

The First Emperor of China

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1.1 What's the book about?

1 Discuss these questions.

- What is China famous for? Think of three things.
- How important is China in the world? Why?

2 The people in the pictures lived at the time of the First Emperor. Answer the questions below. Find words in *italics* in your dictionary.



A farmer



B emperor



C soldier



D scholar



E courtier



F prisoner

a Who:

- played music at the emperor's *court*?
- was the head of the *empire*?
- kept chickens on his *farm*?



G musician

b Talk about the other people in the pictures. What did they do?

1.2 What's first?

In the first chapter, a 13-year-old boy is suddenly a king. Can a boy be a king, do you think? Discuss your ideas.



H prime minister

A New King

*'Qin is strong,' Li Si said to the young king.
'Your enemies are weak. You can be king of everything.'*

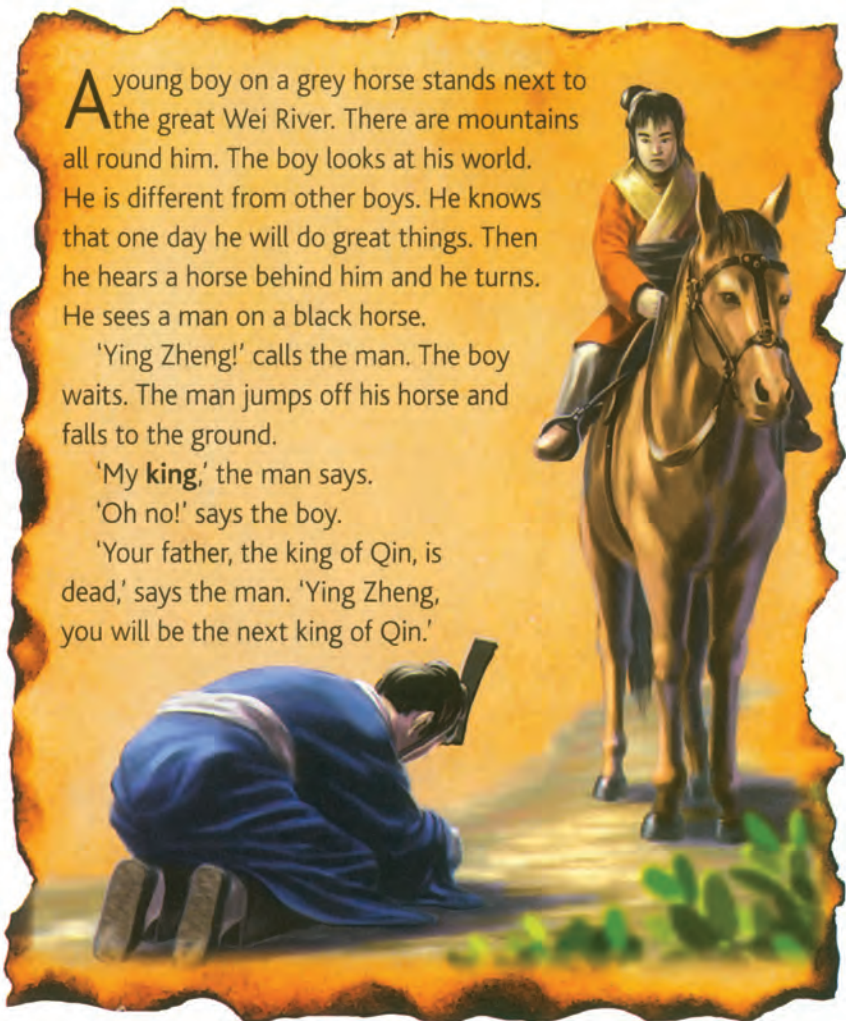
A young boy on a grey horse stands next to the great Wei River. There are mountains all round him. The boy looks at his world. He is different from other boys. He knows that one day he will do great things. Then he hears a horse behind him and he turns. He sees a man on a black horse.

'Ying Zheng!' calls the man. The boy waits. The man jumps off his horse and falls to the ground.

'My king,' the man says.

'Oh no!' says the boy.

'Your father, the king of Qin, is dead,' says the man. 'Ying Zheng, you will be the next king of Qin.'



