

# China's Terracotta WARRIORS

THE FIRST EMPEROR'S LEGACY

OCTOBER 28, 2012–JANUARY 20, 2013

PRESENTED BY

J.P.Morgan

CHASE 

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This exhibition was organized by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts in partnership with the Asian Art Museum and the Shaanxi Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau and Shaanxi Cultural Heritage Promotion Centre, People's Republic of China.

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PRE- AND POST-VISIT LESSONS & PRESENTATIONS

**GRADES 9-12** >

China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy

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# China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy

## TEACHER LETTER



Dear Educator:

The MIA's Division of Learning and Innovation is pleased to share with you these teacher resources for the special exhibition "China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy."

**About the exhibition:** This traveling exhibition, on view at the MIA from October 28, 2012, to January 20, 2013, features over 120 rare objects—including eight life-size terracotta tomb warriors—from the extraordinary archaeological site in China's Shaanxi Province. Also included in the exhibition are bronze ritual objects, jade artifacts, gold and silver ornaments, and palatial architectural components that illustrate the emergence of the Qin State under the First Emperor.

**About the learning resource:** This guide is designed to accompany your classroom's visit to the exhibition. The interdisciplinary lessons for students in grades 9–12 relate to visual arts, social studies, and English language arts. Lessons, guiding questions, and activities contained in it encourage students to look closely at, analyze, and communicate about the featured objects and information. Collection Connection activities extend the materials' life beyond the close of "China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy."

This learning resource includes:

- Teacher briefing sheets, which provide background information to contextualize the exhibition.
- Presentations (PDF format, scrollable) designed to be projected.
- Classroom materials, easily printed and copied, that enable students to follow along with and actively engage in the presentation.
- High-quality images of objects in the exhibition, and from the archaeological site in China.
- Expectations for a tour at the MIA.

This resource connects you and your students to resources available on the MIA's Web site, [www.artsmia.org](http://www.artsmia.org), including the *Teaching the Arts* features and [www.artsconnected.org](http://www.artsconnected.org). These online resources offer tools and ideas to support your teaching and opportunities to share your ideas with other museum and classroom educators.

To schedule your classroom's tour of "China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy," visit [www.artsmia.org/tours](http://www.artsmia.org/tours) and complete the tour request form.

Last, but not least, thank you to Jason Kingman, MIA summer intern and secondary teacher in Minneapolis, for developing much of these materials to enhance your visit to this fabulous exhibition.

Sincerely,

Sheila McGuire  
Manager | Department of Learning Resources | Division of Learning & Innovation  
Minneapolis Institute of Arts

# China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy

PRE-VISIT LESSON (GRADES 9-12)



## WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Look closely at the photograph. What do you see? Describe these sculptures. Where do they appear to be? Write a short paragraph explaining your observations.

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Next, turn and talk to a partner. In what ways are your observations alike? Different? Did talking to your partner lead you to revise your own thoughts? If yes, in what way? If no, why not?

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Last, share your observations with the class.

## THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition \_\_\_\_\_ will be on display at the \_\_\_\_\_ from October 28, 2012, to January 20, 2013.



## VOCABULARY

Archaeology:

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Artifact:

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Emperor:

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Exhibition:

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Terracotta:

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## HISTORY

- What is the First Emperor's name? How is his name pronounced?
- At what age did he become king of the small state of Qin?
- Which empire did he unify from smaller warring states?
- The name of this empire is thought to be the origin of what English word?
- When did he rule?
- How long ago was that?

## GEOGRAPHY

- The Qin dynasty was located in eastern China, in the heart of which valley?
- Which province of China is this in?
- During Qin Shihuang's reign, where was the Qin capital? Locate it on the map. Also locate Xi'an (*shee-ahn*).
- Archaeological records show us that Xianyang was a majestic capital, covering more than 17.4 miles. How many square kilometers is this?

## WHY IS THE FIRST EMPEROR IMPORTANT?

- Qin Shihuang's \_\_\_\_\_ created a unified China, with the increased power of a central government, for the first time in history.
- In the capital \_\_\_\_\_ he built more than 270 palaces, the likes of which had not been seen before in China.
- The First Emperor \_\_\_\_\_ systems of law, weights and measurements, writing, and currency.
- He connected walls, built by previous rulers, to form the \_\_\_\_\_ as a barrier to enemies.
- He directed the construction of his own \_\_\_\_\_ complex, now known as one of the greatest Chinese archaeological discoveries.

## DISCOVERY

- When did local farmers discover the first of three pits near the First Emperor's tomb? How did they discover it?
- What did the farmers find that caused them to alert Chinese authorities?
- What did Chinese archaeologists quickly begin doing to the burial complex?
- For how long have they continued this activity?

## CONTENTS OF THE BURIAL COMPLEX

- Since 1974, approximately how many terracotta warriors, horses, and chariots have archaeologists discovered?
- What kinds of bronze objects have been found *in situ*, or in their original place, in the burial complex?

**HOW DO WE LOOK AT ART?**

Look closely at the three images and observe the elements and principles of visual art:

**HOW DO WE LOOK AT ART?**

What are the elements of visual art you will discuss while looking at the next three images?

What principles of visual art will you discuss?

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**EXAMPLE 1: GENERAL**

Describe the colors you see in this sculpture in as much detail as possible.

Describe the types of lines you see. What do you consider the primary function of line in this sculpture? Descriptive? Expressive?

Where do you see shapes and lines repeated to create patterns?

Describe the textures you see in as much detail as possible.

Do you think this sculpture looks balanced? Why or why not?

**EXAMPLE 2: CRANE**

What colors do you see in this bronze sculpture? Be as specific as possible.

Describe the lines you see. Do you consider the use of line more descriptive or expressive? Why?

How does the artist balance positive and negative space?

Which elements and principles do you consider most important in this sculpture? Why?



### **EXAMPLE 3: CAULDRON**

What types of lines do you see in this vessel? What do you consider the primary function of line here?

What do you think the texture of this vessel might feel like? Why? How might the texture enhance the experience of holding this cauldron?

Where do you observe negative space in this vessel?

Describe the patterns you see on different parts of the cauldron.

### **HOW DO WE ANALYZE ART?**

By combining our observations of visual art elements and principles with the history of the object, we create an analysis.

### **HOW DO WE CRITIQUE ART?**

By introducing our personal opinions into an art analysis, we create a critique.

### **ANALYZE AND CRITIQUE**

Read each art analysis (see end of the worksheet) closely.

For each, record two examples of visual art elements or principles, and historical, social, or cultural context.

Record two personal opinions regarding each work of art.

### **ANALYSIS EXAMPLE 1: GENERAL**

Record two examples of visual art elements or principles in this analysis:

Record two examples of historical, social, or cultural context in this analysis:

Record two of your personal opinions regarding this work of art:

### **ANALYSIS EXAMPLE 2: CRANE**

Record two examples of visual art elements or principles in this analysis:

Record two examples of historical, social, or cultural context in this analysis:

Record two of your personal opinions regarding this work of art:

### **ANALYSIS EXAMPLE 3: CAULDRON**

Record two examples of visual art elements or principles in this analysis:

Record two examples of historical, social, or cultural context in this analysis:

Record two of your personal opinions regarding this work of art:

## **DISCUSSION**

When the First Emperor began the rule of united China, he made many changes and created many new laws for his subjects. Some historians believe his new laws were harsh, while others contend his laws set the foundation for China as a world power. What do you think?

Consider these acts of the First Emperor:

- Standardized money across the empire
- Standardized weights and measurements across the empire
- Burned all history books
- Built a national road system
- Connected walls to make the Great Wall of China
- Buried people alive who didn't agree with him
- Ordered about 700,000 people to build his tomb complex

## **TIMELINE PROJECT**

- As a class, we will create a timeline of important events before, during, and after the rule of the First Emperor in China.
- This timeline could be made on large paper or as an interactive media file.
- Each student should find and record as many important dates as possible while viewing the exhibition at the MIA. Bring these results back to the classroom to share and synthesize.



Armored General, Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE), Terracotta, Excavated from Pit 1, Qin Shihuang tomb complex, 1980, Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum 000847. The image is produced with kind permission from the Qin Shihuang's Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum, ©Photograph by Xia Juxian and Guo Yan.

### ANALYSIS EXAMPLE 1: GENERAL

Most impressive of all the terracotta warriors, the general is distinguished by his size, headdress, and armor—which extends down his front and ends below his waist in a triangular form. His ribbons, assumed to be emblems of rank, are tied in bows on his upper front. His headgear in real life would be a cap adorned with the tailfeathers of a bird known as *he* (making the cap a *heguan*). Feathers of the *he* were chosen because of the bird's brave nature; he were known to fight to the death. Representations of warriors wearing such costumes can be seen in other art mediums, in addition to the terracotta figures of the Qin dynasty.

