

# The Shang Dynasty

## Learning Objective:

To find out about the Shang Dynasty of China and explore how we know about it.

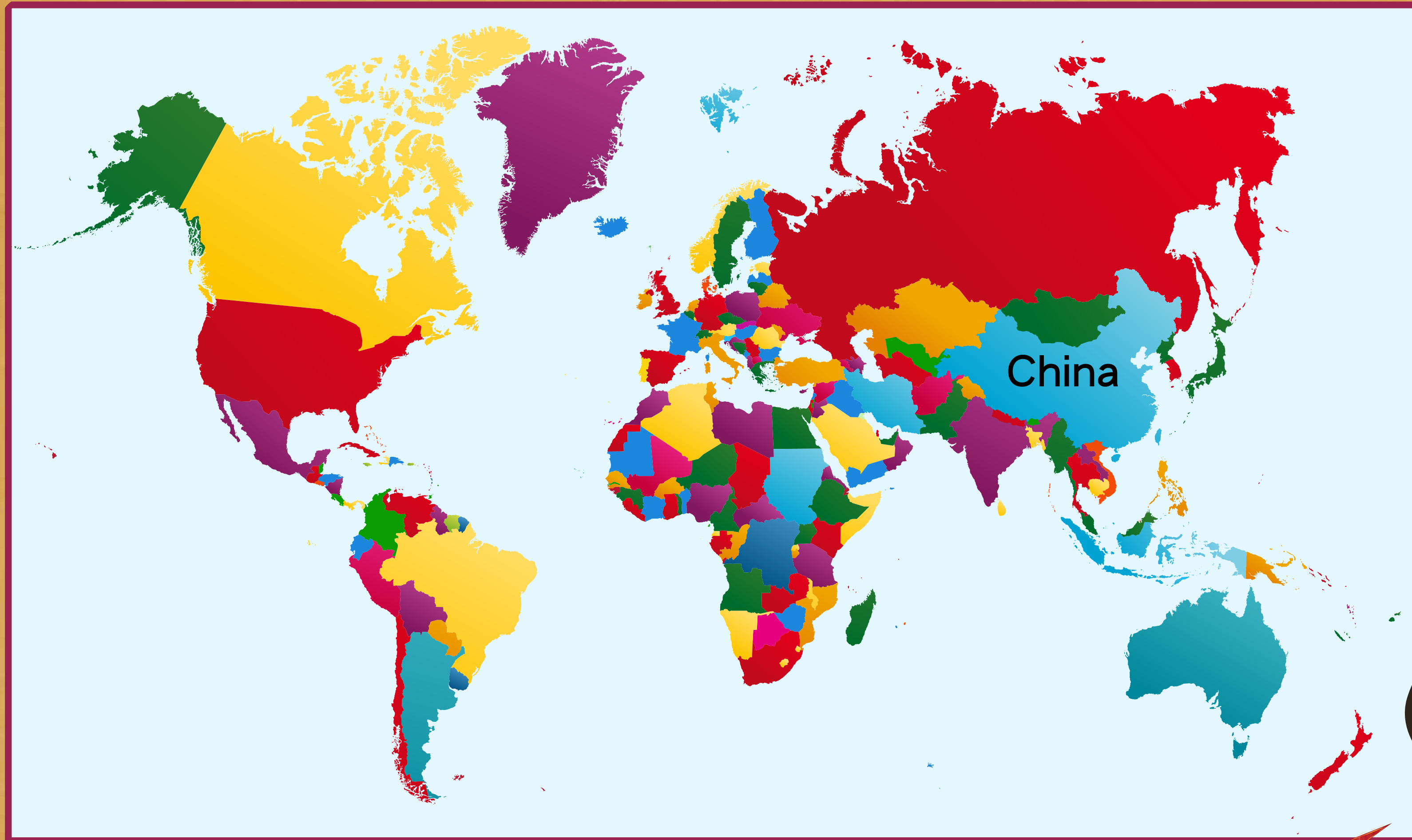




Where is China?

What do you already know about China?

This map shows where modern-day China is.  
China is a country in Asia.



Where do you live on this map?



Over the coming lessons, we will be exploring the Shang Dynasty of ancient China.



What is a dynasty?

A dynasty is a line of hereditary rulers in a country. A dynasty starts when a ruler takes power. They then pass on their kingdom to their children when they die, who then in turn pass power down to their own children.



King George VI passed the throne to his daughter...

Queen Elizabeth II who will pass the throne to her son...

Prince Charles who, when he dies, will pass the throne to his son...

Prince William who will pass the throne to his son Prince George.

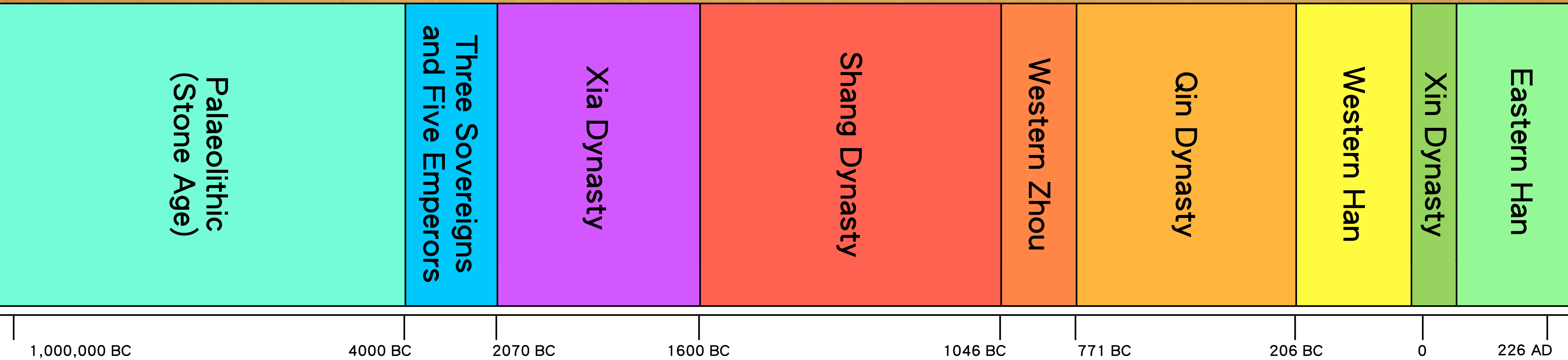
The British royal family today is part of the Windsor Dynasty. Other famous British dynasties include the Tudors and the Stuarts.

