

# Project glossary

**afterlife**

The life that is believed to begin after death.

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**ancestor**

A family member who lived a long time ago.

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**bi**

Circular discs of jade with a hole in the middle frequently buried with the dead.

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**bronze**

A metal alloy of copper and tin.

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**chariot**

A two-wheeled cart pulled by a pair of horses.

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**China**

A large country in East Asia.

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**civilisation**

The most advanced form of society.

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**dagger-axe**

A sharp dagger with a bronze blade fixed to a wooden pole.

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**deity**

A god or goddess.

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**ding**

An ancient Chinese cauldron used for cooking, storage or ritual offerings to the gods or ancestors.

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**divination**

The act of finding out and saying what will happen in the future.

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**dynasty**

A succession of people from the same family who rule the country, and the period when the country is ruled by them.

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**emperor**

The male ruler of an empire.



**hierarchy**

A system in society where people are organised into different levels of importance from highest to lowest.

**inscription**

Words cut into pottery, stone, bone or metal.

**jade**

A hard, green-coloured stone found in riverbeds and excavated from mountains.

**oracle bones**

Pieces of turtle shell or ox bone used to communicate with ancestors and gods.

**plastron**

The flat underside of a turtle’s shell.

**power**

The ability to make people do as you want.

**sacrifice**

The act of killing an animal or person and offering them to the gods.

**shaman**

A priest who is believed to communicate with spirits.

**Shang Dynasty**

The earliest ruling dynasty in the recorded history of China (c1600–c1046 BC).

**silk**

A soft, delicate fabric made from thread produced by silkworms.

**taotie**

A creature in Chinese mythology whose image appears on artefacts such as masks and ritual vessels.

**Xia Dynasty**

Believed to be the first Chinese dynasty and the first organised government (c2070–c1600 BC).

**Yellow Emperor**

The first emperor in Chinese history, Huangdi, who united many tribes near the Yellow River.

**Zhou Dynasty**

Ruled China after the Shang Dynasty in a time of peace and unity (c1046–c256 BC).

