

China (1750–1918)

Chinese society underwent dramatic transformations between 1750 and 1918. At the start of this period, China was a vast and powerful empire, dominating much of Asia. The emperor believed that China, as a superior civilisation, had little need for foreign contact. Foreign merchants were only permitted to trade from one Chinese port.

By 1918, China was divided and weak. Foreign nations such as Britain, France and Japan had key trading ports and 'spheres of influence' within China. New ideas were spreading from the West, challenging Chinese traditions about education, the position of women and the right of the emperor to rule.



chapter 11

Source 1 An artist's impression of Shanghai Harbour, c. 1875. Shanghai was one of the treaty ports established for British traders after China was defeated in the first Opium War (1839–42)

11A

What were the main features of Chinese society around 1750?

- 1 Chinese society was isolated from the rest of the world, particularly the West. Suggest two possible consequences of this isolation.

11B

What was the impact of Europeans on Chinese society from 1750 onwards?

- 1 One of the products that Western nations used, to force China to open up to trade, was opium. What impact would this have had on Chinese society and stability?

11C

How did the Chinese respond to European influence?

- 1 The Chinese attempted to restrict foreign influence and crush the opium trade, with little success. Why do you think this was the case?

11D

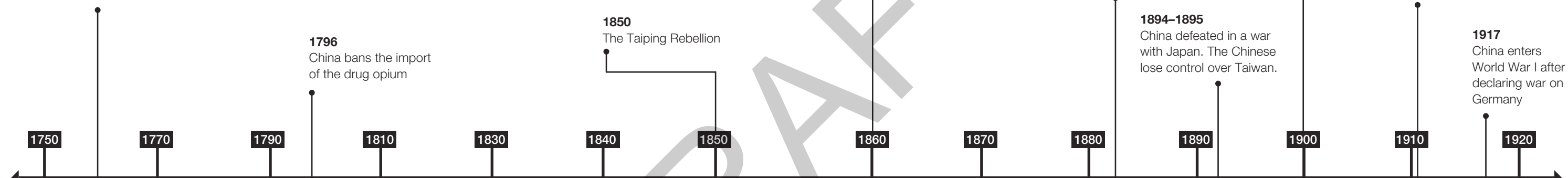
What was the situation in China by 1918?

- 1 By 1918, the Chinese emperor had been removed and a Chinese republic established in which the nation's leader was elected by the people. Suggest two or three factors that might have led to this change.

11.1 China 1750 – 1918 – a timeline



1760
The Chinese emperor bans foreign merchants from trading in all Chinese ports except Canton (modern-day Guangzhou)



1773
Britain starts producing the drug opium in India and selling it in China)



1796
China bans the import of the drug opium

1850
The Taiping Rebellion

1839–1842
The First Opium war between China and Britain. China suffers a humiliating defeat and is forced to hand control of Hong Kong to the British.

1856–1860
The Second Opium War between China and the forces of Britain and France. China is defeated and the emperor is forced to allow foreign traders into many Chinese ports.

1861
The Empress Dowager Cixi starts her rule when her son is named emperor at the age of four. She is the real ruler of China for the next 47 years.

1861
The start of the Self-Strengthening Movement reforms



1884–1885
China defeated in a war with France. China loses control over Vietnam.

1894–1895
China defeated in a war with Japan. The Chinese lose control over Taiwan.

1898–1900
The Boxer Rebellion



1908
Empress Dowager Cixi dies

1911
The 1911 Revolution; uprisings turn into a national revolt, causing the overthrow of China's last dynasty. China becomes a republic.



1917
China enters World War I after declaring war on Germany

Check your learning 11.1

Remember and understand

- 1 How many opium wars was China engaged in?

Apply and analyse

- 2 What can you learn about Chinese society from the fact that the Empress Dowager Cixi was able to rule for 47 years?

Evaluate and create

- 3 What evidence is there that the Chinese attempted to resist Western influence?
- 4 Research and write a short report on the Self-Strengthening Movement.

11.2 Traditional Chinese social structure

In the 18th century China was largely cut off from the rest of the world. The country had been ruled by the emperors of the Qing Dynasty since 1644, also known as the Manchu Dynasty. There was a strict social **hierarchy**, with the emperor and nobles at the top. The dominant belief system was **Confucianism**, which encouraged respect for one's ancestors. Chinese society was based on a sense of duty and loyalty between the people and their ruler.

Social structure

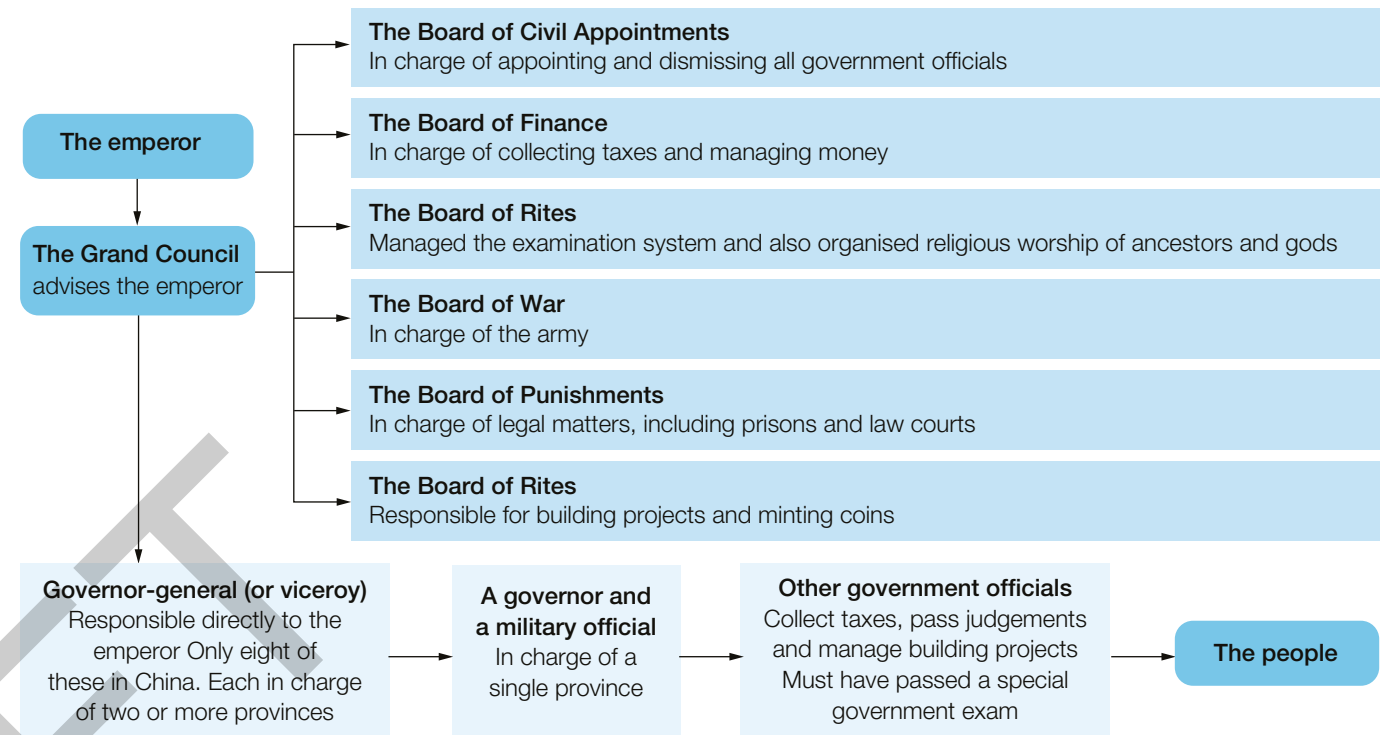
In the 18th century the Chinese emperor had total authority. He personally directed the army and could overrule any judgment made by any court. Next in the social order came the government officials, who achieved their positions by performing well in the

Source 1 China, showing the boundaries of Qing and modern China



government examination system. Other classes, in order of wealth but perhaps not in respectability, were the merchants, artisans and craftsmen, and the farmers and peasants. This social order remained unchanged from the time of the first emperor of a unified China in 221 BCE to the late 19th century.

