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# Lesson Plan: Be a Great Wall Dynasty Engineer!

## Materials Needed:

- **For Building:** A mix of any of the following: LEGO bricks, cardboard boxes (cereal boxes, shoe boxes), paper towel tubes, play-doh or modeling clay, sofa cushions and pillows, wooden blocks, tape, and glue.
- **For Research:** A tablet or computer with internet access for a short video clip.
- **For Reflection:** Paper and pencil/pen or a notebook.
- **Optional:** A map of China, small figurines (like toy soldiers or animals).

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## Lesson Plan Details

**Subject:** World History & Engineering Design

**Age Group:** 9-10 years old

**Time Allotment:** 60-90 minutes

### 1. Learning Objectives

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

- Explain the main purpose of the Great Wall of China using their own words.
- Design and construct a model of a section of the Great Wall, incorporating key features like watchtowers and varied terrain.
- Creatively describe the experience of someone who lived or worked on the Wall through a short, imaginative journal entry.

### 2. The Lesson: Step-by-Step

#### Part 1: The Emperor's Problem (10-15 minutes)

1. **Hook/Introduction:** Start with a question to spark curiosity. Say, "Imagine you are the powerful emperor of a vast and wealthy land. Nomadic tribes from the north keep trying to raid your villages. What could you build to protect your people and your treasure? What would it be made of? How would it work?"
2. **Brief Exploration:** Discuss the student's ideas. Then, explain that this was the exact problem faced by Chinese emperors. Show a short, engaging video (search for "Great Wall of China Drone Video for kids" on YouTube) to give them a sense of its incredible scale.
3. **Key Concepts (Keep it Simple!):** While watching or right after, briefly explain these three ideas:
  - **It wasn't one wall:** It was many walls built by different dynasties (ruling families) and connected over time.
  - **It was for defense:** Its main job was to keep invaders out. Watchtowers were used as signal stations to send messages quickly using smoke or fire.
  - **It was hard work:** It was built by soldiers, peasants, and prisoners using materials found nearby, like stone in the mountains and packed earth in the desert.

## Part 2: You are the Dynasty Engineer! (30-45 minutes)

1. **The Mission:** Announce, "Your mission, as the new Chief Dynasty Engineer, is to design and build a section of the Great Wall. It must be strong enough to protect the land behind it!"
2. **The Build:**
  - Let the student choose their building materials from the collection you gathered. This gives them creative ownership.
  - Encourage them to think like an engineer. Ask questions during the build to guide their thinking:
    - "Where will you build your watchtower so your soldiers can see the farthest?"
    - "What part of your wall needs to be the strongest and why?"
    - "Imagine your wall is in the desert. What materials would you use instead of stone?" (This is a great chance to use play-doh for "rammed earth").
    - "How will your soldiers get up onto the wall?" (Encourages them to build ramps or stairs).
  - **Introduce a Challenge (Optional):** Halfway through, introduce a fun problem. For example, "Oh no, Engineer! We've received a report that a small group of invaders is trying to get through! You need to reinforce a section of your wall immediately!" This adds an element of exciting problem-solving.

## Part 3: Wall Tour and Soldier's Story (15-20 minutes)

1. **Show and Tell (Assessment):** Ask the student to give you a tour of their Great Wall section. Have them explain their design choices. This is where you assess if they understood the key concepts (e.g., "This is my watchtower for sending smoke signals," or "I made this part extra thick because it is defending a village.").
2. **Creative Writing (Application):** Now, ask the student to imagine they are a soldier stationed on the section of the wall they just built.
  - **Prompt:** "Write a short diary entry about your day. What did you see from the watchtower? Was it cold? Were you lonely? Did you see any traders passing by? What do you miss about home?"
  - This activity helps the student think about the human side of history and creatively apply what they've learned about the Wall's purpose.
3. **Wrap-up:** Have the student share their diary entry. Congratulate them on their excellent work as both an engineer and a storyteller!

## 3. Differentiation and Extension

- **For Extra Support:** Work alongside the student to build the wall together. Provide pictures of the Great Wall for inspiration and help them brainstorm ideas before building.
- **For an Extra Challenge:** Ask the student to incorporate a specific geographical feature into their build, like making the wall go over a "mountain" (a pillow) or across a "river" (a blue scarf). They could also research and add a feature like a "fort" or "barracks" to their design.
- **Extension Idea:** Use the map of China to trace the general path of the Great Wall. This helps visualize just how enormous it is.

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