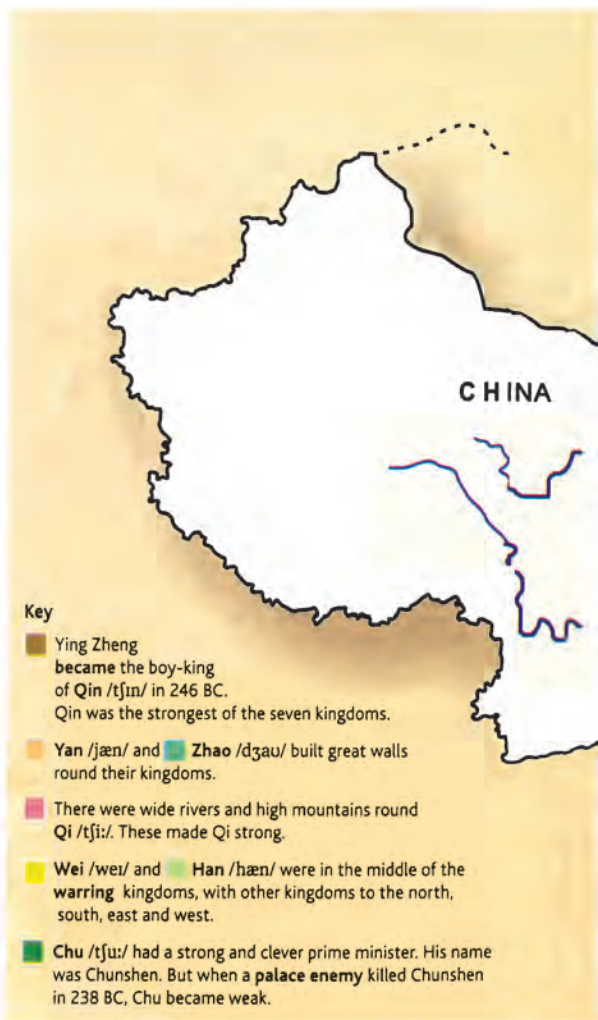
king /kɪŋ/ (n) The *king* is the most important man in his country. His country is his *kingdom*.

● The Seven Warring Kingdoms: China in 246 BC*

In 246 BC, there was no China. There were seven kingdoms. From 475 BC to 221 BC, they were all at war. Sometimes two kingdoms fought a third kingdom.

The kingdoms did not only fight. They bought and sold things. They had new ideas about farming. They learned more about their animals. They made new **weapons**. Their scholars talked about **laws** and good **government**. But war was very important to these countries.

‘Only fight when you can win,’ said one book on war. ‘Plan well. Hit your enemy



* BC: years before Christ was born

weapon /'wepən/ (n) You fight with a *weapon*. A gun is a *weapon*.

law /lɔ:/ (n) A *law* says that something is right or wrong.

government /'gʌvənmənt, 'gʌvənmənt/ (n) The *government* makes the laws for a country. It *governs* the country.

become /bɪ'kʌm/ (v) When you change from a girl into a woman, you *become* a woman.

warring /'wɔ:ɪŋ/ (adj) When one country fights another country, they are *warring* countries. The two countries are fighting a *war*; they are *at war*.

palace /'pæləs/ (n) A king lives in a *palace*.

enemy /'enəmi/ (n) Your *enemy* wants to hurt you.



quickly, when he is not ready.’

The kingdom of Qin was in the west. It was in a good place. It had rivers and mountains to the east and a wall to the west. The other kingdoms did not like Qin.

‘The people of Qin are not intelligent and they are only interested in money,’ people in the other kingdoms said.

They were wrong. The people of Qin were very intelligent.

Of all the kingdoms, Qin was the strongest. The government worked well. It **controlled** the people. The Qin farmers worked very hard too. There was food for everybody and families had many children. The children went into the army.

The Qin **army** moved cleverly and quickly. The soldiers walked 50 kilometres a day with heavy weapons and three days’ food on their backs. They were very strong. Qin wanted to be the best.

And when Ying Zheng and Li Si wanted to take the other kingdoms, Qin was ready.

control /kən'trəʊl/ (v) When you speak, people have to listen. In this way, you *control* them.
army /'ɑ:mi/ (n) There are many soldiers in an *army*; they fight for their king or country.

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British English

Original

Ying Zheng, king of Qin, became the first emperor of China. He had new ideas and made new laws. He built big palaces – and a great wall. But life was difficult for his people and dangerous for the emperor. So he took an army with him into the next world.

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Level 2
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PENGUIN ACTIVE READING The First Emperor of China Jane Rollason

