



# Architectural Historian: Great Wall of China

## Adventure Description:

In this adventure, you will think like an architectural historian and evaluate a restoration plan that might be used to restore the Great Wall of China.

## Activity

Teacher note: This lesson is long and can be completed across multiple days. If you want to complete it across multiple days, complete Steps 1-3 on one day and Steps 4-5 on another day.

### Step 1: Background Information on Architectural Historians and Great Wall of China (5 minutes)

- Show [Video: Great Wall of China](#).
- Explain to students that there has been a lot of controversy surrounding restoration projects on the Great Wall. For example, there was negative press after a restoration project rebuilt part of the Great Wall using modern materials (like cement and metal) instead of original materials (like clay bricks and mud). In addition, parts of the wall were rebuilt in a way that made the wall look smooth, which was not what the wall looked like when it was originally built. The original wall had a more uneven texture because it was made by hand, not with modern machines. The color of the cement is also different than the color of the original wall. Show [Handout: Examples of Pre- and Post-Restoration on the Great Wall](#).
- Explain that architectural historians advocate for structures to be rebuilt in a way that show historical accuracy. Historical accuracy refers to the original intention and design of the structure.
- Ask students how they think architectural historians can provide valuable feedback on how to restore the Great Wall in a historically accurate way. Show [Handout: Being an Architectural Historian](#). Discuss how architectural historians are experts on understanding the original purpose of the wall, materials that were used to build the wall, and what the original design looked like.

### Step 2: Activity Explanation (5 minutes)

- Explain to students that they will be divided into groups and each given a proposal from a restoration team that wants to restore a specific part of the Great Wall. Students will think like architectural historians and carefully evaluate the restoration team's proposal to determine whether the proposal should be used for a restoration project or whether it needs to be revised.
- Provide students with [Handout: Steps to Evaluate Proposals](#). As a class, read through the steps.

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## Step 3: Evaluating Proposals (35 minutes)

- Divide students into groups. Provide each group with the following: one proposal from [Handout: Group Assignments](#) and [Handout: Additional Information to Use](#).
- Have students begin evaluating the proposals.
- As students are reading proposals and discussing potential problems, ask the following questions: How do the sources provide additional information that you can use to assess whether the proposal you are given is a good idea? Do you think that the plan to assess the wall's current damage has enough detail? For example, if your sheet said that the evaluator will spend one day at the wall writing down a few notes, is that information sufficient enough to create an entire restoration plan?
- As students are filling out rubrics, ask the following questions:
  - Do you think that there needs to be extensive changes made to the proposal you are reviewing?
  - What do you think is the most important item that needs to be fixed in the proposal?
  - What would happen if architectural historians didn't review these proposals?
  - Is there additional information you wish you had to analyze the proposal? Would it be helpful to consult with another type of professional?
- Teacher notes: You can have groups submit their rubrics to you for feedback. See [Handout: Teacher Key](#) for feedback and ratings on each proposal. While there are no right or wrong scores, we suggest providing groups with questions to consider and notes on what other architectural historians might think about if they were evaluating the proposal. If you are not going to have groups submit their rubrics, continue on to next step, and students will present their evaluation to the rest of the class.

## Step 4: Class Discussion (20+ minutes)

- Explain to students that the class will now act as a committee that is reviewing proposals. Each group will come to the front of the class and give a recap of the proposal that was submitted. Then, groups will describe how they evaluated the proposal, what the most prominent concerns were, and the overall score they gave.
- After groups have presented, discuss whether the scores were close or extremely different. What factors contributed to this?
- Then, discuss how group members might have disagreed on what score to give on different parts of the rubric. Even though architectural historians all have similar intentions in regards to restoring buildings in historically accurate ways, they might have different opinions on whether a plan is a good idea.

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## Step 5: Build a 3D Model (20 minutes)

- Teacher note: This step is optional!
- Explain to students that they will build a 3D model that shows how they would repair the section of the Great Wall that they reviewed in the proposal. For example, if a group reviewed a proposal for the military fort, they will now build a 3D model of the military fort and repair it in a way that is historically accurate and safe.
- They should use art supplies and building materials to create a 3D model.
- They should also use a separate piece of paper to list the materials that they would use to build the wall and their plan to restore it to make sure it is done in an historically accurate way.
- Groups can then present these models to the class, explaining the similarities and differences between the model they created and the proposal they evaluated.

## Materials List

### Provided online:

- Video: Great Wall of China
- Handout: Examples of Pre- and Post-Restoration on the Great Wall
- Handout: Being an Architectural Historian
- Handout: Group Assignments
- Handout: Additional Information to Use
- Handout: Steps to Evaluate Proposals
- Handout: Teacher Key

### Not provided:

- Art supplies and building materials (ex: tape, scissors, popsicle sticks, recycled materials)

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