

From Mr. Wylie:

We were studying Ancient China, and we came upon the Qin Dynasty and its ruler, Shi Huangdi. This leader, who later became the first emperor of China, was determined to unify the country under his own solid grip. He was also destined to drive out all the invaders from the north. In order to do this, he ordered the construction of the Great Wall of China. This wall took years to build and cost countless lives. The emperor was as ruthless to his own countrymen as he was to his enemies. This assignment was for students to put themselves in the shoes of a peasant who had been ordered to work on the Great Wall. They were to use all the information they had learned from class and apply it to this Great Wall Diary.

Name _____

Period _____

Diary of the Great Wall

For this assignment, you are to imagine that you are a peasant in China during the time the Great Wall is being built. Shi Huangdi has summoned the peasant masses and it is your job to create a barrier that will keep China safe from nomadic invaders.

You will need to keep a diary of how you felt as you created this wall. Were you happy, sad or proud? How were the working conditions? How did this make you feel about Shi Huangdi? What are your thoughts about the wall? These are only a few questions that you could address in this diary.

The guidelines for this diary are as follows:

- 12 pt. Times New Roman Font
- 1 page typed
- Double-spaced
- Use classroom notes, the textbook or outside resources to get a better understanding of how a peasant might have felt in this situation

The Wall

Today was my first day at the wall. I thought it would be big and magnificent, but it was horrible! I am sore all over, I was yelled at, hit, and so many people were injured so I had to work twice as hard to make up. I am coming down with a strange sickness that I am afraid of. My weakness is so great that I can barely walk and I am extremely filthy. I want leave and never come back, but I know I will be killed in the attempt. Shi Huangdi is not thinking about us, he only cares about himself and this wall. Tears were streaming down my face as I work trying to do my best. I don't think that the wall is worth all the thousands of peasants lives. To Shi Huangdi, he could care less about peasants. My mother wishes I had never left. I told her that everything will be alright and that I will be okay, but I was wrong. I write to my mother as much as possible to keep her updated on the wall and on my health. My father is also somewhere working on the wall, but i cannot find him. Today, my friend was killed by a falling boulder. I was surprised to see that they just buried him inside the wall!! I didn't want to look as they put him inside the wall. I said goodbye and left to get what little rest I have.

The working conditions were also horrible. I was given little food and water and I had to work from sun up to sundown, there are even people outside at night. I can't believe they treat us like this after we came to help construct this wall. Tomorrow I hope we are treated better than we were today. I tripped and broke my sandal so now I have to work barefoot. I kept wanting to just leave and go home to my family instead of working on this project were I am treated no different than the dirt on the floor. The peasants waste so much energy walking back and forth carrying stones and gravel miles just to stop, then do it again. The wall doesn't even look half finished because of the incident where someone chiseled the wrong part of the stone and sent part of it crashing down on top of everyone. He was killed for the accident so now I am scared to mess up and am trying to work my hardest so I don't end up

getting killed like that man. The thing that angers me the most is that I am only twelve and people that are thirty-five are working on the wall. I will be forced to work on the wall for the rest of my life. I better get some rest and food, tomorrow is a new day.

Yezon Al-Hamwy

Dear Diary

The first thing I would do is get me a good breakfast, then I would here people bang on my door then I would go open it and these soldiers would drag me out and say come work on the Great Wall Of China. I would have a piece of bacon in my mouth and I grabbed a handful before they bang on my door. I stuck the handful of bacon in my pocket. When I got there I saw people dieing and getting beaten. One of the soldiers came up to me and took my bacon that was in my mouth and he ate it. It was like 1000 degrees outside, I was burning up. I was so mad I threw my tools down and yelled, **“ARE YOU KIDDING ME”!** So then the guy that took my bacon came up and slapped me in my face and after that I hurried up and picked up my tools and began to work harder and faster.

I was working all day and all night, so of corse I was tired. I started slacking when I was supposed to be working so the guy that took my bacon came up and slapped me again. Then I took some bacon out of my pocket and ate some. I almost died because this huge rock was going to fall on my head but I moved out of the way and saved myself from the light. We are still working on this wall and I almost fell alsleep but my friend came and poored water on me so I thanked him for that. My friend ended up going home that day because a rock fell on his leg and he could not work any more. I am still working on this wall it has been about a week and I am getting tired of these guards not doing any thing but looking at us work and they get to go home.