The Chinese believed that the emperor received his power directly from god and he was known as the 'Son of Heaven'. Anyone coming into his presence had to **kowtow** (kneel and bow their head to touch the ground) three times. Tradition stated that if the emperor was worthy and ruled well, the empire would do well. However, it was also believed that if China faced flood, famine or conflict, this was a sign that heaven was displeased with the emperor and he could be overthrown. During the period of the Qing Dynasty the emperors were able to convince the people that they still had heavenly support.



Source 2 The Chinese system of government under the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912)

Confucianism

The main belief system in Imperial China was Confucianism. Confucianism is not a religion, but a code of behaviour that influences the way that people live their lives.

Confucius was a philosopher and teacher who lived from 551 to 479 BCE in eastern China. He argued that people should live virtuous lives, respect their elders and rulers and do their best to fulfil their given roles in society. Proper rules governed what people of different classes should or should not do, and how they should behave towards their superiors. Confucius taught that if everyone followed these rules, society would be harmonious. A person should try to treat others kindly, to act nobly and to distinguish right from wrong.

Confucianism encouraged 'ancestor worship'. On important days such as anniversaries of deaths, male descendants offered gifts to their ancestors. During these rituals, men would lay offerings before tablets bearing the names of dead ancestors. Women could not perform these rituals.

The examination system

To become a government official, a Chinese man had to pass a special government examination. The test was based on ancient Confucian philosophy, Chinese classics and literature. In theory, any Chinese male was eligible to sit for the examination. However, in

reality, poor men did not have the time or resources to prepare for the test and women were not allowed to apply. The government officials formed a class that came to be known as the **Mandarins**. They lived a privileged and luxurious life.



Source 3 A group of Chinese government officials, referred to by Europeans as Mandarins

Check your learning 11.2

Remember and understand

- 1 Examine Source 2. What were the responsibilities of the Board of Civil Appointments the Board of Rites and the Board of Punishments?
- 2 Identify two beliefs of Confucian philosophy.

Apply and analyse

- 3 How did Confucianism help to maintain social harmony?

Evaluate and create

- 4 To what extent was the Chinese social system equal?

11.3 Chinese traditions

For most people in China during the Qing Dynasty, daily life depended on ancient traditions and beliefs. Most people worshipped their ancestors, farmed the land and used simple technology. Things had changed little over the generations.

Life on farms and rural villages

Only around 6 per cent of the population lived in cities. The rest lived in small farming villages or towns. Most people were peasants who farmed the land. As well as growing crops, poorer peasant families often made extra money by spinning or weaving cotton or silk, or making other handicrafts that they would sell at local markets. Poorer families would often rent their land from wealthier landowners, and had to give them up to 50 per cent of what they grew.

Craftsmen and peasant farmers used simple technology in their day-to-day lives. People and

animals, rather than machines, did nearly all the physical work. Farmers used tools such as ploughs, and carts for transporting goods. Weavers used spinning wheels or hand spindles to make silk or cotton thread, and porcelain makers used the same hand moulding techniques that had been used for centuries.

Lives of women

Women in Chinese society occupied a much lower position than men. They could not inherit property and depended on their fathers or husbands for their livelihood. A virtuous woman was expected to be loyal and obedient to her father or husband.

Women generally took responsibility for domestic arrangements within the home: they cooked, cleaned and raised children. A wealthy woman might have had servants to direct to do this work but poorer women had to do it themselves. Many farming women also

worked in the fields or helped make handicrafts for extra income. Daughters were not valued as much as sons and there is evidence that some families killed baby girls at birth.

Women faced many restrictions on their activities. They were discouraged from interacting freely with men. Women were barred from holding government positions and very few were educated.

Men were free to remarry as soon as their wives died, but many believed that widows should commit suicide rather than re-marry.

Foot binding

One of the clearest indications that women were not equal was the painful practice of foot binding. Small feet, or 'golden lilies', were seen as a sign of beauty, and from the age of five, girls had their feet bound with strips of cotton. The toes were folded back and the

bones bent until the foot was completely deformed. Fifteen-year-old girls often had feet as small as 7 centimetres long.

For women with bound feet, walking could be excruciatingly painful and they often experienced long-term damage to their legs and hips.

Education

There was no such thing as compulsory education in China so most children of peasant farmers received no formal education. Girls learnt household tasks, such as cooking and weaving cloth, while boys learnt to tend livestock and help with planting and harvesting crops.

Schools for boys were established throughout China's provinces. If families could spare their sons from work, they were often willing to pay the school tuition so their sons could sit the government examination. Most boys in middle class and wealthier families attended school.

However, there were differing views about educating women during the Qing Dynasty. Some scholars viewed education for women as necessary only if it was to help educate their sons or to manage household finances. Many women in wealthy households were literate but they had to study at home.



Source 1 Chinese peasants in southern China planting rice, an activity that required the labour of peasant men, women and children



Source 2 A woman with bound feet, c. 1900

Check your learning 11.3

Remember and understand

- 1 Briefly describe the way that most Chinese lived in the time of the Qing Dynasty.

Apply and analyse

- 2 Explain three differences between the lives and status of males and females during the Qing period.

Evaluate and create

- 3 Conduct some further research on foot binding and create an illustrated PowerPoint presentation that addresses:
 - reasons for the practice
 - consequences of the practice for girls and women
 - what the practice tells you about the status of women in traditional China.

11.4 Chinese culture

During the Qing Dynasty, China had a rich and sophisticated culture. Beautiful buildings, art, music, opera and delicate porcelain were all part of Chinese life. The upper-class Chinese were most likely to be involved in cultural life but all Chinese appreciated beautiful buildings and objects.

Literature

The Qing emperors encouraged literature. Emperor Qianlong, who ruled from 1735 to 1796, was one of the greatest supporters of Chinese literature. He ordered Chinese scholars to collect thousands of masterpieces of Chinese literature, which he published in a collection called *The Complete Book of the Four Treasuries*. However, Emperor Qianlong was suspicious of any books or poems that contained negative views of the Qing. As a result, over 2000 books were censored and destroyed.

Despite strict censorship practices, writers during the Qing period continued to produce a rich body of literature. One of the most famous novels of the period was *Dream of the Red Chamber* by Cao Xueqin.

Chinese opera

Between 1790 and the 1840s, a distinctive style of opera evolved. It was known as 'Beijing Opera'. Its performers wore striking make-up and bright costumes to show the personalities and status of their characters. Rather than acting 'realistically', Beijing opera performers used graceful, 'symbolic' movements. Audience members knew that certain gestures were meant to show particular emotions. For instance, a sudden backward somersault expressed the despair a person feels upon losing a loved one. Specific movements were also used to indicate particular actions, for example, lifting a foot meant entering a house.

Architecture

Architecture during the Qing period continued many of the styles and forms from the Ming period before it. New influences included the use of glass and a greater integration of buildings and garden spaces. One of the most significant buildings of the Qing era was the Summer Palace, built between 1749 and 1764.



Source 1
A scene from the Chinese opera *Farewell My Concubine*, a story from 200 BCE, still performed in modern times.



Source 2 Now a major tourist attraction, this modern-day photo of the Summer Palace shows paddle boats on Kunming Lake.



Source 3 A painting from the 19th century depicting the manufacturing of porcelain in China using hand modelling and moulding techniques

The Summer Palace reflected the relationship between buildings, gardens and lakes, according to traditional Chinese principles of design. All aspects of the palace and its grounds were intended to contribute to an overall sense of harmony.

Porcelain

Porcelain is a glazed and baked ceramic material that originated in China in the time of the Han Dynasty, about 2000 years ago. By the Qing period, Chinese porcelain was of such high quality that it was sought all over the world. It was so popular that 'china' actually became the English word for porcelain.

