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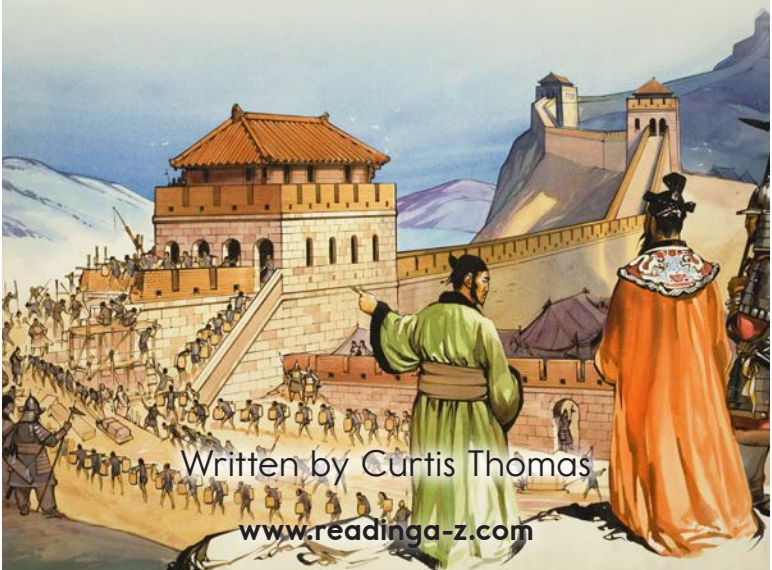
The Great Wall of China



Written by Curtis Thomas

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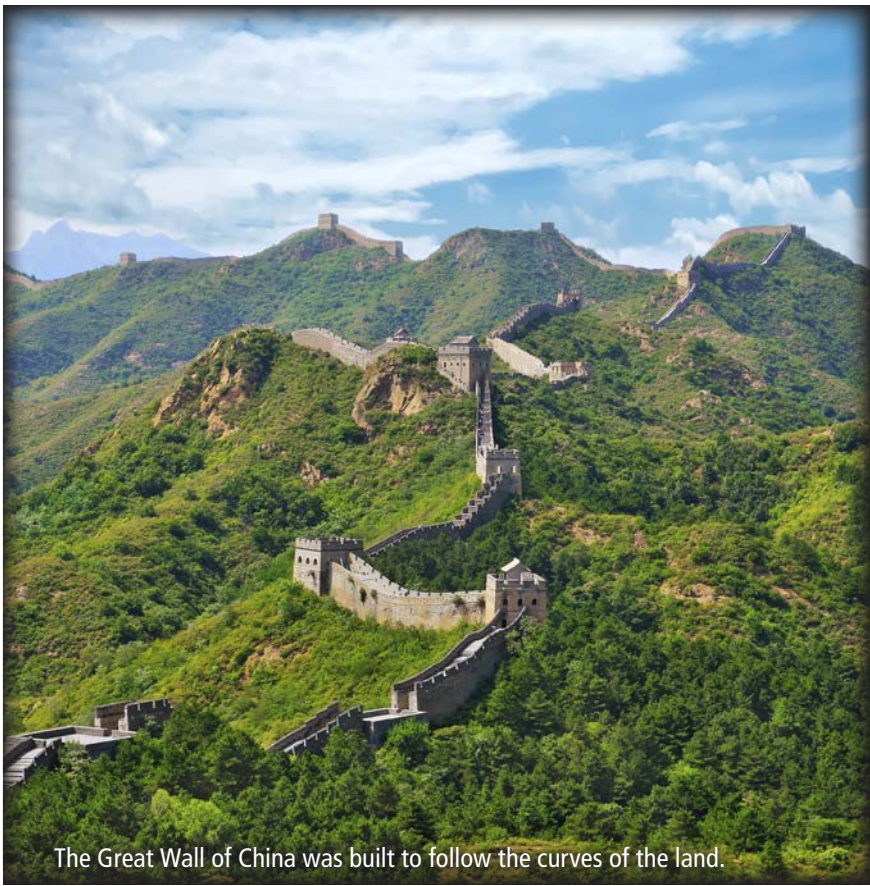
Focus Question

What makes the Great Wall of China so impressive?



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The Great Wall of China was built to follow the curves of the land.

The Longest Wall

The longest wall in the world twists and turns across the **continent** of Asia. The Great Wall of China is one of the most amazing **landmarks** on our planet. It's also the biggest reason people visit China.

