

# Student and Class Activities

## Terra Cotta Warriors: Guardians of China's First Emperor

1. Practice the pronunciation of the Chinese name for the First Emperor:  
Qin Shihuangdi sounds like:  
Chin Shhr Hwong Dee  
Practice writing Qin Shihuangdi's name in Chinese:

秦始皇帝

2. **Class Discussion on Ancient China**

Create a class **KWL** chart about ancient China. On a **KWL** chart, students write in the first column what they already **Know** about a topic. In the middle column students write what they **Want** to know about a topic. In the last column, after exposure to a topic, they write what they **Learned**. What they learned can line up to answer what they want to know or not.

K(now)	W(ant to Know)	L(earned)

As students discuss their **KWL**, write a list on the board of the topics or categories they bring up such as technology, wildlife, resources, music, architecture, food, military, occupations, art, government power, etc. For example if a student says, “pandas come from China,” write the word, wildlife.

Tell the students that they will see pictures and artifacts at the *Terra Cotta Warriors: Guardians of China’s First Emperor* exhibition relating to all these topics. Discuss the meaning of the words you used. When needed, show a picture to illustrate.

Create a chart such as the one to the right and fill in the topics you want the students to look for in the exhibit. Tell them they will write the name of the artifact and what it tells us about life during the time of the First Emperor.

Have the students share their observations about life in ancient China using the information they collected on their charts. Discuss what they could NOT tell from the objects in the exhibit. Have them write a story about one of the people in the list below:

- Emperor
- Laborer
- Official
- Palace guard
- Acrobat
- Palace cook
- Warrior
- Musician
- Peasant farmer

Topics	Artifact	Information
Technology		
Wildlife		
Resources		
Music		
Architecture		
Food		
Military		
Occupations		
Art		
Government Power		
Other:		

### 3. Class Film Screenings

*Mulan*. Takes place in the time period following the Qin dynasty. (Walt Disney Studios, 1998.)

*Hero*. (Directed by Zhang Yimou, Beijing New Picture Film Company Edko Films/Elite Films, 2002.)

*The First Emperor: The Man Who Made China* (documentary). (Directed by Nic Young, Discovery Communications/Lion Television, 2006.)

*The Emperor and the Assassin*. (Directed by Chen Kaige, Beijing Film Studio/Canal Plus/China Film Co-Production Corporation/NDF International/New Wave Company/Prizel/ShinCine, 1999.)

#### 4. Comparing Ancient China, Modern China and Life as a Chinese American

The students can read and compare three books about life in ancient China, life in China today, and life as a Chinese American. This can be a class or individual activity. Students may use this activity to practice their reading aloud skills.

As they read, ask the students to look for comparisons such as:

1. What conclusions did the author reach about life for each time and place?
2. How are the lives of the characters in the stories alike or different?
3. How are the lives of the characters in the stories alike or different from your own?
4. What questions would you like to ask a character?
5. What do you think a character would find strange about your life?
6. Create a postcard a character might send you. What would be on the front of the card? What would the message be? Create a postcard you might send the character.
7. Create a chart comparing the lives of a character from ancient China, a character from modern China, a Chinese American, and yourself.

Book and Character	Responsibilities	Family life	Education	Leisure Time	Comments

#### 5. Observation Skills

The TCW exhibit is a great place for students to practice their skill of observation. After their visit, students may write about what they observed. It is helpful to gather words while at the exhibition that they can use in their writings.

Before coming to the exhibit, they will make a class list of things to look for such as qualities, properties, values, and descriptive words. To prepare, place the students in small groups. Give each group two objects that are similar such as two different dolls, different objects, or different pictures. Tell the class that they are to see which group can find the

most features or descriptive words to compare about the two objects. They must work quietly so that other groups do not steal their ideas.

After about five minutes, find which group has the most items to compare by asking one group to read its list, and the other groups mark off anything they name that is on their list. Then the next group tells the class the items on their list that were not already named by the first group. There will be class discussion generated about what items are the same or too similar to rename. Continue this through all the groups.

