

China

Film: 49 minutes

Explore went to China on a fact-finding mission. During the three-week trip, the team discovered many of China's hidden gems: philosophy, art, education, and rural life. They also discovered how the country's hard-working and innovative leaders were working to solve issues of the environment, human rights, and public health.



CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Grades 6 – 12

Geography, World History, Foreign Language

Geography – Standard 18. Understand global development and environmental issues

- Understand the possible impact that present conditions and patterns of consumption, production and population growth might have on the future spatial organization of Earth
- Understand how the interaction between physical and human systems affects current conditions on Earth
- Understand the concept of sustainable development and its effects in a variety of situations
- Understand why policies should be designed to guide the use and management of Earth's resources and to reflect multiple points of view

World History - Standard 44. Understand the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world

- Understand efforts to improve political and social conditions around the world
- Understand the causes and effects of population growth and urbanization
- Understand the importance or meaning of the natural environment for societies around the world
- Understand rates of economic development and the emergence of different economic systems around the globe
- Understand how specific countries have implemented social and cultural changes

Foreign Language – Standard 4. Understand traditional ideas and perspectives, institutions, professions, literary and artistic expressions, and other components of the target culture

- Know historical and cultural figures from the target culture and their contributions
- Know chronological order and significance of important historical events in the target culture
- Know the location(s) and major geographic features of countries where the target language is/was used
- Know significant political, military, intellectual, and cultural figures and how they shaped historical events and the target culture's perspectives

Resource - [McREL Content Knowledge – Standards & Benchmarks](#)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION with DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The film covers many topics. Brief background information for each topic is provided below. Discussion questions follow the chronology of the film. It may be useful to pause the film and have discussions periodically.



AnWu School

China's future lies in the hands of its children, who have in front of them the daunting task of taking 100% responsibility for supporting their families as a free-market economy replaces the former communist system. Rural schools, where the vast majority of children in China receive their primary education, are often below the standards of their urban counterparts. About 80% of rural schoolchildren don't get past middle school, and many face difficult life prospects as they become teenage farmers and migrant workers. Hear how the children of AnWu's primary

school are already preparing for their future.

- ☞ *How does AnWu Elementary School compare with your elementary school? What are the similarities and differences?*
- ☞ *If you are learning to speak Chinese, how does their English language instruction compare to your Chinese language instruction?*

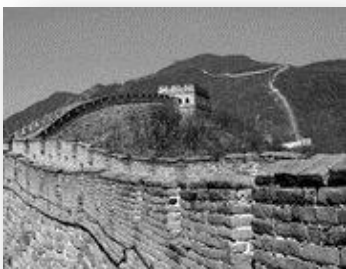


Wolong Giant Panda Nature Reserve

An estimated 1,600 giant pandas now survive in the wild, in a few mountain ranges in the central Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Shaanxi, and Gansu. Pandas once roamed lowland areas, but were chased out by farming, forest clearing, and other human development. Once nearing extinction, recent efforts to preserve and multiply the population have revitalized the species. Once nearing extinction, recent efforts to preserve and multiply the population have revitalized the species.

Established in the Sichuan province in 1963, the Wolong Nature Reserve is home to one of the earliest research bases for the endangered giant panda. Standing an average of 43 inches tall and around 350 pounds, giant pandas live for about 25 years - and much of that time is spent eating. A giant panda can consume as much as 83 pounds of bamboo per day.

- ☞ *Why is it important to create nature reserves for endangered animals like the panda?*
- ☞ *What are the challenges for breeding pandas?*



The Great Wall

Built in stages over many centuries, the Great Wall of China stretches more than 6,400 kilometers, or nearly 4,000 miles through northern China. China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang, began constructing the wall in the 3rd century BC to protect the northern borders of his empire from Mongolians and other nomadic invaders.

- ☞ *Why did Emperor Qin begin the Great Wall?*
- ☞ *How would a world leader be considered today if they chose to build a "Great Wall" around their country?*



Emperor Qin's Tomb

In 247 BCE, Emperor Qin Shi Huang had 700,000 workers construct a tomb lined with thousands of life-sized terracotta warriors and horses, whose purpose was to help protect the emperor in his afterlife. A ceramic army of 8,099 life-sized, intricately carved statues modeled after Emperor Qin's infantry men, officers, and archers stand at attention. It took them over 38 years to construct the burial place.

To protect the secrecy and safety of its location, workers with knowledge of the site were buried alive in the tomb. The site of the terracotta warriors is considered by some to be the eighth wonder of the world. During his rule (259 BCE - 210 BCE), Emperor Qin's lavish building projects and harsh reign caused unrest among Chinese peasants. They gathered, seized the steel weapons from the terracotta warriors in his mausoleum, and staged an uprising that overthrew the dynasty. The succeeding Han Dynasty would rule China for the next 400 years.

- 💬 *Why did Emperor Qin have this tomb built? What does this imply about his beliefs in the afterlife?*
- 💬 *Do you know of other cultures where the ruler built something similar to this tomb?*



Tibet

Journey to the spiritual city of Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. See Potala Palace, the traditional winter home of the Dalai Lama and a pilgrimage destination for thousands of Buddhists. Listen to the sounds of monks practicing the art of debate at the Sera Monastery, and witness the many ways in which new technologies are changing the Tibetan cultural landscape.

- 💬 *Compassion is very important in the practice of Buddhism. What does being compassionate mean to you?*
- 💬 *Explain how the "three poisons" - desire, ignorance, and hatred - can produce fighting with other human beings.*



Environment

As its economy continues to develop at breakneck speed, China's coal-fired power plants work round the clock to provide the energy for growth, releasing huge amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Experts predict that China, now the world's largest emitter of CO₂, will produce even more in years to come. Wen Bo, a leading Chinese environmentalist, sheds light on his approach to raising environmental awareness in his home country. Chinese students also comment on the challenges China faces today in balancing growth with the need for ecological conservation.

Read more about Wen Bo on

explore.org

- 💬 *What are the environmental issues in China?*
- 💬 *How is the global environment affected by what happens in China?*
- 💬 *As China shifts away from being a socialist/communist country, what are the citizens' concerns? How has socialism and communism provided security for its citizens? How will a more democratic form of government be an improvement?*



Yangtze River

The Yangtze River, the lifeline of China, originates from a glacier in the Dangling Mountains of Tibet and runs for 4,200 miles, making it the third longest river in the world after the Nile and the Amazon. Throughout history, people have used the Yangtze for trade, transport, and tourism. One mile long and 600 feet high, the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River is a project of epic proportions - and controversy. The dam, completed in 2008, created a vast reservoir extending 370 miles, about the distance from Los Angeles to San Francisco. It brings drinking water to northern China and generates as much electricity as 18 coal-fired power

plants. But it has also displaced some two million people and caused widespread flooding, destroying rural villages and cultural treasures.

- 💬 *What is the importance of the Yangtze River in China?*
- 💬 *What are the benefits and drawbacks of the Three Gorges Dam project?*
- 💬 *What makes the project comparable to the building of the Great Wall?*



Rural Women

Women in rural China have one of the highest suicide rates in the world. Wu Qing at the Development Center for Rural Women believes that empowering women with the idea of equality, giving them out-of-home work skills, and instilling a sense of social responsibility will increase their feeling of self-worth and improve quality of life.

- 💬 *Why do you think there is a high suicide rate for women who live in rural China? As a society, how has China typically treated women? How does it compare with other cultures?*
- 💬 *Wu Qing, Director of Development Center for Rural Women, believes that men and women should work together so that men will know what women have to contribute. Why is it important to include men in their efforts to make things better for women?*