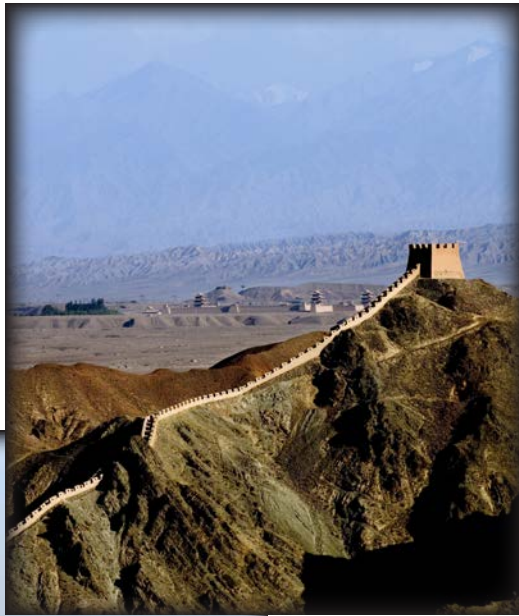
A Dragon Sleeps

People built the walls that make up the Great Wall along China's northern **border**. They wanted to keep out enemies and **protect** China.

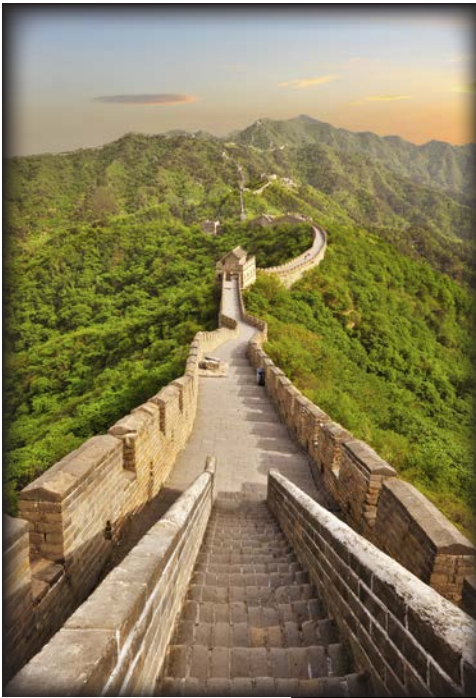
Many people in China think of land as a living thing. They say the Great Wall is like a sleeping dragon. The wall is curved instead of straight to flow in **harmony** with the land.



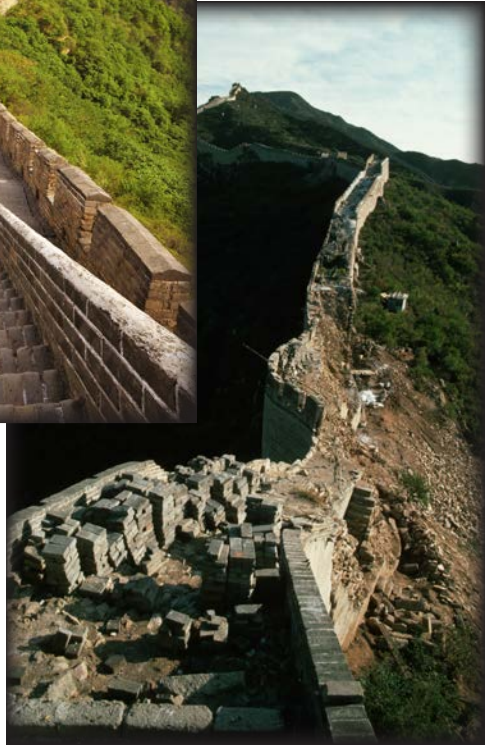
From mountain sections in the west (top), the wall makes its way across China. In the east, the wall ends in the Yellow Sea (bottom).



The tail of the dragon is in a desert. The head is next to a sea. The dragon's body passes through many different types of land, including deserts, mountains, farmland, and beaches. Some parts are near Beijing (bay-ZHING), China's capital.



People are allowed to visit parts of the Great Wall that have been taken care of (top). Visitors are not allowed at some sections that are falling apart (bottom).



