

# WorldHistory Studies Weekly

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## Gifts of Ancient China

Do you enjoy fireworks or playing with a yo-yo? Thank the Chinese people for these inventions! As you hold this newspaper, you should know the Chinese first developed paper and block printing. People in other cultures were using clay tablets and woven papyrus reeds. And, if they wanted to copy something, they did it by hand. Chinese block printing made books easier to print. Do you use a toothbrush or like playing soccer? Scientists think these originated in China thousands of years ago too.

The Chinese gave the world many more gifts. Paper money, eyeglasses, umbrellas, waterproof clothing and the harness and stirrup were all Chinese inventions. The ancient Chinese were the first to use coal for heating and made cloth from the cocoons of silk worms. They used kites as a form of communication, not just as something to do on a windy day. The Chinese made the first compasses using lodestone. They invented gunpowder for firecrackers, not weapons. Some people also say the Chinese, not the Dutch, made the first windmills. In this issue we will learn more about the ancient Chinese and their contributions to the world.

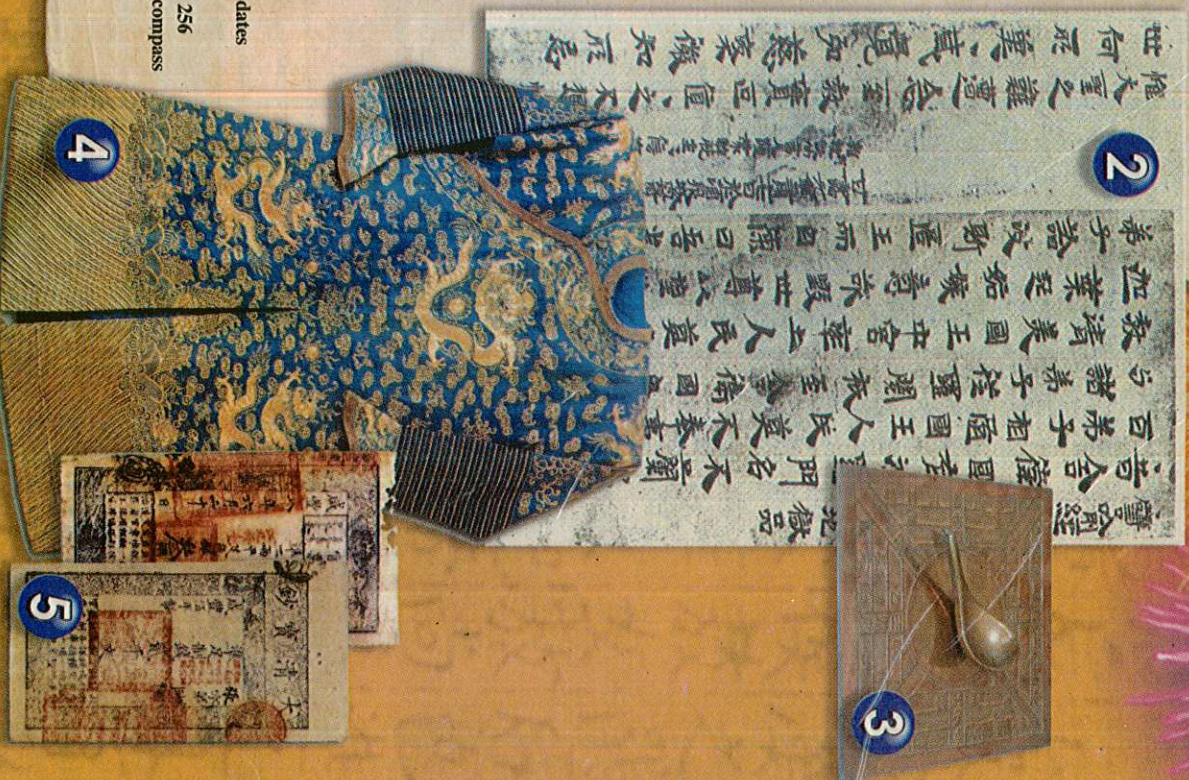
What do you know about the country of China? Ever hear of the Great Wall, the Forbidden City or Confucius? China is part of Asia and is the fourth largest country in the world. People have lived in China since 5000 B.C., which makes it one of the world's oldest civilizations. When you think of mummies, or preserved bodies, you probably think of the ancient Egyptians—but the Chinese have mummies too. In the 1980s, the world learned about wonderfully

preserved mummies from northwestern China.

