7-1 Notes

* Rivers (the Huang He and the Chang Jiang), mountains, and Deserts (the Gobi, a vast, cold, rocky desert) helped shape China’s civilization. Only 1/10 of China’s land could be farmed.
* Artifacts show that the Huang He valley was the first center of Chinese civilization.
* Little is known about the first rulers, the Xia.
* The Shang dynasty built the first Chinese cities like, Anyang and ruled most of the Huang He valley.
* Shang kings chose warlords (military leaders who command their own armies) to govern the kingdom’s territories.
* Warlords and royal officials made up the upper class—the aristocrats (nobles whose wealth came from the land they owned).
* Shang China worshiped gods and spirits. They kept them happy by making offerings of food and other goods.
* Scratches on oracle bones are the earliest known examples of Chinese ancient writing.
* Pictographs are characters that stand for objects in Chinese writing – they join two or more pictographs to represent an idea.
* The Shang people are best known for their works of bronze.
* Wu Wang led a rebellion against the Shang and began a new dynasty called the Zhou. It lasted longer than any other Chinese dynasty.
* Bureaucracy is made up of appointed officials who are responsible for different areas of government.
* Zhou kings ruled the government. Chinese kings were considered to be the link between heaven and earth. If the king was bad, the people could overthrow him.
* Mandate – a formal order
* Mandate of Heaven – a heavenly law believed to be given to the king giving him power to rule.
* The Chinese developed irrigation, flood-control systems, and the iron plow to improve farming.
* An important trade item during the Zhou dynasty was silk.
* As an improvement for fighting, the Chinese invented the saddle and stirrup.
* The Period of the Warring States was a time of violence that made the Chinese people look for ways to restore order.