

The Great Wall of China

Read the text. Then answer the questions on the next page.

- 1 The Great Wall of China winds across the mountains, grasslands, and deserts of northern China. It is one of the largest things that people have ever built. Over about two thousand years, the people of China built this giant wall to guard their land against invaders.
- 2 The Great Wall is not one wall but many walls built at different times. The earliest sections were raised more than 2,500 years ago. Later, emperors connected old walls and added new ones. Most of the wall that visitors see today was built by the Ming rulers, who governed China from 1368 to 1644. Measured together, all of the walls stretch more than 13,000 miles.
- 3 Builders used different materials in different places and times. On the dry plains, workers packed damp earth into wooden frames and pounded it until it was almost as hard as rock. In the mountains, they cut blocks of stone. Ming builders baked millions of bricks in ovens called kilns. They even mixed sticky rice into the mortar, the paste that holds bricks together. It made the mortar very strong.
- 4 The wall worked as a whole defense system, not just a barrier. Watchtowers rose along it, and soldiers kept watch from them. When guards spotted enemies, they signaled the next tower with smoke by day and fire by night. A warning could travel hundreds of miles in a few hours. The top of the wall was also a road. Soldiers could hurry along it to any spot under attack.
- 5 Building the wall was exhausting and dangerous work. Soldiers, farmers, and prisoners were all ordered to help. They hauled heavy stones and bricks up steep ridges, often by hand. They labored through freezing winters and scorching summers with little food. Many thousands of workers died before the wall was finished.



The Great Wall of China: Questions

Go back to the text to find your proof. Underline it in the color shown.

1. What is the topic of this text?

- ☐ the emperors of China
- ☐ the Great Wall of China
- ☐ how bricks are made

2. Which sentence tells the main idea of the whole text?

red

- ☐ Ming builders baked bricks in ovens called kilns.
- ☐ Northern China has mountains, grasslands, and deserts.
- ☐ Over about two thousand years, the people of China built this giant wall to guard their land against invaders.

3. What is the main idea of paragraph 4?

orange

- ☐ The wall worked as a whole defense system, not just a barrier.
- ☐ Smoke rises into the sky.
- ☐ Soldiers kept watch from the towers.

4. Write two details from paragraph 3 that tell more about its main idea.

yellow

5. What is paragraph 5 mostly about?

green

6. Which detail does NOT belong in this text?

- ☐ Guards signaled with smoke by day and fire by night.
- ☐ The Nile River flows north through Egypt.
- ☐ Ming builders mixed sticky rice into the mortar.

The Great Wall of China: Answer Key

Answers are in green. The proof is where to find each answer in the text.

1. What is the topic of this text?

- ☐ the emperors of China
- ☒ **the Great Wall of China**
- ☐ how bricks are made

Proof The topic is named in the title and comes up in every paragraph.

2. Which sentence tells the main idea of the whole text?

red 

- ☐ Ming builders baked bricks in ovens called kilns.
- ☐ Northern China has mountains, grasslands, and deserts.
- ☒ **Over about two thousand years, the people of China built this giant wall to guard their land against invaders.**

Proof Paragraph 1: "Over about two thousand years, the people of China built this giant wall to guard their land against invaders."

3. What is the main idea of paragraph 4?

orange 

- ☒ **The wall worked as a whole defense system, not just a barrier.**
- ☐ Smoke rises into the sky.
- ☐ Soldiers kept watch from the towers.

Proof Paragraph 4: "The wall worked as a whole defense system, not just a barrier."

4. Write two details from paragraph 3 that tell more about its main idea.

yellow 

On the plains, workers pounded damp earth until it was hard. Ming builders baked bricks in kilns and mixed sticky rice into the mortar.

5. What is paragraph 5 mostly about?

green 

How exhausting and dangerous it was to build the wall.

6. Which detail does NOT belong in this text?

- ☐ Guards signaled with smoke by day and fire by night.
- ☒ **The Nile River flows north through Egypt.**
- ☐ Ming builders mixed sticky rice into the mortar.

Proof It is not about the topic of the text.