The general also wears long trousers and square-toed shoes. His hands are posed as if resting on a sword. He assumes an imposing stance, while his expression of intense concentration, along with his carefully groomed moustache and sideburns, convey an aura of impassive authority, solemnity, and dignity.

To date, nine figures of generals have been excavated from the pits, two of which are without armor. They were positioned standing to the left side of a chariot, upon which bronze bells and drums were often installed to function as the command signals.



Crane, Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE), Bronze, Excavated from Pit K0007 in Qin Shihuang tomb complex, 2002, Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum 005970. The image is produced with kind permission from the Qin Shihuang's Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum, ©Photograph by Xia Juxian and Guo Yan.

### ANALYSIS EXAMPLE 2: CRANE

This bronze crane is shown walking with its long, graceful neck bent downward. One can easily imagine this bird searching through the reeds at the edge of a pond, its sharp beak pointed at a fish or an insect. This crane was discovered in the First Emperor's burial complex in 2001, along with an underground "city" possibly built to house the emperor in his afterlife.

This life-size crane, along with many other assorted bronze birds, was found positioned along a constructed riverbank in this "city." Like the warrior figures, the birds were painted in detail to appear lifelike; however, little paint remains on this sculpture. Some experts believe that the crane's location may represent a scene of musicians training birds to entertain the First Emperor in his afterlife.



*Ding* Cauldron, Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BCE), Bronze, excavated at Bianjiazhuang in Longxian, Shaanxi, 1981, Longxian Museum 81L619. The image is produced with kind permission from the Shaanxi Cultural Heritage Promotion Centre.

### ANALYSIS EXAMPLE 3: CAULDRON

This food cauldron, or pot, is dated to the Spring and Autumn period (770-476 BCE), several hundred years before the First Emperor and the Qin dynasty existed. This cauldron, known as a *ding*, was the most important ritual vessel among all other types in China at the time. This vessel was used to cook meat during a ceremony devoted to the ancestral spirits.

Vertical handles on the top edge allowed the vessel to be handled over a fire. In this example, the interlacing pattern on the side is cast against a background of lines, a very complicated design. Compared to other vessels, the Qin-style *ding* of this period has a shallower belly; the legs have become so thick and strong that the upper section linking it to the belly swells out like a lump.

# China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy

## POST-VISIT LESSON (GRADES 9-12)



### VOCABULARY CONNECTIONS

Review the vocabulary from the pre-visit lesson.

- What is an example of **archaeology** in the exhibition?
- What is an example of an **artifact** in the exhibition?
- Who was the emperor the **exhibition** was focused on?
- What is **terracotta**?

### WRITE A REVIEW!

Write a one-paragraph review of the "China's Terracotta Warriors" exhibition. Consider:

- What did the exhibition look like? What objects were in it?
- How did the objects relate to Chinese history?
- What is your opinion of the exhibition?
- Would you want to take your family to the exhibition? If yes, why? If no, why not?

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## **TIMELINE PROJECT**

- Gather your collection of dates that you recorded from the exhibition.
- Construct the timeline of ancient Chinese history in your chosen format:
  - Electronic
  - Large, on the wall, paper
  - Individual/partner
- Consult [www.metmuseum.org/toah](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah) for an example of an electronic timeline.

## **FINAL PROJECT OPTIONS: CIRCLE THE OPTION THAT YOU CHOOSE.**

**Option 1:** Chinese writing is different from English writing. Research Chinese characters. What does Chinese writing look like today? How is it different from ancient Chinese writing? Where can you see Chinese characters in the United States today? Research this option and write an essay (aim for 3–5 paragraphs) responding to these questions.

**Option 2:** The First Emperor had expert architects to design his palaces. Design an emperor's palace of your own and draw how it would look. Include written descriptions of, or present verbally, the rationale behind your design choices.

**Option 3:** Choose your favorite object from the exhibition. Write an essay or create a presentation that analyzes this object. Consider the pre-visit materials about the analysis of objects: elements of art, principles of art, historical context, and personal opinions. Review the examples of an analysis in the pre-visit materials to guide your project.

**Option 4:** The First Emperor undertook many projects to show how powerful he was to his people. What other rulers in history have done the same thing? Consider both contemporary and historical leaders. What are some of the methods rulers use to show their power? Public displays of influence surround us today, which we call advertising. Design an advertising campaign for the First Emperor, as if he were leading China today.

# China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy

## ART COLLECTION CONNECTIONS AT THE MIA (GRADES 9–12)



Make connections to the MIA's collection while you are at the museum. Or visit [artsmia.org](http://artsmia.org) and [artsconnected.org](http://artsconnected.org) to explore the collection later.

### COLLECTION CONNECTIONS 1

**Art Honors Past Art:** Chinese art is known to reference and build off of previous artistic achievements. Find several examples of earlier Chinese works of art (before 225 BCE) that have influenced the terracotta warriors you saw in the exhibition.

Find several examples of later Chinese art (after 200 BCE) that were influenced by the terracotta warriors and the art of the Qin dynasty.

Consider the way the objects look, the way they were made, and where they were used and/or found to start.

### COLLECTION CONNECTIONS 2

**Tombs: Power, Prestige & Protection:** Throughout Chinese history, tombs (and their contents) have symbolized an individual's power and social status attained during his or her lifetime. However, tombs are also the site in which the deceased ensures his or her power and social status is protected for eternity.

Find several examples of objects in the museum—both from China and other cultures—that were placed in tombs to either show power or status of the deceased. Also consider objects that were placed in tombs to protect the deceased in the afterlife. Start in the Asian galleries, and make sure to visit the Americas and Ancient Greece and Rome galleries as well.

### COLLECTION CONNECTIONS 3

**Mighty Militaries:** The military that the First Emperor built for himself—both real and underground—was large in size and scope. Explore the Asian galleries to find other objects related to military power. What kinds of weapons are displayed as art in the gallery? How many representations of militaries can you find in Asian paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts?

#### **COLLECTION CONNECTIONS 4**

Explore *The Art of Asia*, an online resource for teachers and students at <http://www.artsmia.org/art-of-asia/>.

#### **COLLECTION CONNECTIONS 5**

Explore the new Teaching the Arts feature on the Chinese *Money Tree* at [www.artsmia.org/education/teacher-resources](http://www.artsmia.org/education/teacher-resources). Search over 70 additional Teaching the Arts features to make even more connections!

# China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy

## RESOURCES *for* TEACHERS



### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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### CHINA BEFORE THE FIRST EMPEROR: XIA DYNASTY TO WARRING STATES PERIOD

The Bronze Age in China began around 2000 BCE with the Xia Dynasty. At this time Chinese civilization was centered around the river valleys of the Huang He (Yellow River) and the Wei He (Wei River). The Xia was followed by the Shang Dynasty (c. 1600–c. 1046 BCE) with its capitals in modern Henan Province in north-central China. It is from the Shang that we have our first evidence of Chinese script on ox bones used for divination (oracle bones). The Shang were defeated by the Zhou in 1046 BCE and in name, at least, the Zhou continued to rule China until almost the time of Qin Shihuang (221–206 BCE). During the period known as the Western Zhou (1046–771 BCE) the ruling family of the Zhou maintained control of the whole territory and introduced the concept of the Mandate of Heaven, through which one king ruled by divine authority (see also *Why is he called the First Emperor?*). The period known as the Eastern Zhou (770–256 BCE) was marked by the steady decline in power of the Zhou ruler, and the rise in power of individual lords of different states. The first period of the Eastern Zhou is known as the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BCE) and the second as the Warring States Period (475–221 BCE).

As the name suggests, the Warring States Period was marked by the continuing struggle for territory between the various states that had grown in power during the Spring and Autumn Period. By the beginning of the 3rd century BCE there were seven of these individual states with their leaders now calling themselves *wang* (king) rather than *gong* (duke). One of these states was the Qin. However, the Warring States Period was not just a time of warfare; it was also a time of great cultural and artistic development. The schools of thought we know as Confucianism and Daoism all took formal shape during this period, and many of the early classics of Chinese writing were compiled as well. Art also flourished, drawing both on earlier Chinese traditions and receiving new life and ideas from increasing contact with the nomadic peoples of the steppes to the north.

By the time the young Ying Zheng, who was to become Qin Shihuang, the First Emperor, ascended the throne of the State of Qin in 246 BCE, those before him had laid the groundwork for his unification of China. As well as developing a highly organized, mobile and powerful army, they had also put in place social and political systems that gave Ying Zheng the power and control to challenge and defeat the other six of the Warring States.

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## WHY IS HE CALLED THE FIRST EMPEROR?

The rulers of the Shang and Zhou Dynasties controlled large territories, and those of the Zhou in particular believed they ruled by divine right—known as the Mandate of Heaven.