Called the Takla Makan mummies, they are more than 4,000 years old. That makes them hundreds of years older than the Egyptian mummy of King Tut. Archaeologists have found more than 100 mummies in China. One of the mummies is 6 feet, 6 inches tall. That's tall, even today. With long, reddish hair, this mummy has a purple-red suit and horizontally striped stockings of red, yellow and blue—pretty colorful! He also was found with not one, but 10 hats. Archaeologists also found a baby girl with red wool in her nostrils and little blue stones covering her eye sockets. She was buried with a cow-horn cup and a bottle.

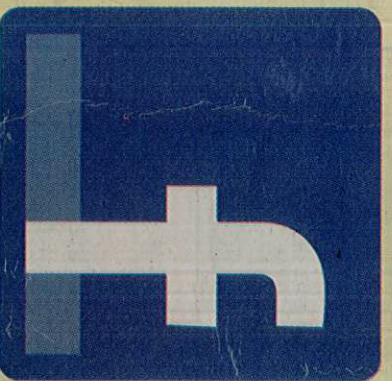
What makes these mummies even more unusual is that they are not Chinese—they are Caucasian. How on Earth did these Caucasian mummies with their pointed noses, blond and red hair and deep-set eyes find their way into China thousands of years ago? No one knows!

1. The earliest documentation of fireworks dates back to 7th century China.
2. World's oldest paper book, dating to AD 256
3. A Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) easy compass
4. A Silk court robe from the 1890s
5. A Qing Dynasty banknote



## Connections Can Facebook Save Dying Languages?

Can you say a few words in Slietz Dee-mi? No? How about saying "hello" in Aka? If you can't, you're not alone! These two languages and 3,500 more could become extinct by the end of this century. Almost 80 percent of the world's population now speaks only one percent of the world's 7,000 languages. This has happened because of globalization. Globalization means that countries are more connected through trade, money and



workers. When countries work together, people must be able to communicate with each other. That means many people have to learn another language. English is the main language used throughout the world for business and the Internet. Why is this a problem? When the last person who is able to speak a particular language dies, some of the knowledge that is found within that language dies with them. A language contains the history

of its people, how they used their environment and their beliefs and ideas. Technology may just save many of these languages from extinction! With YouTube, Facebook and other forms of social media, languages that are spoken by even 5 or ten people can be taught to others around the world.

National Geographic has been working on the Enduring Voices Project. Its goals are to record native speakers of endangered languages into talking dictionaries and help communities learn ways to save their languages from extinction. What language do you want to help save?



# History of Ancient China

## Paperor Qin

Born in 259 B.C., Ying Zheng united the different kingdoms of China by 221 B.C. He became the first emperor of a united China and called himself Emperor Qin Shi Huang. He was also called Ch'in. He made everyone use the same writing system, money, weights and measures. He had roads built to connect the different kingdoms and erected beautiful palaces in the capital of Xian. The name China came from Ch'in.

