

LEVELED BOOK • V

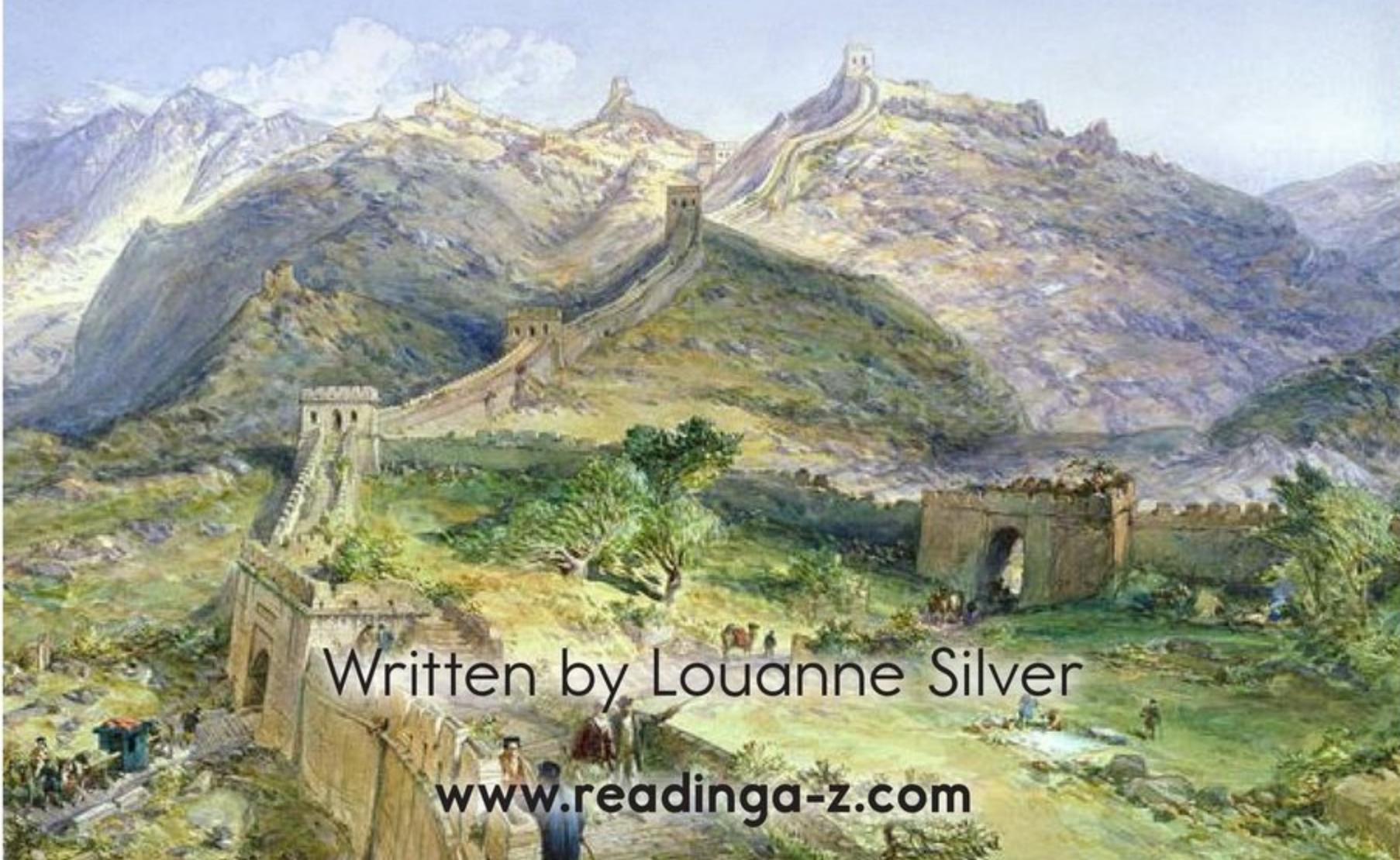
# The Great Wall of China



Written by Louanne Silver

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## Focus Question

What is the significance of the Great Wall of China?

## Words to Know

convicts

parallel

culture

raiding

feat

restoration

harmonious

steppes

kilns

winds

nomadic

uniform

Front cover: The Great Wall crosses a variety of terrains, including rugged mountainous areas.

