Comparing Information

The First Emperor
Book Excerpt from The Tomb Robbers by Daniel Cohen

Digging Up the Past: Discovery and Excavation of Shi Huangdi’s Tomb
Magazine Article by Helen Wieman Bledsoe

How can we uncover the past?

To learn about the recent past, we might ask older friends and relatives to recall events they lived through, or to talk about the way life used to be. To explore the very distant past, we have to dig deeper—literally! The two selections you are about to read describe an amazing discovery that has uncovered an important part of China’s ancient history.

Quickwrite
Think about a time period you wish you knew more about. It might be when your parents were children, when your grandparents were children, or even thousands of years ago. Write down what span of years you would like to learn more about and why.
ELEMENTS OF NONFICTION: SYNTHESIZING INFORMATION

There can be dozens, even hundreds, of resources available on the same topic. However, not every source presents the same information on a topic. When you read multiple sources on the same topic, you synthesize information; that is, you combine information from different sources into a broad understanding of a topic.

As you read the texts, you’ll notice that they are about the same topic. First, determine the focus of each selection. Then, make logical connections across the texts in order to come up with a synthesis, or combination, of the information that the texts convey.

READING STRATEGY: SET A PURPOSE FOR READING

Your purpose for reading these two selections is to synthesize information. A chart can help you.

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VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Make a chart like the one shown. Write each vocabulary word in the appropriate column, and then write a brief definition of each word you already know.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD LIST</th>
<th>ancestor</th>
<th>disintegrate</th>
<th>reconstruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>archaeological</td>
<td>excavation</td>
<td>surpass</td>
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<td></td>
<td>barbarian</td>
<td>immortality</td>
<td>preservation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>dedicate</td>
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Complete the activities in your Reader/Writer Notebook.
Here is what may turn out to be the greatest archaeological find of modern times, one that may ultimately outshine even the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun. It is the tomb of the emperor Ch'in Shih Huang Ti. Now admittedly the name Ch'in Shih Huang Ti is not exactly a household word in the West. But then neither was Tutankhamun until 1922. The major difference is that while Tutankhamun himself was historically insignificant, Ch’in Shih Huang Ti was enormously important in Chinese history. In many respects he was really the founder of China.

1. Tutankhamun (tōt’āng-kā’man): Egyptian pharaoh whose tomb was found intact in 1922.
2. Ch’in Shih Huang Ti (chīn shīh hwáng’ dī): The use of the word Ch’in (or Qin) at the beginning of the emperor’s name is a formal title that refers to the place from which the emperor came.
The future emperor started out as the king of the small state Ch’in. At the time, the land was divided up among a number of small states, all constantly warring with one another. Ch’in was one of the smallest and weakest. Yet the king of Ch’in managed to overcome all his rivals, and in the year 221 B.C. he proclaimed himself emperor of the land that we now know as China. From that date until the revolution of 1912, China was always ruled by an emperor. The name China itself comes from the name Ch’in.

Shih Huang Ti ruled his empire with ferocious efficiency. He had the Great Wall of China built to keep out the northern barbarians. The Great Wall, which stretches some fifteen hundred miles, is a building project that rivals and perhaps surpasses the Great Pyramid. The Great Wall took thirty years to build and cost the lives of countless thousands of laborers. Today the Great Wall remains China’s number one tourist attraction.

As he grew older, Shih Huang Ti became obsessed with the prospect of his own death. He had survived several assassination attempts and was terrified of another. He traveled constantly between his 270 different palaces, so that no one could ever be sure where he was going to be. He never slept in the same room for two

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3. **Great Pyramid**: massive four-sided monument built around a tomb by people in ancient Egypt.

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**SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION**

What is the focus of the information presented in lines 10–17?