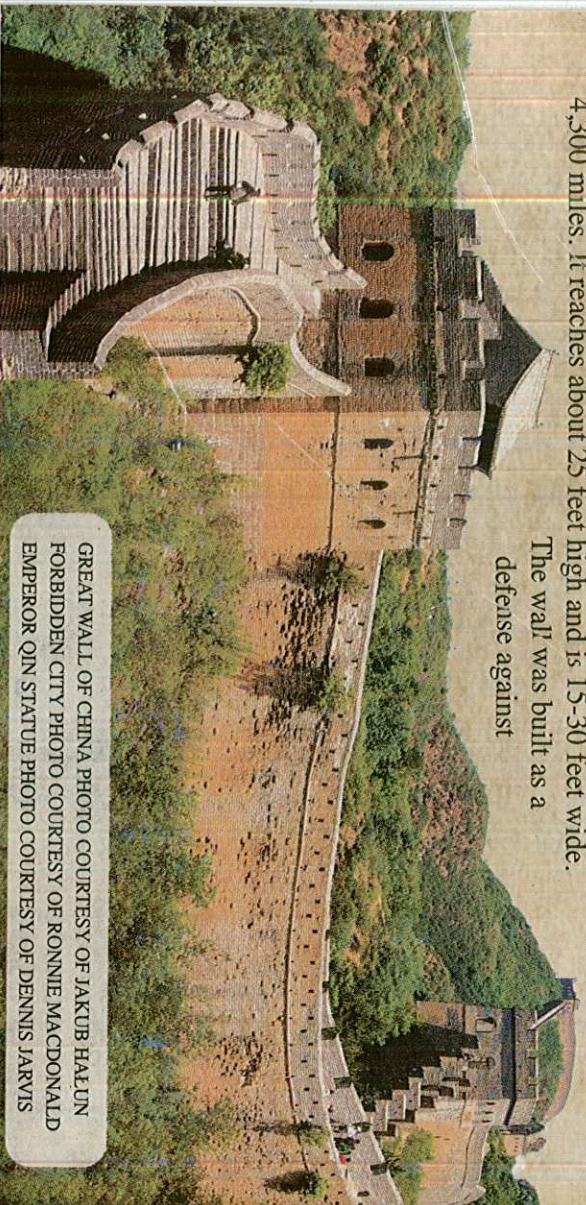
Emperor Qin didn't like scholars and their books. He thought education for the common people took time away from growing crops. He buried some scholars alive and sent hundreds of scholars to work creating the Great Wall of China. Qin also ordered the scholars' books to be burned, except those about medicine and farming. He didn't like the teachings of Confucius and ordered his writings burned too.

Emperor Qin's laws required people to spy on one another. Because of his cruel rule, Qin lived in fear that some people would harm him. It is said that he rarely slept in the same palace two nights in a row. He sent stand-ins who resembled him to meetings where his life could be at risk. Thousands of workers toiled for 11 years to build his royal tomb. He died in 210 B.C. after drinking a potion he thought would give him eternal life.

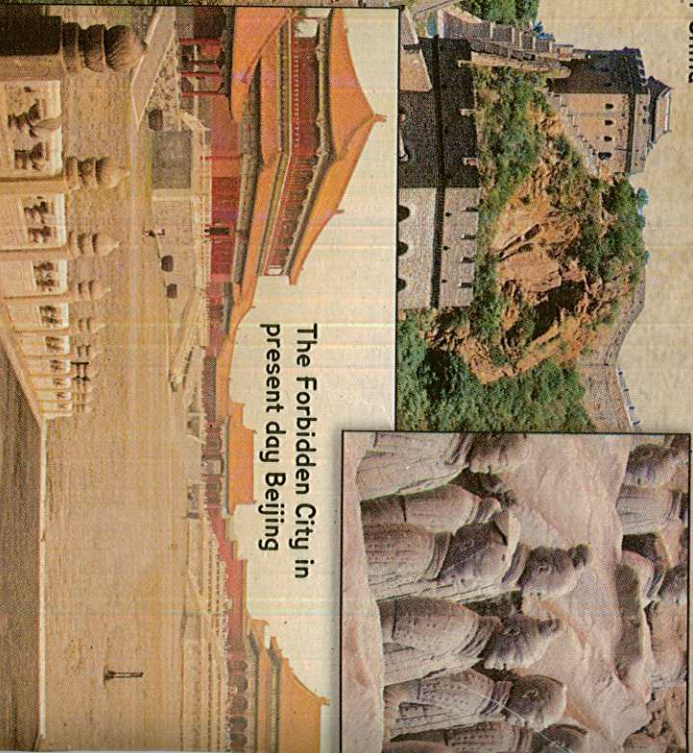
## Great Wall

One of the most famous historic structures in China is the Great Wall. Around the year 220 B.C., Emperor Qin began the huge undertaking of connecting the many different walls of China, some dating back to 400 B.C. Built entirely by hand, the Great Wall snakes up mountain ranges, down into valleys and across deserts of northern China. The Great Wall is the longest structure ever built and stretches close to 4,300 miles. It reaches about 25 feet high and is 15-30 feet wide.

