

# 3

# Ancient civilizations

## Reading

### Before reading

- 1 Discuss these questions.
  - 1 Talk about how people lived 3,000 years ago:  
What kinds of jobs did they do?  
What kinds of houses did they live in?  
What did they wear?
  - 2 What do you know about China now and a long time ago?
- 2  Read and listen.

### The Kings

From 1700 until 1100 BC, the area of China around the Yellow River was **ruled** by a family of kings called the Shang. They were rich and very powerful. The king and his family lived in large palaces, **decorated** with beautiful objects. They had many **servants** who made them food and did all the work in the palaces, so they had an easy life. When a king died, they buried him in an underground tomb and filled it with expensive objects – **jewellery**, works of art and **weapons**.

### The People

The richest people of ancient China were priests and warriors. They lived in cities with very high walls. Their houses were large and made of wood or **brick**. They wore beautiful gowns made of **silk**. They didn't work, and spent their time hunting and horse riding.

Other people lived outside the walls, in houses made of **mud**. They were **merchants** and **craftsmen**, so they worked for their living. They were not poor, but they were not protected during wars.

## The Shang Dynasty

What was life like in China 3,500 years ago?  
Was it very different to life now?  
What did people do?  
How did they live?  
Let's find out.



Most of the people during this time were farmers. They lived in villages in the countryside. They worked in fields with tools made of stone, grew **grain** such as rice, and kept animals. The best place for farming was by the Yellow River. Here the warm, wet conditions were perfect for growing rice.

The farmers lived in small houses made of mud or bamboo. Inside, there wasn't any furniture, and they slept on the mud floor. They were very poor. They had to **obey** the kings and the rich people all the time and give them food and gifts. They didn't have a very easy life.

## Important Developments

During the time of the Shang, there were some interesting inventions. The Chinese discovered how to make bronze, by mixing other metals together. Bronze is an important metal because it is strong and lasts for a very long time. The Chinese made all kinds of things from bronze – pots for cooking, cups for drinking, jewellery and weapons.

But perhaps the most important development during the time of the Shang was writing. Once a civilization can write, people can pass on information about themselves, their lives and what they believe. Although the Chinese started writing at this time, they didn't have paper yet, so people wrote on animal bones, on stone, on bamboo, and even on turtle shells!

So, life for people in ancient China was quite different from our lives today.

## Vocabulary

3 Use the words from the text to complete the sentences.

- 1 **Craftsmen** make different things by hand – shoes, pots, tables – anything!
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ are dangerous tools that kill people.
- 3 When my mum asks me to do something, I \_\_\_\_\_ her. I always do it.
- 4 After it rained, the ground was wet and my shoes were covered in \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 My sister's wedding dress was beautiful but expensive. It was made of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 She \_\_\_\_\_ her new house with paintings, plants and flowers.
- 7 In the past, rich people had lots of \_\_\_\_\_ to cook and clean for them.
- 8 My father and my uncles built our house. They laid every \_\_\_\_\_ one by one.
- 9 My sister wore beautiful gold \_\_\_\_\_ at her wedding – a ring, a necklace and a bracelet.
- 10 In Asia, rice is the most common \_\_\_\_\_, but in North America it's wheat.
- 11 Queen Victoria \_\_\_\_\_ England from 1837 to 1901.
- 12 At the market, there are \_\_\_\_\_ selling lots of different things – fruit, clothes and sweets!

## Reading comprehension

### 4 Write True or False.

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| 1 The Shang were a family of kings.                         | <u>True</u> |
| 2 The kings were buried with many things.                   | _____       |
| 3 Rich and poor people lived together in the cities.        | _____       |
| 4 Some houses were made of wood, but some were made of mud. | _____       |
| 5 There were more farmers than anyone else.                 | _____       |
| 6 Farmers didn't have servants to help them.                | _____       |
| 7 The Chinese made jewellery from gold.                     | _____       |
| 8 The Chinese wrote books about animals and turtles.        | _____       |

### 5 Complete the facts.

- The Shang ruled the area near the Yellow River in China.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ did all the hard work in the king's palaces.
- \_\_\_\_\_ people liked hunting in their free time.
- Merchants lived outside the walls of the \_\_\_\_\_.
- The grain usually grown by the farmers was \_\_\_\_\_.
- Farmers' \_\_\_\_\_ were made of stone.
- An important metal discovered by the Chinese was \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ was the most important development during the time of the Shang.