**barbarian** (bär-bär’ë-an) *n.* a person considered by those of another group to have a primitive culture

**surpass** (sər-pās’) *v.* to become greater than; to go beyond

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**ANALYZE TEXT FEATURES**

Factual information is based on true statements or actual events. “Today the Great Wall remains China’s number one tourist attraction” (lines 23–24) is an example of factual information. Writers will sometimes include factual information in graphic aids such as a map. What factual information does this map convey about the size of Shih Huang Ti’s empire and the size of China today?
nights in a row. Anyone who revealed the emperor’s whereabouts was put to death along with his entire family.

Shih Huang Ti searched constantly for the secret of *immortality*. He became prey to a host of phony magicians and other fakers who promised much but could deliver nothing.

The emperor heard that there were immortals living on some far-off island, so he sent a huge fleet to find them. The commander of the fleet knew that if he failed in his mission, the emperor would put him to death. So the fleet simply never returned. It is said that the fleet found the island of Japan and stayed there to become the ancestors of the modern Japanese.

In his desire to stay alive, Shih Huang Ti did not neglect the probability that he would die someday. He began construction of an immense tomb in the Black Horse hills near one of his favorite summer palaces. The tomb’s construction took as long as the construction of the Great Wall—thirty years.
The emperor, of course, did die. Death came while he was visiting the eastern provinces. But his life had become so secretive that only a few high officials were aware of his death. They contrived to keep it a secret until they could consolidate their own power. The imperial procession headed back for the capital. Unfortunately, it was midsummer and the emperor’s body began to rot and stink. So one of the plotters arranged to have a cart of fish follow the immense imperial chariot to hide the odor of the decomposing corpse. Finally, news of the emperor’s death was made public. The body, or what was left of it, was buried in the tomb that he had been building for so long.

There are two contradictory stories about the tomb of Ch’in Shih Huang Ti. The first says that it was covered up with earth to make it resemble an ordinary hill and that its location has remained unknown for centuries.

But a more accurate legend holds that there never was any attempt to disguise the existence of the tomb. Ch’in Shih Huang Ti had been building it for years, and everybody knew where it was. After his death the tomb was surrounded by walls enclosing an area of about five hundred acres. This was to be the emperor’s “spirit city.” Inside the spirit city were temples and all sorts of other sacred buildings and objects dedicated to the dead emperor.

Over the centuries the walls, the temples, indeed everything above ground was carried away by vandals. The top of the tomb was covered with earth and eventually came to resemble a large hill. Locally the hill is called Mount Li. But still the farmers who lived in the area had heard stories that Mount Li contained the tomb of Ch’in Shih Huang Ti or of some other important person.

In the spring of 1974 a peasant plowing a field near Mount Li uncovered a life-sized clay statue of a warrior. Further digging indicated that there was an entire army of statues beneath the ground. Though excavations are not yet complete, Chinese authorities believe that there are some six thousand life-sized clay statues of warriors, plus scores of life-sized statues of horses.

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4. provinces: districts, or parts, of a country.
5. imperial procession: a group of people traveling with an emperor.
Most of the statues are broken, but some are in an absolutely remarkable state of preservation. Each statue is finely made, and each shows a distinct individual, different from all the others. This incredible collection is Shih Huang Ti’s “spirit army.” At one time Chinese kings practiced human sacrifice so that the victims could serve the dead king in the next world. Shih Huang Ti was willing to make do with models. Men and horses were arranged in a military fashion in a three-acre underground chamber. The chamber may have been entered at some point. The roof certainly collapsed. But still the delicate figures have survived surprisingly well. Most of the damage was done when the roof caved in. That is why the Chinese archaeologists are so hopeful that when the tomb itself is excavated, it too will be found to have survived surprisingly well.

The Chinese are not rushing the excavations. They have only a limited number of trained people to do the job. After all, the tomb has been there for over two thousand years. A few more years won’t make much difference.

Though once denounced as a tyrant, Ch’in Shih Huang Ti is now regarded as a national hero. His name is a household word in China. The Chinese government knows that it may have an unparalleled ancient treasure on its hands, and it wants to do the job well. Over the next few years we should be hearing much more about this truly remarkable find.
Comprehension

1. **Recall** Why did Shih Huang Ti have the Great Wall built?