The wall was built as a defense against



GREAT WALL OF CHINA PHOTO COURTESY OF JAKUB HALUN  
FORBIDDEN CITY PHOTO COURTESY OF RONNIE MACDONALD  
EMPEROR QIN STATUE PHOTO COURTESY OF DENNIS JARVIS



The Forbidden City in present day Beijing

invaders. Today, the wall can't keep outsiders from entering China, but long ago it worked well. In addition to a defense against invaders, the wall provided a way to transport men and supplies throughout the Chinese empire.

Fires were the communication between watchtowers of the wall at night. In daytime, watchmen used smoke signals. It is said that the amount of dirt and stone used constructing the wall could circle the Earth with an 8-foot high wall!

## Terracotta Soldiers

Found in 1974 by local people digging wells, the Terracotta Army of Emperor Qin is truly amazing. Nearly 8,000 life-like soldiers have been found, as have hundreds of life-size horses. No two soldiers are alike—they all have different facial expressions and hairstyles. Made of terracotta clay, the lower part of the figures' bodies are solid and the upper bodies are hollow. Archaeologists have also unearthed wooden chariots and weapons. The Terracotta Army guards the tomb of Qin Shi Huang near Xian. The tomb is a popular tourist attraction in China.

## Silk Road

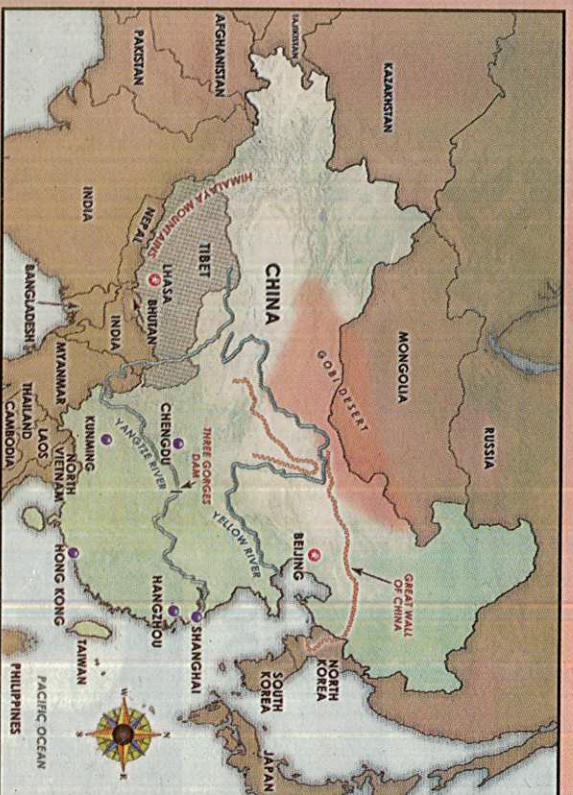
The Silk Road was the name for the network of trade routes between China and lands to the west in ancient times. Merchants gave items like silk and spices to nomadic people to trade during their travels. Monks, missionaries and even soldiers traded with the people of India, Persia,

The Great Wall of China

## China

China is surrounded by the Gobi Desert on the northwest, the Himalayan Mountains on the southwest and the Pacific Ocean on the east. These natural barriers allowed China to stay isolated from the rest of the world for many years and develop a civilization without much contact with other cultures. In recent years, China has begun to be more influenced by western culture. In 2008, China hosted the Summer Olympics in Beijing, China's capital city.