Determine which group had the most items to compare. If one

group has many more properties to compare, discuss how they created their list. If many properties to compare are left out by all the groups, prompt the class to add more by saying such things as: How do they feel? Are they pretty? How valuable are they? What are they used for? If time allows, blindfold one student and see if he/she comes up with any other ideas by touching the objects. As they are sharing their lists, create a class list on the board or overhead projector.

Remember to look for color, shape, texture, size, patterns, to use all of their senses, and to use words describing emotions.

The day of the trip to see the exhibit, remind the students of these things to observe, so that they see more details. Remind them to use all of their senses.

#### 6. Writing Activity

During your tour of the exhibition, chose one aspect of the exhibit that you enjoyed the most. After your visit to the museum, write a persuasive letter to a friend to convince him/her to come see *Terra Cotta Warriors: Guardians of China's First Emperor*. Remember to use your observation techniques to generate descriptive language in order to make your letter more convincing.



*Detail of warrior, framed by warriors in foreground*

Your letter should contain the following parts:

1. An introduction that engages the reader and states the purpose of the letter.
2. Facts that back up your opinion. Use descriptive adjectives and action words that will help the reader “see” the exhibit.
3. A conclusion which summarizes your purpose and details.

### **7. World Communities**

Before coming to see *Terra Cotta Warriors: Guardians of China's First Emperor*, brainstorm and discuss human needs (food, water, shelter, safety, etc.) with the class. Relate these needs to jobs in your community, such as a grocery store and restaurant provide food.

Discuss why people have jobs. Discuss a variety of jobs and how they meet the community's needs. Discuss what students will see on the ride to the museum. Remind the students that they will see some landforms (rivers, fields, hills, etc.), and some things that are man-made (buildings, bridges, trucks, farms, etc.)

On the trip to the museum, the students will observe their community and find ways the community helps people meet their needs. The teacher can use clip art to create an activity where the students mark pictures they

see of community resources along the way.

At the exhibit, have the students look for examples of ways that community needs were met in ancient China. For example, when they see the chariots, they may observe that horses and chariots were used for transportation.

A chart may be created ahead of time with community needs listed. The students can fill in the chart in the exhibit of objects they see and how they meet those needs. Students may also draw pictures of objects if preferred.

After their visit to the exhibit, discuss with the students how the needs of a community were the same during the time of ancient China. Compare how these needs are met today.

### **8. Natural Resources**

Since the terra cotta warriors were created 2,200 years ago, most of the materials used at that time have disintegrated. Only very strong artifacts made of such materials as stone, clay, and metal have survived. We do not have clothing or items made of wood or plants, because they break down chemically and disappear. Many natural resources do still remain. From those we can infer what other materials were used

at that time. For example, in the terra cotta warrior pits, we think that wood beams were placed above the rows of warriors because of the indentations in the clay walls left by the wood.

What are natural resources? They are materials that are made by nature. They are not man-made. Some examples are plants, minerals, water, petroleum, and rocks. The products that people create depend on the natural resources available in the area.

As a homework assignment, have the students make a list of the materials used to construct their houses. Discuss the lists before coming to the exhibit. Which resources do they expect to find used in ancient China? Which do they NOT expect to find? Why?

At the exhibit, students will see many materials used at the time of the Qin Dynasty. They will see a model of the First Emperor's palace. Have the students look for natural resources and observe how they are used. After the visit to the exhibit, they will discuss natural resources.

The following terms are used to describe artifacts in the exhibit. Some of them are defined in the Glossary: inlaid, inscribed, relic, height, circumference, diameter, length, width, thickness, cast in relief, excavated, inscription, edict,

deceit, plaque, scale weight, mold, ceremonial, percussion, gilding, dagger, mechanism, helmet, armor, fragment, torso, archaeology, site, pigment, archer, civilian, infantry, acrobat, official, general

The following materials are represented in the exhibit. Tell the students to look for artifacts made from each resource and list it next to each.

