



# Year 5

History: *What was it like in settlements around the Yellow River Plain?*

Task 1

The Shang was an Ancient Civilisation in part of China, around the Yellow River. They were famous for their bronze work, their jade, using oracle bones to predict the future, and their powerful army. They dominated large parts of China for around 500 years. Find the Yellow River (sometimes called Huang He) on Google Maps or in an atlas.



Early settlements of the Shang Dynasty developed in the valleys around the Yellow River. What would be the good reasons for people settling near a big river? What are some of the disadvantages or dangers of settling next to a river?



Early Settlements: Problems and Solutions

Match the problems on the left with the correct solution from the right.

Water from the river might flood our houses.

*We have built huge watch towers in the walls that surround our cities.*

Enemies might attack our cities.

*We have made canoes for traders to transport goods to and from other places.*

Our crops might be destroyed by water overflowing the river.

*We have built canals to divert the water from flooding our farmers' fields.*

The river is so big that it is hard to travel to other cities to trade with them.

*We have built huge mud banks and walls to stop floodwater from flooding our villages.*

Match up some of the problems posed to early settlers by the Yellow River with some of the solutions that could have been tried.

**Design your own Shang city. Don't forget to use the checklist below.**



Along the Yellow River Plains there were numerous Shang settlements. Some were small farming villages and others were thriving cities. Cities had temples and palaces at their centres and everything else, like the detailed wood and clay houses of priests and warriors, was built around them. There were enormous guarded earthen walls around the city that would act both as defences against the unpredictable river and as a way of keeping enemies out. Poorer people like craftsmen and farmers had to live in mud huts outside the city walls as their work was often dirty, noisy or smelly. Farmers and craftsmen would deliver goods through special gates in the city walls.

#### City Checklist

##### Inside

- Emperor's Palace
- Great temple
- Fancy houses for priests and warriors
- Roads

##### Outside

- Wall with gates and towers
- Farming villages
- Yellow River
- Dirt roads