

Great Wall of China Assignment

—Analyzing the Benefits and Costs of Constructing the Great Wall—

The Great Wall of China is still standing today as one of the most visible landmark achievements of ancient China. Over two thousand years later, the Great Wall still inspires wonder in everyone who sees it. But why would the Qin emperor want to build such a wall? And at what cost? Read the following passage and identify the benefits and the costs of the construction of the Great Wall of China.

The most obvious benefit of building the Great Wall was protection. The wall helped to prevent nomadic horsemen from invading China's farms along the northern boarder. These horsemen could strike quickly and disappear back into the hills. They made agriculture very difficult for farmers. The Great Wall also kept farmers living along the boarder from joining the nomads.

Building the Great Wall also enabled Qin Shi Huangdi, the first and only emperor of the Qin, to get rid of many of his enemies. He ordered them to work on distant parts of the wall. He also sent soldiers to work on the wall. As a result, the soldiers could not band together and rise up against the emperor.

However, building the Great Wall is estimated to have required more than 300,000 workers, most of whom were drafted to work against their will. In addition, thousands of farmers and merchants were forced to supply these workers with food, shelter, clothing and tools. Most of these supplies never made it to the work sites; bandits roaming the countryside robbed the supply caravans. The work of constructing the wall was so difficult and the living conditions were so harsh that thousands of workers died. Often they were buried within the Great Wall itself. Thus the Great Wall of China gained the gruesome title of "the world's longest cemetery."

Task: Read the passage on the other side of this page. Identify three benefits that came from the construction of the Great Wall of China *as well as* three costs. List the costs and benefits in the chart below.

Benefits	Costs
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Imagine that you are Li Su, chief minister to the Qin Emperor Shi Huangdi. You have been assigned the task of recommending to the emperor whether or not he should order construction of the Great Wall of China. You must weight the benefits and the costs and write a recommendation. You are to write a letter to the emperor. Your letter must explain both the probable benefits of the Great Wall as well as warn of the potential hazards and problems. Finally, give your opinion on whether the Great Wall should be constructed.

Your letter must contain the following:

1. List and explain three different benefits of constructing the Great Wall.
2. List and explain three different costs of constructing the Great Wall.
3. Include your recommendation based on the costs and benefits *as well as* your reasoning behind your recommendation.
4. Your letter should be written from the perspective of Li Su. Make your letter creative and realistic. What information would the emperor want to know? What would Li Su say?
5. Your letter must be both neat and legible.