However, they still saw themselves only as earthly monarchs. Qin Shihuang saw himself differently. He believed he was from the same lineage as the divine Sage Kings of China's mythical past. He wished both to live forever and to go on ruling into eternity. So he invented a new title for himself: *Shi Huang Di*. Shi means "first" or "commencing"; Huang, meaning "august," was the name of the first three mythical kings; and Di, "divine ruler," was the title of the five Sage Kings that followed. So, although we now simply translate Huangdi as "Emperor" its true significance is much greater than that one word can convey.

From the Early Bronze Age onwards (c. 2000 BCE) Chinese history is recorded in terms of dynasties. A dynasty was a succession of rulers who all came from the same family or were associated with that family. Once Qin Shihuang had created the concept "Emperor," all future rulers of China took that title for themselves. The principal dynasties from his time up to the beginning of the 20th century were Han, Sui, Tang, Song, Liao, Jin, Yuan, Ming, and Qing.

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## ENTERTAINMENT IN THE COURT OF THE FIRST EMPEROR

The First Emperor knew that if he failed in his search for the secret of eternal life, he would still rule in the parallel world of the after-life. So within the inner and outer walls of his tomb complex, the First Emperor made sure he would have a palace complex every bit as grand and luxurious as the ones he had in life.

In pits close to the tomb mound, archaeologists have discovered numerous pottery figures of courtiers, officials, musicians and acrobats. In contrast to the stiff, military poses of the terracotta warriors, the figures of the entertainers are full of life, caught in mid-performance. A heavily-muscled, pot-bellied strongman was found in a pit that also contained a massive bronze ritual vessel, which it seems likely he was about to lift; an acrobat stands poised, hand raised, balancing an unknown object on the tip of one finger. It is a scene you could see today at the Shanghai Circus.

In another extraordinary find, a group of terracotta musicians is shown in the act of playing various instruments with expressions of concentration on their faces. In front of them are life-size bronze models of water-birds—geese, swans and cranes—suggesting an open-air concert on the banks of an ornamental pond with, it is believed, some of the birds trained to dance in time with the music. Archaeologists have also excavated individual skeletons of wild birds and animals, each in its own coffin, which must be the prized creatures of the imperial zoo or hunting park.

Elsewhere, outside the outer wall of the tomb complex, the imperial stables have been excavated in which real horses were buried with beautifully modeled terracotta figures of kneeling grooms next to them. They are there ready to take the Emperor out hunting or to war as occasion demanded.

As excavations continue, a clearer picture of life in the court of the First Emperor builds, but already we can begin to imagine its luxury and magnificence.

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## HISTORICAL RECORDS

Archaeology is telling us more and more about Qin Shihuang and his empire, but for a long time there was only one main source of information about him. That was a book called the *Shiji*, also known as the Records of the Grand Historian of China. It was written by Sima Qian between 109 and 91 BCE, 100 years after the death of the First Emperor. He was a palace official at the court of the Han Emperor Wudi; the Han dynasty followed Qin Shihuang.

Sima Qian's aim was to write a complete history of China from the time of the mythical Yellow Emperor to his own time. Six years into the writing of the *Shiji*, Sima Qian fell out of favor with the Emperor and was thrown into prison. He was sentenced to death, but chose to be castrated instead so that he could stay alive to complete his work. From this we can see that his dedication to his work cannot be questioned, but we have to be more careful about accepting his accuracy, especially in his accounts of the empire under Qin Shihuang. We know that he had access to the imperial records of the Qin, so much of his information comes from the best of sources. However, Sima Qian had several agenda. Primarily he was writing in and for the Han dynasty, whose emperors wanted to emphasize their right to rule by damaging the reputation of their predecessor, the First Emperor. It is also likely that some of the criticisms of Qin Shihuang are secretly directed at the Han and Emperor Wudi.

It is possible that some of the most terrible stories about Qin Shihuang are later additions to the *Shiji*, but even so Sima Qian does not paint a kind picture of him and emphasizes many of his worst aspects. In time, other evidence may show some of this to be unfair. One other thing that remains to be tested is Sima Qian's staggering account of the contents of Qin Shihuang's tomb mound (see *The Tomb Mound of the First Emperor*).

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## THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF QIN SHIHUANG

Attitudes to Qin Shihuang have changed throughout history, and periodically he has been known as a cruel and ruthless tyrant who may have united China for the first time but only at a terrible cost. It is seen that his obsessive quest for immortality came to nothing, and instead of ruling for 10,000 generations, his dynasty lasted only 15 years. Much of this, however, comes from the version of one historian writing for a dynasty that wished to discredit Qin Shihuang (see *Historical Records*).

If we step back and look at what we now know about the First Emperor from the records of the time and from new archaeological finds, his achievements in such a short space of time were remarkable and extraordinarily long-lasting. In unifying China he brought to an end centuries of war between the rival states, and there is only evidence of him treating one of these states harshly after conquest. In establishing a central government to control the new empire, he abolished the inheritance of titles and offices which had led to much corruption, and instead created a strict hierarchy based on merit and achievement. In standardizing all the coinage, weights, and measures to be used across the empire, he ensured fairness and uniformity in trade and commerce.

It is not possible for us now to say how much of this was done from a sense of justice and how much simply stemmed from the need to control. The system of laws and punishments the First Emperor introduced were certainly strict and severe, but they were also wide-ranging and universally applied. We have detailed knowledge of them from the records on 1,100 bamboo strips discovered in the tomb of a local magistrate dating to 217 BCE. The strict

penal code ensured that the Emperor had a ready supply of convict labor for his great projects, such as the Great Wall (see *The Great Wall*), the road and canal systems, his palaces and, of course, his tomb. Every able-bodied male was also liable to conscription into the army for a year or more and after that to an annual period of labor in the Emperor's service. He also continued an established practice of the Qin before conquest in which every household was registered and members of communities were placed into "responsibility groups" obliged to inform the authorities if anyone failed in their duty or broke a law.

However he was viewed, every dynasty that succeeded Qin Shihuang, including the Han, which criticized him so severely, continued to use and benefit from the principles of government he laid down. In particular the absolute right of command he established has continued to be seen as the norm right up to modern times.

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### **THE DISCOVERY OF THE TERRACOTTA ARMY**

The tomb site of the First Emperor not far from the present-day city of Xi'an in Shaanxi Province had been known for more than 2,000 years, but it was not until a chance discovery in 1974 that the wonders of the Terracotta Army began to come to light.

In March of that year, a group of men from a nearby village were looking for a new place to sink a well. They decided to try a spot about 1.5 kilometers (.93 miles) east of the First Emperor's tomb mound. They had been digging for some hours when one of them, Yang Xinman, hit something hard. Thinking it was just a rock, he called for his friends to help move it. What, in fact, his spade had struck was a mass consisting of the head and torso of one of the generals of Qin Shihuang's spirit army. The men reported their find to local officials, and the site that was to have been a simple well became one of the most important and complex archaeological excavations of all time.

As work has progressed over the years, four main Terracotta Army pits have come to light: three with figures in them and one empty, suggesting the complex was not completed before the Emperor's death. It is estimated that the pits contain up to 8,000 figures, though the exact total may never be known.

If you visit the Terracotta Army yourself, you might get a chance to meet one of the three men who made the discovery, as they are sometimes there signing copies of the official guidebook!

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### **THE GREAT WALL**

The Great Wall of China that we are familiar with today dates from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). It was built largely using previously existing foundations, and the man credited with building the first Great Wall is Qin Shihuang. In fact the history of the wall goes back even further. During the Eastern Zhou period (770–221 BCE) a number of states built defensive walls against either northern tribes or neighboring states. It was the First Emperor, however, who took these existing walls and linked them, adding a further 5,000 kilometers (3,106 miles), to create a single northern defensive system.

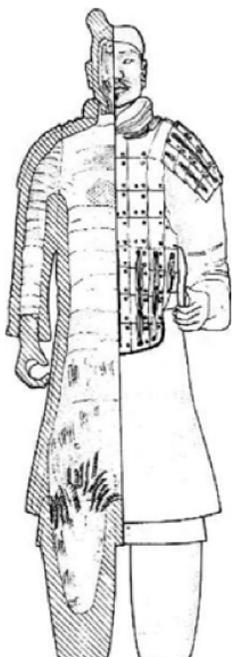
The Qin wall divides into an eastern, a central, and a western section, and together they run from the western end of the Yellow River into modern-day Korea. It was not made of brick like the later Ming dynasty wall, but of rammed earth and stone. It was built by hundreds of thousands of soldiers, convicts, enslaved people, and ordinary people, countless numbers of whom died in the process. It served not just as a defense for the empire, but also as a symbol of the First Emperor's power.

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## THE MAKING OF THE TERRACOTTA FIGURES

When Qin Shihuang gave orders for the construction of his underground army and all the attendant figures for his tomb complex, he was asking his officials to do something that had never been done before. They had no models from earlier times to work from, since wood and pottery figures that had been placed in tombs before were neither life-size nor modeled as realistically as required. In fact, at the time of the First Emperor, the modeling of figures of any kind was still at a very early stage of development.

