



ENGINEERING

AN EMPIRE™

SERIES CLASSROOM GUIDE

Identification Terms

Using the dictionary at www.merriam-webster.com, an Internet resource such as www.History.com or an encyclopedia, students should define or explain the significance of the following terms:

Antiquity

Architecture

Behemoth

Decedent

Fortification

Foundation

Impregnable

Monetary

Opulent

Pinnacle

Introduction

The *Engineering an Empire™* series takes students back in time to explore the development and innovations that have characterized the world's great empires. The series focuses on architectural and engineering innovations, showing how political leaders envisioned and implemented some of the world's most lasting structures and monuments. Beginning more than five-thousand years ago with the unbelievable precision of the Egyptian pyramids, the fourteen documentaries in this collection explore several of the world's key civilizations including: China, France, Britain, Mexico and more, showing how and why each empire flourished.

Cutting-edge graphics and stunning location footage reanimate the streets of such ancient cities as Carthage and Rome, while expert interviews trace the rise of each empire and the technological achievements that paved the way for critical advancements in infrastructure and design. Students will learn about important historical eras and changes, along with key concepts and scientific principles. Historians and other experts explain how and why ancient techniques and structures continue to shape our world today.

Topics Covered

The topics covered throughout *Engineering an Empire* include: Ancient Greece, Persia, Carthage, Russia, China, The Aztecs, The Mayans, Renaissance Italy, The Byzantines, Napoleon's France and Industrial Britain.

Curriculum Links

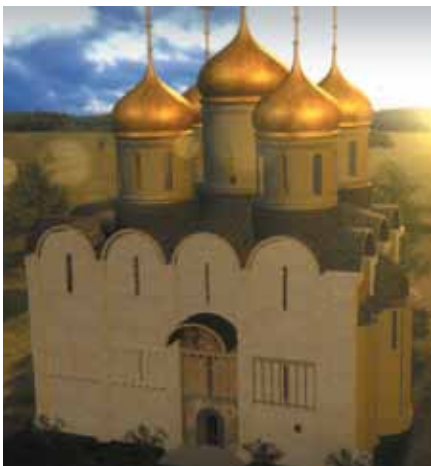
Engineering an Empire would be useful for classes on World History, Architecture, Civics, Political Sciences, and Government. It is appropriate for 8th graders and above, including college students.





Discussion Questions

1. How does an empire typically begin? What are the signs that one civilization might be poised to become a long-lasting empire?
2. Where are the biggest cities in empires typically located? Why do you think this is? What advantages does the terrain pose? Disadvantages?
3. Why do you think leaders of empires place great importance on building architectural monuments? How do these monuments shape their legacy? Do you think they intended for the structures to last forever?



4. What costs are involved in building a great structure? Do you think the final product is worth the cost? Why?
5. Do you think there is a pattern among how the empires featured in this series declined? What are some of the reasons an empire may lose power? What is left behind by a great empire or culture when it ceases to exist?





Extended Activities

- 1. Charting an Empire.** Each program in this series traces the rise of an empire, exploring key leaders and their accomplishments. During or after watching one of these programs, answer the following questions: What time period does this episode cover? Who were the key leaders, and what were the major advancements and innovations of this era? How is this empire remembered today? How does it compare with others you have studied?
- 2. What's the Source?** Historians and other experts use primary sources to determine new information about the past. What kinds of sources are used by historians in this series? Online or at the library, find an additional primary source related to the topic of the show. These sources could be a letter, image, poem, painting or any other primary source. What insight does this source give you into this culture and time period? Share these with your larger class or group.
- 3. Who's Leading?** Choose one leader you learned about by watching a program in this series. Write a short essay (1-3 pages) on some of the tactics or accomplishments he or she used in building their empire. What characteristics made him/her successful? What were their downfalls or weaknesses?
- 4. A Favorite.** The series explores in great detail many of the most famous structures ever built. Have you ever been to one of them? If not, is there one in particular you would like to visit? Why? Make a short presentation to the class about a building, monument or historic site you have seen in person or one you would like to visit. You can use any form you would like to deliver the presentation: a model, PowerPoint, a poster or a short essay.

Books

Harman, Chris. *A People's History of the World: From the Stone Age to the New Millennium*. (Verso, 2008).

Burbank, Jane. *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*. (Princeton University Press, 2011).

Borden, Daniel, Jerzy Elzanowski, Joni Taylor and Stephanie Tuerk. *Architecture: A World History*. (Abrams, 2008).

Salvadori, Mario. *The Art of Construction: Projects and Principles for Beginning Engineers & Architects*. (Chicago Review Press, 2000).

Additional Websites

Ancient History on History.com:

www.history.com/topics/ancient-history

UNESCO World Heritage Centre:

whc.unesco.org

Library of Congress World Digital Library:

www.wdl.org/en

Internet Ancient History Sourcebook:

www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbook.asp

History of World Empires:

www.AllEmpires.com