- bronze
- clay – terra cotta
- jade
- wood
- gold
- turquoise
- gilt bronze with shell inlay
- bronze inlaid with silver and gold
- limestone
- bamboo
- iron
- stone

The following weapons are found in the exhibit:

- spear, lance, sword, arrow,
- crossbow, halberd, dagger, axe

**Natural Resources Post Activity:**

After their visit to the exhibit, refer to the list of artifacts filled in at the exhibit on their list of resources. Discuss the resources and their uses. Discuss how these same objects are made today. Discuss the use of plastic

to make many products. What are plastics made of?

Research the history of jade. See bibliography.

**9. Chinese Calligraphy**

While at the *Terra Cotta Warriors: Guardians of China's First Emperor* exhibit, students may observe and practice Chinese calligraphy. Discuss with the students that Chinese characters are very different from the phonetic English language.

Each Chinese character represents a syllable and also has a meaning. Chinese characters are made with brush strokes and look like drawings.

See sample below.

The symbols originally were pictures of people, animals, and other things but over the centuries these are no longer recognizable.

Although there are about 80,000 characters, only about 3,500 are commonly used. Each character takes the same amount of space no matter how complicated it is. There are no spaces between the characters so the reader has to figure out which syllables go together.

[http://www.omniglot.com/writing/chinese\\_evolution.htm](http://www.omniglot.com/writing/chinese_evolution.htm)

**10. What is Art?**

Class Discussion: What is art? “Art” is a very difficult word to define, and everyone can have their own opinion of what they think it means. Does art have more to do with the actual item, the intention of its creation, or the ability of the creator? Try to come to a class consensus of what is art. Then create a class consensus of how the art in the exhibit can be critiqued.

The exhibit presents a good opportunity to think about the differences between art and something that is just utilitarian. During their visit to the museum, ask the students to think about their definition of art and whether the artifacts are art or not. Since the warriors were created for something rather than an aesthetic purpose, are they art? Note the beauty of the warriors and their design. After the class visits the exhibition, show the class their answers to “What is Art?” and ask if they still feel the same way they did before the visit. Have their opinions changed? How is the culture

of ancient China represented in the artifacts found in the pits and tomb?

Have the students imagine that they are creating a set of items they wish to accompany them in the afterlife. List the items and tell why. If their items were found 2,000 years from now, would people consider their artifacts art?

The exhibit reflects art at the time of the Qin Dynasty. Show the students several samples of modern art. (A pre-activity can be for students to bring a picture from home of a piece of modern art to be used in this discussion, or the art teacher can be involved in the selection of artwork.) Just as the terra cotta warriors told us much about life during the time of the Qin Dynasty, what does modern art tell us about life today?

The warriors were created to “protect” the First Emperor throughout eternity. Give each student a ball of clay. Have them create their own personal protector. Write and discuss their choice of protector. Is it an animal? A specific person? Do they consider their statue a work of art? Why or why not?

As an extension, students may research and share the definition of art with the class. They will find many definitions. Encourage them to choose their favorite and tell why.

**11. Chinese Symbolism**

The Chinese use various animal-like symbols in much of their art and decorations. These symbols represent virtues and wishes of good fortune. For instance, a dragon is an example of a symbol believed to ward off evil spirits and lightening. Cranes symbolize longevity, a long life.

Much symbolism was used in artwork in ancient China as well as today. Before coming to the exhibit, have the students research Chinese symbolism and then look for these symbols in the exhibit.

At the exhibit the students will see examples of decorated roof tiles with Chinese symbols. The Chinese believed that the roof of a building was a landing platform where spirits connected with the human world. The roof slanted upwards in order to send evil spirits back to heaven. Roof decorations were utilized to help communicate with the spirits in order to attract good fortune, blessings and protection.

**Activity:** Have the students research Chinese symbolism and create a drawing or clay model of their own roof tile to use to protect their own home.

**12. Preserving Artifacts**

Class discussion: While at the museum, the students were asked



to consider how artifacts could deteriorate. Ask the students to list some items in their home that came from their grandparents. How are these items treated? (Hopefully with respect so they do not get damaged.) Discuss why families want to preserve their heritage. Have students list some items they own that they hope to some day show to their grandchildren. What will they do to be sure these items are kept safe?

Discuss with the class why artifacts should be conserved.

Artifacts in a museum are conserved for the “world family.” They tell about our collective past.