Faced with this seemingly impossible task, they turned to what they knew best: strict and careful organization of the workforce and tried and tested technology and procedures from other areas of technology. They created what we might see these days as a huge manufacturing company, with managers, overseers, and workmen organized into factory complexes. The making of the figures was broken down into separate steps using, wherever possible, the 1,000-year-old technique of modeling from molds. For this they borrowed heavily from building technology in the making of tiles and pipes. The clay they used for their material seems mainly to have come from Lishan, the mountain at the foot of which stands the Emperor's tomb mound. It was probably prepared at a central processing plant and then sent out to the various workshops.



Line drawing showing internal structure of a standing terracotta warrior

The process of construction of a figure varies slightly according to its type, but also, it would seem, according to which workshop made it. They were built from the bottom to top with a heavily modeled solid base and feet to give the whole figure the necessary support; above the lower legs the figures are hollow. The lower body was jointed onto the legs, and the torso was built up with coiled clay, sometimes in one part, sometimes in two. The heads, arms and hands were modeled separately. It would seem that the hands were made flat in two-part molds and then bent into the desired position.

The heads were either made from two molds or just one mould for the face with the back of the head modeled by hand. Hairdos and caps or hats were made separately and then added to the figures. So far up to ten different basic face shapes have been identified, but varying combinations of facial features, such as beards, moustaches, and eyebrows, were carefully added to make each figure appear unique. All the other body parts, clothes, and armor were also hand-finished, and the whole figure brightly and realistically painted. The final effect is the startling appearance of a real army composed of distinct, individual soldiers.

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## THE TERRACOTTA ARMY PITS

The pits that were dug to hold the Terracotta Army cover an area of more than 2,500 square meters (26,910 square feet) and are situated about 1.5 kilometers (.93 miles) east of the Emperor's tomb mound itself. Four pits have been excavated, three containing figures and one empty.

They were all built along roughly the same lines. Taking Pit 1 as an example, it was sunk almost 5 meters (16.40 feet) into the ground and then reinforced to make it as long-lasting as possible. There are ramps along the sides to allow the workmen access. The ground and sides were strengthened with thick layers of rammed earth. Ten thick partitions of rammed earth were built running the length of the pit, dividing the space into eleven corridors in which the terracotta figures were placed. The floors of these corridors were paved with bricks, and the walls lined with wooden beams and posts. Large rounded wood beams, the impressions of which can still be seen, ran across the top of the corridors to support the roof at a height of about 3 meters (9.84 feet). The finished effect would have been that of a hallway in a palace. Reed mats were laid out on top of the roof beams, followed by layers of clay to form a water-proof protection. Any remaining gaps in the pit were filled with rammed earth, and then soil from the original excavation was piled on top to form a mound 2–3 meters (6.56–9.84 feet) high.

Pit 1, which is rectangular in shape, is the largest and housed the main army of armored and un-armored soldiers interspersed with four-horse carriages. The soldiers are arranged in formation with a rear-guard, and flanks with soldiers facing outward. This is the most fully-excavated pit. Pit 2 is the next largest and is L-shaped; it has only been partially excavated to allow the visitor to see what it was like at the time of discovery. It contains a large squadron of war chariots and armored cavalymen standing in front of their horses, and a group of archers and infantrymen. Pit 3 is smaller and U-shaped. It is the only pit that has been fully excavated and contains one chariot, centrally positioned, and 68 high-ranking officers and infantrymen. Archaeologists believe that it represents the command headquarters of the army. Pit 4 is large in size and situated between Pits 2 and 3, but completely empty. It is believed that work on the complex came to a halt during the uprisings that followed the death of the First Emperor and that Pit 4 was never completed

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## THE TOMB MOUND OF THE FIRST EMPEROR

Staggering as all the discoveries already made are, the greatest of all is still waiting for archaeologists to tackle it. Qin Shihuang's tomb mound itself has been completely untouched, it is believed, since he was placed under it in 210 BCE. We do however have a description of what might be there, thanks to the writings of Sima Qian, the Grand Historian of China (see *Historical Records*):

“As soon as the First Emperor became king of Qin, excavations and building had been started at Mount Li, while after he won the empire, more than 700,000 conscripts from all parts of the country worked there. They dug through three underground streams and poured molten copper for the outer coffin, and the tomb was filled with models of palaces, pavilions and offices as well as fine vessels, precious stones and rarities. Craftsmen were ordered to fix up crossbows so that any thief breaking in would be shot. All the country's streams, the Yellow River and the Yangtze were reproduced in mercury and by some mechanical means made to flow into a miniature ocean. The heavenly

constellations were above and the regions of the earth below. The candles were made of oil to ensure them burning for the longest possible time.”

Tests on the soil of the tomb mound have shown unusually high concentrations of mercury, which suggests some truth in this account. Modern archaeologists estimate that the Emperor’s burial chamber itself is at least 30 meters (98.43 feet) and perhaps as much as 40 meters (131.23 feet) below the original ground level. They also believe that above the burial chamber itself there were terraced buildings with galleries and towers intended for the Emperor to ascend from his underground palace to look out over his empire.

There are no plans at the moment to excavate the tomb mound and it is possible that it may never be opened. Instead, as technology advances, it may be possible to explore it by other means, and the First Emperor will continue to lie there undisturbed.

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## **WEAPONS AND ARMOR OF THE TERRACOTTA ARMY**

When you look at the figures in the exhibition and at photographs of the site itself, you will notice that none of the soldiers carry weapons. However some of their postures clearly indicate that originally they did. It is likely that many of the weapons were taken away when the pits were looted by warlords not long after the fall of the Qin. Nonetheless, up to 40,000 bronze weapons and, principally, arrowheads have been found in Pit 1. Many of the swords that have been found are still razor-sharp, protected by a coating of oxidized chrome indicating very sophisticated manufacturing techniques. Some also carry inscriptions giving dates of manufacture between 245 and 228 BCE, which means they were actual weapons that must have been used in warfare before they were buried with the Terracotta Army.

The most important weapon of the Qin army was the chariot, of which four types have been excavated. They were all originally made of wood with bronze fittings and had a door at the back for mounting and dismounting. The types differ in size and weight, and therefore in mobility and strategic use. Type 1 is the heavy command chariot used by middle- and lower-ranking officers, who would have had a driver and a charioteer armed with a dagger-axe on a shaft up to almost 4 meters (13.12 feet) long. Type 2 is lighter and the main war-chariot with a driver flanked by two charioteers similarly armed. Type 3 is a heavy reserve chariot, and Type 4 a smaller lighter ‘rapid response’ chariot equipped with a driver and only one armed charioteer. In battle the fighting chariots formed pairs at the head of a unit of infantry.

As mentioned above, the principal weapon of the charioteer was the *ge* or dagger-axe. This weapon already had a long history in Bronze Age Chinese warfare and was an L-shaped bronze blade mounted on a long shaft used for sweeping and hooking at the enemy. Infantrymen also carried *ge* on shorter shafts, *ji* or halberds, similar to the *ge* but with a spear tip extending from the top of the axe, and spears and lances. For close fighting and defense, both charioteers and infantrymen carried double-edged straight swords slightly under a meter in length. Swords were carried slung across the back rather than at the waist. The archers were equipped with crossbows with sophisticated trigger mechanisms capable of firing arrows over 800 meters (2624.67 feet).

It is not clear what weapons the cavalry carried since none have been found with them. The armor which you see on many of the warriors was made up of small panels of leather. However, ordinary infantrymen wore no armor at all. Officers wore armor of different length and design according to rank. The tiles that make up the armor of high-ranking officers were smaller and would have been richly decorated with ribbons, straps, and buttons. Charioteers wore long armor for extra protection, and cavalrymen shorter, lighter armor for maximum mobility. No helmets have been found in the pits, though it is known from other evidence that they were standard equipment. It is suggested that this is because the army is shown in readiness, waiting for orders, rather than in actual battle formation.



