

ACTIVITY **4**

Document-Based Activities

Han China

Using Source Materials

Part A

DIRECTIONS Examine the following text and pictures. Underline key words and make notes in the margin if you wish. Then use the documents and what you have learned in your studies to answer the questions. Your answers will help you write an essay about Han China.

Document 1

Before You Read: The following words in the document below may be new to you: bequeathed, template, self-perpetuating, subsequent, dynamics. You may want to look them up in a dictionary.

The West inherits its traditions from the Romans and the Greeks, while China inherits from the Han.
 —Liu Qingzhu, director of the Institute of Archaeology in Beijing

The dynasty arose 2,200 years ago and lasted more than four centuries. Today, ethnic Chinese still call themselves Han—an echo of a golden age in art, politics, and technology when China rivaled the Roman Empire in power and prestige . . . It bequeathed a template of ideal rule—a united China and a self-perpetuating government—that became the goal of all subsequent dynasties . . . In the Han legacy, too, are spiritual and ethical dynamics that guide millions of Asians. One is Confucianism.
 —Mike Edwards, *National Geographic Magazine*, February 2004.

1a. What two civilizations are compared with the Han in these quotes?

1b. How did the Han dynasty influence the goals of later dynasties?

Activity 4, Han China, continued

Document 2

Before You Read: The following words in the document below may be new to you: *exceptional, detestation, envoys*. You may want to look them up in a dictionary.

Exceptional work demands exceptional men. . . . A man who is the object of the world's detestation may live to accomplish great things . . . it is simply a question of training. We therefore command the various district officials to search for men of brilliant and exceptional talents, to be our generals, our ministers, and our envoys to distant states.

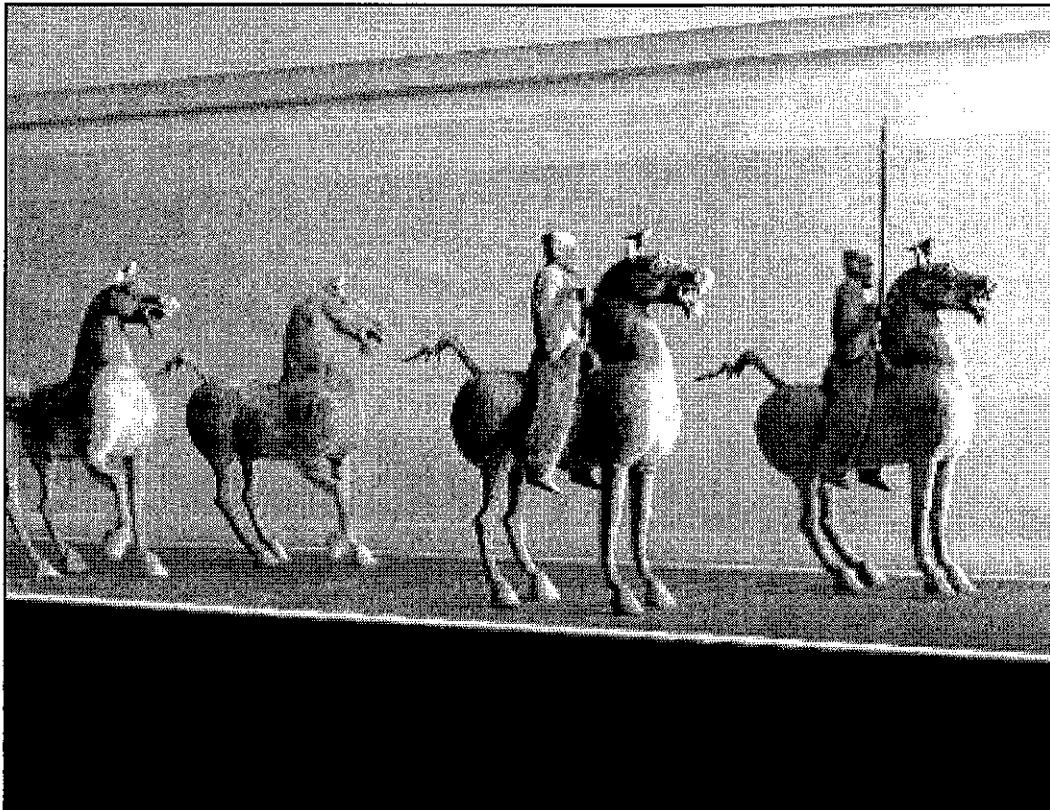
—Emperor Wudi from *Classical Chinese Literature*, edited by John Minford and Joseph S. M. Lau. Copyright ©2000 by Columbia University Press. Reproduced by permission of the publisher.

2a. What is Emperor Wudi looking for in generals and leaders?

2b. During the Han dynasty the government found and trained leaders. How does that compare to the way leaders are chosen in the United States?

