

TIMELINE LESSON PLAN

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Straight-lined timelines allow students to see visually that different events occur in relation to other events. Such lines may also be used to compare one civilization's events with another civilization. A bar timeline will allow a visual representation of events which can be compared by length, overlap, and concurrence of time periods.

Objective

The student will visually be able to compare different Chinese dynasties by completing a timeline that will show lengths and times of various dynasties.

Materials

Students: pencil, colored pencils or markers, timeline worksheet, list of desired dates to be used

Teacher: overhead master of timeline worksheet, colored overhead-projector pens

Procedure

Discuss how the timeline is divided into centuries which are labeled. Point out the division between B.C.E. and C.E.

Ask the students for the date of the first dynasty, then if it can be placed along the timeline.

Have the students write the dynasty with its dates beside the **X** above the first bar below the time line.

Ask where the first date begins in the labeled century. How might that date be placed along the timeline between two centuries? (Be sure to point out that B.C.E. dates go to the left of the century lines while C.E. go to the right.)

Demonstrate drawing the line on the transparency by tracing the point on the timeline down to the appropriate box below the timeline. Then draw in the line.

Have the students copy your example.

Use the same procedure for the closing date.

Check student work before coloring. Often they are not sure of themselves and make mistakes, particularly in placing B.C.E. dates.

Color between the drawn bars.

Repeat this procedure several times to be sure the students understand.

The students should be able to finish on their own

Follow-up

Ask the students to make observations about the chronology of the chart they completed. Ask them to notice which dynasties are short and which are long. Ask questions such as why some of the dynasties have overlapping times, or why some dynasties might be shorter than others. Ask the students to think of questions that the timeline chart could help answer.

Write a worksheet for the students to answer some of the questions suggested above.

CHINESE IMPERIAL DYNASTIES

SHANG DYNASTY **1766-1111 B.C.E.**

CHOU DYNASTY **1111-221 B.C.E.**

CH'IN DYNASTY **221-206 B.C.E.**

HAN DYNASTY **206 B.C.E. - C.E. 221**

ERA OF DIVISION **217-580**

Northern Dynasties:

 Northern Wei 386-532

 Western Wei 535-554

Southern Dynasties:

 Western Chin 219-316

 Eastern Chin 217-419

SUI DYNASTY **581-618**

T'ANG DYNASTY **618-906**

FIVE DYNASTIES **907-960**

LIAO DYNASTY **907-1128**

SUNG DYNASTY **960-1279**

YUAN DYNASTY **1260-1368**

MING DYNASTY **1368-1644**

CH'ING DYNASTY **1644-1911**

Sui Dynasty (581-618)

Emperors

Yang Jian (r. 581-604) reigned as Wendi

Yang Guang (r. 605-617) reigned as Yangdi

Major Historical Events

589 China is reunified.

Wendi established the “Three Department” system with Six Ministries: Personnel, Revenue, Rites, War, Justice, and Public Works.

583 Wendi moved the capital to the newly built Chang’an named for a previous Han capital city to the northwest. It became the largest city in the world for its day as well as the largest in area of any walled Chinese city. Under the Tang Dynasty it was the most cosmopolitan city.

584-589 The Grand Canal was built from Chang’an eastward to the Tong Pass.

605 Yangdi began building the Grand Canal from Luoyang to Huai River, then to Jiangdu on the Yangtze River.

608-609 The Grand Canal was built from the Yellow River to Beijing by many thousands of men and, for the first time, of women. The canal was 40 paces across and 2000 km long creating an interconnecting transportation system which aided administrative tasks, defense movements, and movement of agricultural and trade goods. It also established a link between northern and southern China making the two territories economically interdependent.

586 and 587 Wendi repaired portions of the Great Wall

607 Yangdi repaired and added portions to the Great Wall. Over a million men undertook the construction. Working at an exhausting pace, it was completed in 20 days costing many lives.

Both Wendi and Yangdi extended control over portions of the Silk Road.

Fall of the Sui

Besides the Great Wall and the Grand Canal, Yangdi built roads, lavish palaces, and other grandiose public works projects costing an immense amount of money and human lives. The peasants were heavily burdened with taxes. To add fuel to their discontent, Yangdi planned and launched three expeditions against northern Korea. Huge revolts broke out throughout northern China. Yangdi fled to his southern capital at Jiangdu where he was assassinated a year later.

