

Document B

Source: Excerpts of a letter written by Chao Cuo, Imperial Secretary of the Han Dynasty, to Emperor Wen, 169 BCE.

Note: Chao Cuo, an advisor to several Han emperors, was highly respected for his ideas about the military and border defense. The recommendations made in this letter were adopted.

The Xiongnu live on meat and cheese, wear furs, and possess no house or field. They move like birds and animals in the wild. They stop only at places which abound in grass and water, want of which will start them moving again. Today the Xiongnu are herding at several places and hunting along the frontiers.... It will be profitable to you to dispatch generals and officials together with troops to govern the frontier areas. People [slaves, convicts, and willing peasants] should be selected to settle along the border areas permanently, who can set up families and grow food grains while getting prepared against possible invasion by the Xiongnu.

For the immigrants in such border areas, the government will construct walled cities, well protected by high walls, deep moats, catapults, and thorns. Each city, along strategic points and thoroughfares, will be designed to hold no fewer than one thousand households.... Each walled city will have an inner wall and an outer wall 150 paces about 209 meters apart. Each residential area in the outer-wall area is to be surrounded by “sandy fields” ... to detect the intrusion of enemies in the night [Intruders will leave footprints in the soil.]

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Document Analysis

1. The Chinese notion of “barbarian” was anyone who wasn’t Chinese. What characteristics of the Xiongnu made them seem barbarian to Chao Cuo?
2. What does Chao Cuo recommend to keep the Xiongnu from invading?
3. What do you think would be more effective in discouraging a Xiongnu invasion, walls or a large Chinese population along the border? Explain your thinking.
4. What benefits are suggested by the document?
5. What costs are suggested by the document?

Document C

Source: Chart created from various sources.

Note: A tribute can simply be a gift. It can also be a kind of bribe.

Year (BCE)	Silk Floss (in catties)	Silk Fabric (in bales)
51	1,500	8,000
49	2,000	9,000
33	4,000	18,000
25	5,000	20,000
1	7,500	30,000

Catty: In Asia, a unit of weight equal to about 1.5 pounds
 Bale: A large bundle. In China today, a silk bale weighs about 132 pounds.

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Photo by William Lindesay

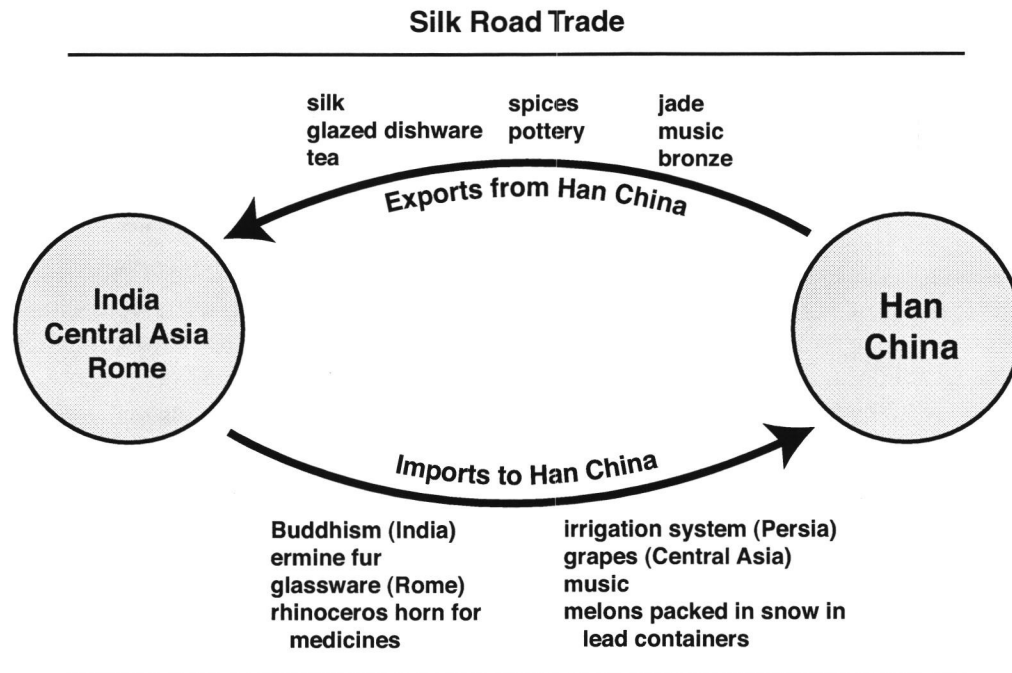
A section of the ancient Han wall.

Document Analysis

1. According to the chart, who was giving what to whom?
2. Between 51 BCE and 1 BCE, what happened to the amount of silk that was given?
3. Judging from both the chart and the photo, how can you use this document to argue that building the Great Wall was worth the cost?
4. Judging from both the chart and the photo, how can you use this document to argue that building the Great Wall was not worth the cost?

Document D

Source: Chart created from various sources.



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Source: Tim McNeese, *The Great Wall of China*, Lucent Books, Inc., 1997.

The [Han] era began like most other periods in Chinese history—with warfare. Wu Di, the sixth emperor of the Han dynasty, established peaceful relations with the nomadic Xiongnu people of the north only after conquering them. But once this had been accomplished, Wu Di used the Wall to aid in expanding China's influence in the world through trade with other nations. He extended the Wall three hundred miles to the west and added a chain of watchtowers beyond the Wall's end. The Wall and watchtowers followed the famed Silk Road that served as China's link to trade with the west.... Wu Di assigned thousands of soldiers to Wall outposts and watchtowers to protect the merchants and caravans traveling along the trade routes.

Document Analysis

1. The most important export from Han China was silk. According to the chart, what trade items might the Han have received in return?
2. How far did the Han emperor Wu Di extend the wall, and why?
3. How would you describe Wu Di's attitude about China's relationship with the rest of the world?
4. How can you use this document to show the benefits of building the Great Wall?
5. How can you use this document to argue that building the Great Wall was not worth the cost?