Empire, Then Adaptation

Trace how Qin rule shaped Han choices and achievements.

WH.2.7 "Trace the developments and achievements of the Qin and Han Dynasties."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two Qin methods of governing, circle one cause of the Qin collapse, and number three Han developments in the order the passage describes them to track what changed and what endured.

From Qin Control to Han Rule

1. In 221 BCE, the Qin ruler Zheng defeated rival states and took the title Qin Shi Huang, or First Emperor. To govern a territory that had once been divided, his court replaced many hereditary rulers with appointed officials. It standardized written characters, weights, measures, and coins, helping orders and trade cross former borders. Workers built roads and linked earlier defensive walls along the northern frontier. These projects strengthened imperial control, but heavy taxes, forced labor, and harsh punishments bred anger. Soon after the emperor died in 210 BCE, rebellions spread. By 206 BCE, the Qin dynasty had fallen.

2. Liu Bang emerged from the fighting and founded the Han dynasty, which ruled, with an interruption, from 206 BCE to 220 CE. Han rulers kept much of the Qin system of appointed officials and local districts because it helped them govern a large empire. Yet early Han leaders reduced some taxes and labor demands, trying to avoid the unrest that had helped bring down Qin rule. Later, Emperor Wu expanded imperial power and promoted Confucian learning in the training of officials. Rather than discard every Qin invention, the Han combined inherited administrative tools with new ideas about how rulers should govern.

3. Under Emperor Wu, Han armies and diplomats reached farther into Central Asia. These contacts helped expand trading networks later known as the Silk Roads, which carried goods and ideas between China and distant regions through many intermediaries. Silk traveled west, while horses from Central Asia were valued in Han warfare. Within the empire, Han artisans improved paper production; in 105 CE, the court official Cai Lun reported a method for making paper from materials such as bark and old cloth. Paper did not replace every writing surface at once, but over time it made written records easier to produce. Han achievements grew from both wider connections and sustained government.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did two Qin measures help turn formerly separate states into a more governable empire?

2. Trace how Qin policies helped cause its collapse and shaped a change made by early Han rulers.

3. Which Qin governing practice did Han rulers preserve, and what new approach did Emperor Wu add?

4. Trace how Han contact with Central Asia contributed to two developments described in the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 100 word museum label for two objects, a Qin coin and a Han sheet of paper. Trace one governing practice that lasted from Qin into Han, one change in Han rule, and how paper could help officials govern.

ANSWER KEY

Empire, Then Adaptation

HIGH SCHOOL · WH.2.7

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two Qin methods of governing, circle one cause of the Qin collapse, and number three Han developments in the order the passage describes them to track what changed and what endured. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did two Qin measures help turn formerly separate states into a more governable empire?	**Appointed officials gave the court control over local government. Shared written characters, measures, or coins helped orders or trade cross former borders.**
2	Trace how Qin policies helped cause its collapse and shaped a change made by early Han rulers.	**Heavy taxes, forced labor, and harsh punishments bred anger and rebellion. Early Han rulers reduced some taxes and labor demands to avoid similar unrest.**
3	Which Qin governing practice did Han rulers preserve, and what new approach did Emperor Wu add?	**The Han kept appointed officials and local districts. Emperor Wu promoted Confucian learning in officials' training.**
4	Trace how Han contact with Central Asia contributed to two developments described in the passage.	**The contacts helped expand trading networks later called the Silk Roads, and Central Asian horses became valued in Han warfare.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

This Qin coin represents a policy that made exchange easier across lands once ruled separately. The Han kept the Qin practice of using appointed officials to govern districts, but early Han rulers eased taxes and labor demands after rebellions had ended Qin rule. A Han sheet of paper shows another step in this story: improved paper production made written records easier to create. Officials might use those records to send orders and track supplies across a large empire. Together, these objects show how Han rulers adapted Qin tools rather than starting over.

Accept other passage-supported Qin measures in question 1. For the museum label, accept plausible uses of paper by officials when students distinguish their inference from facts stated in the passage.