The Qing potters continued many of the styles and techniques made famous under the Ming Dynasty. However, improved glazing methods and the use of higher temperatures for firing led to brighter colours and clearer designs.

Highly skilled artisans were engaged in all aspects of the creation of porcelain and they enjoyed status and a high standard of living.

Check your learning 11.4

Remember and understand

- 1 How did Beijing Opera performers convey emotion or action?
- 2 What evidence is there that Chinese porcelain was highly regarded in England?

Analyse and apply

- 3 What can you learn about the Emperor Qianlong from his attitude to literature?

Evaluate and create

- 4 Examine Source 3 showing Chinese potters.
 - What does the painting show?
 - How realistic do you believe this painting to be?

11A rich task

Qing style and fashion

The new Qing rulers established a dress code for the imperial court as a way of distinguishing the ruling elite and government from the general population. They also decreed that all Chinese men should wear their hair in the Manchu style to show their obedience to their new rulers. The Manchu, who founded the Qing dynasty, were made up of various tribes from Manchuria (in north-east China) and had a different style to the previous rulers.

Descriptions and images of Qing clothing styles, hairdos, buildings, decoration and furniture can tell the historian a great deal about the lives of people in the period.

Source 1

Court robes worn by the imperial family displayed round dragon medallions. The dragon symbolised the emperor, known as the Son of Heaven ... Civil and military officials displayed square court insignia badges on their robes with the appropriate bird or animal to identify their rank. The robes were made out of expensive fabrics like silks, satins, fine wool and furs ... Women dressed according to the rank of their husbands. There were also laws governing what commoners wore. Servants, actors and labourers were only allowed to wear clothes made of cheap materials like hemp cloth and sheepskin.

Matthews L. and Clements J., (2014) *Oxford Big Ideas History 9* Obook, OUP Melbourne

Source 3

When the Shunzhi (Qing) Emperor first conquered China in 1644 ... he decreed that all men should wear their hair in the Manchu style to show their obedience. They shaved the front of their head and wore a long braid at the back called a 'queue'. Anyone who refused to change his hairstyle was treated as a bandit and could be hunted down and killed.

Growing one's hair long at the front or cutting off one's queue were symbols of rebellion.

This hairstyle lasted until the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1912.

Matthews L. and Clements J., (2014) *Oxford Big Ideas 9 History* Obook, OUP Melbourne

Source 4

Before a Manchu woman grows up, she wears a single pigtail hanging behind; at the end of the pigtail is wound with a red cord, the front hair is cut into a bang, and often a bead made of gold or silver or jewellery is fastened on the tip of the pigtail, which is swinging with the wind, to show a sense of beauty.

China Culture 2008. http://www1.chinaculture.org/library/2008-01/28/content_29219.htm



Source 2 Emperor Yongzheng being carried in Triumph. From Ferrario Julkes, *Le Costume Ancien et Moderne*, 1820s.



Source 5 This image, from 1912, shows Chinese men having their queues cut off after the fall of the Qing Dynasty.

skilldrill: Historical sources as evidence

Evaluating the reliability and usefulness of sources

Evaluating the reliability and usefulness of sources is one of the most important, and perhaps most difficult, historical skills you need to master. A reliable source is one that you can trust. You can be reasonably sure that it is accurate or that it reflects a perspective from the period that you are studying. A useful source is one that will help you to address the questions that you are examining.

Step 1 Evaluating reliability

To determine the reliability of a source, you need to identify whether it is biased. Being biased means having an unbalanced or one-sided opinion. To recognise bias in a source, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who wrote it or made it?
- When was it written or made?
- Why was it written or made?
- Was the person who wrote or made it paid? If so, who paid them?
- Does it distort the facts?
- Does it give one side of the story, or is it balanced?
- Can the views expressed in this source be verified by another source?

Step 2 Evaluating usefulness

To evaluate the usefulness of a source you should ask the following questions:

- What question am I investigating?
- Is the source reliable?
- What messages is the source conveying – both explicit and implicit?
- What is the source saying or showing that will assist me to answer my historical question?
- What additional information would I like that would help me to answer my question?

Apply the skill

- 1 Using the questions above as guides, examine each of the sources on this page for their reliability and usefulness in assisting you to answer the question: 'What can you learn about society and attitudes during the Qing period in China from an examination of the ways that people dressed and wore their hair?'

Extend your understanding

- 1 Examine Sources 1 to 5. Explain how the sources are useful in answering the question: 'To what extent were styles of dress in Qing China determined by status and occupation?'

11.5 Early contact with the West

Under the Qing emperors, China was known as 'The Middle Kingdom'. This term grew from the idea that China was the centre of the world. It was similar to the European description of the large sea between Europe and North Africa as the Mediterranean Sea. Mediterranean also means middle of the earth.

The Qing emperors believed that China was superior to other nations and had no need of contact with others. However, during the 18th century, increasing numbers of Europeans were interested in China. Missionaries and merchants wanted to establish bases in China but they were restricted to Guangzhou. Over the course of the 19th century, Europeans gradually increased their influence in China.

Missionaries

Christian missionaries from European countries believed that theirs was the one true religion. They had no respect for Confucianism, Taoism or Buddhism. Many missionaries and their families came to China in the late 18th century and attempted to convert as many people as possible to Christianity. They started hospitals, schools and orphanages and had the Bible translated into Mandarin. By 1900, there were about 100 000 Christians in the country.

The Chinese emperors distrusted Christianity. They saw it as a challenge to Confucian values and disliked foreign missionaries moving around their country. Government officials also saw Christian missionaries as potential rivals to their own belief and education systems.

Early traders

For Europeans, China was a rich storehouse of treasures. Tea, silk, spices, porcelain, lacquerware and furniture were highly desirable items. However, European traders were unable to interest the Chinese in buying their products in return. Silver was the only currency that the Chinese would accept. By 1800, British merchants were paying over three and a half million pounds worth of silver to China, in return for tea alone.

In an attempt to change this situation, the British Government sent an ambassador to China in 1793. Earl Macartney's task was to convince the Emperor that Britain should have greater trading rights and that more ports should be opened to Western traders.

Macartney's mission was a failure, largely because of his arrogance. He refused to *kowtow* to the emperor. Instead, he simply knelt on one knee. As a result, the emperor refused all of Macartney's requests. He was ordered to leave Beijing within two days, taking with him a letter from the emperor to King George III.

Source 1

Macartney brought back an edict [order] from the Qianlong Emperor for King George III. 'As your ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things. I set no value on objects strange or ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures.'

But the most devastating thing about Qianlong's edict was that it had been drafted even before Macartney's mission arrived in China. The sad truth is that the ambassador never really stood a chance.

2 extracts from BBC Four program, *Getting Our Way*, Episode 2 – 'Prosperity'

Source 2

You can't conceive of them saying Yes to Macartney's demands. After all, what did he want? He wanted not only trading posts, possibly an island as a base for trade, and above all, he wanted diplomatic relations on an equal footing, and this was quite unthinkable to the Chinese. After all, there could only be one sun in the sky, and that, of course, was China. (Sir Percy Cradock, Ambassador to China, 1978–83)

Extract from BBC Four program, *Getting Our Way*, Episode 2 – 'Prosperity'



Source 3

A caricature published after the return of Britain's failed envoy to China shows Earl Macartney declining to *kowtow* before the Emperor Qianlong, unlike the men behind him.

The continuing trade imbalance

In Europe, the demand for Chinese goods continued to grow. Apart from tea, Chinese silks, porcelain and artefacts such as fans were very fashionable. There was also a Chinese influence in garden design. Chinese bridges and pagodas became essential elements in the gardens of stately homes. The Chinese, in return, continued to show little interest in European products



Source 4 The Chinese Bridge at Painshill, the 18th-century estate of Charles Hamilton in Surrey, England

Check your learning 11.5

Remember and understand

- 1 What products did Europeans want to buy from the Chinese?
- 2 What was the attitude of the Chinese emperors to Christianity?

Analyse and apply

- 3 What evidence is there that both the Chinese and the Europeans believed that their civilisations were the most important in the world?

