

CHINA'S FIRST EMPEROR: SHI-HUANGDI

Mark It on the Map

Have students locate China and its neighbors on a world map—including Japan and other islands. Then have students turn to page 4 and take note of China's geographic location on the inset globe. Read aloud each site noted on the map, and have students locate the site. Ask if any of the names are familiar to them. Ask those students when and in what context they have heard of the sites. Remember to use the map on page 4 as a reference as the class studies the issue.

rammed-earth	Legalists
feudal	caldron
regent	qin
Daoist	loess

Introduction

Ask students what the word “emperor” means to them. Use their answers as the basis for a discussion. Ask the following questions: How does a person become a political leader? What personality traits does a leader need? How does a leader stay in power? What policies might a person use to stay in power? Make a list of the students' answers. Keep them for reference and comparison while studying about Shi-Huangdi.

Questions for Discussion

- When did Shi-Huangdi rule China? When was his tomb site found? For approximately how many years did it lie untouched?
- What did the excavators of Shi-Huangdi's tomb site find?
- What is the origin of “China,” the country's name?
- What is meant by the phrase “blood for the drums”?
- What does the title “Shi-Huangdi” mean? What was the emperor's name (given name) and what was the significance of the name change?
- What was a “tiger tally”? Be complete with your explanation.
- What is meant by “mandate from heaven”?
- Who was Li Si, and what positions (and duties) did he have in the court of Shi-Huangdi?
- What is the Shiji? When was it written? By whom?
- How did the Chinese explain their belief that a powerful leader was one who controlled metal?
- For what purposes did the ancient Chinese use the bronze ding?
- How did Shi-Huangdi eliminate unemployment?
- Why were boundary walls important to Shi-Huangdi?
- What were some of the orders Shi-Huangdi gave in an attempt to avoid being assassinated?
- Why and how did Chinese officials keep Shi-Huangdi's death a secret?
- To what does “small seal” refer? And, who is credited with introducing “small seal”? Also, how and why has this script played a key role in Chinese history?

Writing Workout

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Read the quote on pages 2–3 to the class. Have the students write a brief essay explaining the message they believe Shi-Huangdi wished to convey.
- Have the students consider realistic options that powerful leaders might use to deter or prevent tomb robbers from entering their tombs. Ask them to focus on two or three preventative measures and write about them.
- Ask students to make a list of the policies Shi-Huangdi implemented when he became emperor. Next to each, have them write what they think was his purpose for passing the

policy and what he hoped to accomplish.

- Consider the “mandate from heaven” policy. Then describe the ways in which the people of the United States can remove an official from office if they feel he or she is not governing properly.
- Write an essay detailing the reasons why Li Si and Shi-Huangdi wanted to abolish feudalism.
- Write an essay on why Shi-Huangdi preferred to have his nobles living in the same place.
- Describe two missions Shi-Huangdi undertook to find the secret to immortality.
- List the various ways in which Shi-Huangdi brought unity to the lands he ruled (standardized writing, weights and measures, coins, roads, axle widths). Then discuss with the class how standardization contributes to a nation’s unity and brings about a more controlled atmosphere.

Think About It

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Consider how Shi-Huangdi’s tomb was found. Why are many finds made by people who are not archaeologists? Where do you think many of these finds are made? What lessons are to be learned? What advice would you give to community officials, and what arguments would you use to support your advice?
- Why do you think no two clay soldiers in Shi-Huangdi’s tomb look alike? What does this fact tell you about Shi-Huangdi’s thoughts/beliefs/hopes when he ordered his tomb built?
- Bring to class several books on archaeological sites throughout the world. Divide the class into groups and give each group one or more books. Ask the students to look for excavated tomb sites. For each, have them list where the site is located, to which time period it dates, to whom it belonged, and whether it was ever looted (if it was, have them indicate when and, if known, by whom). Let each group present its findings to the rest of the class. Ask one student to record the name and location of each site mentioned, and how many groups noted that site. Finally, lead a class discussion about the profession of tomb robbing: What types of tombs were robbed? Why were they robbed? Why did robbers risk their lives? Is tomb robbing more profitable or risk-free than other forms of theft?
- Read the quote on page 13 to the class. Ask the students for their opinion as to what Shi-Huangdi meant by these words.
- Have students read about Shi-Huangdi’s order to burn books on page 19. Have them list each category of book he kept off the condemned list. Then, next to each category, have them give reasons why they think Shi-Huangdi was willing to keep these books in print.
- Have students consider what life would be like if there were no historical records. Make a list of their comments on the board.
- Write an essay on why historians such as Sima Qian are important.
- How could later generations of Chinese interpret Shi-Huangdi’s inability to retrieve the ninth caldron?
- What does Shi-Huangdi’s constant search for an elixir to make him immortal tell you about him as an individual?
- Shi-Huangdi’s policies of standardization did not bring him and his descendants the long reign for which he had hoped. They did, however, form the basis for a unified land that continues today. Discuss with the class why this is so. Make sure students always give specific reasons for their answers.