# **China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy**

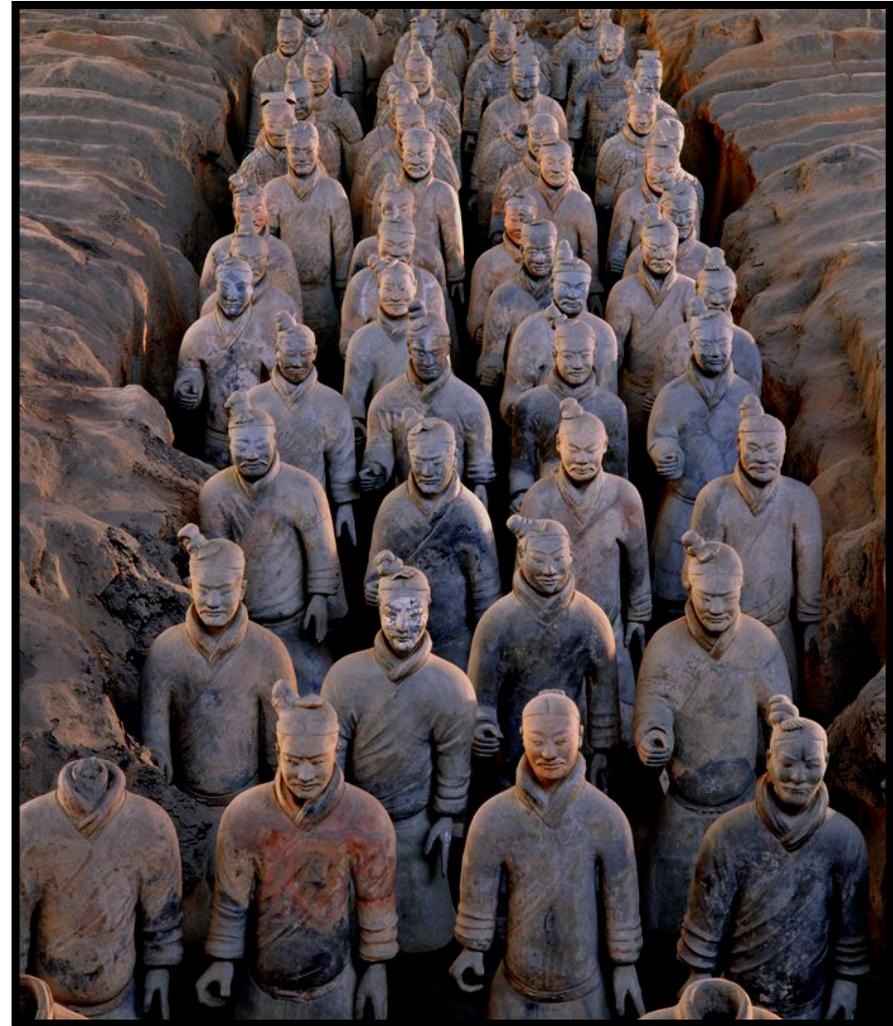
Pre-Visit Lesson (Grades 9-12)

Minneapolis Institute of Arts

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# What Do You See?

- Look closely at the photograph. What do you see? Describe these sculptures. Where do they appear to be? Write a short paragraph explaining your observations.
- Next, turn and talk to a partner. In what ways are your observations alike? Different? Did talking to your partner lead you to revise your own thoughts? If yes, in what way?
- Last, share your observations with the class.



Terracotta Warriors, Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE), View of Pit 1 showing the terracotta army lined up at attention facing east. The image is produced with kind permission from the Qin Shihuang's Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum, ©Photograph by Xia Juxian and Guo Yan.

# The Exhibition

- “China’s Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor’s Legacy” will be at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) from October 28, 2012, to January 20, 2013.
- This lesson introduces you to its history and previews some of the objects that you will see at the MIA.

# Vocabulary

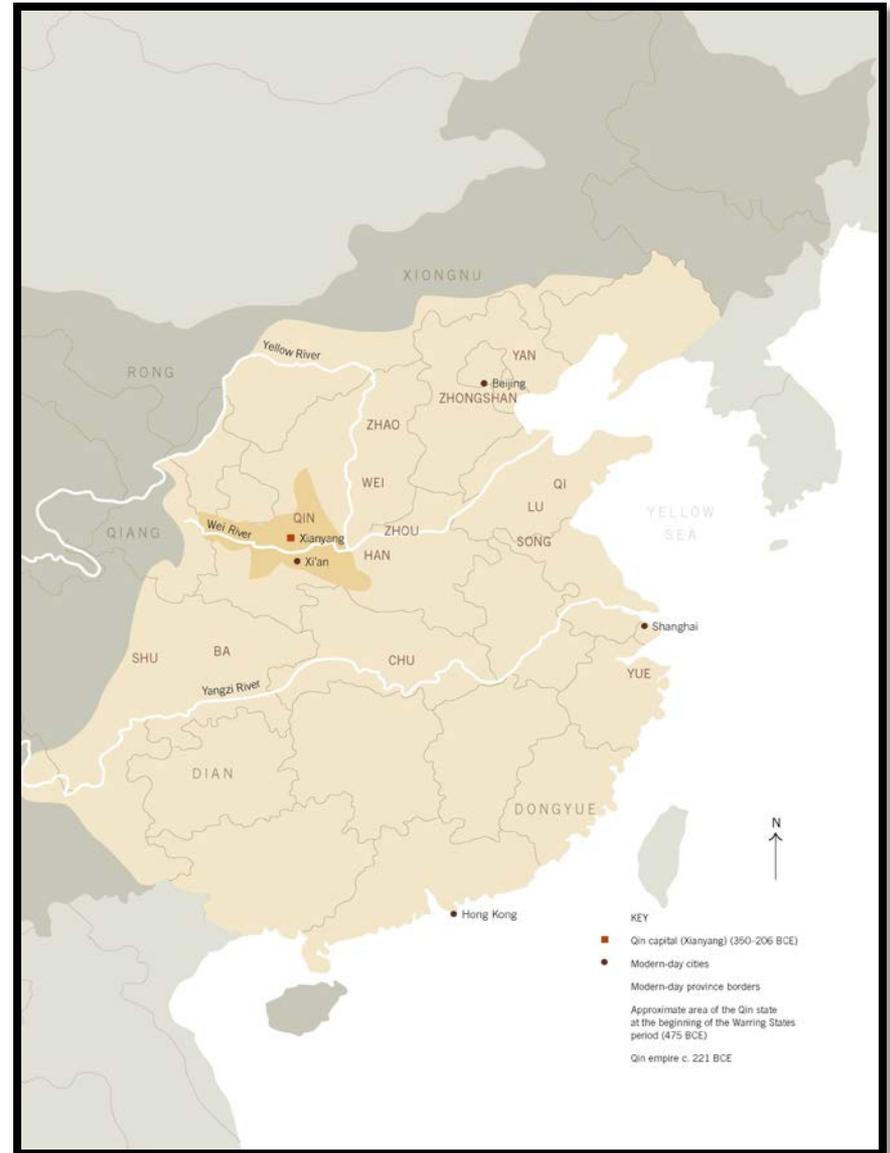
- **Archaeology:** the scientific study of historic or prehistoric peoples and their cultures by analysis of the objects that they left behind, especially those that have been excavated.
- **Artifact:** any object made or shaped by humans.
- **Emperor:** the ruler or leader of an empire.
- **Exhibition:** a display of art or artifacts often shown in a museum.
- **Terracotta:** a type of pottery made from clay that has an orange-brown color after it is baked. (This word comes from Italian, for baked “cotta” and earth “terra.”)

# History

- The First Emperor, Qin Shihuang (*chin shrr hwong*), is an important figure in Chinese history.
  - Qin Shihuang became king of the small state of Qin (chin) when he was only 13 years old!
  - Over the next 25 years he defeated many smaller states that were fighting one another and established the Qin Empire in 221 BCE.
    - “Qin” is thought to be the origin of the modern English word “China.”
  - He ruled as the First Emperor from 221-210 BCE
    - How long ago did he rule?
-

# Geography

- The Qin dynasty was located in eastern China, in the heart of the Yellow River Valley in Shaanxi (*shang-see*) province.
- During Qin Shihuang's reign, the Qin capital was Xianyang (*shee-ahn-yong*), near Xi'an (*shee-ahn*).
- Archaeological records show us that Xianyang was a majestic capital covering more than 45 square kilometers (17.4 miles).



