

# Year 5 Shang Dynasty Knowledge Organiser

## What is the Shang Dynasty best known for?

**The Anglo Saxons, Picts and Scots and the Vikings**  
*Why was the Battle of Hastings such an important conquest in British history?*

**Victorians**  
*What would my life have been like if I lived during Victorian times?*

### ★ Star Vocabulary ★

**dynasty:** a sequence of rulers from the same family  
**timeline:** a display of events in date order  
**emperor:** a man who rules an empire which is an area. There were 30 Shang Emperors  
**revolt:** to fight in a violent way against the rule of a leader  
**archaeology:** a science that deals with past human life and activities as shown by objects  
**artefact:** something created by human activity  
**ancestors:** Your great-great-great grandparents are your ancestors  
**Bronze Age:** the period of time between the Stone Age and the Iron Age  
**Cheng Tang:** the first ruler of the Shang Dynasty after he defeated the king of the Xia Dynasty  
**Fu Hao:** one of the wives of King Wu Ding and a military commander  
**Oracle Bones:** bones used to ask questions to the Gods or predict the future

### Key Facts

1. The first ruler of the Shang was Tang Shang, a military leader. There were thirty Shang Emperors.
2. The Shang built their **houses and public buildings** out of wood and mud. They built mud banks to try and hold back.
3. Shang society was divided into different **classes**. At the top were the ruling class under the **royal family**, then came **priests**, an **administrative class**, **warriors**, **craftsmen**, **traders**, **farmers** and **slaves**.
4. The Shang were specialists in **bronze** work and many beautiful artefacts have been recovered from their tombs.
5. The Shang believed in a supreme God, **Shang Di**, as well as subsidiary powers or spirits.
6. **The Shang were the first Chinese to develop writing.** They used **pictographs**, characters which could convey more than one meaning.
7. The **Shang year** of 360 days was comprised of 12 months of 30 days. It was based on the lunar month and the solar year. An additional month was added when necessary.
8. In order to predict the future, or ask questions of the gods, people would engrave questions on **oracle bones** (tortoise shells or cow bones). These would then be burned and the priests would 'read' the cracks which then appeared.
9. Chinese people used to grind down these ancient animal bones to make **traditional medicines**. In 1899 some scholars noticed engravings on the bones and discovered they had come from North East China.



### Key Skills

- Sequence and structure complex subjects and themes.
- Start to suggest reasons for connections over time and across places and cultures.
- Comment on impact and legacy.
- Select, organise and use information from more than one source to construct an informed response and/or opinion.

### Timeline for the Shang Dynasty:

