

My MEP Projects: Y9

Y9 Project: The Forbidden City

Name: _____

In the very centre of Beijing, covering an area the size of one hundred football pitches, lies the walled complex of palaces known in English as the Forbidden City. The Emperors of China lived there for almost 500 years until the last 'son of heaven', Pu Yi, the boy emperor, abdicated in 1912. Now one of the most famous tourist attractions in the world, it is a treasure trove not just of ancient buildings and priceless objects but also of stories and folklore, symbols and historical facts. So come along, step through the imposing gates and enter this incredible world.

Go for it!



Task 1: A few facts

The name "Forbidden City" is a shortened translation of the Chinese name zǐ jìn chéng, literally: 'Purple Forbidden City'. Nowadays in China, it is usually referred to as the Gùgōng 'former palace'. Find out the Chinese characters for both these names and write them here:

Use the internet to research the answers to the following questions:

1. Why was it called 'forbidden'?

2. Emperors of which two dynasties lived in the Forbidden City?

3. When was it named a UNESCO World Heritage Site?

Here are some numerical facts about the Forbidden City. Translate the numbers into Chinese characters. There's a glossary below to help you with numbers, but if you need to check how to do numbers over 100, take a look at the Y9 project on Bubble Tea to get detailed explanations.

Numerical fact	Number in Chinese
3	十四
A <u>million</u> workers built it	
<u>One hundred thousand</u> craftsmen were involved	
It has <u>980</u> buildings	
There are <u>8,700</u> rooms	
<u>14 million</u> visitors enter every year	
<u>80,000</u> visitors enter every day	

Numbers Glossary

a hundred	bǎi	百
a thousand	qiān	千
ten thousand	wàn	万
one million	bǎi wàn	百万
one hundred million	yì	亿

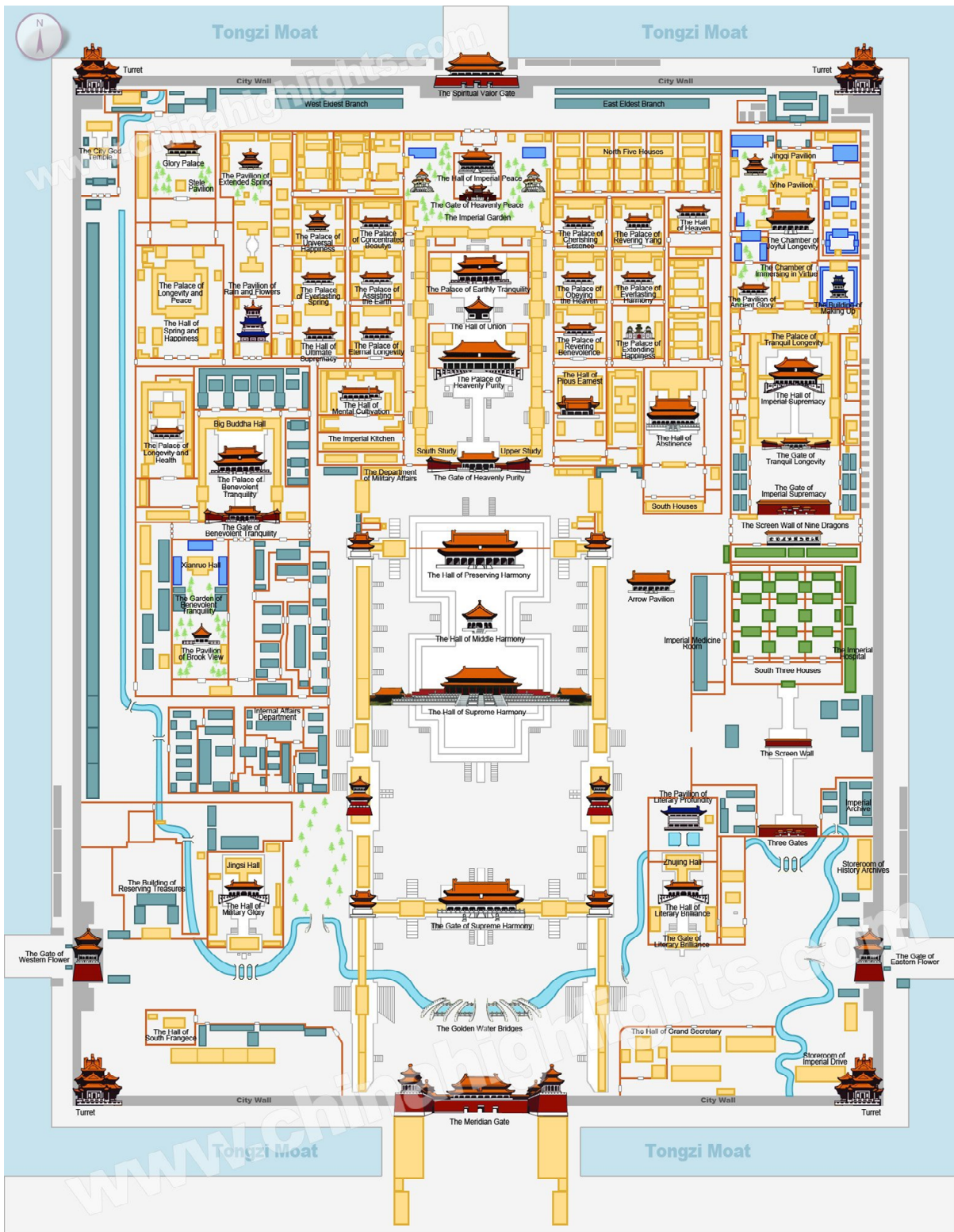
☆	Task 1 complete	
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Task 2: Exploring the Forbidden City