# Why is the First Emperor Important?

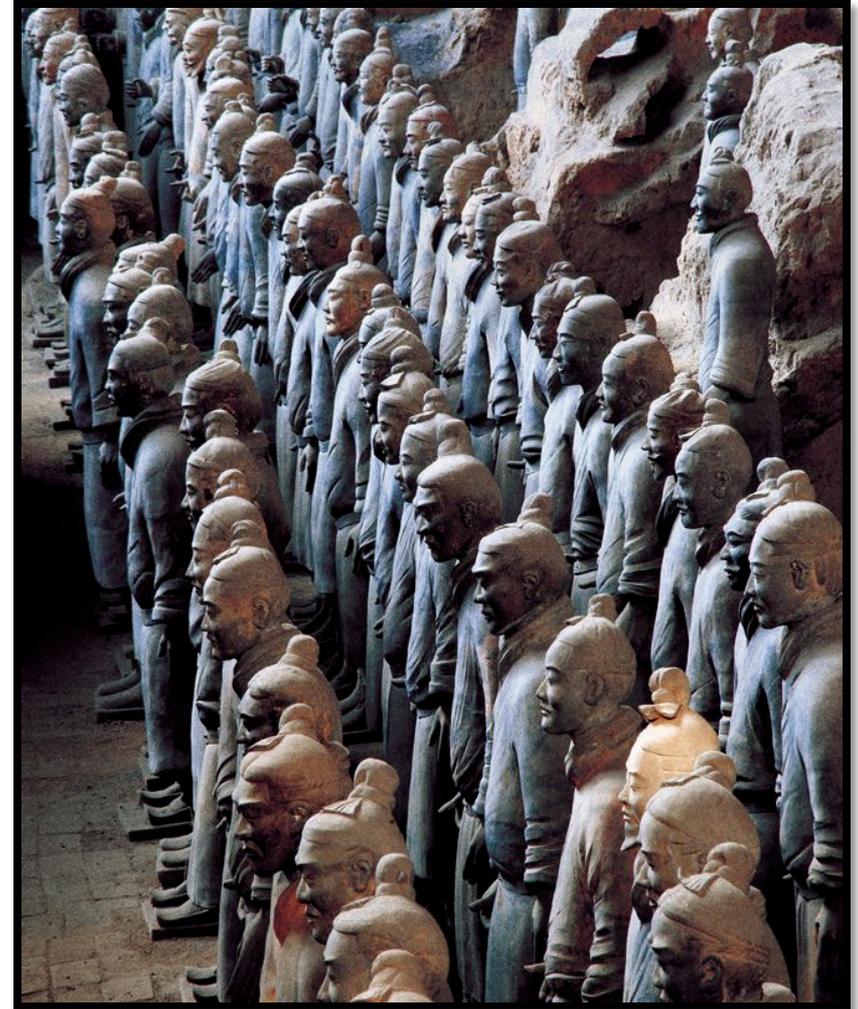
- Qin Shihuang's military expansion created a unified China, with the increased power of a central government, for the first time in history.
- In the capital, Xianyang, he built hundreds of palaces, the likes of which had not been seen before in China.
- The First Emperor standardized systems of law, weights and measurements, writing, and currency.



Armored Kneeling Archer, Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE), Terracotta, Excavated from Pit 2, Qin Shihuang tomb complex, 1977, Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum 005504. The image is produced with kind permission from the Qin Shihuang's Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum, ©Photograph by Xia Juxian and Guo Yan.

# Why is the First Emperor Important?

- He connected walls, built by previous rulers, to form the Great Wall of China as a barrier to enemies.
- He directed the construction of his own burial complex, now known as one of the greatest Chinese archaeological discoveries.

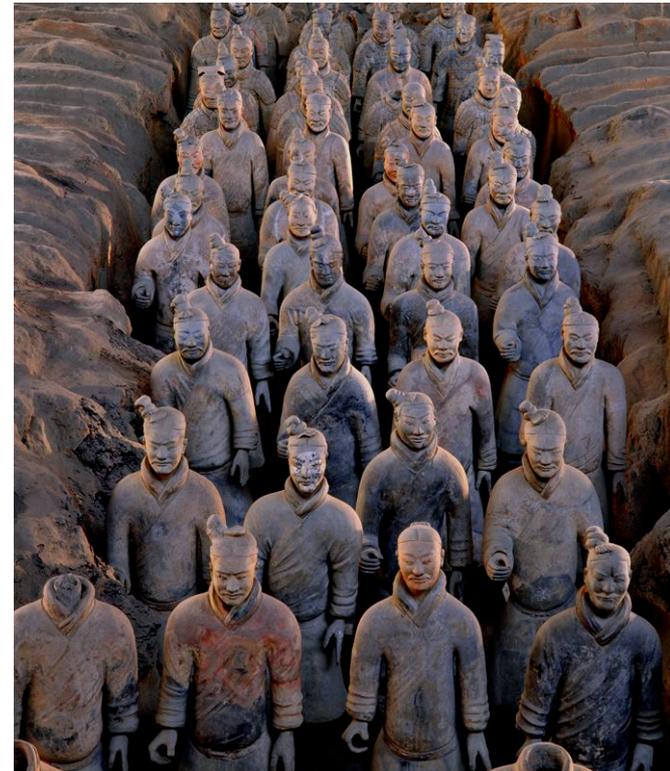


# Discovery

- Local farmers discovered the first of three pits near the First Emperor's tomb while digging a well in 1974.
- When the farmers found terracotta fragments, they alerted Chinese authorities.
- Chinese archaeologists quickly began excavating the burial complex, and excavations have continued ever since.

# Contents of the Burial Complex

- Since 1974, archaeologists have discovered over 7,000 terracotta warriors, horses, and chariots.
- Thousands of bronze weapons and other assorted bronze animals have been found *in situ*, or in their original place, in the burial complex.



Chariot Horse, Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE), Terracotta, Excavated from Pit 1, Qin Shihuang tomb complex, 1978, Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum 002545. The images are produced with kind permission from the Qin Shihuang's Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum, ©Photograph by Xia Juxian and Guo Yan.

# How Do We Look at Art?

- Look closely at the next three images and discuss the elements of visual art:
  - Color
  - Line
  - Shape
  - Value
  - Form
  - Texture
  - Space

# How Do We Look at Art?

- Look closely and discuss the principles of visual art:
  - Repetition
  - Pattern
  - Emphasis
  - Contrast
  - Balance

# Example 1: General

- Describe the colors you see in this sculpture in as much detail as possible.
- Describe the types of lines you see. What do you consider the primary function of line in this sculpture? Descriptive? Expressive?
- Where do you see shapes and lines repeated to create patterns?
- Describe the textures you see in as much detail as possible.
- Do you think this sculpture looks balanced? Why or why not?



# Example 2: Crane

- What colors do you see in this bronze sculpture? Be as specific as possible.
- Describe the lines you see. Do you consider the use of line more descriptive or expressive? Why?
- How does the artist balance positive and negative space?
- Which elements and principles do you consider most important in this sculpture? Why?



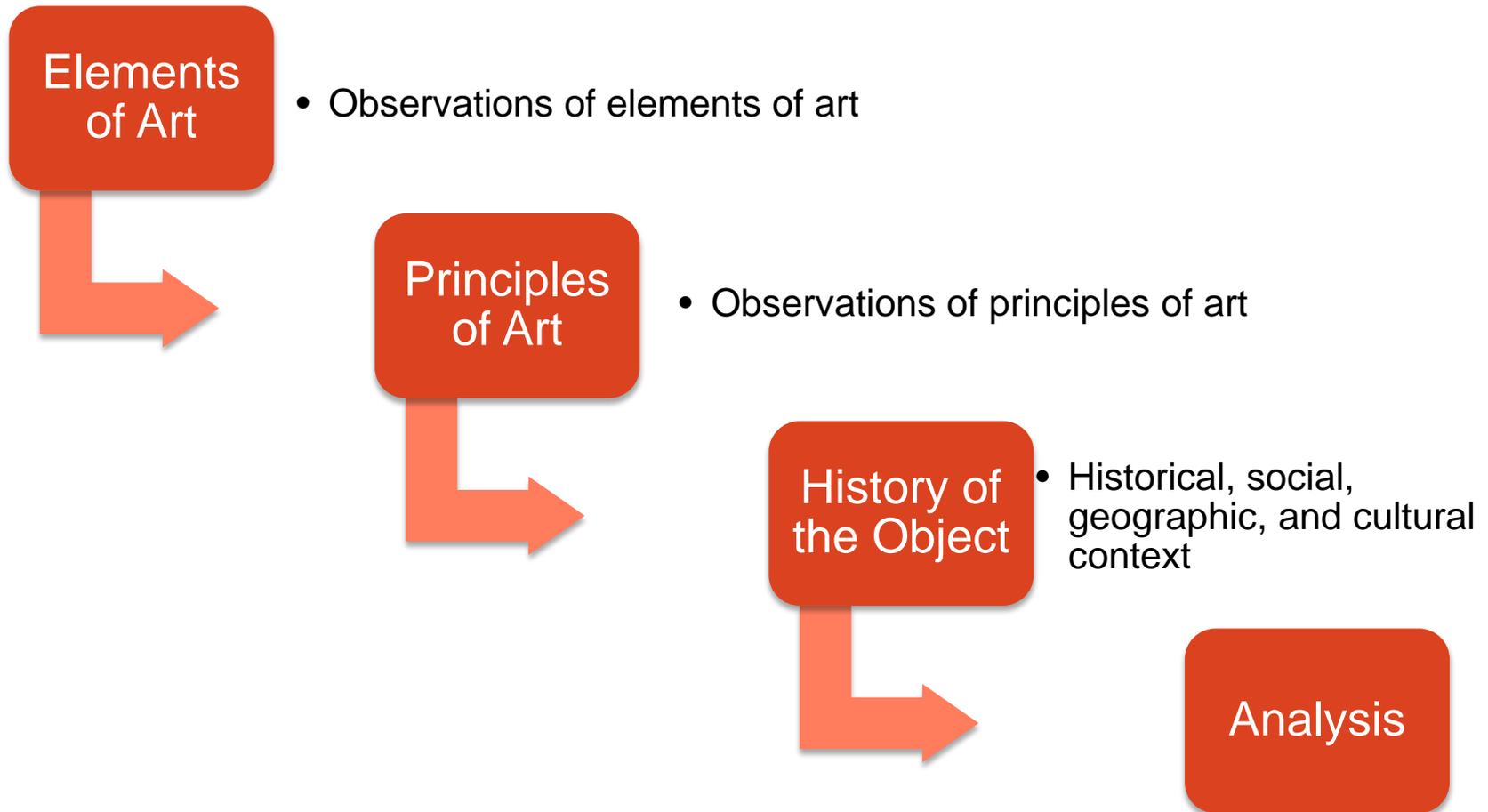
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- What types of lines do you see in this vessel? What do you consider the primary function of line here?
- What do you think the texture of this vessel might feel like? Why? How might the texture enhance the experience of holding this cauldron?
- Where do you observe negative space in this vessel?
- Describe the patterns you see on different parts of the cauldron.