I thought about running but I remembered what the king said. He said any body that tries to run will be killed and buried in the wall. When he said that my mouth just dropped to the ground and of corse I got slapped for day dreaming. It has been a week and a couple of days and im still working just can't wait until this wall is finished. Who ever thought of this im really mad at. This has been a good experience of work now I dont ever want a job again but I have to so I can take care of my house and wife. Well it has been a couple of years and now the great wall is done.

sincerely,

J

Jamar allen

Dear Diary,

I have been working five years to build this wall, for nothing in return. I get little food and I work through harsh winters with no breaks through the day. I have a family at my house that I need to take care of, but Shi Huangdi has to build a great monument. I feel mad, I am exhausted from all this work. I may have broke a few bones here and there, but what does Shi Huangdi do? He just tells me to get back to work.

I don't like Shi Huangdi at all. He is making everybody work on this great project of his, but when it is done it probably won't even be successful anyways. He has broke the backs of many of us, so we need to speak out about this. And guess what, he wants to make a new project after this!

I don't think this wall will be successful because other countries will come up with inventions to get through, around, or over the wall. So I don't even know why he is building this wall. It is killing many people, even kids. I really want to speak out about this, but if I do I know I will get killed.

Today we are working on the final touches of the wall like adding details and making everything look good. We have to make designs on the whole wall which will probably take a week or so. We also have to make the pathway smooth so horses and wagons can go on it. We are almost done with this wall though, so I am thankful I can go back to my family and have regular meals. I won't have to walk 1 mile to get here either. I can go back to my job as a farmer and actually make money for my family. I believe Shi Huangdi made a bad decision. I think we will go against him and overpower him. Revolts will start and many more people will be killed, but I hope this will happen because it's about time that we speak out.

So once more, I believe this wall will do bad to and bankrupt the Qin dynasty, and we will become a weaker nation. I hope our next leader will be better to us and actually respects us.

Sincerely,

Qin Zhou (Jacob Bores)

Dear diary,

I am partly proud, but also really angry because I have to go and work on the great wall. I am proud to be apart of such a big accomplishment, but I am not so happy about the conditions I will be working in. If they want us to work faster then they should give us food and drinks not starve us. I understand that they want it done soon, but maybe they could give us a few days off when it's really cold outside.

If I was emperor the people would like me much more and I would be much better. I would be better because I wouldn't be so harsh and mean I would be more kind to my people. The wall is going to be an absolutely breath taking thing when it's done I know that but maybe they could cut us just a little slack.

The thing that angers me the most about working on the wall is that we can't complain at all! If we even say man it's hot out here we can possibly be killed! Shi Huangdi is a really good emperor and I really like him as our emperor. However I don't agree with Shi Huangdi making us work as hard as we can just to build a wall. If it's really that necessary then he should let us rest so we can do the best work possible.

Here is something else that angers me, the clothing they give us. We work so hard and what do we get to where? RAGS!! They give us just some pieces of junk that they found laying around and they want us to where those and be happy? It just doesn't make sense.

I almost forgot, they never and I mean never reward us for ANYTHING! We could have had a really good day and accomplished a lot, and they will just walk by check it and say "You should have done more I could have done more."

These are all reasons why I fell if they want us to work on the wall then they should start treating us better. I think if they don't then one of these days everyone will just stop and refuse to work on it anymore.

Sincerely, Philip

Dear Diary,

Building the Great Wall of China has been a horrid journey for me. I have been forced to build this for two months already. Before I even started building I thought it was a bad idea made by Shi Huangdi. Nobody wants to be locked in China forever.

Shi Huangdi has forced us to build this Great Wall, which is not even worth building. Sure it will keep invaders out, but how will he get the punished Chinese out. Speaking of punishment, legalism is not the right government to be having while we are building the enormous wall. Many people have already been harshly punished and I don't want to become one of them.

I'm not really sure if these mud bricks are going to hold. I hope they do. Everyone feels like a slave building these bricks. My friend had just died yesterday from the cold, wintery temperatures we have been having. Many others have died, too. Thankfully, I have not been sick, but I have broken my arm. A lot of my other close friends have either broken their backs, arms, or legs. This has been very hard for me and basically everyone else in the process of building this dangerous wall.