Title page: Scottish artist William Simpson created this watercolor and pencil painting of the Great Wall in 1874.

Page 3: The Great Wall is an international landmark visited by millions of people in every season.

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The Great Wall of China

World Landmarks

Level V Leveled Book

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In 1987, the Great Wall of China was chosen as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations.

## Remarkable Landmark

The Great Wall of China is one of Earth's most famous human-made features and one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. This remarkable **feat** of engineering and design is one of the most challenging construction projects ever undertaken. The many sections of the wall are China's biggest tourist attraction. Together they are longer than the distance between the North and South Poles.

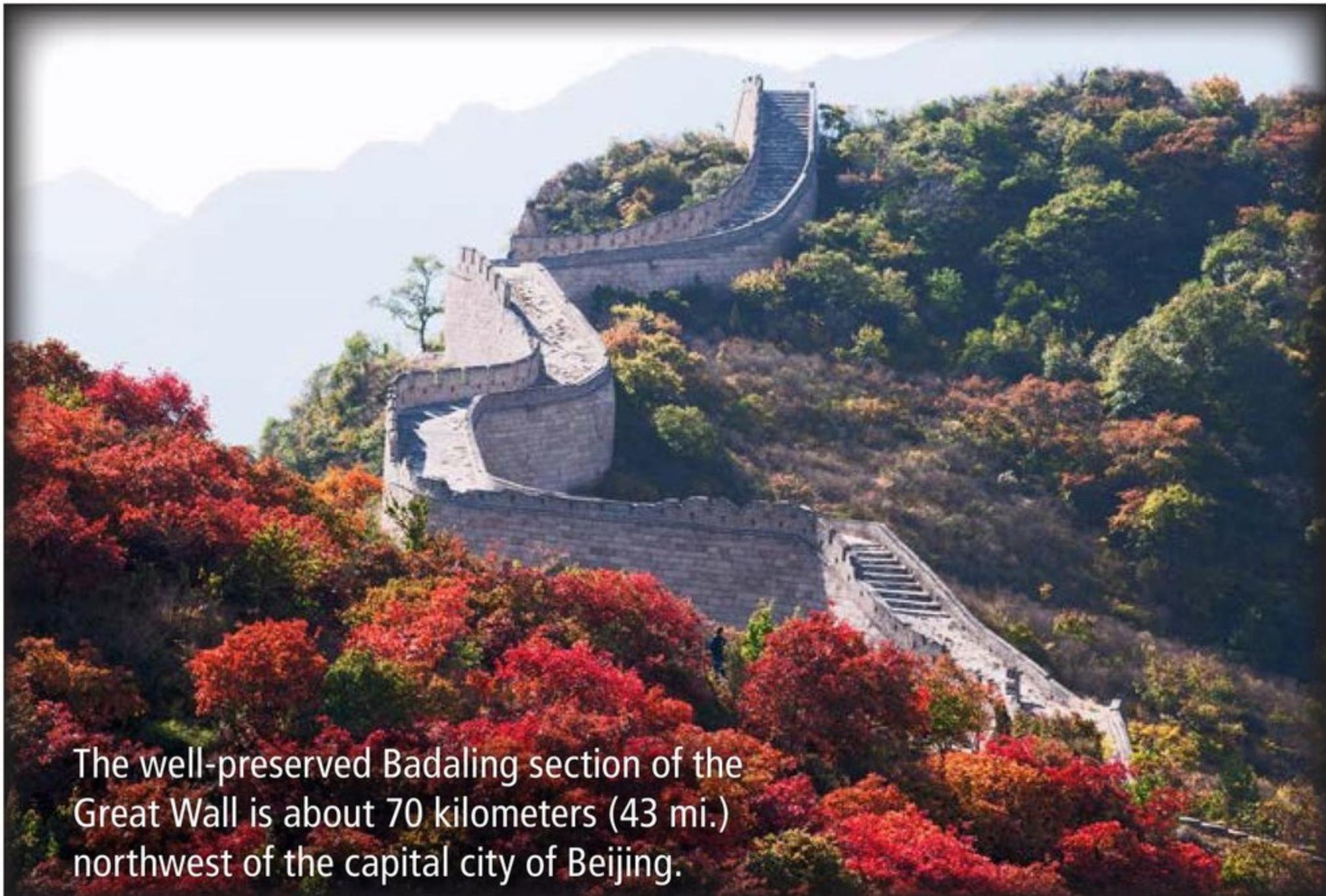
The Great Wall is a record of China's long, rich history. People began building the wall more than two thousand years ago. It tells the story of changing power, technology, and ways of life in China from long ago to the present.

