

Where is China? How did geography affect the development of classical civilizations in China?

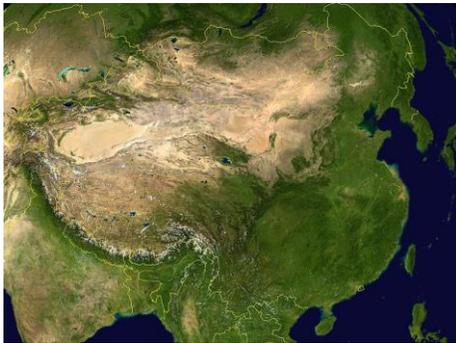
Objective:

- **Describe** the location and geography of China.
- **Explain** how geography affected the development of classical civilizations in China.

Introduction

—Directions: In the chart below, write down everything you think you know about China right now and questions about China that you would like to know the answers to.

China



[China 100.78713E 35.63718N.jpg](#) created by NASA is in the public domain and modified by New Visions for Public Schools



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What do you already know about China?

What do you want to know about China?

Write questions you'd like to know the answers to.



Think Like a Geographer

Where is China?

→ Directions: Examine the map below and use it to complete the tasks that follow.

Note: The map below shows the boundaries of the modern-day nation, the People’s Republic of China. The civilizations identified as “China” throughout history did not always have the same borders.



Source: [People’s Republic of China \(orthographic projection\)](#) created by Ssolbergj published under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International and modified by New Visions for Public Schools.

Relative location is a description of where a place is in relation to how a place is related to other places. For example, Canada is *north of* the state of New York.

North	East	West	South	West	South	Northeast	Northwest
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Using the map and directional words above, complete the tasks below.

1. Describe the location of China relative to **two regions**.

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2. Describe the location of China relative to **two oceans**.

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3. Describe the location of China relative to **two other bodies of water**.

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4. Describe the location of China relative to **two land-based geographic features**.

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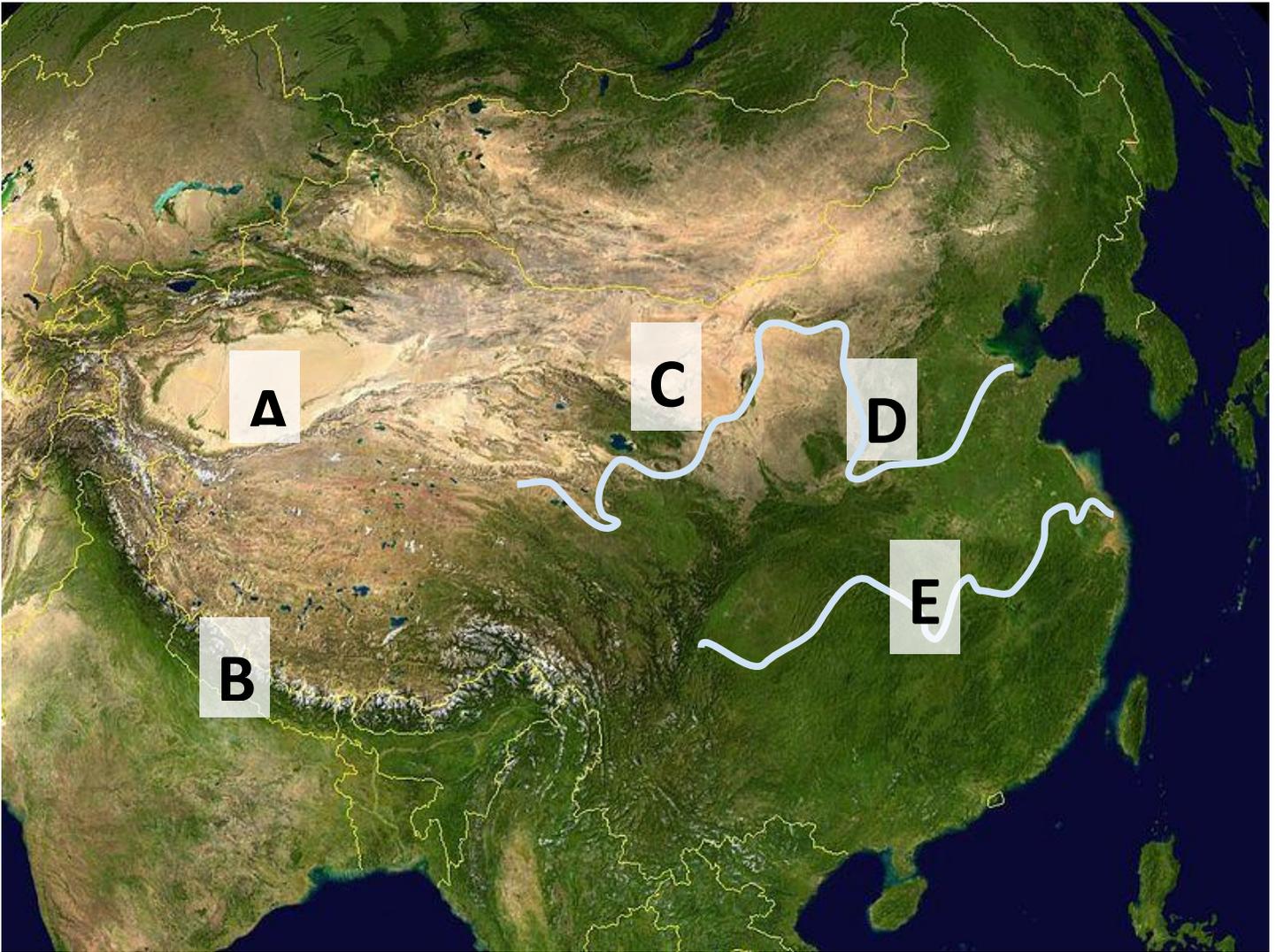
5. In 1-3 sentences, describe the location of China relative to four different locations or geographic features.



