

# Globalizing the Common Core Lesson

## **Title: Emperor Qin Shi Huang Di: Hero or Villain?**

### **Author:**

Andrea Abrishami, La Crescenta Elementary School, Glendale USD

### **Standards:**

- **Content Standard-6.6.5**
- **Common Core Standards**
  - Reading Standards for Informational Text 6.1
  - Reading Standards for Informational Text 6.2
  - Writing Standard 6.1
  - Speaking and Listening Standards 6.1
  - Speaking and Listening Standards 6.2

### **Overview:**

In this 2-day lesson students will read and analyze multiple sources about Chinese Emperor Qin Shi Huang Di. Students will discuss his accomplishments, how people felt about his rule, and the impact he had on future dynasties.

### **Inquiry Question:**

Was Emperor Qin Shi Huang Di a hero or villain?

### **Materials:**

- One copy of Source Set for each student (See Bibliography and attached copy of Source Set)
- Pencil, eraser, and highlighter
- Projector and document camera
- Primary sources included in the Source Set (See Bibliography)

### **Preparation:**

Each student should have a pencil, eraser, highlighter and a copy of the source set.

### **Activities:**

#### **Day 1:**

1. Project Source 1 for students to see. Open discussion by activating students' prior knowledge asking: What do you see? What do you already know about this tomb?
2. Guide students to vocabulary on the left-hand side; teacher should read vocabulary words and students should read definitions.
3. Read passage aloud; then ask students to highlight or annotate something that surprised them from the text.

4. Have students share with a partner, then share with class. Teacher should read aloud the last two lines of the first page, placing emphasis on the guiding question: Was Qin Shi Huang Di a hero or villain?
5. Project Source 2 for students to see. Guide students to vocabulary on the left-hand side; teacher should read vocabulary words and students should read definitions.
6. Read passage aloud, then ask students to highlight or annotate something that surprised them about Qin Shi Huang Di's tomb.
7. Give students one minute to discuss. Students should then individually answer the question below the text. Have students share with a partner then share with class.
8. Project Source 3 for students to see. Guide students to vocabulary on the left-hand side; teacher should read vocabulary words and students should read definitions.
9. Read passage aloud, then ask students to highlight or annotate the achievements described under the rule of Qin Shi Huang Di.
10. Read the second passage.
11. Give students one minute to discuss each passage. Students should then individually answer the question below the text. Have students share with a partner then share with class.

### **Day 2:**

1. Project Source 4 for students to see. Guide students to vocabulary on the left-hand side; teacher should read vocabulary words and students should read definitions.
2. Read passage aloud then ask students to highlight or annotate common topics between the two texts. Discuss similarities and differences between information provided in Sources 3 & 4 about Qin Shi Huang Di. Chart student responses.
3. Students should then individually answer the question below the text. Have students share with a partner then share with class.
4. Project Source 5 for students to see. Discuss maps and what changes over time. Read through each question and students should answer each question individually. Between questions, provide 2-3 minutes. Allow one minute of talk time with a partner, and two minutes to write a response.
5. Briefly review topics discussed in Sources 1-5, by asking the following questions:
  - a. Who was Qin Shi Huang Di?
  - b. What were Qin Shi Huang Di's accomplishments?
  - c. How did people feel about Qin Shi Huang Di?
6. Students should then individually answer the reflection questions.

### **Modifications:**

- Students may be placed into mixed ability groups.
- Teacher can model written responses with sentence starters.

### **Assessment:**

Students will complete the reflection individually. In the reflection students will list at least three accomplishments of Qin Shi Huang Di. Students will also determine if Qin Shi Huang Di was a hero or villain and support their point of view with evidence from the sources provided.

### **Bibliography:**

Source 1: Image of clay soldier from Qin Shi Huang Di's tomb

<http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/view-image.php?image=66951>

Source 2: Sima Qian, *Records of the Historian*, First Century BCE  
*The World in Ancient Times: Primary Sources & Reference Volume*, Ronald Mellor & Amanda H. Podany, Oxford University Press, 2005, p.96.