Some techniques to preserve museum artifacts include:

- Handle the objects very carefully
- Keep the artifacts clean by removing dust, dirt, mold and other harmful matter that may contribute to deterioration
- Do not use harmful chemicals on or near the artifacts
- Keep artifacts in a display case which reduces the amount of dust etc. that can come into contact with the artifacts
- Keep the light low since some forms of light cause damage
- Do not allow pictures to be taken with flash cameras
- Photocopy documents
- Keep the temperature cool

- Look at the artifact regularly to check for signs the artifact is deteriorating so it can be stopped or slowed down. Signs of deterioration are fading colors, parts loose or missing, and insect infestation

After visiting *Terra Cotta Warriors: Guardians of China's First Emperor*, discuss which items seem to be better preserved than others (such as items made from rocks and more sturdy resources).

### 13. Legalism vs. Confucianism

Although his systems, standardizing writing and weights and measures, proved quite beneficial in unifying his new empire, standardization was disastrous for philosophical ideas. The First Emperor outlawed all schools of thought other than the officially sanctioned Legalism. This philosophy assumes that people are selfish and anti-social, and that the state is always more important than the individual. People must be harshly punished or rewarded to behave correctly in a way that would benefit the state and its ruler. This was a departure from the most popular school of thought at the time, Confucianism, which states that the strength of a government ultimately is based on the support of the people and virtuous conduct of the ruler. It

emphasizes human goodness and social nature, as well as the right to rebel against those who stand in its way, such as unjust rulers.

The following points can be covered on a chart, in a comparative essay, or in a class discussion:

- What are the core ideas of each philosophy?
- What are the major points of difference in each?
- Are there any similarities between the two?
- Find at least one Chinese dynasty or ruler that employed each school of thought. How were they beneficial/detrimental to their respective societies?

### 14. Map Activity

Use an outline map of China to identify the following geographical features and locations:

#### Cities

- Xi'an  
The Museum of the Terra Cotta Warriors and Horses is about 36 kilometers (22 miles) east of Xi'an.
- Beijing
- Tianjin
- Nanjing
- Shanghai
- Guangzhou
- Chongqing
- Hong Kong

#### Rivers

- Yellow River
- Yangtze River
- Pearl River

#### Bordering Countries

- Afghanistan
- Bhutan
- Burma
- India
- Kazakhstan
- North Korea
- Kyrgyzstan
- Laos
- Mongolia
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Russia
- Tajikistan
- Vietnam

#### Bodies of Water

- East China Sea
- Korea Bay
- Yellow Sea
- South China Sea
- Pacific Ocean
- Philippine Sea

#### Provinces

- Anhui
- Fujian
- Gansu
- Guangdong
- Guizhou
- Hainan
- Hebei
- Heilongjiang
- Henan

- Hubei  
Locate the Three Gorges in this province. It is southeast of Xi'an.
- Hunan
- Jiangsu
- Jiangxi
- Jilin
- Liaoning
- Qinghai
- Shaanxi
- Shandong
- Shanxi
- Sichuan
- Yunnan
- Zhejiang

### 15. Great Wall

There is much visible evidence of the influence of the First Emperor on the history of China. Besides the terra cotta warriors, one can visit the Great Wall, one of the largest man-made structures of all time. Parts of the wall were initially begun before the time of the Qin dynasty in order to keep out invading nomads from the north. Even though the emperor did not start the building of these walls, he contributed a great deal by unifying and expanding them.

The First Emperor conscripted labor for the job of expanding the wall and many of these laborers died while working on the project. It is rumored that these bodies were buried in the



*Bell used to sound retreat for troops*

wall; this is why it is called the longest cemetery in the world.

During the First Emperor's time, the walls were reinforced with earth, wood, and stone. Later during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 CE), the use of bricks, tile, and limestone made the building of the wall move at a faster pace.

Although the Great Wall has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1987, much of it is in disrepair.

In some areas, nearby villagers have taken parts of the brick wall to build their homes, while in other areas the wall is

crumbling and is not safe for touring. In Beijing the most well-preserved parts of the wall are visited by about four million visitors each year. The Great Wall today is more than 4,000 miles long.