Think Like a Geographer

What geographic features exist in China? How might those features have affected the development of classical civilizations in China?

—Directions: Examine the map below, then read the descriptions of the corresponding geographic features and answer the accompanying questions.



Source: [China 100.78713E 35.63718N.jpg](https://www.nasa.gov/images/content/10078713E_35.63718N.jpg) created by NASA is in the public domain and modified by New Visions for Public Schools.

A. Taklamakan Desert



Taklamakan desert in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

[Taklamakan desert.jpg](#) created by Pravit is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International

The Taklamakan desert is a sandy desert located on the western border of China that is bordered by the Tien Shan Mountains to the west. Merchants created trade routes on the northern and southern borders of the desert that became important parts of the Silk Roads during the classical era, connecting China to civilizations in the Middle East and Europe.

1. What effect might this geographic feature have had on trade between China and the west?

B. Himalaya Mountains



Picture of the 9th highest peak in the world, a part of the Himalaya Mountains.

ApproachingNangaParbat.JPG created by [Waqas.usman](#) is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](#) license.

The Himalaya Mountains separate the Indian subcontinent from China and they are the tallest mountain range in the world. Mount Everest is the tallest peak at 29,029 ft. Though there are passes through the mountains, the Himalayas isolated India and China from one another.

2. What positive effects might this geographic feature have had on China?

3. What negative effects might this geographic feature have had on China?

C. Gobi Desert



Gobi Desert landscape in Ömnögovi Province, Mongolia.

[OmnogoviLandscape.jpg](#) created by Doron, is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](#) license.

The Gobi Desert separates China from Mongolia. It is the fifth largest desert in the world and is made up of mostly bare rock rather than sand. Temperatures range from -40°F in winter to 113°F in the summer.

4. How might this geographic feature have affected China's ability to expand its borders to the north?

D. Yellow River



Hukou Waterfall of [Yellow River, China](#)

[Hukou Waterfall.jpg](#) created by [Leruswing](#) is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](#) license.

The Yellow River, or Huang He, runs from west to east through China. It is called the Yellow River because it passes through a section of China where the soil is *loess*, a fine, wind-blown dust with a yellow color that blows into the river and is carried downstream.

The river has also been called "China's Sorrow" because its floods are unpredictable and destructive. The deadliest recorded flood took place in 1332-33 during which seven million people died.

Chinese civilization started in the fertile valley of the Yellow River and major Chinese cities developed on its course throughout history.

5. How did this geographic feature affect the development of civilizations in China?

E. Yangtze River



Hukou Waterfall of [Yellow River, China](#)

Yangtze river cruise.jpg created by [Tuner tom](#) is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](#) license.

The Yangtze River, which runs from west to east through China, is the third longest river in the world. One-third of modern-day China's population lives in the Yangtze River Valley.

Throughout China's history the Yangtze has been used for irrigation for agriculture and transportation. Today, the river is a major part of China's economy.

Ancient civilizations developed around the Yangtze River, but the most successful civilizations in China were established on the banks of the more fertile Yellow River. The Yangtze and the people that lived near it were conquered by the Qin Dynasty during the classical era and became an important part of Chinese civilization in later dynasties including the Han.

5. How did this geographic feature affect the development of civilizations in China?