Han Dynasty, 206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.

- “People of the Han” → original Chinese
- Paper invented [105 B.C.E.]

- Silk Road trade develops; improves life for many
- Buddhism introduced into China
- Expanded into Central Asia
The Long Reign of the Han (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.)

- Liu Bang, a peasant who defeated all other contestants for control of China, established the Han dynasty
- The Han established a political system that drew on both Confucian philosophy and Legalist techniques
Han Organizing Principles

- Heaven, earth, man form eternal trinity
- Economic welfare is basis of popular morality
- Government must provide peace & prosperity, & education
  - Moral education through rites, music & literature
Concept of Imperial Power

- Emperor is a moral agent
  - Representative of hierarchical order of mankind
  - A reflection of the order of the universe
  - Responsible for keeping mankind in harmony
    - Does this through moral suasion
    - Sets a moral example
- Goodness & virtue given embodiment in rites & music
Central Government

- The central government was run by two chief officials and included a number of functionally specialized ministers.
- Local officials collected taxes, drafted men for corvée labor and military service, and settled local disputes.
Most people had no contact with the central government.

Local officials were supplied by a class of moderately wealthy, educated local landowners whom historians refer to as the “gentry.”

The gentry adopted Confucianism as their ideology and pursued careers in the civil service.
The Government

- **Bureaucracy**
  - Highly organized & centralized government

- **Civil Service Exam**
  - Scores determined who received positions in the government
  - Exams based on Confucian philosophy
  - No favoritism; had to prove they were qualified
Civil Service Examination

- During the Han dynasty, a civil service examination based on Confucianism was established.

- In order to work in the Chinese government, a man had to pass an examination on Chinese history and Confucianism.

- Only scholars could work in the government.
Han Bureaucracy

**EMPEROR**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**
- Prefecture
  - District
  - Commune
  - Village
- Commandery
  - Inspecting Secretary
  - Commandery Commandant Specialists

**THREE EXCELLENCIES**
- Chancellor
  - Chancellor's Office
  - 10 Ministers
- Grandee Secretary
- Commander-in-chief
  - Generals
  - Armies
Chang'an
The Han Capital
Chang’an was an easily defended walled city with easy access to good arable land. The population in 2 c.e. was 246,000. Other cities and towns imitated the urban planning of Chang’an.
Living in Chang’an

- The elite of Chang’an lived in elegant multistoried houses arranged on broad, well-planned boulevards.
- They dressed in fine silks, were connoisseurs of art and literature, and indulged in numerous entertainments.
- The common people lived in closely packed houses in largely unplanned, winding alleys.
The Emperor in Chang’an

- The emperor was supreme in the state and in society.
- He was regarded as the Son of Heaven, the link between heaven and the human world.
- Emperors were the source of law.
- But anything that went seriously wrong could be interpreted to mean that the emperor was guilty of misrule and that he was losing the Mandate of Heaven.
Emperors lived in seclusion, surrounded by a royal retinue that included wives, family, servants, courtiers, and officials.
Han Territorial Expansion

- After a period of consolidation, the Han went through a period of territorial expansion under Emperor Wu (r. 140–87 B.C.E.)

- During the Western Han period (202 B.C.E.–8 C.E.) the capital was at Chang’an.

- During the Eastern Han (23–22 C.E.) the capital was at Luoyang.
Emperor Wudi, 141-87 B.C.E.

- Started public schools.
- Colonized Manchuria, Korea, & Vietnam.
- Civil service system
  - bureaucrats
  - Confucian scholar-gentry
- Revival of Chinese landscape painting.
The Economy

- The Silk Road is a trade route that connected Xian China to Rome.
  - Chinese exported silk to the rest of the world.
  - Sold government stored surplus grain, iron, and salt.
  - Surplus to raise income instead of raising taxes.
Overland Trade

- During the Han dynasty, merchants established overland trade routes to other centers of civilization.

- The Silk Road went through Central Asia to the Middle East.

- The Silk Road was a famous Chinese trading route.
Trade Routes of the Ancient World
Cultural Diffusion

- Cultural diffusion is the exchange of cultural ideas and/or objects.
  - The Silk Road encouraged cultural diffusion.
  - Chinese ideas and objects were introduced to other cultures.
Chinese contact with India led to the introduction of Buddhism in China.
Achievements

- Paper
- Wheel Barrow
- Compass
- Seismograph
Achievements

- **Acupuncture**
  - Inserting needles into certain points in the human body can alleviate pain
  - Believed to restore health & well being
Han Artifacts

Imperial Seal

Han Ceramic Horse

Han Ceramic House