Source 3, Parts 1 and 2-Text from inscription on Mount Langya  
 Recorded by Sima Qian in *Records of the Historian*, Trans. Yang Hsien-Yi and Gladys Yang, 1974.  
 Excerpts available at: <http://archive.artsmia.org/terracotta-warriors/preview.html>  
 Complete text available at:  
[http://wps.pearsoncustom.com/wps/media/objects/2427/2486120/chap\\_assets/documents/doc4\\_5.html](http://wps.pearsoncustom.com/wps/media/objects/2427/2486120/chap_assets/documents/doc4_5.html)

Source 4-  
 Part 1-Text from inscription on Mount Langya  
 See above  
 Part 2-Excerpt from Han dynasty poet and statesman Jia Yi (201-169 BCE)  
 Available at: <http://archive.artsmia.org/terracotta-warriors/preview.html>

Source 5: Maps  
 See the timeline at <http://archive.artsmia.org/art-of-asia/history/chinese-dynasty-map.cfm>.

### **Appendix 1 Standards:**

California History-Social Science Standard

6.6-Students analyze the geographical, political, economic, religious, and social structures of China.  
 6.6.5-List the policies and achievements of the emperor Shi Huangdi in unifying northern China under the Qin Dynasty.

Common Core Standards:

- Reading Standards for Informational Text 6.1-Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Reading Standards for Informational Text 6.2-Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions and judgments.
- Writing Standard 6.1-Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Speaking and Listening Standards 6.1-Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one), in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- Speaking and Listening Standards 6.2-Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to the topic, text, or issue under study.

## Source Set: Emperor Qin Shi Huang Di: Hero or Villain?

### Source 1



Platoons of clay soldiers were buried with China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang Di, to accompany him during his eternal rest.

#### Vocabulary

**ascending:** taking up a position

**aristocracy:** people of the highest social class; superior group.

**bureaucracy:** a system of government where important decisions are made by state officials rather than elected representatives

**philosophy:** school of thought; guiding or underlying principles

In 246 B.C., a young man by the name of Ying Zheng became the emperor at the age of 13. Upon **ascending** to the throne, he gave himself a new title: Qin Shi Huang Di, which means First August and Divine Emperor of Qin. His dynasty did not last long, but his rule was felt for generations to come. He went against tradition, abolished the **aristocracy**, and awarded posts on the basis of ability alone. Qin Shi Huang Di also created a central **bureaucracy** which continued through following dynasties. Some historians believe he ruled harshly as he adopted the **philosophy of Legalism**. Qin Shi Huang Di unified China by creating a single form of currency for the Qin Empire, as a result all other forms of money became **obsolete**. In addition, Qin Shi Huang Di built a great wall to protect his land from invaders from the north.

**Legalism:** philosophy of administration in Ancient China; principles and practices of a school of political theorists advocating strict legal control over all activities, a system of rewards and punishments uniform for all classes.

**obsolete:** not used any more; out of date.

*Given all the accomplishments under his rule historians disagree as to what type of ruler Qin Shi Huang Di was. Read from the following sources describing the rule of Qin Shi Huang Di. What would life had been like under his rule? Was he a hero or villain?*

## Source 2

### The Emperor's Tomb

#### Vocabulary

**Mt. Li**, in the modern area of Xian, a manmade mound that looks like a hill.

**ascended**: took a position

**convict**: somebody in prison

**sarcophagus**: a stone coffin

**crossbows**: powerful bows for firing arrows

**mechanisms**: machines or mechanical appliances; the arrangement of connected parts in a machine

**circulated**: flowed freely in a circular system

#### Sima Quin, *Records of the Historians*, First Century BCE

In the ninth month he (the new emperor) buried the First Emperor at **Mount Li**.

When the First Emperor had just **ascended** the throne, he started to dig and construct the Mount Li Mausoleum. After he had united the world, more than 700,000 **convict** laborers from the world were sent there. They dug through three straits of springs, poured in liquid bronze, and secured the **sarcophagus**. Terra-cotta houses, officials, usual and valuable things were moved in to fill it. He ordered artisans to make **crossbows** triggered by **mechanisms**. Anyone passing before them would be shot immediately. They used mercury to create rivers—the Jiang (or Yangtze), the Huang Ho (or Yellow), and the great seas, wherein the mercury was **circulated** mechanically. On the ceiling were **celestial bodies** and on the ground geographical features. The candles were made of oil of **dugong**, which was not supposed to burn out for a long time.

**Source:** The World in Ancient Times: Primary Sources & Reference Volume, Ronald Mellor & Amanda H. Podany, Oxford University Press, 2005, p.96.