Many women have helped us by making us cards. This really helps us, but the only thing is, is that we rarely get food to eat. We sometimes get sick from being hungry. We all starve everyday working on this project.

Overall, the building of this wall has been a very hard journey. I hope that it will do something good for me and all of the others pretty soon. It might make me stronger, but that is no use for me, especially as I am getting older. Even though I don't like working on the Great Wall, I have to, so I must get back to work. If I don't get back in time I may get harshly punished. I really would not want to be punished! After all of this building is done I wish to travel around the world. This will help me see the world and get away from Shi Huangdi and his harsh ruling of the country of China. Well, I better get back to work!

Sincerely,

Ying Lee (Jenna Burmeister)

Dear Diary,

I am so sick of working on the Great Wall! My knees and back are killing me, I am coming home more and more exhausted each day. I hate wearing rags and starving. Life is unfair and cruel.

I am having second thoughts about the wall. Is it worth all of the workers' deaths, just so that China can have a little bit more border and protection? Last week, a few people starved to death and was then put into the Great Wall of China! I couldn't stand working around corpses, but I didn't exactly want a death sentence for complaining either.

So many lives have been taken. I constantly worry about the fact that at any minute, I could be next. If I had to choose a way to go, it would be in the place of someone I love. But do I honestly love China enough to sacrifice my well being for it's protection? For that I have no answer. I hate Shi Huangdi.

Shi Huangdi is on his way to becoming China's most hated. People are starting to rebel against him and his wishes. I am deeply considering becoming one of them. He is killing many citizens in the hopes of finishing a man-made landmark. I hope that one day all of China will see him for who he really is, a selfish man. Everyone will soon realize that he doesn't care about them but only about the wall. The wall that is somehow more important than China's future. I wish that the Great Wall of China didn't exist. If it didn't we would all go back to our average, normal, every day lives. I would be farming, harvesting, growing crops, and enjoying my simple little farm life. I would almost never go as hungry as I am now, because I would be able to provide for myself, as well as my family. I feel like such a disgrace to them because they go hungry at night because I cannot farm to feed them enough. When the great wall is over I will have my wish. Because of that, I get up in the morning with a motivation stronger than my aching back or hunger. My motivation is my old life coming back to stay forever when the wall is finished. I will be patient.

Sincerely,

Jamie Cooper

Dear Diary,

Today was another terrible day working on the Great Wall. Shi Huangdi is still just as strict and forceful as the day I started. Dressed in rags, we still work and work through any weather. We still get little food and water. Even though our bodies ache and we are tired of the terrible conditions, only a few people try to escape, considering we will be sentenced to death. Although some people die from trying to escape, many die from the working conditions. They die from exhaustion and from no food or water. There are also many people that have a broken bone. My back is very sore and my left arm is broken. Now if anybody were to come and watch us peasants work on the Wall, they most likely wouldn't notice that many people had a broken bone. Nobody dared to complain, terrified of the consequence that will follow. To get me through these awful things, I try to think of the positive. For example, as soon as the Great Wall is completed we will be protected and the Wall we prevent nomadic invasions. The Wall is supposed to be complete in about two weeks. When this event comes, I will be proud to say that helped make our empire safe. This would make me happy, but then Shi Huangdi will probably have already come up with another massive building project. Ever since I have started working on the Wall, I discovered that Shi Huangdi was very strict and cruel. As he just keeps forcing us to keep working through the harsh conditions. This lead me to dislike Shi Huangdi and I do not want him to be our emperor any longer. He needs to leave and a new and better emperor needs to take his spot. I do realize he has organized great building projects, but he is too strict about making the peasants work through awful conditions that cause many deaths. I don't think that I am the only person who feels like this. I'm sure many of us peasants want to revolt against Shi Huangdi. As soon as Shi Huangdi is gone nobody will be sad, we will all be happy. Then a new and better emperor will hopefully come. One that will give the peasants more food and water, warmer clothing. I'm sure many people want this, but we have to gather all of the people of the empire, which won't be easy. Shi Huangdi has all the power. Although if Shi Huangdi's followers go against him we could have a chance at getting a new emperor. Until this happens we will continue to suffer. Sincerely, Kaitlyn Kline

