

China

Economy & Social Class



Previous



Next



Main
Menu



Chapter
Menu

Farming

- Yellow and Yangzi rivers flooded their banks most years and left a rich, fertile topsoil, or silt, on the surrounding land that made planting and growing easy.
- Grew crops such as millet, rice, and wheat for people in the army and in the cities. 
- Chinese farmers used oxen and water buffalo to pull plows made of iron to till the soil.
- Families often used their own waste as fertilizer.
- Painted clay pots were used to store the harvest.



Previous



Next



Main
Menu



Chapter
Menu

Money

- Used a system of coins, or currency, for buying goods as early as 2005 B.C.
- Shells, knives, and silk were the earliest forms of currency.
- During the Qin dynasty, the emperor declared that coins should be standardized, or worth the same amount in every part of China.
- A common currency made it easier for people to trade with each other.



Previous



Next



Main
Menu



Chapter
Menu

Silk Road

- Built a network of roads and canals to allow people to trade with each other.
- Silk Road stretched from China across Asia to the Mediterranean Sea.
- Silk was a rare and valued fabric that ancient Chinese traded with other peoples. 
- Along the Silk Road, merchants traveled by camel across deserts to trade Chinese silk, tea, and spices for gold, silver, and precious stones from Central Asia.



Previous



Next



Main
Menu



Chapter
Menu

Inventions

- Developed a system of writing so that people all over China could communicate with each other, making trade easier.
- Invented the abacus, a counting tool that used rods and sliding beads to calculate sums for trading goods. Sometimes called the “the world’s first calculator” .
- Innovative inventions also helped spread trade across China, such as paper and printing.



Previous



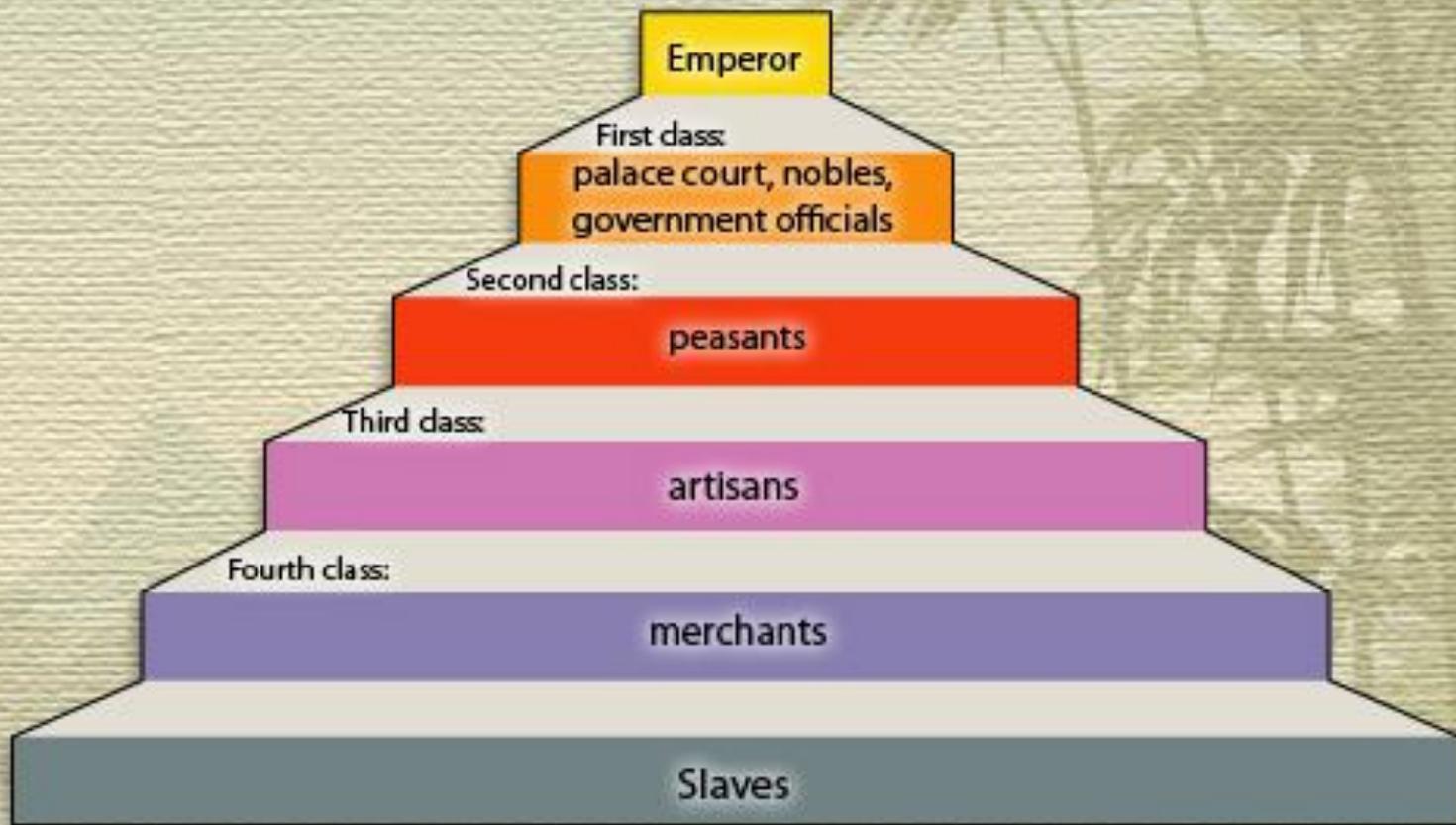
Next



Main
Menu



Chapter
Menu



Previous



Next



Main
Menu



Chapter
Menu

Aristocrats

- They were wealthy people whose wealth came from past generations.
- They had large amounts of land.
- They lived in huge beautiful estates.
- They also worked along the emperor.



Peasants

- Most of society were farmers (9 out of 10).
- These farmers lived in villages.
- Farmers rented their land from aristocrats and gave part of their harvest to the owner of the rented land. 
- Farmers also owned their own small part of land for their own use.
- The farmers were required to participate in building projects for one month every year.
- They also had to pay taxes and serve as soldiers in the army.



Previous



Next



Main
Menu



Chapter
Menu

Artisans

- These were woodworkers, architects, carpenters and artists.
- They made useful and beautiful objects that were often expensive and were sold to the higher classes. 
- They made iron weapons and tools, jade and bronze art, and cloth made of silk.



Previous



Next



Main
Menu



Chapter
Menu

Merchants

- The merchants provided goods and their services for the higher classes of the artisans.
- They were usually bankers, shopkeepers and traders.
- They lived in towns 
- Although some merchants became wealthy over time, they weren't respected.
- They were believed to only care for their own needs and to not be any good for society.



Previous



Next



Main
Menu



Chapter
Menu