## Flowing Wall

The ancient Chinese art and science of *feng shui* (FUNG SHWAY) governed the design of the wall. Feng shui is a set of principles that suggest how things should be arranged in relation to the flow of energy. The Great Wall is curved instead of straight because it was designed to flow over the land in a **harmonious** way.

The Great Wall was built along China's northern border. Many people in China think of the wall as a sleeping dragon. Its tail is in the west, in Gansu (GAHN-soo) Province. Its head, in the east, is in Liaoning (lee-OW-ning) Province near the Yellow Sea. From tail to head, the dragon's body is surrounded by deserts, **steppes**, mountains, lakes, rivers, fertile lowlands, and beaches. Some of the wall is located near Beijing (bay-ZHING), China's capital.





The well-preserved Badaling section of the Great Wall is about 70 kilometers (43 mi.) northwest of the capital city of Beijing.

## Sections of the Wall

The Great Wall isn't one wall—it's made up of many separate sections. Some of the walls are **parallel** to each other. Four of the main sections are within 121 kilometers (75 mi.) of Beijing. In 2007, the Great Wall was voted one of the New Seven Wonders of the World.

Badaling (BAH-dah-ling) is the most famous and best-preserved section. Badaling **winds** along steep mountains northwest of Beijing for about 12 kilometers (7.5 mi.) and has forty-three watchtowers.

Farther east, Mutianyu (MOO-tyen-yoo) is a scenic portion of the Great Wall that spans high mountains. It measures 2.25 kilometers (1.4 mi.) long and has twenty-two watchtowers.

## How Long?

The Great Wall's Chinese name means the "Long Wall of Ten Thousand Li." A *li* is a Chinese measurement that equals about one-half of a kilometer or one-third of a mile, so ten

thousand li equals about 5,000 kilometers (3,100 mi.). Even recently, people thought the wall wasn't much longer than that. Then between 2007 and 2012, scientists used advanced technology to measure the wall. They discovered that the wall is more than four times that long! It's about 21,196 kilometers (13,171 mi.) long when the lengths of all the sections are added together.



Northeast of Beijing, Jinshanling (JIN-shahn-ling) is a well-preserved section of the wall that's about 10 kilometers (6 mi.) long. It has sixty-seven watchtowers. Long ago, soldiers slept in some, while others were used to store hay and weapons. Some of the watchtowers have windows that were used for shooting arrows at enemies.

Next door to the east, Simatai (SU-mah-tie) is about 5 kilometers (3 mi.) long and has undergone a great deal of **restoration**. It is an extremely steep section with thirty-four watchtowers, about half of them on each side of Mandarin Duck Lake.

