

Project glossary

afterlife

The life that is believed to begin after death.

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ancestor

A family member who lived a long time ago.

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bi

Circular discs of jade with a hole in the middle frequently buried with the dead.

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bronze

A metal alloy of copper and tin.

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chariot

A two-wheeled cart pulled by a pair of horses.

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China

A large country in East Asia.

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civilisation

The most advanced form of society.

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dagger-axe

A sharp dagger with a bronze blade fixed to a wooden pole.

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deity

A god or goddess.

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ding

An ancient Chinese cauldron used for cooking, storage or ritual offerings to the gods or ancestors.

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divination

The act of finding out and saying what will happen in the future.

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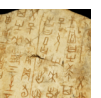
dynasty

A succession of people from the same family who rule the country, and the period when the country is ruled by them.

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emperor

The male ruler of an empire.



hierarchy

A system in society where people are organised into different levels of importance from highest to lowest.

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inscription

Words cut into pottery, stone, bone or metal.

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jade

A hard, green-coloured stone found in riverbeds and excavated from mountains.

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oracle bones

Pieces of turtle shell or ox bone used to communicate with ancestors and gods.

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plastron

The flat underside of a turtle’s shell.

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power

The ability to make people do as you want.

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sacrifice

The act of killing an animal or person and offering them to the gods.

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shaman

A priest who is believed to communicate with spirits.

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Shang Dynasty

The earliest ruling dynasty in the recorded history of China (c1600–c1046 BC).

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silk

A soft, delicate fabric made from thread produced by silkworms.

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taotie

A creature in Chinese mythology whose image appears on artefacts such as masks and ritual vessels.

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Xia Dynasty

Believed to be the first Chinese dynasty and the first organised government (c2070–c1600 BC).

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Yellow Emperor

The first emperor in Chinese history, Huangdi, who united many tribes near the Yellow River.

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Zhou Dynasty

Ruled China after the Shang Dynasty in a time of peace and unity (c1046–c256 BC).