Take a look at a detailed map of the Forbidden City. You'll find a good one on this website.

http://bit.ly/Forbidden_City

Scroll down to the paragraph headed "The Layout of the Imperial Palace" and click on the right-hand side to enlarge the map. You will find a copy of this map on the next page of this project, but the online map is clearer.



You'll notice straight away that it is built on a very regular north/south axis. The way that buildings are aligned had huge symbolic importance in China, especially when it came to Emperors. The Emperor was the 'son of heaven' 天子 tiān zǐ, the link between heaven 天 tiān, earth 地 dì and humanity 人 rén. His power was given to him by Heaven and where he lived was the symbolic centre of the world. The Emperor faced south towards the sun, his subjects faced north to kneel before him. The plan of the Forbidden City followed ideas set out in ancient China about an ideal cosmic order. Building according to this cosmic order would ensure good fortune not just for the emperor but also for the people. Even today, some people say that the reason Beijing is such a prosperous city is because of this perfect layout at its heart.

Task 2a: *What is Feng Shui?*

Many cultures and religions place symbolic importance on the way buildings are aligned. For example, Christian churches traditionally place altars at the east end of the church and mosques are built so worshippers pray towards Mecca. Chinese beliefs about the importance of keeping harmony with the energies of nature are known as 风水 fēng shuǐ . Use the library or the internet to read about feng shui, then answer the following questions:

1. What do the characters in feng shui mean?
2. What English word beginning with 'g' have some people used to translate feng shui?
3. Write down three things you found out about feng shui that interested or surprised you.

Task 2b: *Finding your way around the Forbidden City*

In this task you'll practise your knowledge of directions in Chinese. First, recap on how to say north, south, east and west and then some phrases like 'behind' 'in front of' and directions such as "go towards", "turn to the east", "turn to the west" etc. Don't forget – lots of Chinese people use compass points to describe directions, so it's an

important skill to learn! You'll find these in text books or watch this fun video filmed in China Town New York:

<http://bit.ly/ChinaTownNY>

- (1) Make some notes in the scroll below to remind yourself of the important phrases to do with directions.

Notes on key words to do with compass points and directions:

- (2) Find the following places and say where they are in relation to the building listed. The first one has been done for you.

The Palace of Obeying Heaven	<i>在 the Palace of Everlasting Harmony</i>	西边
The Imperial Kitchen	<i>在 the Hall of Mental Cultivation</i>	
The Hall of Literary Brilliance	<i>在 the Gate of Supreme Harmony</i>	
The Hall of Ultimate Supremacy	<i>在 the Pavilion of Rain and Flowers</i>	
The Pavilion of Extended Spring	<i>在 the Glory Palace</i>	
The Spiritual Valor Gate	<i>在 the Hall of Imperial Peace</i>	
The Hall of Military Glory	<i>在 the Internal Affairs Department</i>	

(3) As you can see, the buildings have really interesting names. Which is your favourite of these names?