Evaluate and create

- 4 Examine the three sources. Identify the words, phrases or features of the image that suggest the Chinese sense of superiority, and the words phrases and features that indicate the British sense of superiority.
- 5 Examine Source 3, showing the caricature of Earl Macartney with the Chinese.
 - a Explain the context for this picture.
 - b Do you think that it is sympathetic to the British or the Chinese? Support your answer with reference to specific features of the picture.

11.6 The opium trade

The British traders were desperate to find a product that the Chinese would be willing to buy. They settled on **opium**, a powerful drug that is highly addictive. British ships began picking up cargoes of opium at Indian ports and selling the drug to Chinese traders.

The opium trade grew quickly. In 1790, private British traders shipped 4000 chests of opium a year into China. By 1822 this had risen to 18766 chests. By this time, China could no longer sell enough tea to pay for so much opium, so vast amounts of silver started to flow out of China. Qing officials saw that the opium trade hurt China financially and socially. The emperor had made buying opium illegal in 1796, but British traders ignored the ban and continued to sell the drug illegally.

The First Opium War

By the 1830s, the negative impact of the opium trade was being felt in all areas of Chinese life. The economy was severely damaged and the physical and mental wellbeing of many people was under threat. In 1839, the emperor appointed Lin Zexu to attempt to stop the opium trade.

Lin Zexu's first action was to confiscate 20000 chests of opium in Guangzhou (Canton). He then insisted that British merchants sign a bond (agreement)

that they would cease importing opium. The British Government's response was to send naval vessels to China demanding payment for the destroyed opium.

At the same time, another issue was causing tension between the Chinese and the British. The British government demanded that the principle of **extraterritoriality** be followed in China. This meant that if British citizens committed crimes in China, they were subject to British, not Chinese, law.

Lin Zexu wrote a letter to Queen Victoria in which he argued that it was illegal to sell opium in Britain so why should the British sell it in China. He began with the words:

Suppose the subject of another country were to come to England to trade, he would certainly be required to comply with the laws of England, then how much more does this apply to us of the celestial empire!

Lin Zexu received no reply.

The combination of these tensions led to the outbreak of war between the British and Chinese naval forces in 1840. The British navy was superior to the Chinese and by 1842 the British had taken control of the key Chinese trading ports. Under the Treaty of Nanjing, in 1842, the British extended their political and economic control over China.



Source 1
A Chinese opium den

- The key features of the treaty included:
- five new ports to be opened to British traders
 - \$21 million to be paid to the British in compensation for the destroyed opium
 - Hong Kong to be given up to Britain for 150 years
 - the principle of extraterritoriality to apply to all British citizens accused of crimes in China.

The Treaty of Nanjing humiliated the Chinese and gave the British much greater influence in China. The opium trade increased and its impact helped to undermine the social system in China and the prestige of the Qing Dynasty.



Source 2 Edward Duncan's 1843 painting of British ships destroying Chinese war junks during the First Opium War

The Second Opium War

Tensions between the British and the Chinese were not resolved by the Treaty of Nanjing. The spread of the opium trade continued to cause resentment. Moreover, the Chinese economy was increasingly weakened by the imbalance of trade. The Chinese believed that they had handed over far too much power to the British, but the British wanted more.

In 1856, Chinese officials boarded *The Arrow*. This was a Chinese ship that had been registered by the British in Hong Kong and was flying a British flag. Britain used the incident as a reason to attack Guangzhou, which led to the outbreak of the Second Opium War.

This time, France joined the British against the Chinese because of recent assaults against their missionaries and sailors. The United States and Russia also offered to send military support to Britain and France but this proved unnecessary. Britain and France

easily overpowered Chinese troops and, once again, China was defeated.

Under the 1858 Treaty of Tianjin, the Chinese emperor was further humiliated and China's independence was virtually destroyed. The key features of the treaty included:

- the opening of 10 more ports to foreign trade
- the extension of trading rights to France, Russia and the USA in addition to Britain
- the extension of rights to missionaries to travel throughout China and freedom of religion for all Chinese
- further financial reparations to be paid in silver to Britain and France
- the legalisation of the opium trade.

By 1860, China was a mere shadow of the proud and cultured nation that it had been a century earlier.

Check your learning 11.6

Remember and understand

- 1 Why did the British introduce the opium trade to China?
- 2 What were the two main issues that led to the First Opium War?

Analyse and apply

- 3 Compare the key features of the Treaties of Nanjing and Tianjin. Which do you think would have been the more humiliating to the Chinese? Refer to specific features of the treaties to support your answer.

Evaluate and create

- 4 Examine Source 1. What can you learn about the place of opium smoking in Chinese society from the image?
- 5 Imagine that you were Queen Victoria and you received the letter from Lin Zexu. Write a reply justifying the actions of the British Government and the British traders.

11B rich task

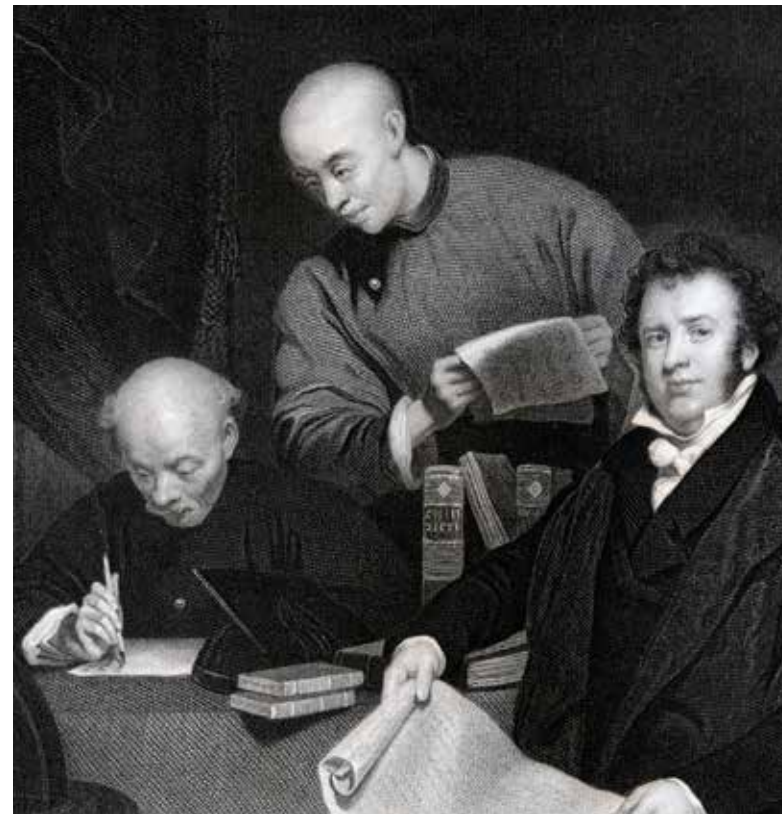
The impact of Europeans on Chinese society

From the mid-18th century, Chinese society was under threat from European influence. By the end of the 19th century, the once proud country of China weakened and unstable. The main influences on this destabilisation were Christianity, opium and the loss of wealth and territory to Western powers.

Source 1

The very trick of the cunning barbarians (foreigners) is to weaken our nation with poison (opium). If they now succeed in fooling our people, it means the disintegration of our national defence and the opening up of the same to our penetration.

Yuan Yulim (Magistrate) in a letter to the Emperor in 1836.



Source 3 A Christian missionary teaching Chinese scholars

skilldrill: Historical sources as evidence

Developing a written historical argument

Historical discussions present different opinions about particular historical questions or issues. Follow these steps to research and write your own historical discussion.

Step 1 Consider evidence from a range of sources, and outline different possible interpretations of that evidence.

- Consider relevant primary sources.
- Consider the ideas of other historians, presented in secondary sources such as textbooks and websites.
- Record the sources of all of your information.

Step 2 Make a decision as to your view on the issue. Decide what arguments you are going to make, and how you will support them.