Viewpoints

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Why do you think Shi-Huangdi chose to break with tradition and appoint his most talented and loyal subjects to political positions? Do you think this would be an effective policy for today's politicians? Why, or why not?
- Think about the "mandate from heaven" policy. List both the advantages and disadvantages of such a program.
- Consider Li Si's advice to Shi-Huangdi about allowing foreigners to stay in Qin: "Ridding Qin of foreigners would make enemies of them and allow them to build up the strength of their own states." Do you agree with Li Si? Is this a policy that still has meaning today? Explain your answers with specific reasons.

Then and Now

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Bring to class several books that detail methods used by governments to ensure the privacy of codes, notes, and important materials. Read out loud to the class the caption about the "tiger tally" on page 14. Divide the class into groups and give each group a book. Let them find modern strategies that are similar to the "tiger tally," and have them present their reports to the class. Lead a discussion on what methods are the most effective and why.
- Freedom of the press is one of the rights held dear by the people of the United States. Shi-Huangdi's order to burn certain books definitely violates such a right. Using specific examples, have students write an essay explaining how freedom of the press affects all aspects of life in the United States.
- Because bronze ding were expensive and their manufacture was time-consuming, only the rich could afford them. Think of today's crafted items. Make a list of those found in almost every household. Make a second list of those found only in households of the rich.
- Shi-Huangdi standardized axle widths throughout his empire. Do you think standardizing the axle widths of all vehicles would be worth implementing in the United States? Why, or why not? Should there be separate standardized widths for personal and business vehicles? Consider how such a policy might be enforced.

Get Into Art

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Use the description of Shi-Huangdi's tomb site on pages 5–7 to draw a diagram of the army and chariots uncovered within. Use different colored markers for soldiers, horses, chariots, the trenches, etc. Make sure to include a legend with the diagram.
- Use the description of Shi-Huangdi's burial mound on page 8 to draw a diagram of the site. Use different colored markers for gates, towers, etc. Make sure to include a legend with the diagram.
- In comic-style form, tell the story of the nine sacred caldrons of Yu.
- Have students turn to page 26 and read the description of the process used to cast a bronze caldron. Then ask students to illustrate the steps in the process.
- Bring to class several magazines that include a great variety of illustrations. Read to the students the first paragraph of the article "The Construction Projects of Shi-Huangdi" on page 27. Divide the class into three groups. Ask the first group to make a collage that illustrates the comparison of the Great Wall in China with a huge stone wall. Ask the second group to make a collage that illustrates the comparison of the palace with the White House. Ask the third group to make a collage that illustrates the comparison of a network of today's highways with the road system engineered at Shi-Huangdi's orders. (See also pages 31 and 41–42.) Display the collages around the classroom.
- Have students turn to page 44. Let each student choose a word or expression and make a

collage, drawing, or cartoon to illustrate the derivation of his or her word.

Class Projects

Students may complete one or both of the following activities:

- ➔ Bring to class books on Chinese history and culture that have many illustrations. Read with the students the explanations of various Chinese symbols as found on pages 20–21. Distribute books among the students and let them look for these symbols in the illustrations. After a specified amount of time, let the students share their findings with the rest of the class.
- ➔ Make a list of the policies implemented by Shi-Huangdi that continue to influence Chinese culture and government. As each policy is suggested, discuss with the class how and why it may be labeled as Shi-Huangdi’s legacy.

Research Projects

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- ➔ Have students find pictures of tomb monuments and memorials in the United States. (Examples: Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery, Washington’s tomb at Mount Vernon, Martin Luther King’s memorial in Atlanta.) Let students compare and contrast the practices of today with those of ancient China. Ask them to explain what measures have been taken to prevent anyone from desecrating the sites.
- ➔ Bring to class books that describe the governments of countries throughout the world and distribute them among groups of students. Divide the board or a large sheet of paper into two columns labeled “Freedom of Speech” and “Limited Freedom of Speech.” Have students list the names of the countries that have “freedom of speech” and the names of those that do not in the appropriate column. Have a class discussion about your findings.

Just for Fun

Students may complete one or both of the following activities:

- ➔ Make your own Chinese “Tee” by following the directions on pages 20–22.
- ➔ Play “T’shu-p’u” by following the directions on pages 36–38.

Words With a Past

Ask students to write six sentences—one with each of the words defined on pages 44–45. Each sentence should be written so that any reader will understand the meaning of the assigned word and have some idea of its derivation.

Follow These Footsteps

Shi-Huangdi
Li Si
Sima Qian
Yu the Great