# What Endured?

Weigh the achievements and limits of three Chinese dynasties.

**AWH.C.8.6** "Assess the significance and legacy of political, economic, and cultural aspects of the Qin, Han, and Tang dynasties (e.g., unification of China, construction of the Great Wall of China, conquest of southern China..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline one action or innovation in each paragraph, and circle an effect of each one. Put a star beside the lasting legacy you think was most significant.

### Power, Exchange, and Lasting Change

1 In 221 BCE, the Qin ruler conquered rival states and declared himself emperor. Qin officials standardized writing, weights, and measures, helping orders and goods move across the new empire. Roads linked regions, while walls built or joined along northern borders helped defend against raids. These projects demanded heavy labor and taxes, and the dynasty fell after only about fifteen years. Yet later governments kept the idea of a single emperor ruling a unified territory. Today's Great Wall includes many later additions, so the Qin legacy lies less in one surviving wall than in the model of state power used to build it.

2 The Han dynasty rebuilt a lasting empire after the Qin. Under Emperor Wu, Han armies conquered kingdoms in what is now southern China, expanding imperial control but also facing resistance. Canals and roads helped move grain from farming regions to cities and troops. Han officials promoted agriculture and used state granaries to store grain for hard times, though supplies did not reach everyone equally. Craftspeople improved papermaking during the Han era, making written records cheaper to produce than many older materials. Over time, paper helped governments keep accounts and scholars share ideas far beyond China's borders.

3 During the Tang dynasty, a system called equal-field allocation assigned farmland to households, aiming to secure taxes and curb the power of large landowners; it weakened as estates grew. Trade routes brought Indian Buddhist texts and travelers to China. Tang thinkers translated and reshaped Buddhist ideas, which influenced art and religious life even after Tang rule ended. Woodblock printing multiplied copies of texts, while experiments with gunpowder began in the Tang period. Magnetic compass knowledge also developed in China, but compasses became widely used at sea after the Tang. These changes lasted in different ways: beliefs and books spread, and later technologies transformed travel and warfare.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why was Qin unification significant even though the dynasty lasted only about fifteen years? Include one cost of Qin rule.

2. How did Han conquest and transportation strengthen imperial rule? What detail shows a limit to that control?

3. Assess the Tang equal-field system: What was it meant to accomplish, and why was its effect limited?

4. How did cultural exchange and printing each help Tang ideas have an influence beyond the dynasty?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one paragraph comparing two different dynasties. Choose one political or economic action and one cultural or technological development, explain an effect and a lasting legacy of each, and identify one limit or change over time.

ANSWER KEY

# What Endured?

HIGH SCHOOL · AWH.C.8.6

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one action or innovation in each paragraph, and circle an effect of each one. Put a star beside the lasting legacy you think was most significant. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Why was Qin unification significant even though the dynasty lasted only about fifteen years? Include one cost of Qin rule. | **Later governments kept the model of a single emperor ruling unified territory. Qin projects also demanded heavy labor and taxes.** |
| 2 | How did Han conquest and transportation strengthen imperial rule? What detail shows a limit to that control? | **Conquest expanded Han control into what is now southern China, while roads and canals moved grain to cities and troops. The conquered kingdoms resisted.** |
| 3 | Assess the Tang equal-field system: What was it meant to accomplish, and why was its effect limited? | **It assigned farmland to households to secure taxes and limit large landowners' power, but it weakened as estates grew.** |
| 4 | How did cultural exchange and printing each help Tang ideas have an influence beyond the dynasty? | **Indian Buddhist texts and travelers reached China, where Tang thinkers reshaped ideas that continued to influence art and religion. Woodblock printing multiplied copies of texts.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Qin leaders standardized weights and measures, which helped goods move across their new empire. Their dynasty was brief, but later rulers kept the model of governing a unified territory. Qin projects also demanded heavy labor and taxes. During the Tang dynasty, travelers brought Buddhist texts from India, and Chinese thinkers reshaped their ideas. Buddhism continued to influence art and religious life after Tang rule ended. Unlike the Qin model of government, this cultural legacy grew through exchange with people beyond China.

Accept other passage-supported judgments of significance. For Part 3, look for two distinct dynasties, an effect and legacy for each choice, and a specific limit or change over time.