Who Held Power?

Trace changes in imperial authority from the Ming to the Qing.

SS24.8.16d "Describe how political changes in China led to the decline of imperial power from the Ming Dynasty to the end of the Qing Dynasty."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline at least four political changes in the passage, circle what happened to the emperor's power because of each change, and number the changes in time order.

From Imperial Orders to Abdication

1. In the early Ming dynasty (1368–1644), emperors claimed final authority over laws, taxes, and appointments. They governed a huge empire through officials chosen largely by civil service exams. These officials carried out orders, but they could also report problems at court. By the 1600s, costly wars and disputes over taxes strained the government. When officials struggled to collect revenue and stop rebellions, the emperor's orders reached fewer communities. In 1644, rebels entered Beijing, the Ming capital. Manchu forces then took the city and began extending Qing rule across China.

2. At first, Qing emperors restored strong central rule, keeping the exam system and appointing officials to govern the provinces. But in the 1800s, foreign powers won wars against Qing China. Treaties forced the Qing government to open ports to foreign trade and grant foreigners special legal rights. Such terms limited what the emperor could decide in parts of China. The Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864) also threatened the dynasty. To fight it, Qing rulers relied on regional officials who raised their own armies. Those officials gained power that the court could not easily take back.

3. After more military defeats, some Qing leaders pushed for change, but court leaders disagreed about how far reforms should go. In 1901, after an anti-foreign uprising called the Boxer Rebellion, foreign governments demanded a large payment and the right to station troops in Beijing. The Qing court later created new schools and provincial assemblies, yet many people doubted it could protect China or govern effectively. In 1911, soldiers and local leaders launched a revolution. Province after province rejected Qing rule, and the last emperor gave up the throne in 1912.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did problems collecting taxes and stopping rebellions weaken Ming imperial power?

2. How did the treaties after foreign wars limit Qing emperors' control?

3. How did fighting the Taiping Rebellion shift power away from the Qing court?

4. Why did the Qing court's later changes fail to preserve imperial rule?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a museum label of five or six sentences tracing one shift in power under the Ming, two different shifts under the Qing, and the final change in 1912. Explain how each shift weakened the emperor's control.

ANSWER KEY

Who Held Power?

GRADE 8 · SS24.8.16d

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline at least four political changes in the passage, circle what happened to the emperor's power because of each change, and number the changes in time order. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did problems collecting taxes and stopping rebellions weaken Ming imperial power?	**Officials could not carry out the emperor's orders in as many communities, so his authority weakened.**
2	How did the treaties after foreign wars limit Qing emperors' control?	**The treaties forced the Qing government to open ports and give foreigners special legal rights, limiting decisions the emperor could make in parts of China.**
3	How did fighting the Taiping Rebellion shift power away from the Qing court?	**Regional officials raised their own armies and gained power that the court could not easily take back.**
4	Why did the Qing court's later changes fail to preserve imperial rule?	**Despite new schools and provincial assemblies, many people doubted the court could protect or govern China. Soldiers and local leaders revolted, provinces rejected Qing rule, and the emperor gave up the throne.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Late Ming emperors claimed final authority, but tax troubles and rebellions made their orders harder to enforce. In 1644, rebels entered Beijing, and Manchu forces took the city, ending Ming rule there. Later, Qing emperors had to accept treaties that gave foreigners special legal rights, limiting imperial control. During the Taiping Rebellion, regional officials raised armies and kept power that the Qing court could not easily reclaim. Even after the Qing created provincial assemblies, many people doubted the court could govern well. When soldiers and local leaders revolted in 1911, provinces rejected Qing rule, and the last emperor gave up the throne in 1912.

Accept responses that connect political changes to reduced imperial authority, even if students use different wording. The final change should identify the end of Qing imperial rule in 1912.