Source 2 A 19th-century cartoon provides a commentary on the British opium trade in China.

Step 3 Write up your discussion. Your discussion should include the features outlined in the table below.

Introduction	Introduces the topic and the issues to be explored
Main body	A series of paragraphs that outline different arguments related to the issue or question. Each point should be supported with evidence.
Conclusion	Sum up the material and give your opinion. Don't say I, say something like 'the evidence suggests ...'
Involvement of sources in your writing	In addition to footnoting all of your sources, you should indicate the source of some of your information as part of your discussion; e.g. 'According to historian Ronald Laidlaw, China lost the First Opium War because it lacked good leadership and organisation.'
Footnotes and bibliography	All quotes, figures and facts that are not generally known must be footnoted. All written and internet sources must be acknowledged; e.g. Wood Michael, 2004, <i>In Search of Shakespeare</i> , Maya Vision International.

Territories previously part of the Qing Empire that were controlled by foreign powers by 1900



Source 4

Apply the skill

Using these and other sources you are to develop an historical argument on the topic:

'Opium was by far the most destructive influence on Chinese stability and wellbeing during the 19th century.'

Steps in developing your argument:

- 1 Examine Sources 1 to 4 and conduct some further research into the negative impact of European influence on China between 1750 and 1911.
- 2 Make notes on the negative influence of the opium trade.
- 3 Make notes on other influences, especially Christianity and the loss of wealth and territory.
- 4 Use the material you have gathered to answer the question in essay form. Note that you should consider all influences before deciding whether opium was the most destructive.

Extend your understanding

- 1 The island of Hong Kong was leased to Britain for 150 years, under the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing. In 1997, the island was handed back to China. Conduct some research on what has taken place in Hong Kong since 1997. Prepare a written or audiovisual report that addresses some of the following points: government, living conditions, customs and traditions, personal freedoms, contact with mainland China.

11.7 China's internal problems

The Opium Wars put China under huge pressure at a time when China was also facing emerging internal problems. The second half of the 19th century was a difficult period for China, which was struggling economically. Most Chinese were still farming or engaged in small businesses. China did not have modern, large-scale industries such as those found in Europe and the United States. In addition, China's population had more than doubled between 1750 and 1850. Farmland was in short supply and food was sometimes scarce. Large numbers of people moved across the country in search of work and food. This had a disruptive impact on the country.

Many Chinese were unhappy about the recent military defeats by foreigners. They also suffered because of the huge sums of money China was paying to foreign powers. These unstable conditions led to internal rebellions and attempts to bring China into the modern world.

The Taiping Rebellion

By far the largest rebellion was the Taiping Rebellion, led by Hong Xiuquan. Between 1850 and 1864 the Taiping rebels seized control of much of south and central China, establishing their own kingdom for over a decade.

Hong was inspired by Christian-missionary pamphlets and believed he was Jesus' younger brother. He declared that he would establish a new kingdom called the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace, and swore to throw the Qing rulers out of China.

In his new kingdom, Hong promised to turn private property into common property to be shared by all. This attracted many famine-stricken peasants, workers and miners who joined with Hong against the Qing rulers. In 1853, with up to one million followers, Hong captured the eastern city of Nanjing, renaming it Tianjing.

Later attempts by the Taiping rebels to take Beijing and Shanghai failed and they were eventually defeated by combined Qing Dynasty and Western forces. Between 20 and 30 million people died as a result of the Taiping Rebellion. Many died in battles, but others died from starvation and disease.



Source 1 Seal of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace

The Self-Strengthening Movement

The opium trade, the military defeats and the western influence on Chinese society all created concerns for the Qing emperors. Beginning in the 1860s, the Qing leaders began a limited program of modernisation, known as the Self-Strengthening Movement.

China's outdated navy was one area that needed improvement. The government purchased several modern ships from Europe and experimented with shipbuilding in Shanghai. In 1862, General Zeng Guofan reported that Chinese workers had managed to build a steamboat, but that it was 'very slow'.

China also needed to build up its industry. In the 1870s, they began to build modern factories. In 1875, a factory in the city of Jiangnan began production of modern rifles. In 1877, the first steam engine was used to power a wool mill. Other industries included shipyards and coal mines.



Source 2 A British factory in Hog Lane, Canton, c. 1838

However, these projects were only partially successful. Foreigners were still needed to run many factories, as the government could not find Chinese who knew enough about modern science or engineering. By 1900, in spite of the Self-Strengthening projects, China was still not able to compete with modern powers.

Foreign wars

A further humiliation for China was to do with its failed involvement in a number of foreign wars. Around the turn of the 20th century, China suffered defeat at the hands of France, Japan and Russia. These defeats left China even more at the mercy of foreign powers, and demonstrated the backwardness of the Qing rulers.

Check your learning 11.7

Remember and understand

- 1 What effect did the great growth in population numbers have on China?
- 2 What did the Taiping rebels achieve?
- 3 What was the Self-Strengthening Movement?

Apply and analyse

- 4 Why did the Self-Strengthening Movement achieve only limited success?
- 5 Why do you think the forces of the Qing Dynasty combined with Western armies to defeat the Taiping rebels?

Evaluate and create

- 6 Address the following question in essay form: 'To what extent was a lack of modernisation the main reason for China's position around 1900?' (In your answer you may draw upon information from this and earlier units.)
- 7 Create a crossword using the names, terms and concepts used in this unit. Swap your crossword with a classmate.

11.8 The Boxer Rebellion

Wars, internal problems, poverty and famine all combined to create a climate of dissatisfaction in China by the end of the 19th century. As a result, a number of rebellious groups developed. The most significant of these was the Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists, or the Boxers.

The Boxers were mostly peasants, with semi-religious but anti-Christian ideas. They were religious martial artists, who believed that their training could eventually allow them to develop resistance to foreign bullets. They blamed the foreigners and Christians for China's problems, calling them 'ghosts' or 'devils'. The Boxers quickly gained the support of people in the provinces of northern China, where peasants had suffered decades of great hardship. They protested under the slogan, 'Support the Qing; Destroy the Foreigners'.

At first, Empress Dowager Cixi condemned the Boxers' actions. She was afraid that Western nations might use the Boxer attacks as an excuse to send in their military forces again. But in 1900, the Empress Dowager suddenly changed her tone. She suggested that she might even sympathise with the rebels.

The Beijing siege

The most famous event of the Boxer Rebellion took place in 1900, when Boxers began attacking the headquarters (known as legations) of the foreign powers in Beijing. The northern part of China was in severe drought and the Boxers blamed the foreigners. Australian journalist George Morrison kept a diary of his experiences in Beijing in 1900. He reported that the Boxers believed the foreigners had disturbed the feng shui and that this was the cause of the drought. He wrote on 26 April: 'According to my boy (servant),

The areas of northern China directly affected by the Boxer Rebellion



Source 1

8000000 men are to descend from Heaven and exterminate the foreigners ... Then the rain will come.'

In Beijing, representatives of the foreign nations were initially confident that they could fight off the Boxer attack. Then in June 1900, the Boxers cut the rail link between Tianjing, on the coast, and Beijing. Telegraph cables were also destroyed and mail delivery was stopped. This left the foreigners in the Beijing legations isolated. For 55 days, the foreigners were besieged and under constant attack by Boxer soldiers and the Qing army.

The Boxer Rebellion was finally crushed by the military superiority of the foreign powers. Troops were sent from eight countries: Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States. Britain's force included Sikh soldiers from India and sailors and soldiers from New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.



Source 2 Japanese troops, part of the international force, with the bodies of executed Boxer prisoners

Consequences of the Boxer Rebellion

The Boxer Rebellion had been designed to drive foreigners out of China. Yet, it had the opposite effect, increasing foreign power and influence.

Once the siege of Beijing was over and the Boxers had been defeated, the Qing officials tried to suggest that they had not supported the rebels. However, the foreign powers would not accept this. The foreigners imposed a harsh punishment on the Qing rulers, known as the Boxer Protocol.