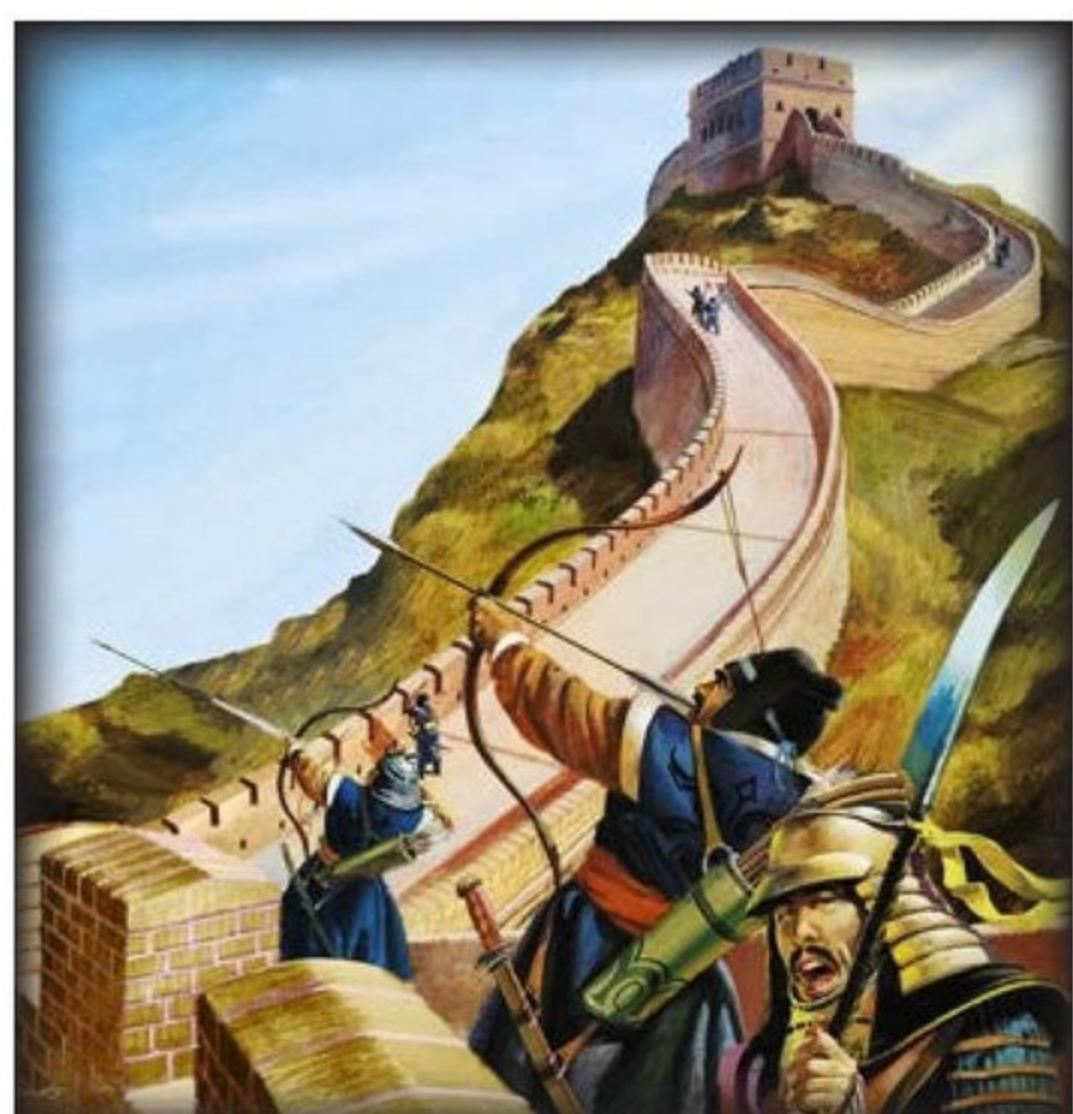
## Why a Wall?

The Great Wall roughly follows the southern edge of Inner Mongolia. This region is now a self-governing part of China, but it was mostly under the control of non-Chinese peoples when the wall was built. The Mongol people were enemies of China long ago, and the wall was constructed to keep them out. It also protected Chinese **culture** from outside influences. The wall didn't always keep out invaders, but it made invading difficult.

In ancient times, small groups of **nomadic** people lived in and near modern-day China. They depended on wild animals and plants for food, clothing, and other things they needed. Beginning around 4000 BC, those who lived in regions with richer soil started growing crops and taming animals.

People settled and built walls surrounding their villages to prevent **raiding** by nomadic people from the north.

British artist Andrew Howat's painting *Great Wall of China* shows Chinese soldiers taking aim against invaders.





After Qin gained control of all of China, Zheng became the first emperor of the new country.

By 500 BC, China was made up of many independent states that fought each other. The northern states also fought their northern enemies. Many more walls were built during this time.

By 221 BC, the powerful state of Qin (CHIN) took control of all of China. The new emperor, Zheng (ZHUNG), wanted to keep China safe from its enemies, so he ordered workers to build almost 4,828 kilometers (3,000 mi.) of wall along China's borders. Some experts think this was the start of the Great Wall. After his death in 210 BC, the Great Wall was neglected for about one hundred years, and parts of it fell apart. Then a new emperor ordered work on a new 483-kilometer (300 mi.) section of wall along China's borders. Later, between AD 386 and 1279, a series of emperors ordered workers to repair parts of the wall and build new sections.

