

Golden Age Evidence

Use evidence to evaluate a period of peace, prosperity, and achievement.

9.3c "A period of peace, prosperity, and cultural achievements can be designated as a Golden Age."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that show peace or stability, circle details that show prosperity, and number three cultural achievements. These marks will help you judge whether the Han Dynasty fits the idea of a Golden Age.

Han China: Evidence of a Golden Age

- ① The Han Dynasty ruled much of China from 206 BCE to 220 CE, interrupted by Wang Mang's rule from 9 to 23 CE. After earlier civil war, Han rulers built a government that lasted for long periods. Roads and waterways connected communities, and farming and trade continued during stretches of stability. Military campaigns also expanded imperial control, so the whole era was not peaceful. Historians must ask which period and whose experience they are judging.
- ② Prosperity grew as farmers, craftspeople, and merchants produced and traded valuable goods. Silk, pottery, iron tools, and other products traveled along routes that linked Han China with Central Asia and lands farther west. The government collected taxes and used its resources to support roads, canals, and officials. Confucian ideas shaped the education of many government workers and encouraged rulers to value duty and order. However, wealth was not shared equally. Large landowners could become powerful, while some farmers struggled with debt or lost their land.
- ③ Han scholars and inventors made cultural achievements that lasted beyond the dynasty. The historian Sima Qian wrote a major history of China. In 105 CE, the court official Cai Lun reported an improved process for making paper, which made writing materials more available than silk or bamboo. The scientist Zhang Heng created a device intended to signal distant earthquakes. These accomplishments grew during a period with important stability and wealth, yet the Han Dynasty later faced rebellions, court conflict, and economic problems. A Golden Age can include limits and still be judged by its major achievements.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What evidence supports calling parts of the Han era stable, and what detail challenges calling the whole era peaceful?

2 How did trade and government projects support Han prosperity? Use evidence from paragraph 2.

3 Choose one Han cultural achievement from paragraph 3. Explain why it could be considered an achievement that lasted beyond the dynasty.

4 What limitation or problem in the passage should a historian consider before calling the Han period a Golden Age?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 3-4 sentence claim deciding whether the Han Dynasty should be designated a Golden Age. Use one detail about stability, one about prosperity, and one cultural achievement from the passage, then explain your decision.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that show peace or stability, circle details that show prosperity, and number three cultural achievements. These marks will help you judge whether the Han Dynasty fits the idea of a Golden Age. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What evidence supports calling parts of the Han era stable, and what detail challenges calling the whole era peaceful?	Government lasted for long periods, with farming and trade continuing during stretches of stability. Military campaigns show that the whole era was not peaceful.
2	How did trade and government projects support Han prosperity? Use evidence from paragraph 2.	Merchants traded goods such as silk, pottery, and iron tools over long routes. The government used tax resources to support roads, canals, and officials.
3	Choose one Han cultural achievement from paragraph 3. Explain why it could be considered an achievement that lasted beyond the dynasty.	Sima Qian's history preserved knowledge of the past; improved papermaking supported writing; Zhang Heng's device represented efforts to observe earthquakes. Accept a reasonable explanation tied to one example.
4	What limitation or problem in the passage should a historian consider before calling the Han period a Golden Age?	Answers may note unequal wealth, farmers' debt or land loss, or later rebellions, court conflict, and economic problems.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Han Dynasty should be designated a Golden Age because long periods of stable government allowed farming and trade to continue. Prosperity grew as valuable goods such as silk and iron tools moved along trade routes. Cultural achievements included Cai Lun's improved process for making paper. Although some farmers struggled and wealth was unequal, the period showed important peace, prosperity, and lasting achievements.

Accept either conclusion if the student makes a clear judgment and accurately uses passage evidence for stability, prosperity, and a cultural achievement. Strong responses may acknowledge a limitation while explaining why it does or does not change the judgment.