Tang Dynasty (AD 618 - 907)

Emperors

Gaozu (r. 618-616) born and known as Li Yuan in his lifetime; name of Gaozu given after his death.

Taizong (r. 626-649) born Li Shimin

Gaozong (r. 649-683)

Zhonzong and Ruizong (r. 683-690 sequentially)
Wu Zhao (Empress Wu) (r. 690-700)
Xuanzong (r. 712-756), called Ming huang, Brilliant Monarch

Major Historical Events

630 Taizong was the first Chinese emperor to control the northern steppe

635 Taizong welcomed Nestorian Christians and allowed a church to be built.

630-645 Xuanzong traveled across Central Asia and India collecting Buddhist texts to be translated into Chinese.

Gaozong brought Lady Wu out of retirement from a Buddhist nunnery. Through ruthless scheming, she became Empress Wu.

660 Gaozong suffered a stroke. Empress Wu was given informal power as regent.

683 Gaozong died. Empress Wu held power as regent through the reigns of her two sons: Zhonzong and Ruizong.

690 Empress Wu usurped power for herself and became the only female emperor in Chinese history.

705 Empress Wu was forced to abdicate at the age of eighty.

Chan Buddhism introduced and became popular, known as Zen Buddhism in Japan

712-745 Xuanzong ruled very ably: strengthened prestige of court by reducing corruption, abolished the death penalty, pursued vigorous foreign policy, established the Hanlin Academy for the arts which long survived his dynasty: some of the greatest poets (Li Biao and Du Fu) and greatest painters (Wang Wei and Wu Tao-tzu) flourished during his reign, and invited teachers of newly introduced Tantric school of Buddhism.

745 Xuanzong fell in love with his son's concubine, Yang Guifei, abandoning his responsibilities of ruler-ship

755-763 An Lu-shan rebellion forcing Xuanzong to flee with Yang Guifei. Palace troops strangle Yang Guifei as source of their troubles and Xuanzong abdicated to his son. This story became the subject of poems, paintings, and plays.

841-845 Massive suppression of Buddhism and other foreign religions occurred: many temples and monasteries were closed, their wealth confiscated by the government, a quarter of a million monks and nuns returned to secular life. This persecution cut China off from contact with Central Asia and India where Buddhism then declined in favor of Islam and other religions. Only Pure Land and Chan schools continued; the other schools did not survive.

875-884 rebellion destroyed Tang Dynasty

End of Tang Dynasty

An Lu-shan declared himself emperor, only to be assassinated by his son, who in turn was assassinated. Various warlords competed for power. This time subsequently became known as the period of the Five Dynasties dating 907-960.

The Song Dynasty (960-1279)

Emperors

Zhao Kuangyin (r. 960-976) reigned as Taizu

Zhou Kuangyi (r. 976-997) reigned as Taizong

Zhao Ji (r. 1101-1126) reigned as Huizong

Gaozong (r. 1127-1162)

Major Historical Events

Song dynasty was known by its defensive policies rather than for territorial expansion. Constant incursions from various nomadic empires to the north threatened the stability of the dynasty.

In spite of military insecurities, it was a time of prosperity: era of entrepreneurship, development of new crops and technologies, creation of new careers and lifestyles in commercial centers.

Printing developed in the period of the Five Dynasties; now literacy and education were promoted.

The availability of printed material improved some rights of women.

The Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi developed ideas that laid the foundations for Neo-Confucianism which would be used by subsequent dynasties to strengthen their rule.

Neo-Confucianism supported detri-mental trends concerning beauty and modesty for women such as foot-binding, stricter seclusion, and the impropriety of marriage for widows.

1127 Northern Song dynasty was overrun by nomadic groups such as the Jurchen from Manchuria calling themselves the Jin dynasty.

1210 Mongols under Genghis Khan begin to attack northern frontiers.

1215 Mongols capture Beijing.

1232 Southern Song allied with Mongols to destroy Jin.

1235-1279 Song dynasty resisted Mongol invaders.

Explosive weapons are used for the first time, initially by the defending armies of the Song and later adapted by the Mongols.

End of the Song Dynasty

The Song dynasty valiantly resisted Mongol invasion for 39 years. The dynasty did not concentrate on its military capabilities. Considering the Mongol swift conquests elsewhere, the armies of the Song had a remarkable effect.