Under the Boxer Protocol, China had to pay damages of millions of pounds worth of silver. Moreover, foreign forces occupied Beijing and surrounding areas for over a year. Looting by foreigners was widespread, often in the name of recovering wealth stolen from missionaries.

Over the next two decades some of the money paid by the Chinese in damages was redirected by foreign powers back into China. The foreigners used it to set up banks and build railways and bridges, in a form of compulsory modernisation. After the Boxer Rebellion, the Empress Dowager Cixi also realised that she had to make some attempts to change or modernise the way China was governed. She agreed to a wide range of reforms, including the abolition of the government examination system in 1905. But other reforms, such as the introduction of a genuinely democratic form of government, were not implemented.

Check your learning 11.8

Remember and understand

- 1 What influences combined to create the dissatisfaction leading to the establishment of the Boxers?
- 2 Which foreign countries helped to crush the Beijing siege?

Apply and analyse

- 3 Why did the Boxers gain such strong support in northern China?
- 4 Explain how the outcome of the Boxer rebellion was the opposite of what was intended? Support your answer with evidence.

Evaluate and create

- 5 You are an advisor to the Empress Dowager Cixi in 1901. Suggest and explain three steps that the Qing rulers could take to strengthen China and limit foreign power and interference.

11.9 Divided responses to Western influence

From the time that Europeans first started forcing their way into China, there were mixed reactions from the Chinese people. The majority of Chinese, particularly the peasants, resented the Europeans and the Christian missionaries. The Qing rulers and the administrative class also felt threatened and undermined. However, there were aspects of Western influence that appealed to some Chinese, especially merchants and people living in the treaty port cities. New technology and modern ideas about politics gained increasing support over the last decades of the 19th century.

Merchant resentment

Until the First Opium War, the only port open to foreigners was Guangzhou. Trade with Britain had been very profitable for Guangzhou merchants. They blamed the Qing emperor for the Treaty of Nanjing (1842) and the extension of trade through another four ports. They believed that trading rights given to five European powers took away their own power and economic opportunities. Moreover, they resented the failure of the Qing emperor to stop the opium trade.

At the same time, many of those in the treaty port areas and in Hong Kong also came into increasing contact with Western technology. They saw the benefits of railways, wharves, bridges and telegraph services in assisting trade and commerce.

Increasing numbers of the small Chinese middle class began to copy Western ways of living and to take an interest in Western social and political ideas.

Western-style education

One area that interested some Chinese was the Western education system. The traditional examination system, based on the Confucian classics, had existed for over a thousand years. Those who had contact with Westerners became increasingly convinced that education should be broader and should prepare young Chinese for the modern world. By the early 20th century an increasing number of young Chinese were completing their studies in Japan, USA or Great Britain.



Source 1 A French cartoon from 1898 showing representatives from foreign powers in Europe and Asia carving up China (China) while a Chinese official stands by, powerless to stop them.

Dr Sun Yat-sen, who was to lead the revolution against the Qing emperors in 1911, received a Western-style education. Although from a peasant background, Sun attended an English-speaking school in Hawaii. Later he studied Western-style medicine at the Hong Kong College of Medicine. Sun learned ideas of nationalism and republicanism from his Western studies.



Source 2 The European influence on China is reflected in these French and American influenced buildings along the Bund in Shanghai.

Christianity

There were also mixed attitudes towards Christianity. Many Chinese (including the Boxers) were strongly opposed to Christians and blamed them for many of China's woes. However, others embraced the new religion. This was largely because of the practical contribution of the various Christian churches; they built schools and hospitals, trained nurses and doctors and looked after the poor. The Christian churches also strongly opposed the opium trade, which was the cause of so much Chinese suffering.

New political ideas

Education and contact with Westerners led to the questioning of the role and power of the emperor. It also gave rise to ideas of nationalism. There was a growing belief that China was one country and that it belonged to a unified people. Nationalists also believed that the Chinese people should have a say in running their own country. Pro-nationalist and anti-Qing movements had first emerged after the humiliation of the Opium Wars. These movements grew stronger after the Boxer Rebellion and the harsh terms of the Boxer Protocol.

Check your learning 11.9

Remember and understand

- 1 What aspects of Western civilisation appealed to some Chinese in the later part of the 19th century?

Apply and analyse

- 2 Explain how the opium trade and the Opium Wars created resentment among Guangzhou merchants?
- 3 What roles did Christianity and Western-style education play in the spread of anti-Qing ideas in China in the late 19th century?
- 4 Examine Source 2. Identify signs that this is a Chinese city and indications of European influence.

Evaluate and create

- 5 Create a dialogue between a traditional Chinese administrator who supports the Qing emperor and a Chinese merchant who has converted to Christianity and supports change. Each person should speak four times and should make reference to specific details about China up to 1901.

11C rich task

Empress Dowager Cixi

From the second half of the 19th century, the Qing regime in China was ruled by the Empress Dowager Cixi. She was the mother of the Emperor Zaichun who was only five when he succeeded to the throne in 1861. Because Zaichun was too young to rule, his mother was appointed as regent. Initially Cixi was intended to share power with eight other regents.

Cixi gradually increased her power and was able to overthrow the other eight regents. When her son died in 1875, she managed to remain in power, continuing in the role of regent, this time for four-year-old Emperor Guangxu. In 1898, when he was 29, Guangxu attempted to assert his own power. He ordered dramatic changes to many aspects of Chinese life. He wanted to build new railways, build up industry and update the education system to include Western science. He even suggested a limited form of democracy.

These reforms alarmed Cixi, who saw them as a threat to her own power. She quickly organised his arrest. Her soldiers took the Guangxu Emperor to a small palace in the middle of a lake, connected to land by a single guarded bridge. Guangxu lived as a prisoner until he died in 1908.

In 1901, after the failed Boxer Rebellion, Cixi agreed to some moderate reforms. They included the modernisation of China's military resources and the abolition of the examination system. These reforms were seen as too little too late.

Cixi died in 1908 after eating a bowl of crab apples with cream. She was buried in the Qing imperial tombs near Beijing. Only three years later the Qing dynasty collapsed and the Chinese republic was established.



Source 1 Early 20th-century portrait of Empress Dowager Cixi by a Western artist



Source 2 The Empress Dowager Cixi with the wives of foreign envoys in Beijing

Source 3

Our past errors will help us to act more wisely in the future. We must no longer distinguish between Chinese ways and foreign ways. So far we have copied only the outer clothes of the West. WE must go further. We must revise ancient methods, stamp out abuses in our system of government and reform completely.

Edict from the Empress Dowager Cixi, 1901. Stokes G and Stokes J, 1967, *Modern China: A Documentary History*, Longmans, London, page 177

Step 4 Assess the extent to which the event or movement would have occurred without the contribution of the key individual.

Step 5 Draw a conclusion about the significance of the individual and support your conclusion with evidence.

Apply the skill

- Using the steps outlined above, examine the question: 'To what extent would the history of China have been different if the Empress Dowager Cixi had been less powerful and less resistant to change?' Present your findings in essay form using at least four paragraphs.

skilldrill: Historical Significance

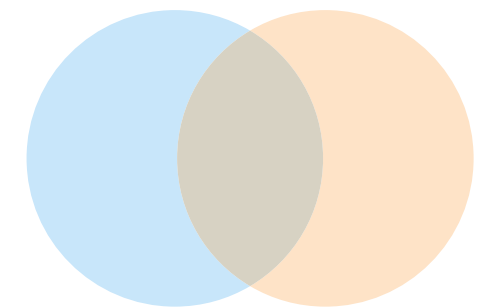
How can an individual influence history?

Certain individuals stand out in history as key figures responsible for change. Julius Caesar, William the Conqueror, Napoleon Bonaparte and Adolf Hitler are all seen as people who have changed history. However, some historians argue that without a background of circumstances, the influence of key individuals would be meaningless. In order to assess the importance of an individual, you should follow these steps:

- Step 1** Decide on a particular historical movement or event to examine.
- Step 2** Research and examine the generally accepted background causes for this movement or event.
- Step 3** Research the role of a key individual in this event or movement.