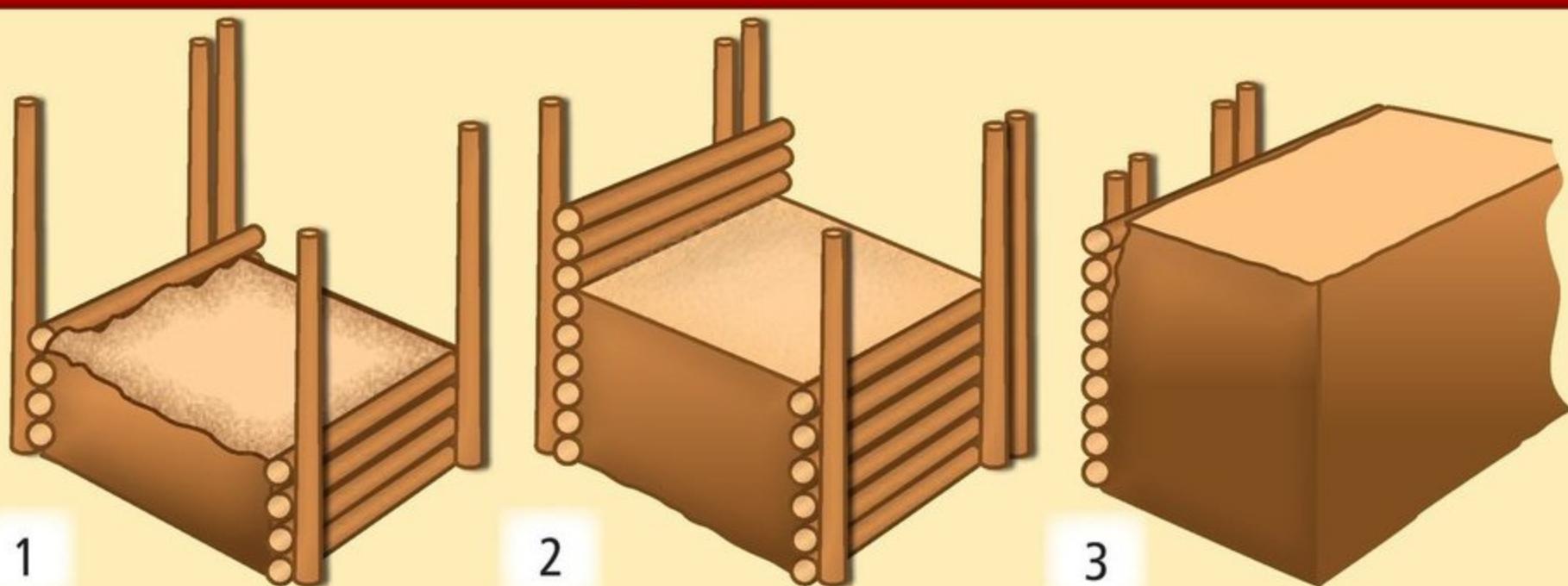
In the mid-1200s, the wall was not successful in keeping out enemies. The Mongols, led by Genghis Khan, invaded from the north. They controlled the country for over one hundred years. They did not maintain the wall.

After driving out the Mongols in 1368, the new emperor wanted to make sure they stayed out of China. He had the wall rebuilt, which was a huge task because much of it had fallen apart. For the next 275 years or so, emperors reconstructed and expanded the Great Wall. Much of today's Great Wall was built or repaired during that time. Since then, work on the wall has mainly involved repairs.



Genghis Khan conquered individual Mongol tribes and formed the Mongol Empire. His empire controlled many countries covering a huge area in Asia.