We are going to be exploring the Shang Dynasty which covers a period when the Shang controlled a part of what is now modern China. The Shang Dynasty is an important period in Chinese history because it is the earliest Chinese civilisation there is evidence for and many advancements were made during this time.



Did you know that the Shang family did not pass power on from father to son but from brother to brother or brother to nephew?

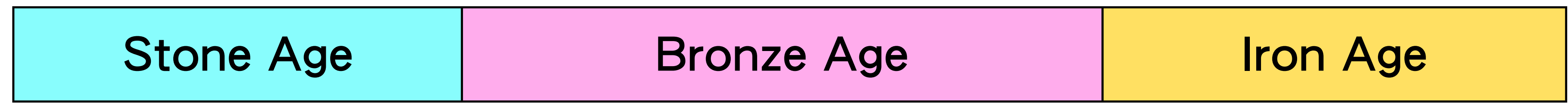
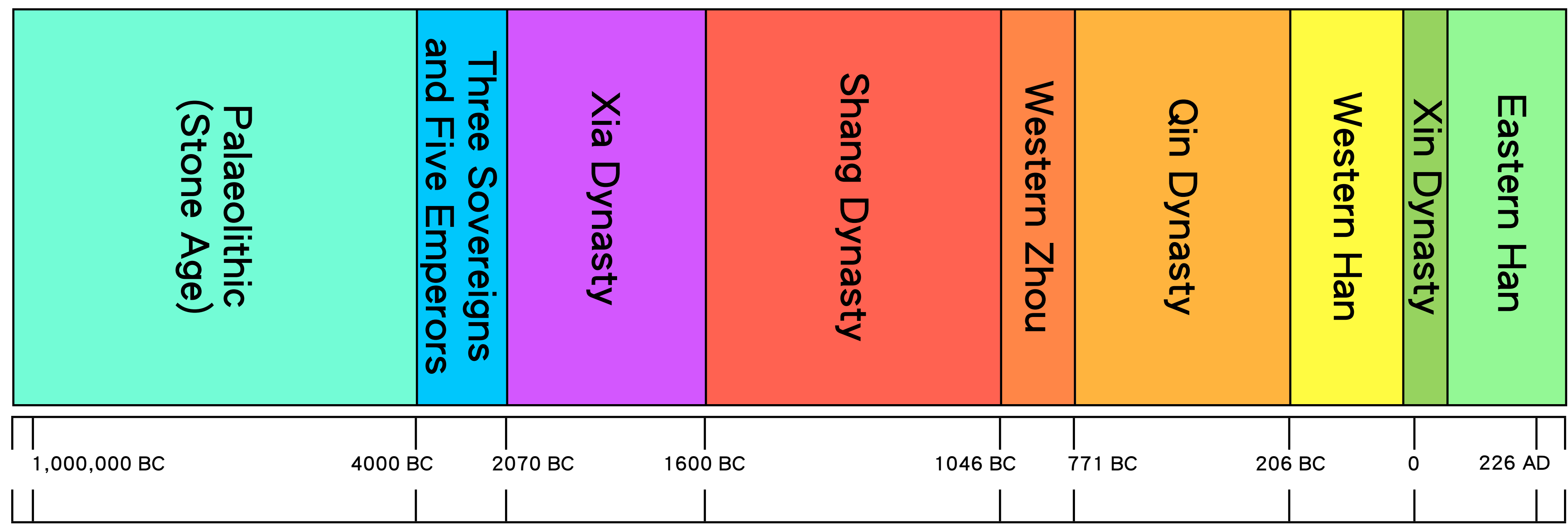
# Timeline of Ancient China



Have a look at this timeline. When was the Shang Dynasty in power?



# Ancient China



# Ancient Britain

This timeline compares the timelines for ancient China and ancient Britain. The Shang Dynasty ruled during the Bronze Age.



This map shows where the Shang Dynasty ruled.



The Bronze Age was a period in prehistory.  
This means that it was before we had a written  
record of events.

How do you think we  
know about the Shang  
Dynasty?



Until relatively recently, historians were not sure whether the Shang Dynasty had actually existed or not. The only evidence they had were stories that were written nearly a thousand years after the end of the Shang Dynasty.



In 1899, a bone with writing on from the Shang Dynasty was discovered. Since then, thousands of these bones, called oracle bones, have been discovered which confirm that the Shang Dynasty existed. It also confirms some of the facts that were written in the history books.



The oracle bones are important because they provide the first written evidence of any society in ancient China. They provide a lot of evidence for what life was like at the time.

Archaeologists have also uncovered evidence of the Shang Dynasty. They have found the remains of buildings, walls and graves, as well as objects from the time.



This is the grave of an important woman of the Shang Dynasty. It was discovered in 1976.

