

One Great Wall

Where is the Great Wall of China and why was it built?

¹ A wall has many uses. It may hold things in. It may keep things out. It may hold things up. In the case of China's Great Wall, the purpose was to keep things out. Tribes of people wanted to move across China's northern mountains and down into China. China's emperors preferred to keep those people out of China. So, four different walls started going up as early as 700 B.C.

² About 500 years later, the emperor got tired of fighting off the northern tribes. He wanted to connect the four main sections of the wall that had already been built. He sent thousands of peasants, poor people who did not have farms, to work on the wall. Soldiers were there to make sure the peasants stayed and worked. They did work hard, and many of them died.

³ Then, 1,500 years after that, another emperor wanted to make the wall even stronger. He started a program that lasted more than 200 years! The wall got longer, and watch-towers and cannons were added at points all along the length of the wall.

⁴ In spite of the wall, China did suffer a number of invasions over the years. Still, the wall's size and the human effort that went into it earn it a place on the list of greatest human feats.

The Facts on the Great Wall

Length	1,500 mi.
Width	15-30 ft. at base; 12 ft. at top
Height	25 ft. (average)
Materials	bricks, rocks, packed earth