## Hang-tu Construction



1. Workers built a wooden frame and filled it with earth.
2. They built the wall higher.
3. Workers removed the frame.

## Building the Wall

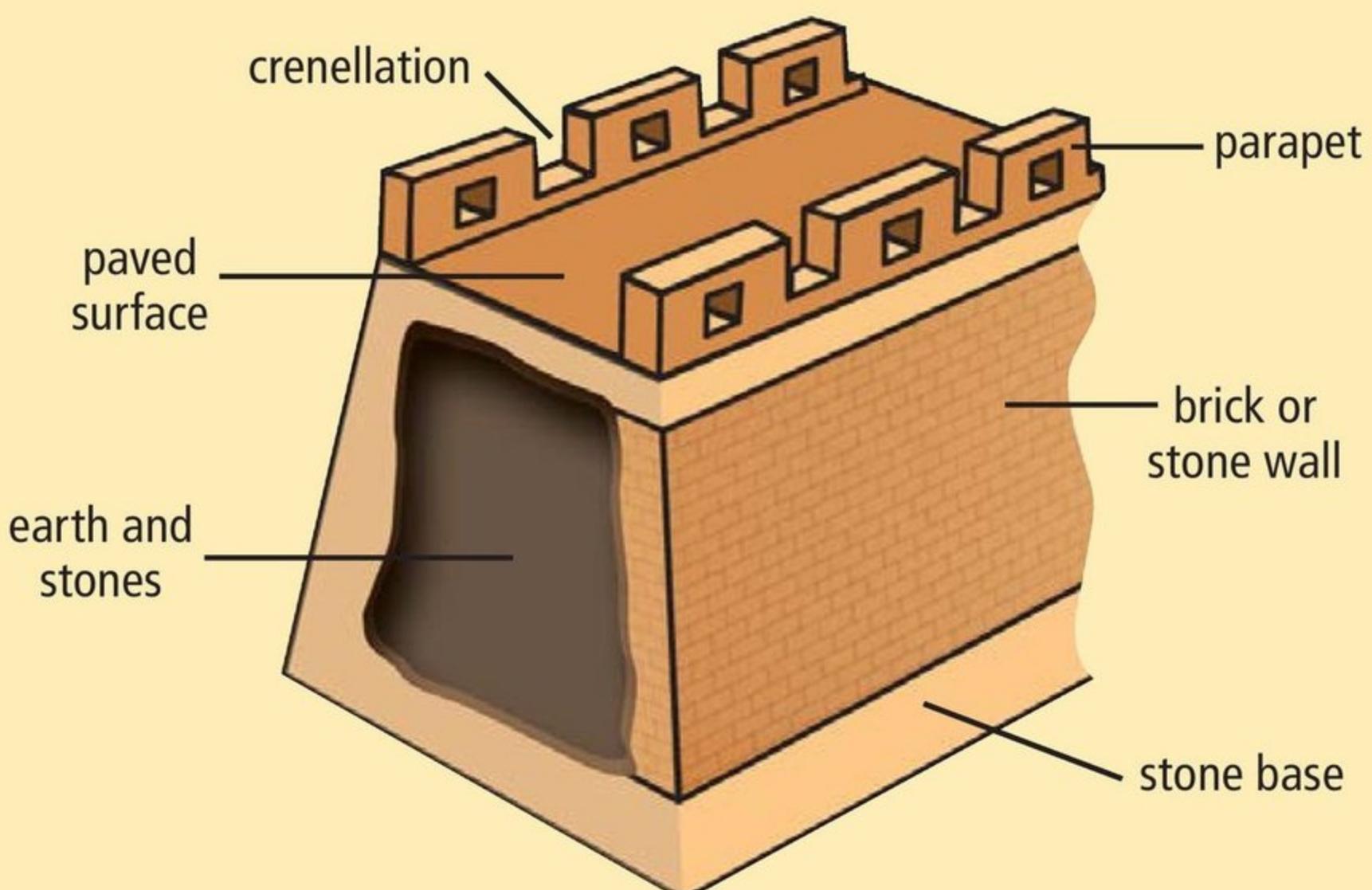
People built the Great Wall in stages over thousands of years. Soldiers, **convicts**, war prisoners, peasants, and others all worked on the wall, often under force. All the walls were constructed with the *hang-tu*, or rammed earth, method. This method involved pounding down packed earth inside a frame made of wood or bamboo. Earth wasn't available in desert areas, so packed sand and shrubs were used instead.



Early walls were made mainly of earth. This wall is in the far western section of the Great Wall.