2. **Recall** What steps did Shih Huang Ti take to protect himself against people who might want to harm him?

3. **Clarify** What makes Shih Huang Ti an important person from the past?

Critical Analysis

4. **Synthesize Information** Consider the information that the author emphasizes in “The First Emperor.” In one or two sentences, state the main idea of the selection.

5. **Examine Cause and Effect** Reread lines 18–24. What were the effects of building the Great Wall of China?

6. **Analyze Text Features** What information do the map and its labels on page 919 provide that the text does not?

7. **Evaluate Information** Skim through the selection, and note the evidence that supports its main idea. Then explain whether you think the author provided enough evidence to support the main idea. How has the writer made logical connections between his main idea and supporting details? Use examples from the text to support your answer.

Synthesizing Information

Review the chart you began to fill in as you read. Add notes about the information presented in “The First Emperor.”

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SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION
Preview the article’s title and graphic aids. What do you think the article will focus on?

These terra-cotta soldiers are only a small number of the thousands of statues unearthed at the sight of Shi Huangdi’s tomb. What details do you notice in the rows of statues?
In March 1974, Chinese peasants digging a well near Xi’an in the central province of Shaanxi found some unusual pottery fragments. Then, deeper down at 11 feet, they unearthed a head made of terra-cotta. They notified the authorities, and excavation of the site began immediately. To date, workers have dug up about 8,000 sculpted clay soldiers, and the site has proved to be one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of all time.

For over 2,000 years, these clay warriors have been guarding the tomb of Shi Huangdi, the First Emperor of China. Tradition says that the First Emperor began building his tomb when he ascended to the throne at age 13, and that it was unfinished at his death, 36 years later. The Chinese historian Sima Qian wrote in the Shiji, “Historical Records,” that the emperor forced 700,000 laborers to work on his elaborate tomb.

The warriors stand guard in three pits (a fourth was found to be empty) that cover five-and-a-half acres and are 16 to 24 feet deep. The largest one contains 6,000 terra-cotta soldiers marching in military formation in 11 trenches, each as long as a football field. At the western end of the formation is a vanguard of archers and bowmen. At the head of six of the trenches stand the remnants of chariots, each with four life-sized horses and 18 soldiers. The wooden chariots have largely disintegrated, unlike the well-preserved terra-cotta horses and men. Last come row upon row of soldiers.

Despite the enormous number of men, no two faces are alike. Their expressions display dignity, steadfastness, and intelligence. Each is tall, standing five-and-a-half to six feet high. Some people think the terra-cotta soldiers portray real-life men from the vast army of the First Emperor.

The warriors’ legs are solid columns of clay, with square-toed sandals on their feet. The hollow bodies are of coiled clay. The head and hands of each soldier were carefully molded and attached to the body in assembly-line fashion. Traces of pink, yellow, purple, blue, orange, green, brown, and black pigment show that the figures were once brightly painted. The horses were roan (reddish-brown), brown, or black with pink mouths.

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1. Xi’an (shē’ân’). . . Shaanxi (shän’shē’): Xi’an is a city of central China. The former capital of the Qin (also called Ch’in) dynasty, it is now the capital of China’s Shaanxi province.
2. Shi Huangdi (also Shih Huang Ti): The spelling of Chinese names and places can vary.
3. vanguard (vən’gard’): the troops that move at the head of an army.
The warriors’ hair styles and topknots, and the tassels trimming their garments, denote their military rank. Many do not wear helmets or carry shields, a mark of bravery in battle. Their armor was probably of lacquered \(^4\) leather; some pieces look like baseball catchers’ pads. The soldiers’ hands are positioned to hold weapons, but most of the weapons have disappeared. Very likely they were stolen when the pits were looted after the fall of the Qin Dynasty (the Dynasty founded by Shi Huangdi). Even so, bronze spears, halberds (a combination spear and battle-ax), swords, daggers, and about 1,400 arrowheads remain. Some of the blades are still very sharp.