Extend your understanding

- Look back at the two images of the Empress Dowager Cixi in Sources 1 and 2.
 - What do you notice most about each image? Organise your ideas using a Venn diagram like the one below, noting similarities and differences.



- How is Cixi's powerful position shown in each of these images?

11.10 Revolutionary movements

Following the crushing of the Boxer Rebellion, the Qing administration was at its weakest point in nearly 300 years. Western influence, economic distress and internal divisions created a situation that was ripe for revolution.



Source 1 Dr Sun Yat-sen

A nationalist revolutionary: Sun Yat-sen

The Boxer Rebellion showed that many Chinese wanted foreign interference in their country to stop. On the other hand, many Chinese were also being influenced by foreign ideas. Thousands of Chinese were now travelling overseas to study in Western countries and Japan. Some returned to China with newly adopted customs and beliefs, as well as ideas about how government could run differently. One such individual was Sun Yat-sen.

Sun Yat-sen had left China in his youth and studied in Hawaii and Hong Kong. He was baptised as a Christian in Hong Kong in 1886. Sun led a Revolutionary Alliance of groups who were devoted

to expelling the Qing rulers and restoring control of a unified China to the Chinese.

Sun made his first attempt to overthrow the Qing Government in 1895. The attempt was a failure and Sun fled to London and then to Japan. He spent the next 16 years gathering support from mainland and Chinese expatriates (Chinese citizens living abroad) and planning his next move.

While he was in exile, Sun Yat-sen developed three ideas that were to guide him and his followers in their campaign for an independent Chinese republic. Sun outlined these ideas, known as The Three Principles of the People, in 1905. They were:

- *Nationalism* – the unity of all ethnic groups in China and an end to foreign interference
- *Democracy* – representation of all people in a democratically elected assembly
- *Welfare* – quality of life for those groups, with recognition of basic rights to food, clothing, transportation, education, rights and freedoms.

Other revolutionaries

Although Sun was based outside China for many years, he had a growing body of supporters. Many of them were people who had benefited from a Western-style education. Ironically, steps by the Qing administration to modernise and Westernise actually helped to bring about its downfall. Better educated Chinese realised that their country could improve in many ways.

Kang Youwei

One Chinese scholar who supported reform was Kang Youwei. One of his first campaigns was to bring an end to foot binding. This attempt, in 1883, failed but it increased his desire to modernise China while retaining Confucian values. Unlike Sun Yat-sen, Kang believed in a constitutional monarchy. This meant that he wanted a democratically elected government but he was happy to retain the emperor as a figurehead.



Source 2 Kang Youwei

Liang Qichao

Another active revolutionary was Liang Qichao. Liang was a scholar and journalist who believed in reform from within. He argued that the Qing leaders should reform China's economy and social practices to be more like Western nations. However, he also wanted to maintain China's traditional culture. Liang took part in China's first student demonstration in 1895, following the humiliating defeat of China by Japan in the First Sino-Japanese War. The emperor took notice of Liang's ideas in 1898 and ushered in the Hundred Days of Reform. However, the Empress Dowager felt that the reforms were going too far and Liang was banished to Japan. Here he used his journalistic talents to spread his revolutionary ideas.



Source 3 In 1905, Sun Yat-sen outlined three ideas to guide the campaign for an independent Chinese republic. These ideas became known as the Three Principles of the People. These principles still influence Chinese government policy to this day. This sign on the island of Kinmen (governed by Taiwan) faces the Chinese mainland. It reads: "The Three Principles of the People will unite China"



Source 4 These wooden, silk and gold shoes were designed for the tiny bound feet of a Chinese woman. Kang Youwei was among those who protested against the practice of foot binding. The ancient practice of foot binding was officially banned in 1912, but continued for many years after that date.

Check your learning 11.10

Remember and understand

- 1 What evidence is there that there was growing dissatisfaction within China in the second half of the 19th century?
- 2 Identify Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles.

Apply and analyse

- 3 Explain two ways in which Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary ideas differed from those of Kang Youwei or Liang Qichao?

Evaluate and create

- 4 Conduct some further research into the Hundred Days of Reform. Outline the key points of the program under the headings:
 - Administrative reform
 - Economic reform
 - Military reform
 - Educational reform
 Suggest three reasons why the program was largely unsuccessful.

11.11 The 1911 Revolution and the end of imperial rule

The turmoil of the opium trade and the influence of the West eventually took their toll on the Qing rulers of China. In October 1911, a republican revolution broke out and in February 1912, the child emperor Pu Yi was forced to abdicate. Almost 300 years of Qing rule was at an end.

Background to the revolution

The Hundred Days of Reform and other attempts to reform China from within met with little success. In 1901, the Empress Dowager issued an edict in which she proclaimed that she was in favour of modernisation. In the edict, she said 'All human rules must be subject to alteration. It is not foolish to put fresh strings on a musical instrument.' However, any attempt at reform was too little too late.

Empress Dowager Cixi died in 1908. The new emperor, Pu Yi, was only two years and 10 months old.

Nationalists seized the chance and began to call for the end of Qing rule. They suggested that the Qing, who originated in Manchuria, were unwelcome foreigners. They claimed that China could only be truly reformed under *Chinese* control.

In the early years of the 20th century, Sun Yat-sen's Revolutionary Alliance attempted several revolutions. All were put down by Qing troops, but with each revolt the prestige and power of the Qing rulers was weakened.

Outbreak of revolution

As is often the case, the revolution, when it came, took most Chinese by surprise. It started from a dispute over the ownership of a railway in the Sichuan province in China's south west.

Faced with debts as a result of the Boxer Protocol, the Qing Government was looking for extra sources of income. They decided to seize a privately owned railway



Source 1 Imperial officials flee from Tianjin during the Chinese Revolution in 1911

in Sichuan. The Qing Government had done things like this before, but this time they met with resistance. Local officials organised mass demonstrations, which quickly turned violent. The Qing Government, fearing further uprisings, tried to send in troops from a neighbouring province. However, the troops sided with the protesters.

Officials from Sichuan, with the support of troops from neighbouring provinces, declared their independence from the Qing emperors. This set off a chain of uprisings. Province after province followed suit and rebelled. A series of uprisings saw the removal of Qing provincial governors in the southern regions of China, between October and December 1911.

The nationalist revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen was in the United States, in exile, when the revolution broke out. Reading about it in the paper, he hurried back to China to help to organise a new government in Nanjing. By December 1911, he was provisional president of the new republic, a nation whose leader was elected by the people.

The end of the Qing Dynasty

The chain of uprisings removed Qing governors in the southern provinces, but the Qing rulers in Beijing still held on to power. Because the emperor was only a baby, his father Prince Juan was ruling as regent. He asked military leader Yuan Shikai to assist the Qing administration to crush the revolutionaries.

Yuan led the Qing army in a battle against the republicans in the province of Wuhan. Although the Qing army was victorious in the short term, it became obvious that the republican forces had the support of large numbers of the Chinese people. Yuan began negotiations with Sun Yat-sen and the republicans.



Source 2 Chinese men having their 'queues' cut off after the fall of the Qing Dynasty

Sun offered to resign as president in favour of Yuan, if Yuan could persuade the emperor to abdicate. Yuan negotiated the emperor's abdication and became president in March 1912.

China became a republic, and thousands of years of imperial rule came to an end.

Check your learning 11.11

Remember and understand

- Write a brief explanation of the role of the following in the 1911–12 revolution:
 - Sun Yat-sen
 - Yuan Shikai
 - Prince Juan

Apply and analyse

- Explain why the Empress Dowager Cixi's 1901 edict was not successful in saving the Qing Dynasty.

- What do you believe was the main reason for the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and the establishment of the Chinese republic? Support your answer.

Evaluate and create

- Construct a timeline showing the events that led to the end of the Qing Dynasty, between October 1911 and March 1912.
- Hold a class debate on the topic: 'By 1901, the Qing Dynasty was doomed.'