Dear Diary,

So far my life is fine. It is o.k. working on this huge wall that rude Shi Huangdi ordered us. We can't even leave from working on it and if we do, we are killed. I feel good working to protect my country, but it is hard work and a pain in the butt. I also feel depressed to see people die because they worked so hard. It is like Ancient Egypt all over again, but that's another story. I also dislike the weather that we have to work in. Snow, rain, whatever! They also give us very little food which doesn't bring energy to our bodies. Shi Huangdi treats us like pack mules! If he wants to take women and men out of their homes, their children will be so sad because they don't have a parent with them, alive, and the children could die. How harsh is that! People should appreciate all of the people that worked on the wall and the ones who died building it. I wish that Shi Huangdi was at least a little bit nicer. I personally think that Legalism is a little harsh, but people normally do not participate in doing crime. The Great Wall of China, that is being built, is supposed to be for protecting us Chinese from those nomadic invaders that come from the north. I also dislike Shi Huangdi for hating Confucianism because Confucianism isn't that bad to me. He also hates Confucianists and has killed several of them. Many people, including me, dislike Shi Huangdi because of too hard, too much, and miserable work without a lot of food. As I've been working today, there also have been many people breaking their backs from doing all of that work with stone. These moments are some of the saddest that I have ever had in my life, to see all of the people lying dead stiff or lying tired from work. For me, it is a treat to be working on such a masterpiece, but it is like rancid chocolate that chokes you, and makes you realize that we are all being tortured. We really deserve better than this foolish treatment and act. Why do the nobles and wealthy people get their ways out. It is simply not fair how they get what they want and all of us have to work our butts off for something for us peasants and those snobby, get what they want, wealthy and nobles. My life is fine, as I said before, but if the other people in our community helped we would be so happy and joyful. They would actually know what we feel like in our daily difficult lives. If we could trade places with them we would tell them how we feel and how they treat us in our daily lives. Simply unfair.

Dear diary,

Today we received a note from Shi Huangdi stating that we must go to help create a barrier that will keep china safe form nomadic invaders. The note says that we must leave now or they can come to our home and kill us. So we were forced to go. When we arrived, we had to go straight to work. It felt horrible to have to leave my home to fallow Shi's orders. We had to work constantly. If you stopped working without permission even for a minute you would be punished and sometimes even killed. We don't eat much, they only feed us sometimes but not very often. They sent me over to get bricks and I got in a lot of trouble because I was late getting back. I really don't like being controlled that much but they said that if I didn't complete my job they would kill me. If I haven't been worked to death or been killed due to refusing to work by the time the wall is finished I will be very proud of myself and my family for being able to take on such a difficult task. As of right now I am not happy at all, I am miserable and disappointed in myself allowing someone to treat me and my family like this . I would someday like to find a way to escape but I am afraid of what they would do to me if I was ever found. I hate living like this but there is absolutely nothing I or anyone else can do about it. My family is very afraid too and they are horrified of what Shi Huangdi might do to them if they were to refuse. I can't wait until I will be able to leave. I miss all my friends and I hope they aren't forced to come here also because it is not fun at all! I hope me and my family will all be able to survive this and someday maybe Shi Haungdi will realize what he is doing to all these innocent people. Although I don't think that will be happening any time soon I still hope it will. For now I am just going to do what I am told. Someday I will be free.

