did not do well in Han China was women. According to Confucius, women were limited to meeting the needs of their husband and children. Some upper-class women, however, were able to become involved in other areas of life.

The Han empire began to have problems. Rich people got richer, while the poor were forced to pay heavy taxes. Members of the court were caught up in plots to gain power. Eventually, the peasants rebelled against their high taxes and poor lives.

A government official named Wang Mang took the throne. He tried to help the poor by taking land from the large landholders. But a terrible flood struck China and the peasants rebelled again. The Han Dynasty was *restored* when a member of the Han family was put on the throne. This was called the Later Han Dynasty.

For the next few decades, China enjoyed peace and wealth. But the same problems arose. The gap between rich and poor was too great. By A.D. 220, the Han Dynasty had fallen for good.

3. What caused the fall of the Han Dynasty?

| Two Great Empires: Han China and Rome | |
|--|---|
| Han Dynasty—202 B.C. to A.D. 220 | Roman Empire—27 B.C. to A.D. 476 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empire replaced rival kingdoms • Centralized, bureaucratic government • Built roads and defensive walls • Conquered many diverse peoples in regions bordering China • At its height—area of 1,500,000 square miles and 60,000,000 people • Chinese became common written language throughout empire • Ongoing conflict with nomads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empire replaced republic • Centralized, bureaucratic government • Built roads and defensive walls • Conquered many diverse peoples in regions of three continents • At its height—area of 3,400,000 square miles and 55,000,000 people • Latin did not replace other written languages in empire • Ongoing conflict with nomads |

Skillbuilder

1. Which empire at its height covered more land?

2. What did the two empires have in common?