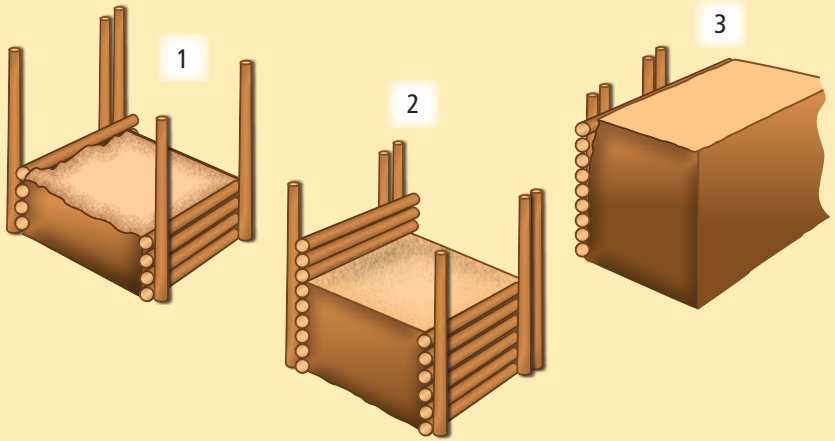
The Walls

Many different walls make up the Great Wall. Some sections have broken and been fixed. Other sections have fallen apart.

In China, the wall's name means the "Long Wall of Ten Thousand Li." A *li* (LEE) is about one-half of a kilometer or one-third of a mile. People used to think the wall was ten thousand li long, which is about 5,000 kilometers (3,100 mi.). Not long ago, scientists used new tools to measure the wall. They found out that the wall is more than four times that long when all the sections are added together!



From 2007 until 2009, the Chinese government held events like this one in Beijing. They celebrated that the wall was much longer than they thought.



1. Workers built a frame and pounded it full of earth. 2. They built the wall higher. 3. Workers removed the wooden frame.

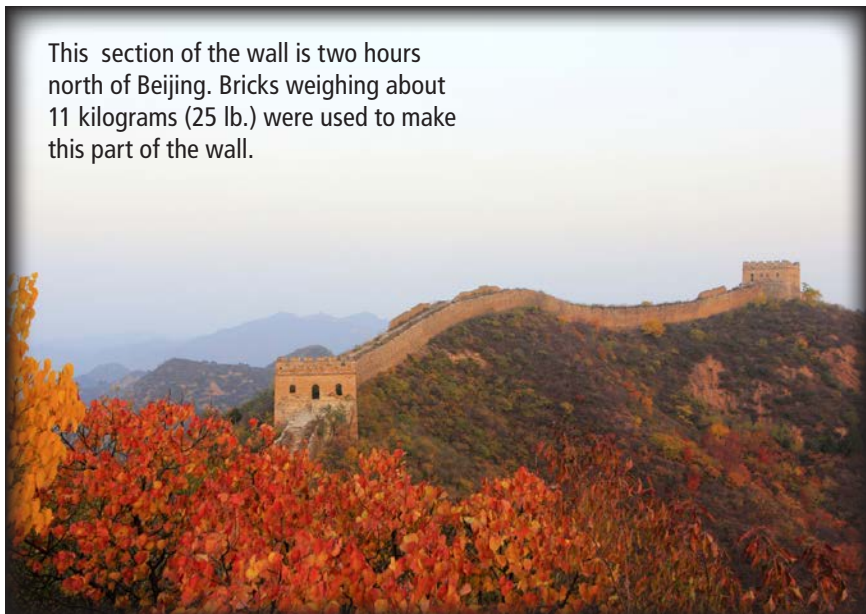
The Materials

Workers used many materials to make the Great Wall. They built early sections using a way of building called *hang-tu*. Workers set up a frame made of wood or bamboo. Next, they poured a layer of earth inside. Workers packed down the earth. Then, they added more layers and packed them down to form a tall wall.

Later on, builders covered dirt walls with bricks and stone. They formed the bricks in wooden molds. Then, they baked the bricks in ovens.

Builders used stone instead of bricks for parts of the wall that needed to be extra strong. Workers filled the spaces between the bricks and stones with **mortar**. The mortar was very strong because it was mixed with sticky rice!

This section of the wall is two hours north of Beijing. Bricks weighing about 11 kilograms (25 lb.) were used to make this part of the wall.





Early walls were mainly made of earth.

The Enemies

The Great Wall helped protect Chinese people from their enemies for many years. At first, the enemies were small groups of people who wandered from place to place. Later, walls protected different kingdoms from each other. After China became one country, the wall protected it from enemies to the north.