Sincerely,

Melanie

My name is Shi Hi. I work at the Great Wall, and lets just say things aren't the best. working for Shi Huangdi isn't as great as I thought it would be. When I figured out I was going to be working for Shi Huangdi at the Great Wall I was happy I got a job, but once I started working, I wish I had never started. I wish I had never started because I never realized how dangerous working at the Great Wall was. Working as a guard at the Great Wall is dangerous because if someone wanted to get to China and you wouldn't let them in, they could threaten to shoot you. One day a man wanted to get over to the other side and I told him no and he pulled out a gun. Once he pulled the trigger a man that was next to me had walked in front of me and took the bullet for me. I have always wondered why he took the bullet for me. Another reason I don't like working at the Great Wall is because of the weather. An example of when we had bad weather was on November 13 when a huge snow storm came rolling in. Since I am a peasant, I don't have a lot of clothes, so I about froze. One thing I do like about working at the Great Wall is that I meet a lot of new people and make a lot of new friends. Another reason I like working at the Great Wall is because I get to look at the pretty wildlife when the weather is nice. Today is November 17 and I found a stray dog along our side of the wall. On my break from working at the wall, I walked around town and asked everyone who's dog it was. No one knew so I went up to Shi Huangdi and asked him if I could take it home to my family. He said yes as long as it doesn't interfere with my work. I took the dog home to my family and named it Rex. Tomorrow I have the day off. My family and I are going to take a walk down to the Yellow River to see the wildlife and wash clothes. I have two boys with the names of Shi Hang and Shi Long. Shi Hang is 7 and Shi Long is 10. My husbands name is Shi Hehi. He is a working man. He works as a farmer in a field, and also works at the Great Wall like I do. We go to work together in the morning at 8:00. Our kids go next door to our neighbors and hang out with the kids over there. Our neighbors mom is a stay home mom, so she tends to watch them for us while we are at work. Working at the wall isn't as bad as I make it sound, I just personally don't like it. I work at the Great Wall for the little amount of money we make, and because I have too. Well I am getting pretty tired, so i'll get back to you tomorrow about how my day goes.

Dear Diary,

Today, I have started my second week of working on my portion of a great wall that is supposed to protect China from Mongols and other invaders. At first, I thought it was an honor above all others to be chosen to assist in such an important project. Now, I realize that it has to be the absolute worst job ever worked at by man. I work on filling the wooden planks with sand and mud constantly, with the exception of breaks for food, like the one I am taking now. The food is even worse and less abundant than the food I used to steal for my wife, children, and I, which is really saying something. Many of us, including me, are severely malnourished from the unsanitary bread and water we are given every day at dusk. No part of my helpless body can escape this dull, aching pain that has spread throughout my body, for it even hurts to write this. This pain is intensified even more by the fact that it rained yesterday, which made digging even harder and heavier than it already was. My muscles groan, no, scream in protest whenever I lift another heavy shovelful of dirt above my head to throw into the slowly-growing wall. The cold is probably the worst part of it all. It's the cold that makes me feel like my bones are merely made of brittle glass, just waiting to be shattered. It's the cold that slows my working speed to that of a turtle, which gives the higher-ranking Chinese men justification to whip me until I choose to deal with the freezing air rather than the crack of the whip and the searing pain it brings. It's the cold that makes it seem like the act of erecting this great wall is a sin against the gods themselves, and the cold is their way of punishing us for daring to create something that's possibly greater than them. It's the cold that makes me want to leave this terrible project behind me and return to my old life with my family. Oh, how I would love to just abandon this place, but the fear for my life keeps me here, for I still vividly recall what happened to the last person who tried to escape. That person was a friend of mine by the name of Yun-Ji-Su, who I bonded with shortly after my arrival here. He was a poor, broad-chested young man who yearned to sail through the Yellow Sea as a successful fisherman, but he was too poor to afford a boat and he was forced to work on the wall with me before he could fulfill his dream. As soon as midnight came on his first night here, he dropped his shovel and

discretely crept towards the edge of the work site, but before he make a run for the nearest city, I heard the yells of several of Shi Huangdi's men as they tackled him to the ground. The sound of Yun-Ji-Su's grunts as he attacked the guards around him rang through the cool, night air, but they were soon replaced by screams filled with agony and the cracking of whips as the men whipped my young friend until he passed out. From that point on, I never saw Yun-Ji-Su again, but I learned what happened to him as I listened to the conversation between two guards as I worked. "He wasn't easy to knock out, but we got him in the end," one guard told the other. "After that, we dumped the piece of filth in the Yellow River to drown. Serves him right." When I heard this, my body started shaking with uncontrollable rage. "So this is how you treat your people, Shi Huangdi?" I thought. "Killing them because they see a greater purpose to their lives than you? Well, I'm not planning on mourning your death; I'll be awaiting it with open arms"

Sincerely,

Chow-Yun-Fat

(Evan Schreiber)