11.12 China moves into the 20th century

The new Chinese republic did not have an easy beginning. There were still many tensions and divisions within the country. Some supported the republic while others still yearned for the return of the emperors. There were those who believed that China should modernise along Western lines as quickly as possible. Other Chinese feared the loss of traditional culture and wanted to resist change. This unstable situation was made worse by China's experiences during the First World War.

The early republic

Despite mixed feelings within China about the republic, most Western leaders were very supportive. The USA was among the first to acknowledge the new republic and establish diplomatic relations. Britain, Japan, Russia and others soon followed.

There was a brief period of stability. A parliament was established and voting rights were extended to all men over 21, if they owned property or had a basic education. There were two main parties:

- The Guomindang was the more democratic of the two and was supported by Sun Yat-sen and his followers.
- The Jinbudang was supported by Yuan Shikai. It favoured a much more limited democracy.

By 1913, it had become obvious that Yuan Shikai was not interested in a democratic republic. He arranged the assassination of several of his enemies and he ignored the wishes of the parliament on a number of financial matters. By 1914, many republicans believed that Yuan had plans to revive the monarchy and make himself emperor. He actually achieved this in late 1915, but his period in power lasted less than three months.

China and the First World War

When the First World War broke out in Europe, Japan joined the allies against Germany. The Germans had held territory in the Shandong Peninsula of China. Japan took advantage of the war situation to invade Shandong. Then, in 1915, Japan presented Yuan Shikai



Source 1 Yuan Shikai just before his abdication, after his brief period as emperor

with Twenty One Demands, aimed at giving Japan enormous control over China. Because he could not rely on support from Europe, Yuan had little choice but to agree to Japan's demands.

Yuan was further humiliated when he was forced to dismantle the emperor system. He died of natural causes several months later. For the rest of the First World War, China was divided.

China eventually entered the First World War after declaring war on Germany in 1917. The new Prime Minister, Duan Jirui, believed that this was the best way for China to regain control of Shandong. In addition, China sent 140 000 labourers to France and Belgium as paid volunteers, and 100 000 of these served near the front lines in Flanders. They dug trenches, carried ammunition and worked in docks, railway yards and arms factories.



Source 2 Men from the Chinese Labour Corps building a road on the Western Front in Europe, c. 1917

However, China was to gain little from its participation in the war. At the end of the war, the Treaty of Versailles imposed harsh conditions on Germany. These included a massive **reparations** bill and the dividing of German colonies between the Allies. Instead of returning the Shandong Peninsula to China, Article 156 of the treaty gave Japan control of Germany's colonial territories in China. One of the few rewards given to China was the return of astronomical instruments taken by German troops after the Boxer Rebellion.

At the end of the war, China was again divided and exploited by foreign countries. Few Chinese people experienced the benefits of the 'democratic' revolution. In addition, China was one of the countries hardest hit by the influenza epidemic that swept the world in 1918. Some historians have suggested that, despite the title 'Spanish Flu', the epidemic might have actually originated in China.

Check your learning 11.12

Remember and understand

- 1 What were the two main political parties in the new republic and what did each stand for?
- 2 How did Western countries react to the establishment of the Chinese republic in 1911?

Apply and analyse

- 3 Why do you think that Yuan Shikai's movement to restore the monarchy failed?
- 4 Why would the Chinese have felt that Article 156 of the Treaty of Versailles was unfair to them?

Evaluate and create

- 5 Prepare a PowerPoint or video report on the 'Spanish Flu'. In your presentation, you should address the following:
 - origins of the disease, including the suggestion that it began in China
 - impact across the world, including figures on deaths
 - effects of the epidemic on the return of soldiers after the First World War.
 - impact of the disease on China.

11D rich task

The last emperor

The last emperor of China, Pu Yi, was not quite three years old when he ascended the throne, and just six years old when he was forced to abdicate and give up the throne. It is unlikely that he understood anything of his position or of the tensions surrounding China at the time.

Nevertheless, Pu Yi was to continue to be a significant figure in China. Under the abdication agreement he was allowed to continue to live in the Forbidden City. He lived there in considerable luxury until 1924. Pu Yi was still treated as emperor by palace staff. In 1934, Pu Yi accepted an invitation from the Japanese government to become Emperor of Manchukuo. This was a large area of Manchuria that the Japanese had invaded and claimed from China. He remained there until 1945.

In 1949, when China became a communist nation, Pu Yi was forcibly returned to China and imprisoned. After his release, the former emperor worked in a mechanical repair shop and later as a gardener in the botanical gardens. He died in 1967.

Many years after his 1908 coronation, Pu Yi wrote an account of the day. He explained that towards the end of the long ceremony, he began to cry. He recorded his father's response:

Source 2

'Hush' he said, 'Don't cry. Be patient. Everything will soon be over. It will soon be finished.'

Some of the courtiers who were near the throne heard him and after the ceremony they talked with one another in whispers. 'How could a Royal Highness say such a thing as "it will soon be over"?' they asked. 'This is a bad omen.'

They felt that my father's remarks indicated that my reign would be an unlucky one.

Kramer P (ed.), 1967, *The Last Manchu: The autobiography of Henry Pu Yi, Last Emperor of China*, Arthur Barker UK, Chapter 1

Source 3

It was on March 14, 1919, that my father and my Chinese tutors introduced me to Mr Reginal Fleming Johnstone in the Yu Ching palace. First, in accordance with protocol, I sat on my throne and he bowed to me. I then stood up and shook hands with him. Then he bowed again and withdrew. Later he re-entered and I bowed to him to show my respect for him as a teacher. After this ceremony was over he began to give me lessons in the company of one of my Chinese tutors.

Kramer P (ed.), 1967, *The Last Manchu: The autobiography of Henry Pu Yi, Last Emperor of China*, Arthur Barker UK, Chapter 7



Source 1 Image of the baby emperor Pu Yi, from the 1987 film *The Last Emperor*.

skilldrill: Historical sources as evidence

Generating different kinds of questions about the past to inform historical inquiry

One of the first and most important steps in conducting an historical inquiry is to generate or pose key questions. These questions will direct your research.

Usually, historians generate one broad, overarching or key question for their inquiry, for example:

'How was the Emperor Pu Yi able to continue to live a privileged life and to hold power, even after the collapse of the Qing Empire?'

You can use the following steps to help you develop questions to guide your historical inquiry.

- Step 1** Think about what you already know about the topic. Use this knowledge as a springboard for questions that will help you to understand the topic in more depth.
- Step 2** List in point form all the things that you already know about the topic.
- Step 3** List in point form all the things that you would like/need to know about the topic.
- Step 4** Use these two lists to develop a series of questions that will aid your research. Remember to include a mix of three types of questions that include:
- closed questions, e.g. 'When did Pu Yi become emperor?'
 - open questions, e.g. 'Why was Pu Yi still treated as an emperor after 1912?'
 - questions that relate to the process of historical inquiry, e.g. 'What evidence is there that ... ?' and 'What other sources might be needed to further explain ... ?'

Apply the skill

- 1 Examine the sources in this rich task and conduct further research on Pu Yi. Use the process described above to generate a range of questions related to the overarching question: 'How was the Emperor Pu Yi able to continue to live a privileged life and to hold power, even after the collapse of the Qing Empire?'
- 2 Use your research and the questions you have developed to prepare a radio documentary that addresses this question. Use Chinese music as a background for your presentation.



Source 4 Japanese poster at the time that Pu Yi was Emperor of Manchukuo, 1934 to 1945

Extend your understanding

- 1 In 1987, a film was made about Pu Yi called *The Last Emperor*. The film was praised for its rich and opulent portrayal of the life of Pu Yi. It has also been criticised for inaccuracies. Watch the film *The Last Emperor*. Identify at least three incidents in the film or aspects of the portrayal of Pu Yi that seem different from the historical accounts of the man and the period.
- 2 Write an evaluation of the film as a historical resource.