### 6 Write the sentences under the correct headings.

- |                                   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| They lived in bamboo houses.      | They lived outside the city walls. |
| They wore silk clothes.           | They lived in wooden houses.       |
| They lived in villages.           | They liked horse riding.           |
| They were not rich, but not poor. | They looked after animals.         |

| Priests and warriors | Merchants and craftsmen | Farmers                      |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
|                      |                         | They lived in bamboo houses. |

### 7 Discuss these questions with a partner or with your class.

- What do you think was the most interesting thing about ancient China?
- Do you think life was similar for people in your area 3,500 years ago? What do you think was the same and what do you think was different?
- Do you think life was better then or is it better now for most people?



I live in Liverpool. Today Liverpool is a huge and busy city, but a thousand years ago it was a Viking settlement.

The Vikings came from cold places like Norway, Denmark and Sweden to find new land in Europe. In 900 AD, some Vikings arrived in England in longboats. They settled in Liverpool. We know this because many areas of Liverpool still have Viking names, for instance, Crosby, Toxteth and Croxteth.

The Vikings built villages and lived in homes made of wood called longhouses. Many families lived in the same longhouse together. They grew grain such as wheat and barley, and kept animals like sheep, pigs and cows.

The Vikings were also skilled craftsmen. Many Viking items have been found in Liverpool such as silver bracelets and bronze weapons.

Make your writing more interesting by using **examples**. It may be interesting to know that Vikings had animals, but it's more interesting to know which specific animals they had: sheep, pigs and cows.

Introduce examples with these phrases:

**like    such as    for example    for instance**

The examples come after a general point. Two or three is a good number to include.

Can you find some examples in the Viking text above?

## 8 Match the general points with their examples.

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1 They grew a lot of fruit, such as                | a weapons and jewellery.     |
| 2 People of different nationalities came, such as  | b bronze, lead and silver.   |
| 3 Weapons were made of different metals, like      | c figs, lemons and oranges.  |
| 4 The Romans settled in many places, for instance, | d Chinese and Italian.       |
| 5 Aztecs built beautiful structures, for example,  | e England, Turkey and Egypt. |
| 6 Interesting objects have been found, like        | f statues and pyramids.      |

## 9 Write about your area a thousand years ago. Answer these questions to help you, and use examples to make your writing more interesting.

Who lived there? Where did they come from?

When did they arrive? Where did they settle?

What did they do? What did they eat? What did they wear?

What did they leave behind?

## Descriptive Writing

# Béjar (Salamanca)

Complete the text with the words in the box.

- wool and leather
- near the mountains and rivers
- bread, vegetables and meat
- in Salamanca, in Spain
- small stone houses
- the Iberian Peninsula
- a small town
- worked in the fields
- sheep and goats
- old stone buildings and walls
- the year 1000 AD

Béjar is in \_\_\_\_\_. Today it is \_\_\_\_\_, but a thousand years ago it was an important settlement in the mountains. A thousand years ago, people came to live in Béjar from other parts of \_\_\_\_\_. They arrived around \_\_\_\_\_, and they settled \_\_\_\_\_ because it was a good place to live and to defend.

The people in Béjar built \_\_\_\_\_ and lived in small communities. They \_\_\_\_\_ and grew crops such as wheat and barley. They also kept animals like \_\_\_\_\_. The people of Béjar wore clothes made of \_\_\_\_\_ to protect themselves from the cold weather in the mountains. They ate \_\_\_\_\_ from the animals they kept. They left behind \_\_\_\_\_, which are still part of the history of Béjar today.