

# The Great Wall Adventure: Build, Defend, and Discover!

## Materials Needed:

- **For Building the Wall:** A collection of building materials like LEGO bricks, cardboard boxes (cereal, tissue boxes), sugar cubes, or even couch cushions and pillows.
- **For the Landscape:** A large piece of paper or cardboard for the base, green and brown construction paper, markers or crayons, small toy figures (like soldiers or horses).
- **For Mapping:** A printed simple map of China, a red crayon or marker.
- **For Discovery:** Access to a short, age-appropriate video about the Great Wall (e.g., a 5-minute documentary from National Geographic Kids or similar).
- **For the Story:** Notebook and pencil.

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## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

1. Explain at least two key purposes for building the Great Wall of China.
2. Design and construct a model of a section of the Great Wall, including essential features like a watchtower.
3. Create a short, imaginative story from the perspective of someone living or working on the Wall.

## Lesson Activities

### Part 1: The Spark - Why Build a Wall? (10 minutes)

1. **Engage with a Question:** Start by asking, "If you wanted to protect your most special toy from being taken, what would you do? You'd probably build a fort around it, right? Thousands of years ago, an emperor in China had a similar idea, but he wanted to protect his whole country!"
2. **Watch and Wonder:** Watch a short, engaging video about the Great Wall. As you watch, ask the student to look for clues to answer two questions: "*Who were they trying to keep out?*" and "*What was the Wall used for besides just being a barrier?*"
3. **Quick Chat:** After the video, discuss the answers. Guide the student to understand that the Wall was built to protect against invading armies from the north and also served as a communication system (using smoke signals from watchtowers) and a transportation route.

### Part 2: The Engineer - Build Your Own Great Wall! (25-30 minutes)

1. **Set the Scene:** Lay out the large paper or cardboard base. Have the student draw or create a landscape with construction paper, marking out mountains and plains. Explain that the real Great Wall was built over very difficult terrain.
2. **The Building Challenge:** Introduce the challenge: "You are the head engineer for the Emperor! Your job is to build a section of the Great Wall on this landscape to protect the lands to the south."
3. **Design Requirements:** Explain that their wall must include:
  - A long, continuous wall that is tall enough for a toy soldier to stand on.
  - At least one watchtower that is taller than the wall itself (for spotting invaders from far away!).

- A walkway on top of the wall for soldiers to patrol.
- 4. **Construct!:** Let the student use their creativity and the building materials (LEGOs, boxes, pillows) to construct their section of the Wall on the prepared landscape. Encourage problem-solving: "How can you make your wall strong? How can you build on the 'mountain' you made?"

#### Differentiation Note:

- **For support:** Work together to sketch a quick blueprint of the wall section before building.
- **For a challenge:** Ask the student to include battlements (the tooth-like pattern on top of walls) and explain their purpose (for protection while shooting arrows).

### Part 3: The Strategist - Mapping the Mission (10 minutes)

1. **Locate and Trace:** Using the simple map of China, help the student find the general location of the Great Wall.
2. **Mark the Border:** Give them a red marker or crayon and ask them to draw the winding path of the wall. As they draw, reinforce the "why." Say, "You are drawing the line that separates ancient China from the lands of the northern invaders. Every part of this line needed to be defended."
3. **Connect to the Model:** Point to a spot on their drawing and say, "The section of the wall you just built could be right here on this mountain!" This connects the hands-on model to its real-world geographic context.

### Part 4: The Storyteller - A Day on the Wall (10-15 minutes)

1. **Set the Scene:** Ask the student to place one of their toy figures on the watchtower they built. Ask, "Imagine you are that soldier. What do you see? What do you hear? Are you lonely? Are you brave?"
2. **Creative Writing Prompt:** Give the student the notebook and pencil. The prompt is: **"Write a short story or a diary entry about one day as a guard on the Great Wall. Your entry should mention what you see from your watchtower and a message you have to send."**
3. **Share the Story:** When finished, invite the student to share their story aloud. This is a creative way to demonstrate their understanding of the Wall's purpose.

### Assessment & Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

Review the learning objectives through a simple conversation while looking at the student's creations.

- **(Objective 1) Ask:** "Looking at the wall you built and the map, can you tell me the two main reasons the Emperor ordered this wall to be built?" (Expected answer: To keep invaders out and to send messages/move soldiers).
- **(Objective 2) Observe:** The completed model serves as the assessment. Point to the watchtower and ask, "Why did you make this part taller than the rest of the wall?"
- **(Objective 3) Review:** The student's story demonstrates their ability to creatively apply their knowledge about life on the Wall. Praise their imaginative details.

Conclude by congratulating them on being an excellent engineer, strategist, and storyteller, and for successfully completing their Great Wall adventure!