

**Ancient China**

*Module 6*

**Lesson 3**



**MAIN IDEAS**

1. The first Qin emperor created a strong but strict government.
2. A unified China was created through Qin policies and achievements.

**Key Terms and People**

**Shi Huangdi** the first emperor of the Qin dynasty

**Great Wall** a barrier across China's northern frontier

**Lesson Summary**

**THE QIN EMPEROR'S STRONG GOVERNMENT**

The Warring States period marked a time in China when several states battled each other for power. One state, the Qin (CHIN), built a strong army that defeated the armies of the other states. In 221 BC, the Qin king Ying Zheng unified China. He gave himself the title **Shi Huangdi** (SHEE hwahng-dee), which means "first emperor."

Shi Huangdi was a follower of Legalist beliefs. He created a strong government with strict laws and severe punishments. He ordered the burning of all writings that did not agree with Legalism.

Shi Huangdi took land and power away from the lords. He made commoners work on government building projects. He divided China into districts, each with its own governor. This helped Shi Huangdi enforce taxes and a strict chain of command.

**A UNIFIED CHINA**

Qin rule brought other major changes to China. Under Shi Huangdi, new policies and achievements united the Chinese people. The emperor set up a uniform system of law. Rules and punishments were to be the same in all parts

*Part 1*

**How did Shi Huangdi's rule demonstrate his Legalist beliefs?**

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**List three ways Shi Huangdi unified China.**

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**Lesson 3, continued**

of the empire. He also standardized the written language. People everywhere were required to write using the same set of symbols. People from different regions could now communicate with one another in writing. This gave them a sense of shared culture and a common identity.

Shi Huangdi also set up a new monetary system. Standardized gold and copper coins became the currency for all of China. Weights and measures were also standardized. With all these changes and the unified writing system, trade became much easier. A new network of highways connected the capital to every part of the empire. Workers built canals to connect the country's rivers. Goods could be shipped faster and easier from north to south. Also, an irrigation system was built to make more land good for farming. Parts of the Qin irrigation system are still used today.

Shi Huangdi wanted to keep fierce nomads from the north from invading China. So he completed the **Great Wall**, a barrier across China's northern frontier. This was a major Qin achievement. The Qin connected earlier pieces of the wall to form a long, unbroken structure. Building the wall required years of labor from hundreds of thousands of soldiers and workers. Many of them died building the wall.

Although he unified China, many Chinese people hated Shi Huangdi's harsh ways. When he died in 210 BC, rebel forces formed across the country. One group attacked the Qin capital, and the new emperor surrendered. The Qin palace burned to the ground. Qin authority had disappeared. With no central government, China fell into civil war.

**Give three reasons why trade became easier under the Qin.**

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**What was the purpose of the Great Wall?**

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Lesson 3, *continued*

**CHALLENGE ACTIVITY**

part 2

**Critical Thinking: Make Judgments** If you had lived in China during the Qin dynasty, would you have joined a rebel group to overthrow the government? Be sure to consider the ideas of Confucianism and Daoism in your answer.

**DIRECTIONS** On the line provided before each statement, write **T** if a statement is true and **F** if a statement is false. If the statement is false, write the correct term on the line after each sentence that makes the sentence a true statement.

part 3

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. The emperor who unified China gave himself the title Qin dynasty, which means "first emperor."

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Shi Huangdi was a follower of Legalist political beliefs. He created a strong government with strict laws and severe punishments.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Under the Qin dynasty, China was unified, a network of roads and canals was built, and the written language was standardized.

Great Wall	Qin dynasty	Shi Huangdi
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**DIRECTIONS** Answer each question by writing a sentence that contains at least one word from the word bank.

part 4

4. Who ordered the destruction of all the writings that did not agree with Legalism?

5. What was the massive building project undertaken that required the labor of hundreds of thousands of soldiers and workers?