Activity 4, Han China, continued

Document 3



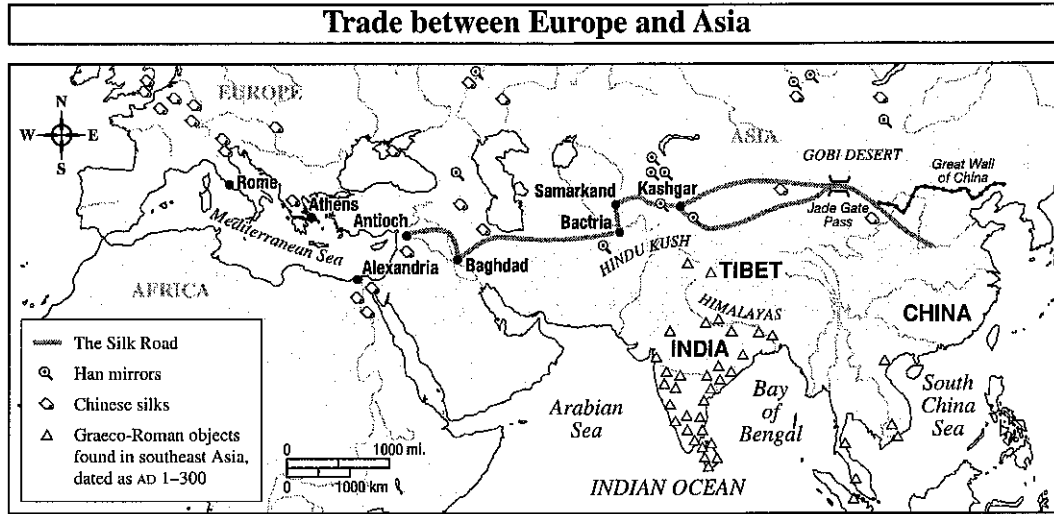
Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY

3a. During the Han dynasty horses became symbols of wealth. One horse ate enough grain to feed a family of six. Why might the Han have thought of horses as symbols of strength and power?

3b. How might the need for horses lead to increased interaction between China and Central Asia?

Activity 4, Han China, continued

Document 4



4a. How far west were Chinese silks traded?

4b. *Exports* are items that are sold. *Imports* are items that are purchased. According to the map, which was greater, China's imports or exports? How does this map show that the Chinese grew wealthy from trade?

Activity 4, Han China, continued

Document 5

Before You Read: The following words in the document below may be new to you: *collated, evolution, proceeding, antiquity*. You may want to look them up in a dictionary.

I have collected and collated all the old traditions that were scattered and . . . lost in the world; I have examined how affairs were conducted; I have looked for the explanation of their success or failure. . . . I have done 130 chapters in all. For my part I have wanted to examine everything that concerns heaven and man, to understand the evolution that has been proceeding from antiquity to our own day and make it the work of a single author.

—Sima Qian, Han historian, *Shiji*, c. 100 BC

5a. According to the document, why did Sima Qian write the *Shiji*?

5b. How did Sima Qian preserve Chinese history?

5c. Later historians used Sima Qian’s work as a model for their own. Are there similarities between history textbooks today and Sima Qian’s ideas?

Activity 4, Han China, continued

Document 6

Before You Read: The following words in the document below may be new to you: *convenient*, *hemp*. You may want to look them up in a dictionary.

In ancient times writing was generally on bamboo or pieces of silk, which were called *ji*. But silk being expensive and bamboo heavy, these two materials were not convenient. Then Tsai Lun thought of using tree bark, hemp, rags, and fish nets. In 105 he made a report to the emperor on the process of papermaking, and received high praise for his ability.

—An official history of paper

6a. How was paper an improvement over previous writing materials?

6b. Paper spread to Central Asia in 751, and to Baghdad by 793. From Baghdad, paper spread to the eastern frontiers of Europe. Look again at the map of the Silk Road in Document 4. Was the Silk Road a factor in the spread of paper? Explain your answers.

Activity 4, Han China, continued

Document 7

Han Accomplishments and Inventions

- Government based on merit system
- Earliest known maps
- Dictionary
- Paper
- Wheelbarrow
- Device for measuring distance
- Seismograph

7a. Which invention or accomplishment was most helpful to Han society? Explain your answer.

7b. Select two Han inventions and describe how they are used today.

Activity 4, Han China, continued

Document 8

Before You Read: The following words in the document below may be new to you: *marvelous, profusion, splendour, homage*. You may want to use a dictionary to look them up.

In the courtyard is a marvelous tree,
Flowers in profusion start from the green leaves.
I pull down the branches. I gather their splendour,
I will do homage with them to the friend of my heart

Their fragrant scent fills my breast, my sleeves,
The road is long, and no way of sending them . . .
The thing in itself is not worth giving you,
All that affects me is time which passes and keeps us apart.

—A poem from *Gushi (Nineteen Old Songs)*, AD 50–150 from
The Han Dynasty, translated by Janet Seligman.
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8a. During the Han dynasty people thought a poem should be meaningful to later generations. How does this poem meet that goal?

8b. During the Han dynasty, a Bureau of Music was created to encourage poets and musicians. What does this fact suggest about the Han dynasty?

Activity 4, Han China, continued**Writing a Document-Based Essay****Part B**

DIRECTIONS Write an essay about the Han dynasty of China. Include an introduction, a body of several paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph. Using at least *four* of the sources in Part A, provide facts and details that support your response. You may draw on any additional knowledge you have acquired about the subject.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Han dynasty ruled China from 205 BC to AD 220. During that time, the Chinese empire expanded to the north, south, and west. Its new boundaries took in much of the land that makes up China today. Han rulers encouraged creativity, and many new inventions were developed during this period.

TASK

How did the invention of paper change Han society? Discuss the effects of this invention on government, commerce, and personal life.

GUIDELINES

- Provide a thorough response to the Task. Be sure to cover all parts of the assignment.
- Use at least *four* of the sources in Part A and include specific information from them in your essay.
- Take advantage of relevant information you remember from your textbook and class work.
- Organize your essay in a clear and logical way.
- Support your statements with facts and information that address the topic.
- Write a conclusion that sums up your ideas.

NOTE: Do not simply restate the Task or Historical Context. Your essay should include much more information.