

Assessment: Was China under the Tang Dynasty really 'the greatest civilisation on earth'?

Earlier in the unit, we looked at the **interpretation** put forward by historian Michael Wood in his book *The Story of China* (2020). He said:

'The Tang, with their capital at Chang'an became perhaps the greatest and most cosmopolitan civilisation on earth.' (p. 132)



For your assessment, you are going to **respond** to this interpretation in the form of a letter to the historian.

To help plan your response, complete the grid below. In the grid, the two sides of the debate have been broken down into different sections (or **criteria**) for success/failure. Use what you've learnt in the lessons of the unit to add evidence to the different sections of the grid.

The Tang Dynasty was 'great' and 'cosmopolitan':	
1: The Tang Dynasty had strong leadership and an effective military , and was able to expand:	
2: The Tang Dynasty was well-connected to the rest of the world (with trade etc). Outside influences were permitted (making it cosmopolitan):	
3: The Tang Dynasty was culturally well-developed (with new religious ideas and interesting art , for example):	

The Tang Dynasty was NOT 'great' or 'cosmopolitan':	
1: The Tang Dynasty did not have strong leadership :	
2: People living under the Tang rulers lived miserable lives :	
3: The Tang Dynasty was hit by serious problems that it was not able to overcome:	

Now, you need to turn this into a letter, addressed to historian Michael Wood. In your letter, explain how far you agree with his interpretation of Tang Dynasty China: was it really 'the greatest and most cosmopolitan civilisation on earth'? First, outline your **judgement**, and then provide evidence to back this judgement up: use the grid above to help, perhaps breaking your ideas up into two or three separate paragraphs. Next, you might consider why others would disagree with you, and what evidence they might use. Finish by underlining why your judgement is correct.

