RUINSCAPE LESSON SHEET

Jiaohe Ruins

On land | China | 2nd century BCE-14th century CE | Grades 6-8

Name _____ **Date** _____

Jiaohe's builders carved their city downward, digging streets and rooms right out of the solid earth.

Read the story

Jiaohe sits on a leaf-shaped plateau about 1.6 kilometers long, with steep cliffs dropping to rivers on both sides. That made it a natural fortress. From around the 2nd century BCE, it was the capital of the Jushi Kingdom, a stop on the Silk Road.

Instead of stacking bricks, people dug down into the hard, packed earth to make streets, homes and courtyards. Some walls were then built higher with rammed earth.

Later, the Tang dynasty of China set up an important government office here to control the region. Jiaohe had Buddhist temples, a central avenue, and houses packed close together.

How it ended

Jiaohe was badly damaged in wars in the 1300s, when Mongol armies fought over the region. People left, and the empty earth city has been dried and shaped by wind ever since.

Key words

- plateau: a flat area of high ground
- rammed earth: soil packed down hard to make walls
- Silk Road: ancient trade routes linking China with Central Asia, the Middle East and Europe

Wow facts

- The city was carved downward instead of built upward.
- Turpan is one of the hottest places in China, sometimes over 45 degrees Celsius in summer.
- Underground water channels called karez still bring water from the mountains.

Talk about it

1. What are the advantages of carving a city into the ground in a hot desert?

_____

_____

2. Why would a town on a trade route become important to empires?

Try this

Draw a map of Jiaohe Ruins as it looked at its busiest. Label three things people did there.

Quick quiz

Circle the best answer.

1. **How was Jiaohe built?**
   - **A.** By carving down into the earth
   - **B.** With stone blocks
   - **C.** With wood
   - **D.** With glass
2. **What made Jiaohe a natural fortress?**
   - **A.** Cliffs and rivers on both sides
   - **B.** A moat of lava
   - **C.** Ice walls
   - **D.** A forest
3. **What trade route passed by Jiaohe?**
   - **A.** The Silk Road
   - **B.** The Amber Road
   - **C.** Route 66
   - **D.** The Inca Road

Go further

Open ruinscape.live/jiaohe-ruins/ for photos, the Then and Now picture where there is one, and links to museum collections and research. On the globe, Lyra Kael can fly the class there and answer questions.

Answer key (for teachers)

1. A. People dug streets and rooms down into the ground.
2. A. The plateau had steep cliffs above two rivers.
3. A. Jiaohe was a stop on the Silk Road.