**Activities:**

Individually, or in groups, research different areas of the Great Wall listed below:

- Great Wall in Liaoning
- Great Wall in Hebei
- Great Wall in Beijing
- Great Wall in Tianjin
- Great Wall in Shanxi
- Great Wall in Inner Mongolia
- Great Wall in Ningxia
- Great Wall in Shaanxi
- Great Wall in Gansu

Create a visual aide and give a presentation summarizing your section of the wall. Include information such as:

- Where your portion is located
- When it was built
- What materials were used
- A brief history of the dynasty responsible for that section

Conduct research on the Great Wall and write a persuasive essay arguing whether the Great Wall should be preserved or whether it is not worth saving. Use the website listed in the Resource Guide.

**16. Math/Geography Activity**

If the Great Wall were moved from China to North America, how far would it reach? On a map of North America, show the distance of 4,000 miles. It does not have to go in a straight line. The wall could go

from \_\_\_\_\_ (name a city) to \_\_\_\_\_ (name a city). You may list many cities along the route. Research the border between the U.S. and Mexico. Compare its use, composition, and problems to that of the Great Wall of China.

**17. Entertainment**

The First Emperor wanted to be sure he was protected in the afterlife which is why he created his terra cotta warriors. He also wanted to be entertained. Based on recent archaeological discoveries of acrobats and strongmen, we believe that the emperor was entertained by a circus, as well as musicians, and water birds. We already knew about his ability to conquer and protect, now we are beginning to learn that there is more to him than warfare.

Archaeologists who discovered the 11 acrobats and strongmen claim that these performers appear to look like those in the modern day Shanghai Circus. Historians had believed that the idea for acrobatics did not evolve until the Han dynasty, however this new discovery disproves that theory. Acrobatics have a long and rich history in ancient China. It is even said that Confucius's father was a strongman.

When the First Emperor was not being entertained by his circus

performers, he enjoyed the music of a string orchestra. When these musicians played, the water birds would dance around a stream. The emperor had 15 terra cotta musicians and 46 bronze water birds placed in his tomb.

During the Qin Dynasty, the Imperial Music Bureau was founded. The bureau was responsible for supervising court and military music. The Music Bureau decided which folk music would be officially recognized. This was a very important task because the First Emperor believed that this music would keep harmony and longevity within his state. The placement of the string orchestra in the First Emperor's tomb emphasizes the importance of music.

**Activities:**

Class discussion: List the types of circuses the students have seen. Visit the three websites below, and create a chart listing items the students might see in the Shanghai Circus, Ringling Brothers and Barnum Bailey Circus, and Cirque Du Soleil. How are these circuses different? How are they the same? Observe that this form of entertainment has remained similar for over 2,000 years.

<http://acrobatsofchina.com/en/history.htm>

<http://www.ringling.com/>

<http://www.cirquedusoleil.com/>

cirquedusoleil/default.htm

### Music

Conduct a class discussion or write an essay to express individual ideas about music:

- Do you feel that music is an important part of daily life?
- What would our lives be like today if we did not have music?
- Would you be upset if you were forced to listen to only one kind of music which a Music Bureau chose?
- Why do you think the First Emperor wanted to control what music was officially recognized by the palace?
- Do you think officially recognizing one type of music would limit different styles of music? Why?

### 18. Responsible Research

Class Discussion: The First Emperor's tombs have contributed invaluable information about how the Chinese people lived long ago. The artifacts tell us much about their culture such as their work, beliefs, entertainment and daily lives. Yet the First Emperor did not allow people to create artwork, so there are not pictures of him that we can use to tell what he looked like. People were not allowed to write about

his life or his activities. He did not allow common people to learn to read and write.

Why do you think these informative activities were not allowed? How did this enforce his desire to control his subjects?

About 100 years after the First Emperor died, a man named Sima Qian wrote a history book called *Shi Ji*, also called the *Records of the Grand Historian of China*. Sima Qian was a palace official at the court of Han. His writing about the First Emperor is very negative, which is a sign that he may have been writing to serve another purpose than preserving history. The Han Dynasty took control of China away from the Qin Dynasty so the book may have been written in order to assert their right to rule. It is also possible that some of what was written about the First Emperor was secretly written to criticize the Han Dynasty and Emperor Wudi.