A second pit, only partially excavated, contains about 1,400 more soldiers. While the first pit holds mostly infantry, \(^5\) the second has a more mobile attack force of horses and chariots. A third pit is thought to hold the high command of the army. The chariot of the Commander-in-Chief survives, with men surrounding it in protective formation.

Covered by a wooden roof and ten feet of earth, these figures were not intended to be seen. When the pits were looted and burned, the roof fell in and damaged most of the sculptures. Reconstruction is a slow, delicate task. Today, a visitor to the site can walk on long wooden platforms 16 feet above the pits and gaze down with astonishment at the thousands of sculptured soldiers below.

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4. lacquered (\(\text{lək}ˈ\text{ərd}\)): covered with a glossy, protective coating.
5. infantry: foot soldiers.
Comparing Organization
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Approximately a mile away from the pits is a gently sloping, rounded mountain covered with trees—the burial mound of the First Emperor. The four-sided, rammed-earth mound covers three-quarters of a square mile and is 156 feet high. It once stood at 400 feet. Of the two great walls that enclosed the funerary park only rubble remains. The perimeter of the outer wall is almost four miles. Set into the strong thick walls were four gates and four corner towers. Inside the walls were gardens, pavilions, and a sacrificial palace, in addition to the burial mound. The burial chamber itself is still untouched, its contents as yet unknown.

Tradition based on the Shiji says that the emperor’s body was buried in a suit of small jade pieces sewed together with gold thread and covered with a pearl and jade shroud. Also in the burial mound were bronze models of Shi Huangdi’s palaces and government offices. These replicas featured such details as pearls to represent the sun and moon, and pools of mercury to recreate rivers and seas.

6. funerary park: the place of a burial.
7. perimeter: the boundary or border of something.
8. pavilions (pa-vil’y anz): open-sided buildings used for shelter or recreation.
9. mercury: quicksilver; a chemical element that is a silvery liquid at room temperature.
According to the ancient Chinese, the soul of the dead continued living and therefore required all of life’s necessities within the tomb. Kings especially needed many luxuries and that is why their tombs are treasure houses of jewels, gold, silver, and bronze. The *Shiji* states that in order to prevent people from robbing the tomb, “Craftsmen built internal devices that would set off arrows should anyone pass through the tunnels.” Because Sima Qian wrote his history a century after the death of the First Emperor, the accuracy of his statements is questionable. In fact, grave robbers did enter and loot Shi Huangdi’s tomb for 30 years after the fall of the Qin Dynasty (four years after the Emperor’s death). During this time, many precious relics most likely were stolen.

In 1980, additional smaller pits were discovered. One contains pottery coffins with bones of exotic birds and animals, probably from the royal zoo. Another has vessels inscribed with the words, “Belonging to the Officials in Charge of Food at Mount Li,” and must be where food and sacrifices were offered to the dead emperor. Uncovered in the nearby Hall of Slumber were clothes and everyday objects for use by the soul of the Emperor. As the excavations continue, each find serves to remind us of the tremendous energy and genius of Shi Huangdi and his people.

**SET A PURPOSE FOR READING**
Reread lines 67–76. What do you learn about the emperor and his tomb, based on the *Shiji* and the items that have been excavated so far? Add your findings to your chart.
Comprehension

1. Recall How was Shi Huangdi’s tomb discovered?

2. Recall What happened to the tomb after the fall of the Qin dynasty?

Critical Analysis

3. Analyze Text Features Look back at the graph on page 926 of “Digging Up the Past.” Does the graph demonstrate what the tomb looks like more effectively than the text? What information does the graph tell you that the text does not? Explain your answer.

4. Synthesize Information Why do you think Shi Huangdi chose to have such an elaborate tomb built? Explain, using information from “The First Emperor” and “Digging Up the Past” for support.

