China SPICE activity

**Procedures:**

1. Confirm students completed the SPICE chart for homework. Perhaps take points off student’s daily quiz grade if they have not completed the chart
2. Assign each student as a “S”, “P”, “I”, “C”, or “E” designation
3. Instruct students to find a partner with the same letter designation as themselves
4. Partners share/discuss information on their respective SPICE theme, adding/changing/correcting information as necessary – 10 minutes (?)
5. Partners then find other set of partners with same SPICE theme
6. Group of 4 then share/discuss information on their respective SPICE theme, adding/changing/correcting information as necessary – 10 minutes (?)
7. All students with same SPICE theme meet together (i.e. all “S” students form a group, all “P” students form a group, and so on).
8. Big SPICE groups share/discuss information on their respective SPICE theme, adding/changing/correcting information as necessary – 10 minutes (?)
9. Form SPICE expert groups – one person from each SPICE theme in a new group of 5. Each member is an “expert” on their SPICE them and should share/present information on each of their respective themes.
10. Other expert group members listen and add/change/correct information on the other SPICE themes. – 30 minutes
11. Summary activity – teacher helps class to discuss China’s history in terms of SPICE themes – 10 minutes (?)
CHINA:

Social –

- Social stratification
  - Upper classes – landed, educated,
  - Educated bureaucrats – “Mandarins”
  - Farmer/peasants – subsistence farming, illiterate
  - Artisans – manufactured goods
  - “Mean” people – unskilled laborers, performers
  - Little slavery in China – peasants/mean people provided cheap labor
  - Some social mobility – unusually talented peasants could pass civil service exams and obtain a position in the bureaucracy

- Gender/Family roles
  - Wives were obedient to husbands
  - Daughters in law obedient to husband’s mother
  - Mothers could gain influence through their sons
  - Male children more desirable than female children
  - First born son most important child – primogeniture = inheritance of property and position

Political –

- Cyclical dynastic rule pervaded Chinese Classical and modern history
  - Zhou (1029 to 258 BCE)
    - Alliance systems to maintain control (land for troops and tax revenues)
    - Feudal system
    - De-centralized gov’t
    - Extended Chinese territory – Middle Kingdom
    - Mandate of Heaven, Emperors called Sons of Heaven
    - Linguistic unity – allowed for more central gov’t control
    - Era of Warring States – Zhou dynasty declined due to regional rulers/warlords ignoring central gov’t/emperors
  - Qin (221 to 202 BCE)
    - Controlled feudal lords by ordering them to imperial court and seizing their lands
    - Organized China into provinces ruled by bureaucrats appointed by emperor
    - Bureaucrats were from non-aristocratic groups – ensure loyalty to emperor
    - Maintained powerful imperial army to ensure regional loyalty
    - Expanded Chinese territory in the south (Hong Kong, northern Vietnam)
    - Defended northern border by building a Great Wall using forced labor and large bureaucracy
    - Implemented a national census – data for tax revenue and labor service
    - Standardized coinage, weights, and measures
    - First Qin Emperor died – internal revolts ended the Qin dynasty
  - Han (202 BCE to 220 CE)
    - Retained centralized gov’t of Qin
    - Expanded Chinese territory (Korea, Indochina, central Asia)
- Bureaucracy and gov’t linked to values of Confucian philosophy
- Invasions by Huns ended the dynasty

Key Elements of China’s political framework:
- Strong local units never disappeared
  - Village authority in rural areas = family rule
- Strong patriarchal families –
  - strong ties among extended family members
  - Ancestor worship – loyalty to family, promoted family connections
- Landed nobles played important role in China’s rural areas
  - Courts of justice, organized military troops
- Centralized gov’t
  - Single law code for the whole empire
  - Uniform tax system
  - Governors loyal to emperor appointed to rule Chinese provinces
- Large, highly skilled bureaucracy
  - Based on merit – civil service examinations
  - Mostly made up of sons of landed upper class who had the time and financial means to study for the exams, but men from lower classes could still take the exams and receive gov’t positions
  - Check on upper class and the emperor himself
- Importance of respect for those in power

Interaction –
- China was somewhat isolated during the early Classical period
- Han – direct contact with India, Parthian Empire in the Middle East, indirect trade with Roman Empire

Cultural –
- Zhou – banned human sacrifice, changed god worship ceremonies, linguistic unity (Mandarin Chinese), oral epics and stories = common cultural identity
- Confucius/Confucianism – political ethics, later given religious aspects (shrines, rituals, etc.) by Han rulers to promote order
  - Emphasis on a proper hierarchal social/political structure
    - Respect and loyalty for those above you in the hierarchy
  - Society’s leaders to behave modestly and without excess, abuse, or greedy
  - Emphasis on learning and good manners
    - Basis of Chinese bureaucracy
- Qin – made Chinese written script uniform – single basic language, burned books thought to be subversive
- Chinese leaders stressed: harmonious earthly life, virtue of obedience to the state, living a good life
- Heavy emphasis on ritual, tradition, virtue,
- Legalism – alternative to Confucianism
  - Legalists advocated an authoritarian state that ruled by force
  - Necessary to combat man’s inherent evil
Combined with Confucianism, Legalism allowed emperors to maintain strong control over their subjects

- Daoism
  - Appealed at first to upper classes – more spirituality than Confucianism
  - Embraced traditional Chinese beliefs in nature’s harmony
  - Emphasized frugality and humility
  - Ensured China would not be united under one single belief system (Confucianism)

- Literature and art flourished in the Classical period
- Architecture – compared to other classical civilizations, little monumental building occurred
- Science – practicality was important rather than theory
  - Astronomers created an accurate calendar
  - Calculations of the movements of planets – predictability = harmony with nature
  - Seismograph to register earthquakes
  - Medical research – anatomy and hygiene
- Math – practicality
  - Acoustics – harmony with nature
- Chinese world view – China was a large island surrounded by barbarians, no perceived need to learn from or teach other civilizations
- Buddhism spread from India to China after the Han decline

Economic –

- Qin – standardized coinage, weights and measures, sponsored irrigation projects, promoted manufacturing (esp. silk)
- Han – indirect trade with Roman Empire, widespread economic prosperity
- Trade – important during Han Dynasty
  - Luxury items for the upper classes
  - Food exchange – wheat for rice
  - Copper coinage used to facilitate trade
  - Merchants not socially/politically powerful, even if economically so
    - Confucian virtues did not place a lot of value on traders
- Technology helped to improve production and increase amount of goods to be traded
  - Paper invented during Han dynasty – increased power of the bureaucracy
- Economy based primarily on agriculture