Many books and articles are written as if they are true, but in reality they are devised to serve another purpose rather than being informative. With the availability of the internet and its valuable research use, it is imperative that students learn how to evaluate all that they see, hear, and read. Studying the First

Emperor presents an opportunity to discuss the importance of education and how and why information is presented. Conduct Internet Evaluation activities as the students use the internet to do research. Evaluation activities can be found on the internet.

### 19. Math Activities

Pit I is estimated to contain 7,000 warriors known as the Right Army. The pit is five meters deep. It measures 230 meters east to west and 62 meters north to south. Convert meters to yards. Compare the size of the pit to a football field. Draw a scale model of the pit and a football field side by side. Decide what scale to use and how much detail you want to show. For example, the pit is divided into nine columns going east to west. How is a football field divided? You could also show how the warriors in the pit are arranged and how the players might be arranged on the football field.

In creating the warriors, foremen supervised teams of subordinates. So far the names of 87 foremen have been found. It is assumed that about a dozen workers served under one foreman. How many people does this show worked on the warriors? Work on the army pits went on for at least

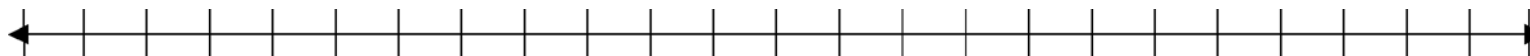
12 years. Seven thousand warriors were produced. How many warriors could each team (foreman and subordinates) produce in one year?

Below is a timeline marked in one hundred year increments. More information can be added if it is created vertically or using the landscape layout.

Directions: Use the timeline below and fill in the information listed.

- Mark 300 BCE at the left end of the time line
- Mark 2100 at the right end of the line
- Find the point that would be 0 and mark it. Discuss the meaning of this point. What does it indicate?
- The First Emperor, Qin Shi Huang, was born in 259 BCE. Mark this date.
- Mark today's date. (What year is it?)
- If a generation is considered to be thirty years, how many generations have lived since Qin Shi Huang's birth?
- You may mark events in China on the top of the time line and worldwide events on the bottom of the timeline. You may include events that are important to you such as your own birth.

- What observations can you make by creating this timeline? For example, was Columbus's trip to the Americas closer to the time of Qin dynasty or to today?



## Pronunciation Guide To Chinese Sounds

Chinese names and places are Romanized (written in the Roman alphabet) according to the *pinyin* system, the standard

form used throughout China to write Chinese in English. (Please note that Taiwan still uses the older Wade-Giles system.)

### Consonants

**C** ts

**Q** ch

**X** sh

**Z** dz

**Zh** j

### C

Cong tsong

Cizhou Tsi-jo

### X

Xi'an Shee-an

### ZH

Zhou Jo

Zhang Jang

### Vowels

a a, as in Alice

e u, as in sung

i ir, after certain consonants (shi, chi, zi, zhi)

Ee, after others (di, zi, bi)

ian yen

ou o, as in toe

u oo

ua wa

ui way

### Q

Qi chee

Qin dynasty Chin dynasty

Qing dynasty Ching dynasty

### Z

Zeng Dzung

## Speak Chinese

*Hello!*

Ni hao! (Nee haow)

*How are you?*

Ni hao ma? (Nee haow ma?)

*I am (insert your name)*

Wo shi . . . (for girls)

Wo shir . . . (for boys)

*I like you*

Wo xihuan ni

(Wo shee-hwang nee)

*She/He is Chinese*

Ta shi Zhongguoren

(Ta shir Jong-gwo-rin)

*I am not Chinese*

Wo bu shi Zhongguoren

(Wo boo shir Jong-gwo-rin)

*I am American*

Wo shi Meiguoren

(Wo shir May-gwo-rin)

*I want to go to China*

Wo yao qu Zhongguo

(Wo yaow choo Jong-gwo)

*I like Chinese art*

Wo xihuan Zhongguo meishu

(Wo shee-hwang jong-gwo may-shoo)