The largest river in China is called the Yangtze River, and the country's largest city, Shanghai, is found at the river's mouth. Another important river is the Huang Hè or Yellow River. It is also called the River of Sorrows because when it floods, it destroys many things. The Yellow River collects silt (mud) as it flows, making it the muddiest river in the world. In 486 B.C., Chinese workers built what is now the world's oldest and longest canal. It connects the Huang Hè and Yangtze rivers and is 1,114 miles



idea.

Find Tibet on the map. China has controlled Tibet since the 1950s. This is a source of tension, because Tibetans want independence from Chinese rule. To bring more Chinese to the Tibetan area, the Chinese built the world's highest railway to the Tibet's capital, Lhasa, in 2006.

## World Regions

long. It is still an important waterway today.

China has the world's largest population, with more than 1.3 billion people. That creates a great need to supply energy to so many people. The Chinese built the world's largest hydroelectric dam to fill that need. Called the Three Gorges Dam, more than 1 million people (about as many as live in the state of Maine) had to leave their homes when workers built the 600-foot tall dam and created a reservoir that extends nearly 400 miles. The project submerged (put under water) hundreds of cities, towns, villages and archaeological sites, so not everyone agrees the dam was a good

## World Biography

### Zheng He: Ancient Explorer



Zheng He was born in 1371 and became the most famous explorer of ancient China. Zheng He lived at a time when the Ming emperors of China wanted to learn about the world outside of China. Zheng He was an educated man who spoke several languages. He also knew a lot about world geography. The emperor asked Zheng He to lead a fleet of ships and venture through oceans to other lands. He's first voyage included more than 27,000 men—sailors, soldiers, artisans, interpreters and more. His fleet included 62 ships! He brought along porcelain, silk, jade and other trade items. Zheng He brought back ivory, timber, pearls and some very unique animals Chinese people had never seen before. He brought lions, ostriches, zebras, leopards and even a giraffe.

Zheng He went on seven ocean voyages in his lifetime, traveling to the lands of India, Africa and Vietnam. He held the title "Admiral of the Western Seas."

Some people say Zheng He may have crossed the Pacific Ocean and reached North America in 1420, decades before Columbus. In 1433, Zheng He died while traveling the Indian Ocean. As was the custom, this famed explorer was buried at sea. After Zheng He died, a new emperor declared there would be no more sea voyages and had all ships destroyed. The emperor also forbade anyone to build new ships. China's trading and contact with other lands came to an end. This isolation lasted for many years.

ZHENG HE STATUE PHOTO COURTESY OF ZN.KARTIKA

Arabia, North Africa and even Europe. The trek was dangerous because of bandits, harsh climates and rough terrain. Eventually, Chinese goods found their way to cities as far away as Rome. Goods from the western lands found their way to China too. But goods weren't the only things traded on the Silk Road. When the people traded, they also shared their culture with each other.

### Chinese Writing

Turtle shells and ox bones helped archaeologists learn about ancient Chinese writing. In ancient times, people wrote fortunes on turtle shells and ox bones and then threw them into a fire. The fire made cracks in the shell or bone. A diviner, a person trained to read the cracks, revealed whether the fortune would come true. These turtle shell and ox bone writings date back over 3,500 years. The pictures don't stand for letters or sounds, but whole words, which makes learning Chinese very difficult. In fact, you need to know about 2,500 Chinese characters in order to read a textbook. To help more people learn to read and write, a new writing system, called pinyin, is being taught. Pinyin uses the Roman alphabet.

### The Forbidden City

The Forbidden City was home to several emperors of the Ming and Qing Chinese dynasties. Work on the city began in 1406 and continued for 14 years. Millions of workers labored to build the palace that 24 emperors would call home. When the Forbidden City was completed, a 26-foot wall and a 20-foot moat kept people out.

For 500 years, most people were forbidden to enter. That's how the city got its name. With 9,000 rooms and 800 buildings, it is the world's largest palace complex. In 1949, the Forbidden City in Beijing was opened to all citizens of China and is now a museum.