Synthesizing Information

Now that you have read both selections, finish filling in your chart. Add the two additional questions and answer them. First, identify the focus of each selection. Then, write a brief explanation of the main idea or ideas the two selections share.

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<td>… the excavation of the tomb?</td>
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What do you learn the most about in each selection?

Synthesizing Information: What main idea or ideas do the two selections share?

How can we uncover the PAST?

Look back at the Quickwrite you wrote about a time period you’d like to know more about. Now that you have read these selections about Shi Huangdi’s tomb, do you have any more ideas about time periods you’d like to “uncover”? Explain.
Vocabulary in Context

**VOCABULARY PRACTICE**

Choose the word or phrase that is closest in meaning to each boldfaced word.

1. **preservation**: (a) demolition, (b) protection, (c) destruction
2. **disintegrate**: (a) fall apart, (b) combine with, (c) match up
3. **reconstruction**: (a) elimination, (b) cancellation, (c) restoration
4. **ancestor**: (a) older sister, (b) great-grandmother, (c) youngest daughter
5. **surpass**: (a) go beyond, (b) turn around, (c) fall back
6. **dedicate**: (a) dislike, (b) devote, (c) daydream
7. **barbarian**: (a) associate, (b) brute, (c) partner
8. **immortality**: (a) everlasting life, (b) short life, (c) temporary life
9. **archaeological**: (a) historical, (b) comical, (c) mystical
10. **excavation**: (a) an injury, (b) a vehicle, (c) a dig

**ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING**

- adequacy  • authority  • concept  • purpose  • structural

Critique the adequacy of each writer’s supporting details. Did he or she fully support the main ideas in his or her article? Use at least two Academic Vocabulary words in your response.

**VOCABULARY STRATEGY: WORD PARTS**

Sometimes you can figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word by breaking the word into parts. For example, the vocabulary word **reconstruction** has three parts: the prefix **re**- ("again"), the base word **construct** ("to build"), and the suffix **-ion** ("action or process").

When you combine the three meanings, you will find that **reconstruction** means "the action of building again." Knowing the meaning of one or more parts of a word will help you determine the meaning of the complete word. Most word parts come from Greek, Latin, or Old English (OE).

**PREFIXES**  |  **MEANINGS**
---|---
**dis-** (Latin)  |  apart
**micro-** (Greek)  |  small
**un-** (OE)  |  the opposite of
**hyper-** (Greek)  |  over, excessive

**SUFFIXES**  |  **MEANINGS**
---|---
**-ance** (Latin)  |  condition, state
**-ate** (Latin)  |  to act upon
**-logy** (Greek)  |  study, theory
**-ive** (Latin)  |  of, relating to

**PRACTICE** Identify the word parts in each word. Then try to define the word. If you need help, use a dictionary.

1. unfortunate  3. hyperactive
2. disappearance  4. microbiology
Comparing Information

Writing for Assessment

1. READ THE PROMPT
The two selections you've just read provide different kinds of information on the same topic. In writing assessments, you will often be asked to compare nonfiction selections that deal with a similar topic in different ways.

In three paragraphs, compare the main idea of “The First Emperor” and “Digging Up the Past.” Remember that the topic of each piece of writing is the same, but each presents different information. Support your comparison using details from each.

2. PLAN YOUR WRITING
Using the chart you filled in as you read, identify the ways in which the selections are alike and different. Then think about how to present these similarities and differences.

• Decide on a position statement for your response.
• Review the selections to find details and examples that support your comparison.
• Create an outline to organize your ideas. This sample outline shows one way to organize your three paragraphs.

3. DRAFT YOUR RESPONSE

Paragraph 1 Provide the title and author of each selection, as well as a sentence explaining the topic they share. State the main idea of the first selection. Include details from the book excerpt as examples.

Paragraph 2 State the main idea of the second selection. Include details from the magazine article as examples.

Paragraph 3 Compare the types of information presented in each selection. Support your comparison with examples from each.

Revision Include transition words such as also, however, instead, or unlike to demonstrate similarities and differences.