

Teacher's Guide to DIG: *China's Hidden Caves*

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This teacher's guide was created by Peggy Epstein, a language arts teacher with 25 years experience. Epstein has a Master's Degree in Instruction and Curriculum from the University of Missouri at Kansas City. She is also the author of "Family Writes: Parenting with Pens, Pencils, and PC's" (Capital Books 2006).

It might be helpful to introduce this issue of DIG by providing the following information:

The Mogao Caves--Mogaoku in Chinese, meaning unsurpassed--were carved into an enormous rock cliff in China and pretty much abandoned over 500 years ago.

However, they were not left empty. (Show location on map.)

For "What a Find!" (pages 8-10)

Go through these "5 W's" as an introductory activity. After reading the article, ask students to explain

--Who (Wang Yuanlu, Aurel Stein, Pauliet)

--What (examples of what kinds of documents were found)

--When (when were the documents placed in the cave? when were they found?)

--Where (on the map)

--Why (why were the documents put inside the cave?)

--How (how the documents preserved, how the contents of Cave 17 will be transferred from inside a real cave to a virtual one)

For "Chiseled Into a Long Cliff" (pages 11-13)

Have students list ten steps for turning rock into a cave.

(Note: include "preparing a pounce" and "using a pounce" as two of these steps.)

For "A Magnificent Diary" (pages 14-17)

a.) Ask students to identify these numbers from the article:

1,000

366

907

600

500

10,000

1987

b.) Ask students to list 10 cultural facts about people's lives we can learn from looking at the cave paintings (and their explanations) on pages 16 &17.

For "The Lotus Girl" (pages 18-20) and "The Pipa Playing Dancer" (page 22)

Divide the class in half. One half will be assigned to "The Lotus Girl"; the other half will be assigned "The Pipa Playing Dancer." Using unlined paper which they have marked into "frames" students will use stick figures and cartoon bubble captions to retell the assigned story. Display work.

For "To the Rescue" (pages 22-23)

After placing students in pairs, give the following instructions.

One of you is a reporter very interested in what will be done to keep the caves and their contents from further deterioration. You will prepare a list of 15 questions, at least three from each page of the article. One of you is the expert who will answer the reporter's questions.

For "What's Special About 220" (pages 28-29)

Good news! (for a culminating activity) The Migao Caves have been opened to tourists. Students, working in groups will create posters advertising this wonderful opportunity. Posters will

--describe the attractions at Migao, including information and graphics on at least three different caves, especially focusing on "What's So Special About 220."

--explain the route tour groups will take (from San Francisco)

--show a couple of souvenirs available in the Migao Cave Gift Shop