The Terracotta Soldiers of Emperor Qin

Emperor Qin

### This Week's Question

#### How was silk discovered?



Legend says that Chinese Empress Lei-Tzu accidentally discovered silk. While she drank tea under the shade of a mulberry tree, a cocoon fell into her teacup. The strands unraveled as she took out the cocoon. Garment makers began to create beautiful silk fabric from the cocoon strands. Only the very wealthy wore silk garments.

For almost 2,500 years, only the Chinese knew how to make silk fabric. Maybe this was because the penalty was death for anyone who told the secret of how silk was made. Eventually, the secret got out. In A.D. 440, a Chinese princess supposedly smuggled out silkworms in her hairpiece. In A.D. 550, two monks took silkworm eggs out of China in their walking canes. Why do you think the Chinese wanted to keep silk to themselves? Would you have tried smuggling silkworms knowing you would be put to death if you were caught?

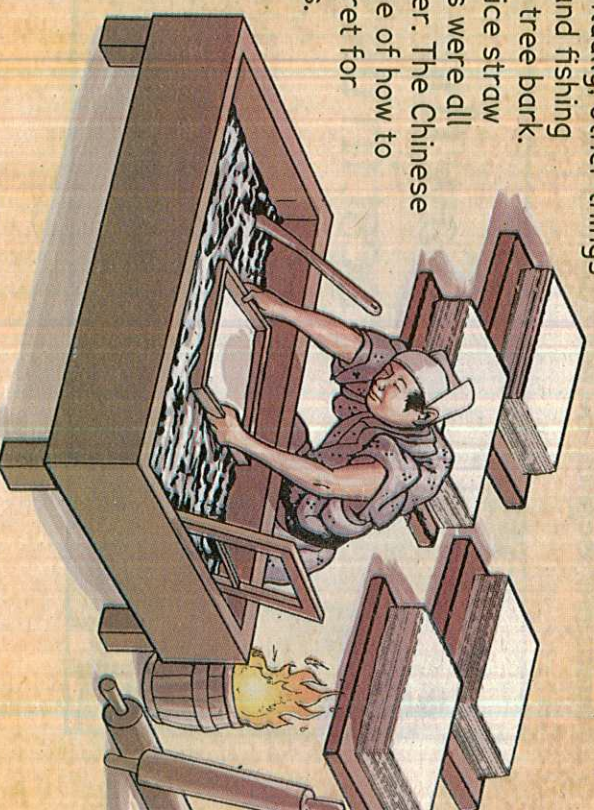
## Trades & Technology

### Paper Making

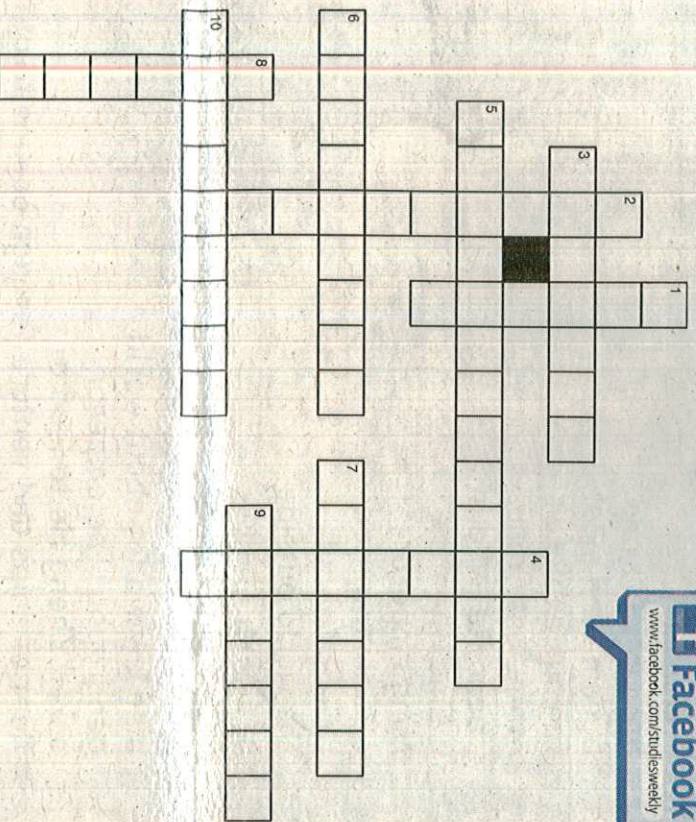
The Chinese were the first to use paper as we know it. Paper made of silk was very expensive, and bamboo, another material often used, was too heavy. Around A.D. 105, a man named Ts'ai Lun discovered something else that could be used for writing. He found a way to make paper from tree pulp. Ts'ai Lun soaked chopped pieces of mulberry tree bark in water. Then he mashed it up, pressed it to remove most of the water and let it dry in the sun. His inexpensive writing material was a big hit. Eventually, other things such as old rags and fishing nets replaced the tree bark.