# How Do We Analyze Art?

By combining our observations of visual art elements and principles with the history of the object, we create an analysis.



# How Do We Critique Art?

By introducing our personal opinions into an art analysis, we create a critique.



# Analyze and Critique

- Read each art analysis closely.
- For each, record two examples of art elements or principles, and historical, social, or cultural context.
- Record two personal opinions regarding each work of art.

# Example 1: General



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Armored General, Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE), Terracotta, Excavated from Pit 1, Qin Shihuang tomb complex, 1980, Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum 000847, The images is produced with kind permission from the Qin Shihuang's Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum, ©Photograph by Xia Juxian and Guo Yan.

# Example 2: Crane



Crane, Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE), Bronze, Excavated from Pit K0007 in Qin Shihuang tomb complex, 2002, Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum 005970. The image is produced with kind permission from the Qin Shihuang's Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum, ©Photograph by Xia Juxian and Guo Yan.

# Example 3: Cauldron



*Ding* Cauldron, Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BCE), Bronze, excavated at Bianjiazhuang in Longxian, Shaanxi, 1981, Longxian Museum 81L619. The image is produced with kind permission from the Shaanxi Cultural Heritage Promotion Centre.

# Discussion

- When the First Emperor began the rule of united China, he made many changes and created many new laws for his subjects. Some historians believe his new laws were harsh, while others contend his laws set the foundation for China as a world power. What do you think?
- Consider these acts of the First Emperor:
  - Standardized money across the empire
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# Timeline Project

- As a class, we will create a timeline of important events before, during, and after the rule of the First Emperor in China.
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# At the Museum

- Look at the art, discuss the art, but please do not *touch* the art!
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# **China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy**

Post-Visit Lesson (Grades 9-12)  
Minneapolis Institute of Arts

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# Vocabulary Connections

Review the vocabulary from the pre-visit lesson.

- What is an example of archaeology in the exhibition?
- What is an example of an artifact in the exhibition?
- Who was the emperor the exhibition focused on?
- What is terracotta?

# Write a Review

Write a one-paragraph review of the “China’s Terracotta Warriors” exhibition. Consider:

- What did the exhibition look like? What objects were in it?
- How did the objects relate to Chinese history?
- What is your opinion of the exhibition?
- Would you want to take your family to the exhibition? If yes, why? If no, why not?

# Timeline project

- Gather your collection of dates that you recorded from the exhibition.
- Construct the timeline of ancient Chinese history in the chosen format:
  - Electronic
  - Large, on the wall, paper
  - Individual/partner
- Consult [www.metmuseum.org/toah](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah) for an example of an electronic timeline.

# Final Project

## OPTION 1

Chinese writing is different from English writing. Research Chinese characters. What does Chinese writing look like today? How is it different from ancient Chinese writing? Where can you see Chinese characters in the United States today? Research Chinese writing and write an essay (aim for 3–5 paragraphs) responding to these questions.

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# Final Project

## OPTION 2

The First Emperor had expert architects to design his palaces. Design an emperor's palace of their own and draw how it would look. Include written or oral descriptions of the rationale behind your design choices.

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# Final Project

## OPTION 3

Choose your favorite object from the exhibition. Write an essay or create a presentation that analyzes this object. Consider the pre-visit materials about the analysis of objects: elements of art, principles of art, historical context, and personal opinions. Review the examples of an analysis in the pre-visit materials to guide your project.

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# Final Project

## OPTION 4

The First Emperor undertook many projects to show how powerful he was to his people. What other rulers in history have done the same thing? Consider both contemporary and historical leaders. What are some of the methods rulers use to show their power? Public displays of influence surround us today, which we call advertising. Design an advertising campaign for the First Emperor, as if he were leading China today.

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# **China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy**

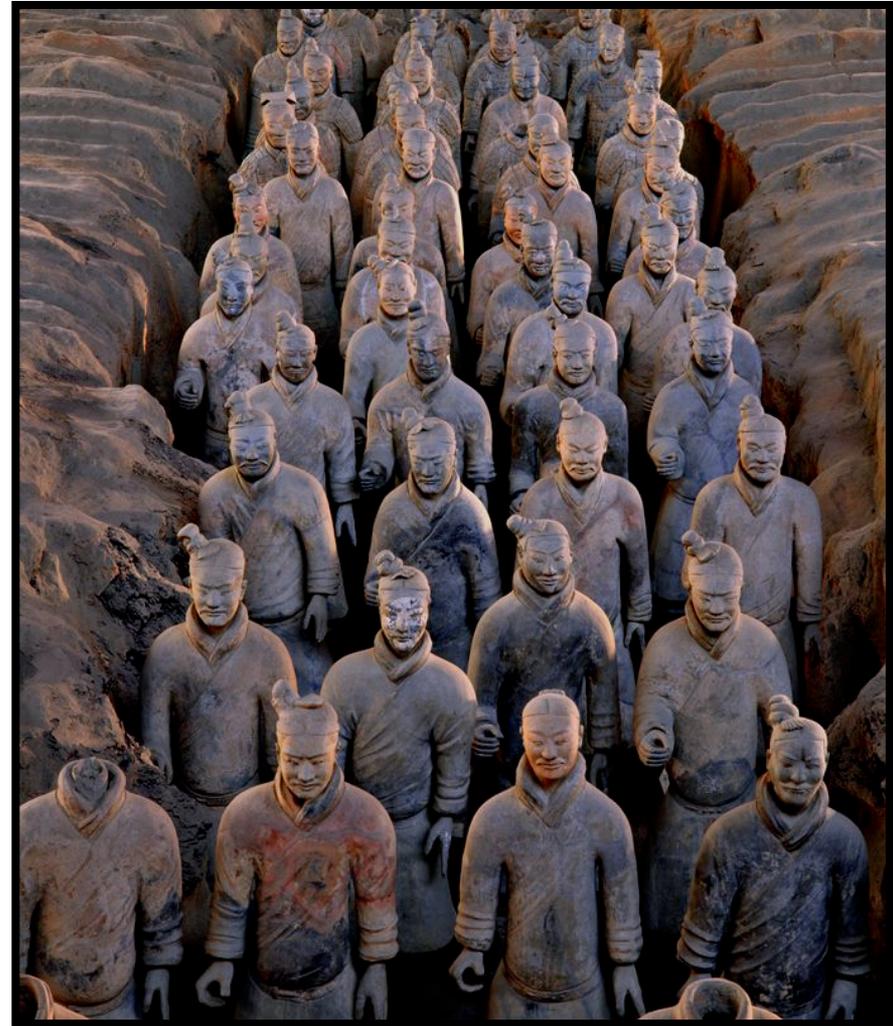
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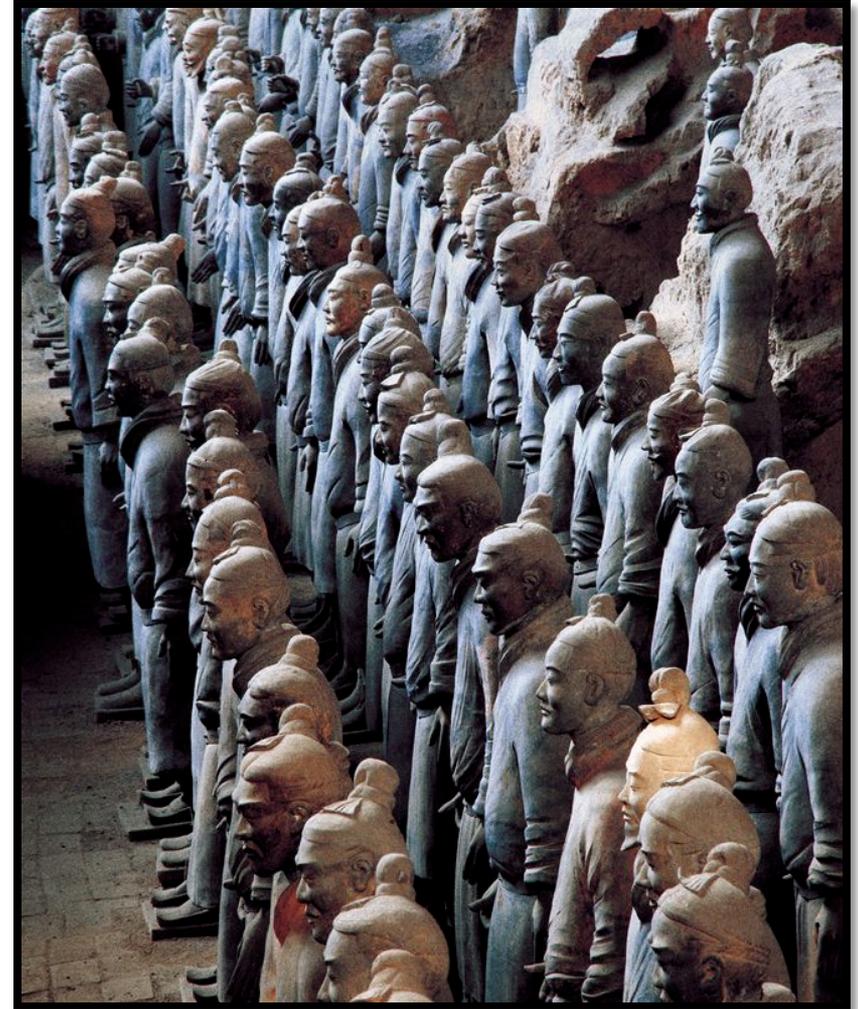
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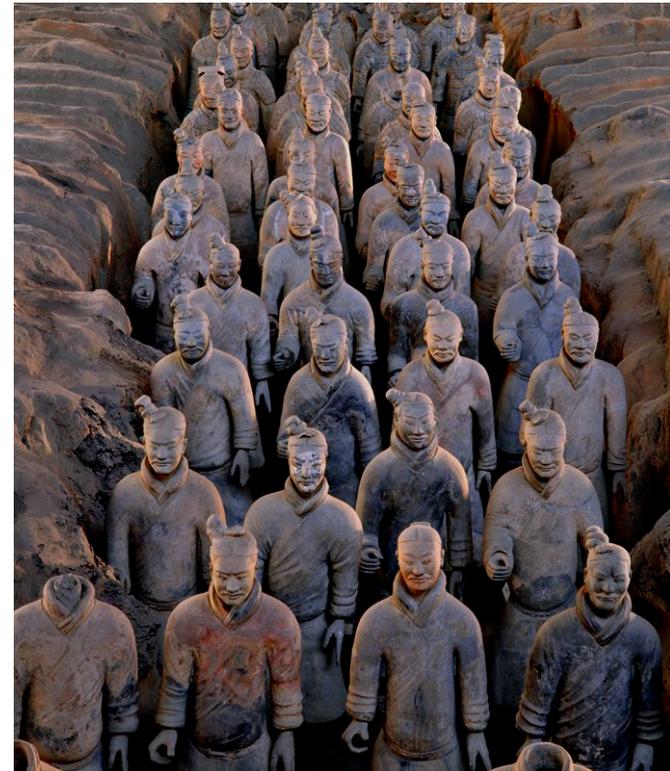