**celestial bodies**: planets and stars.

**dugong**: water mammal, also called a sea cow

As Qin Shi Huang Di ordered the construction of his tomb, what message do you think he wanted to share with future generations about himself and his empire?

---



---



---



---

### Source 3

#### Celebrated Accomplishments

The emperor had a tower built on Mount Langya and a stone inscription set up to praise the power of Qin and make clear his will.

#### Vocabulary

**diligently:** working hard and with persistence

**pursuits:** tasks

**prosper:** succeed financially; flourish

**toil:** work hard

**script:** system of writing

**accordance:** consensus, in agreement

**regulated:** controlled

Great are the Emperor's achievements,  
Men attended **diligently** to basic tasks,  
Farming is encouraged, secondary **pursuits** discouraged,  
All the common people **prosper**;  
All men under the sky  
**Toil** with a single purpose;  
Tools and measures are made uniform,  
The written **script** is standardized;  
Wherever the sun and moon shine,  
Wherever one can go by boat or carriage,

For our Emperor in **accordance** with the time  
Has **regulated** local customs,  
Made waterways and divided up the land.  
Caring for the common people,  
He works day and night without rest;  
He defines the laws, leaves nothing in doubt,  
Making known what is forbidden.

**Source:** Excerpt from inscription on Mount Langya, 109-91 BC

Highlight the achievements described above under the rule of Qin Shi Huang Di.

**etiquette:** rules of acceptable behavior.

**virtuous:** with moral integrity

Qin (is) greedy, violent, keen for profit and untrustworthy. It knows nothing about traditional **etiquette**, proper relations, and **virtuous** conduct. If it sees something profitable before it, just like a wild animal it will disregard relatives and brothers.

**Source:** Xu Jia, courtier of the state of Wei, 275 BCE

Contrast how Qin is described in the texts above.

---



---

### Source 4

#### A Growing Empire

The emperor had a tower built on Mount Langya and a stone inscription set up to praise the power of Qin and make clear his will.

#### Vocabulary

**decorous:** dignified, well-mannered

**flourish:** be healthy or grow well

**armour (armor):** protection for soldiers and military vehicles

**realm:** area of interest, kingdom

In far off, remote places,  
Serious and **decorous** administrators  
Work steadily, just and loyal.

Tasks are done at the proper season,  
All things **flourish** and grow;  
The common people know peace  
And have laid aside weapons and **armour**;

The universe entire  
Is our Emperor's **realm**,  
Extending west to the Desert,  
South to where the houses face north,  
East to the East Ocean,  
North to beyond Tahsia;

**Source:** Extract from inscription on Mount Langya, 109-91 BC

**insignificant:** too small or unimportant to be worth consideration

**homage:** great respect and honor; or something done to honor a person or thing

**righteousness:** morally right or justifiable

**thereby:** as a result of that

Qin, beginning with an **insignificant** amount of territory, reached the power of a great state, and for a hundred years made all the other great lords pay **homage** to it. Yet after it had become master of the whole empire...its ruler died by the hands of men. Why? Because it had failed to rule with humanity and **righteousness** and to realize that the power to attack and the power to retain what one had **thereby** won, are not the same.

**Source:** Jia Yi (201-169 BCE), Han dynasty poet and statesman

Highlight common topics in the two texts above.

What did you learn about the death of Qin Shi Huang Di from Han dynasty poet Jia Yi?

---



---

What can you infer about Qin Shi Huang Di's leadership that led to his death?

---

## Source 5 Mapping It Out

### Maps of the Chou, Qin, and Han Dynasty Empires

Source: See Timeline at <http://archive.artsmia.org/art-of-asia/history/chinese-dynasty-map.cfm>



1. Looking at the maps of China during the 3 dynasties: the Chou, Qin, and Han. How does the size of the Dynasty change over time?

---



---

2. What was built during the Qin dynasty to change the northern border of the Dynasty?

---



---

3. How did this affect the Empire's interaction with neighboring peoples?

---



---

4. Looking at the size of the Qin Dynasty and the information from previous sources, what can you infer about the success of the Qin Dynasty? Do you think Qin Shi Huang Di's rule affected the Han Dynasty?

---



---



### Reflection

What achievements during the rule of Qin Shi Huang Di helped to unify northern China?

---

---

---

---

Use evidence from the documents to support your response to the following questions.  
What was life like under the rule of Qin Shi Huang Di? Was he a hero or villain?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---