Name _____ Date _____

# Ancient China: Confucianism, Daoism and Legalism

**Directions:** Read the passage about three schools of thought in ancient China, then study the table. Several questions ask how the passage is organized and how the schools compare.

## Three Schools of Thought

### Three Answers to a Time of War

In the late Zhou period, China split into rival states that fought for hundreds of years. Thinkers asked how people could live in peace and order. Many thinkers offered answers. This age is often called the time of the Hundred Schools of Thought. This passage looks at three of those schools.

**Confucianism** comes from the teacher Confucius. He came from Lu, a small state in eastern China. He lived from about 551 to 479 BCE. Confucius taught that people should be kind, respect their parents and follow proper customs. He believed that a ruler of good character would set an example for the people to follow. Later, his followers collected his sayings in a book called the **Analects**.

**Daoism** is named for the **Dao**, or "the Way," which Daoists saw as nature's order. Tradition credits a teacher named Laozi with its main book, the **Daodejing**. Historians are not sure Laozi was one real person. The book probably had more than one writer. Daoists taught that people should live simply and in harmony with nature. In contrast to Confucius, they said a good ruler should interfere as little as possible.

**Legalism** took a very different view. Legalist thinkers such as Han Feizi believed that people are selfish by nature. They said a ruler needs strict laws, with rewards for obeying and harsh punishments for breaking them. The rulers of Qin, a state in the west, followed Legalist ideas. In 221 BCE, Qin united China. Later, rulers of the Han dynasty made Confucian teachings the official philosophy of the state.

Three Schools of Thought in Ancient China

| School | Key teacher or book | How a ruler should govern |
|---|---|---|
| Confucianism | Confucius; his followers collected his sayings in the Analects | Lead by good example. Show kindness, and respect proper customs and family duties. |
| Daoism | Laozi, by tradition; the Daodejing | Rule lightly and do not force things. Let people live simply, in harmony with nature. |
| Legalism | Han Feizi and other Legalist thinkers | Make strict laws that everyone knows. Reward those who obey, and punish lawbreakers harshly. |

**1.** Which choice best describes how the passage is organized?

A. It explains one cause of China's wars and then its many effects.
B. It tells the life story of Confucius from his birth to his death.
C. It lists the events of the Qin dynasty in the order they happened.
D. It describes a time of war. Then it explains three schools that offered answers.

**2.** Match each name or term from the passage about Chinese thinkers to its description. Write the letter of the matching answer on each line.

1. _____ Zhou
2. _____ Hundred Schools of Thought
3. _____ Analects
4. _____ Dao
5. _____ Han Feizi

A. a wall built along China's northern border
B. the dynasty that united China in 221 BCE
C. a book of sayings collected by followers of Confucius
D. the dynasty in whose late period rival states fought
E. the Way, which Daoists saw as the natural order of the world
F. a Legalist thinker who believed people are selfish by nature
G. a name for the age when many thinkers offered answers

**3.** Which phrase from the passage signals that two schools are being compared?

A. In contrast to Confucius
B. Later, his followers collected
C. In the late Zhou period
D. In 221 BCE

**4.** What does the passage tell you about where Confucius came from and where the Qin state was?

A. Confucius came from the west, and the Qin state was in the east.
B. Confucius came from outside China, and Qin was in the far north.
C. Confucius and the rulers of Qin came from the same small state.
D. Confucius came from Lu, in the east, and Qin was a state in the west.

**5.** How does the table help readers?

A. It tells the full life story of Laozi from birth to old age.
B. It puts the three schools side by side so readers can compare them.
C. It gives the year each school began and the year it ended.
D. It quotes one famous saying from each of the three teachers.

**6.** Complete the sentences about what two of the schools taught.

| **Word bank** |
| --- |
| interfere • Analects • armies • parents |

Confucius taught that people should respect their _____. Daoists taught that a good ruler should _____ as little as possible.

**7.** A ruler makes strict laws, rewards people who obey them and harshly punishes people who break them. Which school's advice is this ruler following?

A. Confucianism B. Legalism C. Daoism

**8.** What does the passage say about who wrote the Daodejing?

A. Historians agree that Laozi wrote every word of it by himself alone.
B. Confucius wrote it, and his followers later added the Analects to it.
C. Tradition credits Laozi, but it probably had more than one writer.
D. Han Feizi wrote it as a guide for the strict rulers of the Qin state.

**9.** Which two statements correctly compare the schools, according to the table? Select 2.

☐ A. Daoism and Legalism both say to punish lawbreakers harshly and often.
☐ B. Daoism says to rule lightly, but Confucianism says to set a good example.
☐ C. Confucianism and Daoism both say to make strict laws that everyone knows.
☐ D. Confucianism says to lead by good example, but Legalism says to use strict laws.

**10.** According to the last paragraph, what happened after the Qin united China?

A. The Qin rulers later gave up Legalist ideas and turned to Daoism.
B. China later split again into rival states that fought for centuries.
C. Laozi later became the first ruler of the Han dynasty in China.
D. Han rulers later made Confucian teachings the state's official philosophy.