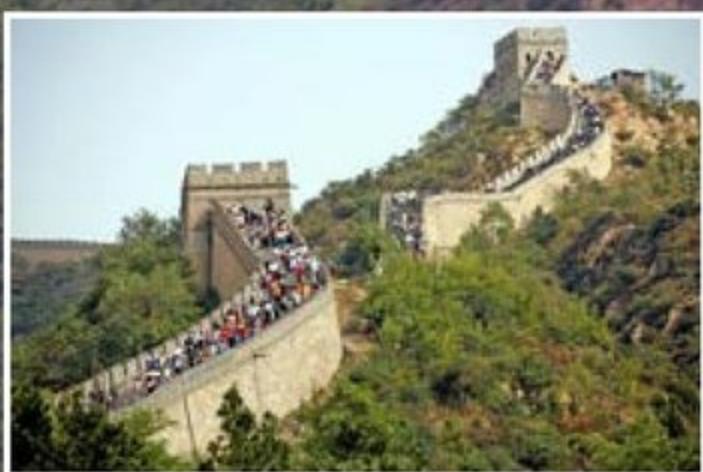
During a time in China's history called the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), many sections of the Great Wall took on their present-day appearance. People constructed the walls using hang-tu methods and then covered them with brick or stone to give them a **uniform** look. Workers formed large bricks with wooden molds and then baked them in **kilns**. Once they were placed in position, workers filled the spaces in between with mortar. So many people worked under harsh conditions to build the Great Wall that a myth arose about the mortar containing the ground-up bones of dead workers. However, historians recently discovered the secret ingredient: sticky rice.

### Ming Wall Construction



## The Great Wall of China

The Simatai section of the Great Wall is 5.4 kilometers (3.3 mi.) long with thirty-five beacon towers.



Each year, over ten million people come to China to see the Great Wall.



There are an amazing 25,000 watchtowers and 15,000 outposts along the sections of the Great Wall.

- Length: combined total length of all sections about 21,196 kilometers (13,170 mi.); the longest series of structures ever built
- Width: widest section about 9 meters (30 ft.); tallest part of wall is about 8 meters (26 ft.)
- Elevation: lowest point is at sea level; highest point is more than 500 meters (1,600 ft.) in elevation

## Visiting the Wall

Visitors who are fortunate enough to tour the Great Wall will need to decide which sections to see. Badaling is the most commonly visited because it's close to Beijing and is the safest section to walk. It also offers the Great Wall Museum, with nine exhibition halls on topics related to history, construction, art, and culture. However, Badaling can be crowded, and it's full of souvenir shops. Most of the other sections have fewer tourists but are also much steeper, so be prepared for a challenging climb.

Besides walking, climbing, and taking pictures, visitors can take a guided tour to learn about the wall's history and construction. Cable car rides are available at some sections, and Mutianyu offers a toboggan ride.



It is recommended that visitors be in good physical condition to hike the mountainous sections of the wall.



## A Source of Inspiration

The Great Wall of China is a remarkable landmark that continues to inspire and fascinate people around the world. The 2008 Summer Olympic Games, in Beijing, featured the wall since the Games always honor the history and culture of the host country. A representation of the wall was a highlight of the Opening Ceremony, and one of the cycling courses included loops between Badaling and Juyong (JOO-yoong) Passes. Swiss cyclist Fabian Cancellara, who won gold and silver medals, later said that he drew inspiration and strength from the effort it took to build the wall.

The Great Wall has witnessed an enormous span of human history, from early farmers, warring states, and powerful empires to modern-day China. Many people are working to preserve the wall so it can continue to tell a part of Earth's story for generations to come.

## Glossary

<b>convicts</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	people found guilty of a crime and serving a sentence in prison; prisoners (p. 11)
<b>culture</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the ideas and customs of a certain group of people (p. 8)
<b>feat</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	an amazing action or accomplishment (p. 4)
<b>harmonious</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	having parts that are related, combined, or work together to create a pleasing effect (p. 5)
<b>kilns</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	special ovens for burning, baking, and drying materials such as clay, brick, or glass (p. 12)
<b>nomadic</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	moving from place to place without a permanent home (p. 8)
<b>parallel</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	lying or moving in the same direction and an equal distance apart (p. 6)
<b>raiding</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a surprise attack or invasion with a specific purpose (p. 8)
<b>restoration</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the act of returning something to its original condition (p. 7)
<b>steppes</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	flat, dry grasslands that can be very hot in summer and very cold in winter (p. 5)
<b>winds</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	moves in a curving line or course; has many curves and bends (p. 6)
<b>uniform</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	the same or similar (p. 12)

# The Great Wall of China

A Reading A-Z Level V Leveled Book

Word Count: 1,265

## Connections

### Writing

Create a persuasive travel brochure that informs readers about the Great Wall. Use information from the book as well as outside resources.

### Social Studies

Research to learn more about Emperor Zheng and Genghis Khan. How were these two leaders alike? How were they different? Create a Venn diagram comparing them.

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