

Student Study Guide

History

1. When did the Ming Dynasty begin?
2. How did Jianwen, a 14 year old become Emperor?
3. Did he control all of China?
4. How old was Zheng He when he was made admiral?
5. What is he most famous for? (Resource note, National Geographic placed a drawing of Zheng He on its cover in 2006, calling him the greatest explorer in the world).
6. According to recently found records, Zheng He traveled the globe before Magellan and Columbus. Is this possible?
7. How long did the Ming Dynasty rule last?
8. Where is the current Forbidden City located?
9. What happened to the old, original Forbidden City mentioned in the book?
10. Why did the Prince of Yan move the location of the Forbidden City?
11. What did the Prince of Yan do with the family and relatives of the old Emperor once he took office?
12. What was Prince's name once he became Emperor?
13. Did Qi Tan exist?
14. What was his real name?
15. Did he have more power than the Emperor?
16. According to history, he didn't betray the Emperor. What happened to him once the Prince took over?
17. General Li is a fictional name. According to history, the real General betrayed the Emperor, allowing the Prince of Yan to enter the Forbidden City. What happened to him after the Prince of Yan took control?
18. What does history tell us about the fate of the Emperor and Empress?
19. What do you think happened to the Emperor and Empress?

Geology

1. Do Catacomb tunnels exist?
2. How do catacombs differ from volcanoes?
3. Is there really a volcano in Enumclaw, Washington with catacombs?

4. How are catacombs formed?
5. Where are catacombs located in the United States?
6. What is the study of volcanoes called?
7. Describe the difference between strata and shield volcanoes.
8. How do these volcanoes differ from the Datong volcanoes?
9. How are some famous volcanologists?

Writing Development

1. Plot

- a. Sometimes many ideas are combined to make a story. What did the author use and combine to write Catacombs and the Forbidden City?
- b. Some authors use dreams, or other areas of interest. Take two or three ideas from your dreams or interests and to create the plot of a story.
- c. Catacombs and the Forbidden City is written from two perspectives. When does a single point of view or perspective work better than writing with two perspectives?
 - i. How does this change the experience of the reader?
 - ii. How does this challenge the author?

2. Character development

- a. Gifts and symbols play a major role in the development of characters. The necklace that Almore used in the book was obviously very powerful because it could control the volcano. How did the necklace get to be so powerful?
 - i. What is the story behind this piece of flint becoming so important?
- b. How do the characters of Cage and Mia develop during the book?
 - i. What challenges does Mia face that matures her character?
 - ii. How does Cage overcome his anger towards his father? How does this impact him throughout the rest of the book?
- c. What writing techniques can be used to develop a character?

3. Writing outlines

- a. Some authors use a VAN prewrite. Write a prewrite using a VAN, then another using a standard outline, and a third using a scene outline format.

- b. What outline format did the author of Catacombs use?

Educator Guide for Catacombs and the Forbidden City

History

Historical Figures and Facts

1. When did the Ming Dynasty begin?
 - a. Approximately 1403, when the Prince of Yan overthrew Emperor Jianwen.
2. How did Jianwen, a 14 year old become Emperor?
 - a. His grandfather died, and Jianwen's own father was already dead. His grandfather chose the oldest son of his oldest son, who was Jianwen.
3. Did he control all of China?
 - a. Yes
4. How old was Zheng He when he was made admiral?
 - a. Reports differ, but most historians believe around 34.
5. What is he most famous for? (Resource note, National Geographic place a drawing of Zheng He on its cover in 2006, calling him the greatest explorer in the world).
 - a. He controlled the largest sailing exploration and navy in the world.
6. According to recently found records, Zheng He traveled the globe before Magellan and Columbus. Is this possible?
 - a. It is also believed that he circled the world before other, more famous, explorers.
7. How long did the Ming Dynasty rule last?
 - a. Almost three hundred years.
8. Where is the current Forbidden City located?
 - a. Beijing
9. What happened to the old, original Forbidden City mentioned in the book?
 - a. It was burned down during the invasion of the Prince of Yan.
10. Why did the Prince of Yan move the location of the Forbidden City?
 - a. He chose Beijing as his capital.
11. What did the Prince of Yan do with the family and relatives of the old Emperor once he took office?

- a. It was the practice of Emperors to imprison or kill the families and former government employees close to the previous rulers. The Prince of Yan executed tens of thousands people.
12. What was the prince's official name once he became Emperor?
- a. Emperor Yongle
13. Did Qi Tan exist?
- a. Yes
14. What was his real name?
- a. Huang Zicheng
15. Did he have more power than the Emperor?
- a. But many believe the general did.
16. According to history, he didn't betray the Emperor. What happened to him once the Prince took over?
17. General Li is a fictional name. According to history, the real General betrayed the Emperor, allowing the Prince of Yan to enter the Forbidden City.
18. What happened to the General after the Prince of Yan took control?
- a. Historical reports state he was killed as the Emperor couldn't trust his loyalty.
19. What does history tell us about the fate of the Emperor and Empress?
- a. History disputes the fate of the Emperor and Empress. Some state they were killed in the fire, while others believe they escaped disguised as monks.
20. What do you think happened to the Emperor and Empress?

Geology

1. Do Catacomb tunnels exist?
 - a. Yes
2. How are catacombs formed?
 - a. Pockets of air tubes are captured under volcanic lava flows. Catacombs are formed when the lava cools, then hardens, leaving tunnels of interconnecting tubes below the surface.
3. How do catacombs differ from volcanoes?
 - a. Volcanoes erupt magma, ash, and other matter, whereas Catacombs are static, hollowed tunnels below a hardened lava flow
4. Where are catacombs located in the United States?

- a. The most famous catacombs are the Lava Bed National Monument in northern California.
5. What is the study of volcanoes called?
 - a. Volcanology
6. How are some famous volcanologists?

Writing Development

4. Plot
 - a. Sometimes many ideas are combined to make a story. What did the author use and combine to write Catacombs and the Forbidden City?
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6. Writing outlines
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 - b. What outline format did the author of Catacombs use?

i. The author used a scene outline approach

Emperor Taizu (Zhu Yuanzhang) overthrew the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) and founded the Ming Dynasty. He made Nanjing the capital of China. In order to strengthen the frontier defense in the north, Zhu made his fourth son Zhu Di the Prince of Yan and gave Beiping to him as his domain. In 1398, Zhu Yuanzhang died and his grandson Zhu Yunwen succeeded the throne. Historically, he was known as Emperor Jianwen. After he came to power, he deeply felt a threat from various vassals with powerful troops under their command. Jianwen adopted the advice of Qi Tai, the minister of war, and Huang Zicheng, minister of the court of imperial sacrifices, to weaken the power of the vassals. In the sixth lunar month of the year when he ascended to the throne, the emperor began to depose Prince of Zhou, Prince of Xiang and three other princes in outlying areas. Zhu Di, the Prince of Yan, who had 100,000 troops under his command, was the most powerful vassal. He launched a punitive expedition against Qi and Huang under the pretext of "no honest ministers but treacherous officials in the imperial court," and won the war, seizing the throne in Nanjing. (Emperor Jianwen was nowhere to be found.) Qi Tai, Huang Zicheng and other senior officials, as well as their families, were executed. Tens of thousands of people were involved in the case and executed. In 1403, Zhu Di changed the reign title to Yongle and issued an imperial edict to "take Beiping as Beijing" (Northern Capital). He then decided to move the capital. In the first lunar month of the 19th year of the reign of Yongle (1421), Beijing became the capital.