Building the Great Wall was fast at some times and slow at other times. When China was in control, Chinese rulers built up the wall. At other times, China was ruled by its enemies and building stopped. Sections of the wall fell apart. Later, when China took back control, workers fixed the wall and built new sections. They used bricks and stone to make the wall stronger.



The Badaling (BAH-dah-ling) section of the Great Wall is near Beijing, China's capital.

The Great Wall of China

The Simatai (SU-mah-tie) 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.

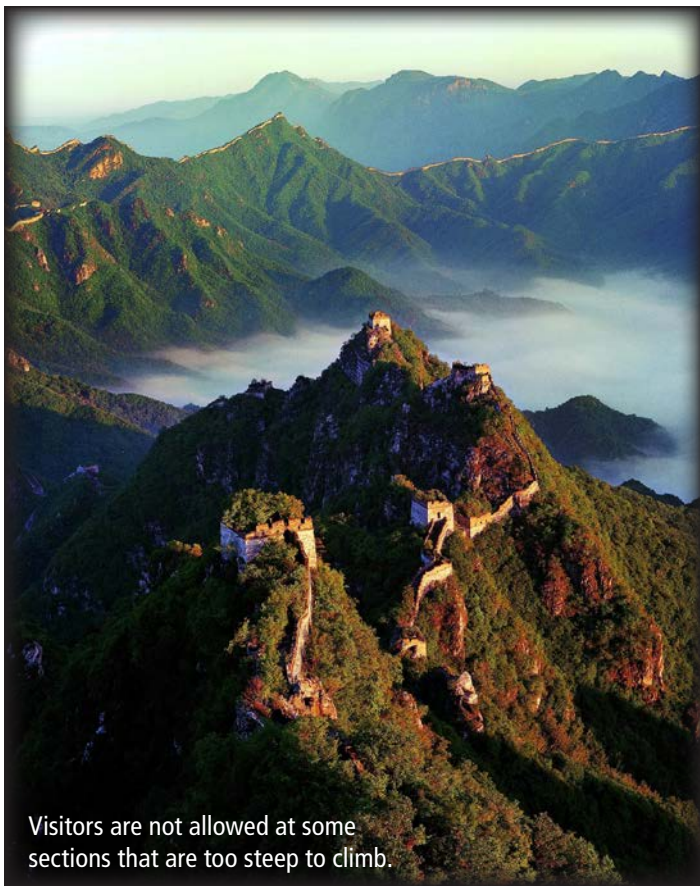
- Length: combined total length of all sections about 21,196 kilometers (13,170 mi.); the longest series of structures ever built
- Width: widest section about 9 meters (30 ft.); tallest part of wall is about 8 meters (26 ft.)
- Elevation: lowest point is at sea level; highest point is more than 500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

The Visitors

People come to see the Great Wall from all over the world. Most people visit the sections that are close to Beijing. If you go, be prepared to do a lot of walking and climbing. You'll also want to take many pictures. Be sure to bring a camera!



Visitors to the hilly sections of the wall need to be in good shape if they want to hike.



How Long Is It?

You can't see the Great Wall from the Moon, but it is still amazing. Imagine lining up all the sections in a row. The wall would stretch from the North Pole to the South Pole. That's a mighty long wall!

Glossary

- border** (*n.*) the line that divides one country or area from another (p. 5)
- continent** (*n.*) one of the main divisions of land on Earth, including Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America (p. 4)
- harmony** (*n.*) a combination or arrangement of parts that creates a pleasing effect (p. 5)
- landmarks** (*n.*) important historical buildings or sites; objects on land that mark a place (p. 4)
- mortar** (*n.*) a liquid mixture of materials that hardens as it dries and is used to hold bricks or stones together (p. 10)
- protect** (*v.*) to guard or defend from harm or danger (p. 5)

Words to Know

border

continent

harmony

landmarks

mortar

protect

Front cover: Parts of the Great Wall go across rough mountainous areas.

Title page: British artist Angus McBride made this painting to show what building the Great Wall might have looked like.

Page 3: The Great Wall was built long ago to protect Chinese people from outsiders.

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World Landmarks
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The Great Wall of China

A Reading A-Z Level M Leveled Book
Word Count: 557

Connections

Writing

Imagine you have just visited the Great Wall of China. Write an email to your teacher describing your experience and explaining what you learned during your trip.

Social Studies

The Great Wall is known as a sleeping dragon. Create a map of the Great Wall, making it look like a sleeping dragon. Include a compass rose and map key on your map.

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