The Yuan Dynasty (1276-1368)

Emperors

Kublai (r. 1260-1294) known posthumously as Shizu

Toghun Temur (r.1333-1368) reigned as Shundi

Major Historical Events

Kublai established his capital at Beijing.

Kublai extended his authority overseas in Sumatra, Ceylon and southern India.
1292 Kublai sent a fleet to Java to rebuke the reluctant leader, asserted Mongol control.

1274 and 1281 Kublai sent fleets against Japan. The second attempt was aborted by a typhoon's destruction of the fleet which the Japanese regarded as the godly intervention of the Kamikaze or divine wind.

Mongol rule throughout was maintained by military occupation. The Mongols resisted assimilation into Chinese culture by retaining the Mongol language and yearly summer visits to Mongolia.

1275-1295 The Venetian merchant Marco Polo traveled throughout Kublai's realm.

1315 The civil service examination was reinstated, but it required that half the degrees be awarded to Mongols and other non-Chinese regardless of their qualifications.

The Mongols rebuilt the Grand Canal and extended it to Beijing.

The End of the Yuan Dynasty

From the 1340s - 1360s, the Yuan dynasty was plagued with ineptitude, intrigues, factionalism, military deterioration, the spread of deadly epidemics such as bubonic plague, and neglect of much-needed water programs. These problems led to the decline and defeat of the Yuan dynasty. During this time peasants revolted and civil war raged throughout the empire. Shundi, the last of the Mongol emperors, fled from Beijing to Mongolia to avoid capture.

The Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

Emperors

Zhu Yuanzhang (r.1368-1398) reigned as Hongwu

Zhu Di (r. 1402-1424) reigned as Yongle

Zhe Qizhen (r. 1436-1450; restored in 1457-1465) reigned as Zhentong, then as Tianshun

Guangzong (r. 1573-1620) reigned as Wanli

Major Historical Events

Taizu was the first commoner to become emperor in 1500 years.

1720 Qing army enter Lhasa; Tibet made a Qing protectorate.

1344 Taizu became a monk at the age of 16 and was sent from his monastery to beg, wandering throughout east-central China.

1352 Taizu joined one of the rebel groups associated with the Red Turbans. Within this band, he rose quickly to command.

1368 Taizu gained control of Beijing. He neither captured or defeated the Mongol emperor who fled to Mongolia. The Ming dynasty was never able to defeat the Mongol; thus were unable to expand their empire into inner Asia.

The Ming dynasty was less grand and extravagant than previous dynasties. It could be described as ordinary, favoring the common man.

Taizu had policies that favored the poor over the rich: he confiscated great estates, and then the state rented these lands to the landless. He abolished slavery and heavily taxed the rich.

Taizu was a suspicious, cruel emperor who was extremely anti-intellectual. He caused the deaths of many government officials through periodic purges.

Yongle rebuilt Beijing to be the capital. He reconstructed the Grand Canal. He pressured the Japanese into accepting him as a nominal overlord after they had raided Chinese coasts.

1405-1433 Under Yongle, seven expeditions were sent out under Admiral Zheng He to assert Chinese domination. This included collecting tribute. This marked the only time China was the dominant maritime power.

1624 - 1627 Struggles between Donglin scholars and the eunuch dictator Wei Zhongxian.

1644 Ming emperor committed suicide after rebels took Beijing

The Qing Dynasty (1644-1912)

Emperors

Kangxi (r. 1662-1722)

Yongzheng (r. 1722-1736)

Qianlong (r. 1736-95)

Guangxu (r. 1898) from 1898-1909 Empress Dowager Cixi ruled, having imprisoned her nephew

Major Historical Events

1645 Chinese men required to wear Manchu hairstyle.

1840-1842 Opium War occurred ending with the Nanjing Treaty which gave Hong Kong to Great Britain.

1850-1864 Taiping Rebellion was a peasant uprising in which a Christian convert called himself the Son of Heaven, identified himself as the younger brother of Christ, collected a huge following, and attempted to overthrow the Qing Dynasty.

1898 Guangxu emperor had attempted needed reforms which the Empress Dowager Cixi suppressed.

1900 Boxer Rebellion occurred.

1911 Qing Dynasty was overthrown by revolutionaries.

1884 Sino-French War occurred.

1894 Sino-Japanese War occurred.