

Mathematics in Ancient China

1 Getting Started

Mathematics was developed in China independently of the mathematics that was developed in Europe and the Middle East. For example, the Pythagorean Theorem and the computation of pi were used in China prior to the time when China and Europe began communicating with each other.

Essential Question How have tools and knowledge from the past influenced modern day mathematics?



Sample: Here are the names and symbols that were used in ancient China to represent the digits from 1 through 10.

1	yi	一
2	er	二
3	san	三
4	si	四
5	wu	五
6	liu	六
7	qi	七
8	ba	八
9	jiu	九
10	shi	十



Life-size Terra-cotta Warriors



A Chinese Abacus

2 Things to Include

- Describe the ancient Chinese book *The Nine Chapters on the Mathematical Art* (c. 100 B.C.). What types of mathematics are contained in this book?
- How did the ancient Chinese use the abacus to add and subtract numbers? How is the abacus related to base 10?
- How did the ancient Chinese use mathematics to build large structures, such as the Great Wall and the Forbidden City?
- How did the ancient Chinese write numbers that are greater than 10?
- Describe how the ancient Chinese used mathematics. How does this compare with the ways in which mathematics is used today?



Ancient Chinese Teapot



The Great Wall of China

3 Things to Remember

- Add your own illustrations to your project.
- Organize your math stories in a folder, and think of a title for your report.



Chinese Guardian Fu Lions