Power and Ingenuity

Trace changes in rule and lasting contributions across Chinese dynasties.

7.H.8 "Describe the dynastic cycle and the cultural and technological contributions of major Chinese dynasties (Zhou, Qin, Han, Tang, Song, and Ming)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the names Zhou, Qin, Han, Tang, Song, and Ming; circle one contribution linked to each; and number two changes of ruling houses that show the dynastic cycle.

What Changes When Rulers Change?

1. Imagine a traveler crossing China at different times, hearing new rulers claim they could restore order. During the Zhou dynasty, rulers used the Mandate of Heaven to explain their right to govern: a ruler who failed the people could lose that right. Zhou thinkers, including Confucius, debated how people should act and how leaders should rule. After long wars among states, the Qin united much of China in 221 BCE. Qin officials standardized writing and weights, making it easier to govern and trade across a large empire.

2. The Qin fell after harsh rule and rebellion. The Han took power and kept a strong central government, while expanding trade along routes later called the Silk Roads. Han craftspeople improved papermaking, which made written records easier to produce. Centuries later, the Tang ruled a wealthy empire where poets such as Li Bai wrote works still read today. The Tang also supported trade with people from other regions. Under the Song, printers used movable type, and improved compasses helped sailors navigate. Each dynasty built on earlier ideas while facing new problems.

3. After the Mongol-led Yuan dynasty, the Ming took power in 1368. Ming builders strengthened sections of the Great Wall, and workshops made blue-and-white porcelain sold near and far. Later, heavy taxes, rebellions, and military pressure weakened Ming rule. Rebels seized Beijing in 1644; Manchu forces then entered the city and began ruling China under the Qing dynasty, proclaimed in 1636. These changes help show the dynastic cycle: a ruling house gains power, governs, faces crises, and eventually gives way to another. The cycle is a pattern, not a fixed schedule.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Zhou idea of the Mandate of Heaven explain why a ruling house might lose power? Name one later change of rulers from the passage.

2. How could the Qin standardization of writing and the Han improvement of papermaking each help people share information?

3. Compare one Tang cultural contribution with one Song technological contribution. What did each add to life in China?

4. How does the change from Ming to Qing rule show two stages of the dynastic cycle?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences for a museum label. Describe one contribution from each of two dynasties other than the Tang and Song, then explain a change of ruling houses from the passage and how it fits the dynastic cycle.

ANSWER KEY

Power and Ingenuity

GRADE 7 · 7.H.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the names Zhou, Qin, Han, Tang, Song, and Ming; circle one contribution linked to each; and number two changes of ruling houses that show the dynastic cycle. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Zhou idea of the Mandate of Heaven explain why a ruling house might lose power? Name one later change of rulers from the passage.	**A ruler who failed the people could lose the right to govern. For example, the Han took power after the Qin fell.**
2	How could the Qin standardization of writing and the Han improvement of papermaking each help people share information?	**Standardized writing helped people use the same written forms across the Qin empire. Improved papermaking made Han written records easier to produce.**
3	Compare one Tang cultural contribution with one Song technological contribution. What did each add to life in China?	**Tang poets such as Li Bai wrote works that people still read. Under the Song, improved compasses helped sailors navigate.**
4	How does the change from Ming to Qing rule show two stages of the dynastic cycle?	**Taxes, rebellions, and military pressure weakened the Ming. Manchu forces then entered Beijing and began ruling China under the Qing.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Zhou thinkers such as Confucius debated how leaders should rule. Ming workshops made blue-and-white porcelain for buyers near and far. Harsh rule and rebellion helped bring down the Qin before the Han took power. That change shows the dynastic cycle because a struggling ruling house gave way to another.

Accept any two accurate contributions linked to two different eligible dynasties. The four-sentence label must also identify a change of ruling houses from the passage and connect it to loss and gain of power in the dynastic cycle.