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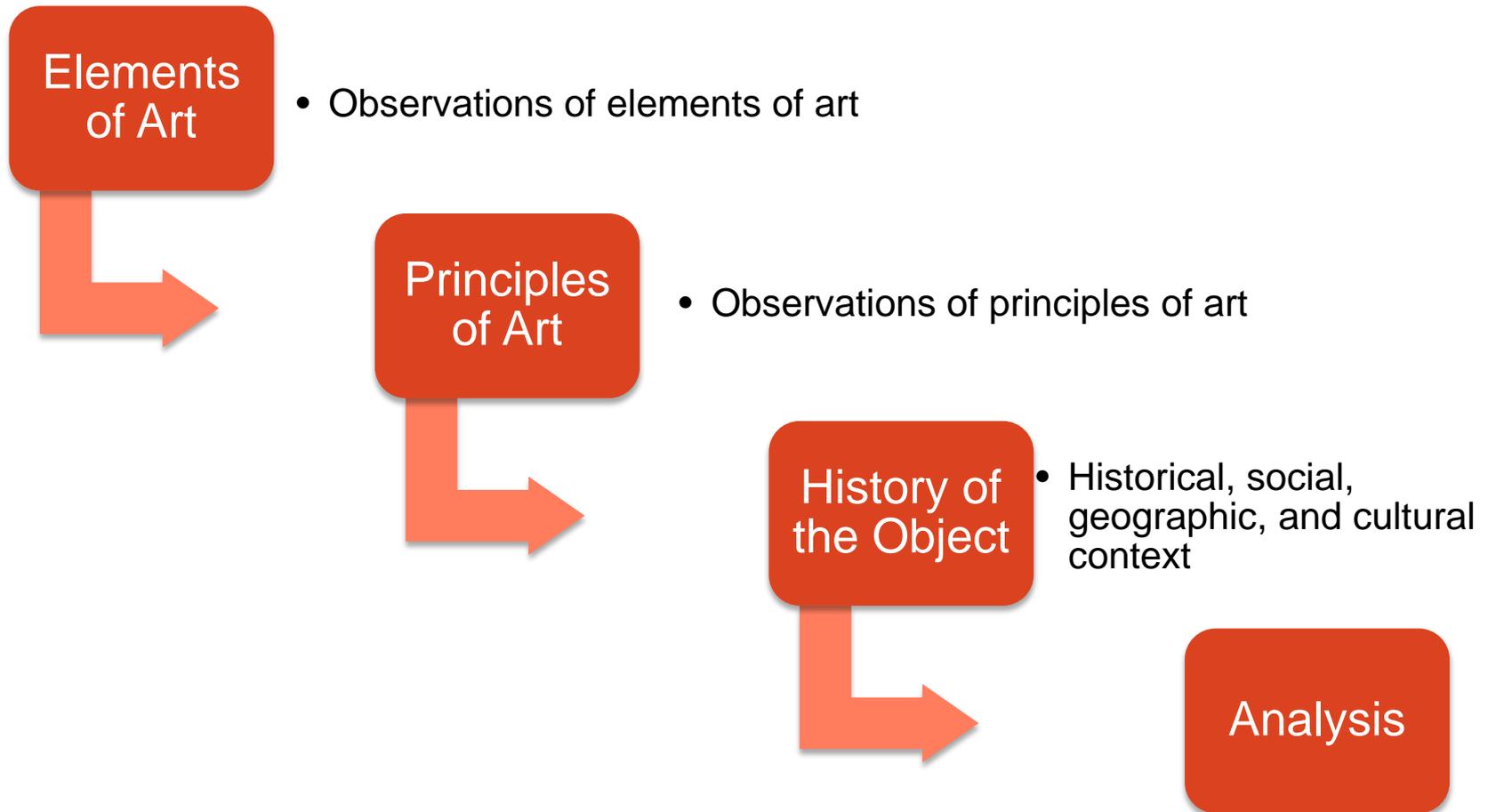
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# **China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy**

Post-Visit Lesson (Grades 9-12)  
Minneapolis Institute of Arts

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- How did the objects relate to Chinese history?
- What is your opinion of the exhibition?
- Would you want to take your family to the exhibition? If yes, why? If no, why not?

# Timeline project

- Gather your collection of dates that you recorded from the exhibition.
- Construct the timeline of ancient Chinese history in the chosen format:
  - Electronic
  - Large, on the wall, paper
  - Individual/partner
- Consult [www.metmuseum.org/toah](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah) for an example of an electronic timeline.

# Final Project

## OPTION 1

Chinese writing is different from English writing. Research Chinese characters. What does Chinese writing look like today? How is it different from ancient Chinese writing? Where can you see Chinese characters in the United States today? Research Chinese writing and write an essay (aim for 3–5 paragraphs) responding to these questions.

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# Final Project

## OPTION 2

The First Emperor had expert architects to design his palaces. Design an emperor's palace of their own and draw how it would look. Include written or oral descriptions of the rationale behind your design choices.

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# Final Project

## OPTION 3

Choose your favorite object from the exhibition. Write an essay or create a presentation that analyzes this object. Consider the pre-visit materials about the analysis of objects: elements of art, principles of art, historical context, and personal opinions. Review the examples of an analysis in the pre-visit materials to guide your project.

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# Final Project

## OPTION 4

The First Emperor undertook many projects to show how powerful he was to his people. What other rulers in history have done the same thing? Consider both contemporary and historical leaders. What are some of the methods rulers use to show their power? Public displays of influence surround us today, which we call advertising. Design an advertising campaign for the First Emperor, as if he were leading China today.

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**MINNEAPOLIS**



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