

THE STORY OF CHINA

The Story of China, written and presented by historian Michael Wood, explores the history of the world's oldest continuous state, from the ancient past to the present day.

Home to over a billion people, China is the new superpower, a country we all want to understand now, and Wood argues that to do so we have to look at its history. Travelling across the country, he explores the landscapes, peoples, stories and cultures that have helped create China's distinctive character and genius over more than four thousand years.

Episode 1: Ancestors

Michael Wood goes back to the beginnings of Chinese history to find clues to today's China. Starting with a family reunion, when 300 relatives gather to worship their ancestors on 'Tomb Sweeping Day,' Michael explores ancient myths and archaeological sites to uncover the origins of the Chinese state; he examines the first Chinese writing, and tells the dramatic tale of the bloodthirsty First Emperor, before an amazing climax with a million pilgrims at a festival on the Yellow River.

As you watch the film, take notes on the following items:

1. Significance of Chinese myths and the ancestors



2. Xia Dynasty and the formation of the Chinese culture

3. Shang Dynasty, oracle bones and Chinese writing

4. Mandate of Heaven

5. Zhou Dynasty and the rise of the Chinese state

6. Axial Age of the rise of Confucianism

7. Qin Dynasty and strong government

8. Han Dynasty and the foundations of Chinese morality and good governance

Conclusion Question: Identify and explain how China created a cultural foundation and Chinese patterns for future dynasties.