Vegetable fiber, rice straw and bamboo canes were all used to make paper. The Chinese kept the knowledge of how to make paper a secret for hundreds of years.

In fact, it took about 500 years for this idea to reach Europe.



Name \_\_\_\_\_



**ACROSS**

- 3. ancient explorer of China
- 5. home to 24 emperors
- 6. longest structure ever built
- 7. animal brought to China by Zheng He
- 9. a danger on the Silk Road
- 10. material used to make ancient compass

**DOWN**

- 1. new writing system in China
- 2. Chinese picture writing symbols
- 4. network of trade routes between China and lands to the west
- 8. used to make silk



As you read this week's lesson, circle or highlight all proper nouns with any color pen or highlighter. This will help you find some of the crossword answers and get ready for this week's test.

*Activity*

vegetable oil into the soot (the Chinese used tree sap). Use a cotton swab as a writing instrument.

Here are some Web sites that will help you learn to draw Chinese characters. The first one will show an animation of how to draw several different characters:

- [http://www.china-family-adventure.com/chinese-writing-symbols.html#U3PQES\\_c3TW](http://www.china-family-adventure.com/chinese-writing-symbols.html#U3PQES_c3TW)
- <http://www.china-family-adventure.com/chinese-writing-symbols.html>

[http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/sites/default/files/pdf/Chinese\\_calligraphy\\_number\\_poster.pdf](http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/sites/default/files/pdf/Chinese_calligraphy_number_poster.pdf)

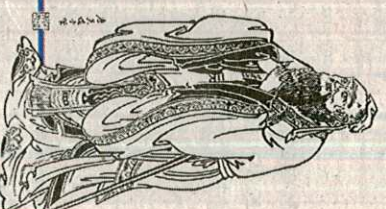
木 卅 犬

Tree

Grass

Dog

像 教 行 子 孔 師 先



respect those in authority, such as government leaders, teachers and parents. He believed the needs of society and family should come before one's own needs. He thought the best way to live one's life could be summed up this way: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

*Let's Write*

Here's your chance to be a philosopher. Read the article about Confucius. Choose one of the quotes by this famous ancient philosopher and write a paragraph to explain what it means. Then, come up with your own statement about something you believe is true and write a paragraph to explain your thinking. Remember to check your writing for proper spelling, grammar and punctuation.

**Ancient Chinese Writing**

Follow the directions below to make paper and ink similar to those used in ancient China. Then try your hand at writing Chinese characters.

**To make paper**

Cut up some newspaper and tissues and soak them in warm water. Use a blender and make a pulp. Place the pulp on a screen and use a sponge to press out the extra water. Transfer the pulp from the screen to a piece of fabric and mold into a rectangle. Allow the pulp to dry completely. Carefully remove the fabric, and you have paper!

**To make lampblack ink**

**Materials**

- old porcelain plates
- candles
- lighter
- cotton swabs
- fire extinguisher (just to be safe)

Hold a lit candle under a porcelain plate until a good amount of carbon soot forms. Next, stir some

**Confucius**

Confucius said, "Seal your mouth three times before speaking." He also said, "By nature, people are pretty much alike—it is learning and practice that sets us apart."

These are just two of many sayings of the Chinese wise man. Born as Kong Qiu in 551 B.C., Confucius became a famous philosopher. He was also taught that one must

Saw the best in us.

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