(4) Look up the following characters and write the pinyin and the English translation:

宫			殿			門	
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(5) Here are some of the palace and hall names in Chinese. From your knowledge of Chinese characters, see if you can match them to their correct English translation. One has been done for you

Palace of Eternal Harmony		长春宫
The Hall of Mental Cultivation		永和宫
Palace of Eternal Spring		养心殿
The Gate of Supreme Harmony		中和殿
The Hall of Middle Harmony		太和門

(6) Traditionally, Chinese characters were read FROM RIGHT TO LEFT. If you're visiting old temples or palaces in China remember that you have to read many signs in the opposite direction to the way modern Chinese is written.



This is a picture of the throne room in the Palace of Heavenly Purity where the Emperor held audience. The text above would be written *zhèng dà guāng míng* 正大光明 in modern Chinese. Research and write here how this phrase is translated into English:

(7) Take a one minute tour of The Forbidden City built in Lego!

<http://bit.ly/ForbiddenLego>



Find out how the brand name Lego is written in Chinese. Write the characters and the pinyin here:

☆	Task 2 complete	
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Task 3: A very special tour

The Forbidden City is amazing in daylight. Imagine visiting it at night during the Lantern Festival. This article from the website The Chairman's Bao is about a fast-food delivery man who finally gets to go inside the Forbidden City after years of seeing it from the outside.

Click on the link below and take the following steps to ensure that you get the most out of this important learning resource.

Tick each step as you complete it on the table below. Remember, **repetition, repetition, repetition** is a key trick for successful language learners. You'll listen to

the short audio five times (don't worry it's only one minute long!) *but don't skimp on it!*

<http://bit.ly/TCB-Courier>

Tick each step as you complete it:

Tasks	✓
Listen to the audio without looking at the text. Jot down in pinyin any words you recognize in the scroll below.	
Listen to the audio again while reading the text.	
Listen to it again while reading the text.	
Hover your mouse over the words you don't know; the website will give you the translation.	
Listen to it again while reading the text.	
Click on 'Comprehension Questions' and do the exercises.	
Choose five Chinese characters that are new to you, use the Stroke Order and Writing Tool to check and practice stroke order for those characters.	
Listen to the audio one more time without reading the text. Enjoy how much better you understand it now!	

☆	Task 3 complete	
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Task 4: Symbols everywhere

In the same way that the layout of the buildings is important as a *symbol* of the Emperor's power and his relationship to the universe, there are lots of other things in the Forbidden City that were put there to represent important ideas about the Imperial system. Use the internet or the library to find out what the following symbols meant in Imperial China.

Find the Chinese characters and pinyin for the words. The first one has been done for you.

Symbol	中文 and pinyin	What the symbol represented
Dragon	龙 lóng	<i>The emperor</i>
Phoenix		
Turtle		
Crane		
Lion		
Unicorn		

Task 4b

Research the answers to the following questions:

1. Why were the roof tiles yellow?



2. Which buildings' roofs are the only ones with 9 animal statues on them?

☆ Task 4 complete

Task 5: The Last Emperor

Imagine being made emperor at the age of 2, being declared 'divine' and having everyone obey you. Then at the age of 6 seeing your dynasty crumble yet being confined to the Forbidden City for years. Imagine then being forced out into the world, witnessing revolution, war and prison, and ending one's days as a gardener. The life story of Pu Yi 溥仪 (pū yí) 1906 – 1966 reads like fiction.

Here's a brief summary of his life:

<http://bit.ly/EmperorPuyi>



Using information from that website or any other source, fill in the timeline below of his life. Choose any 6 dates that you think are important or interesting in his life story:

Year	Event in Pu Yi's life
1906	<i>Born in Beijing, son of a Manchu prince</i>
1967	<i>Dies in Beijing as an ordinary citizen</i>

One of the most famous films made about Pu Yi and actually filmed in the Forbidden City itself was made in English by the Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci in 1987. Watch this trailer for the movie:

<http://bit.ly/PuyiFilm>



Now choose two quotes from actors in the trailer that you think are interesting and write them here:

Two interesting quotes:

☆	Task 5 complete	
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Task 6: Little Dog Emperors?

It wasn't just boy emperors that lived spoilt lives in the Forbidden City. The Qian Long Emperor (1711-1799) was particularly fond of his pet dogs and had special clothes made for them. Here is an interesting article from The Chairman's Bao about some special dogs clothes inspired by this story.



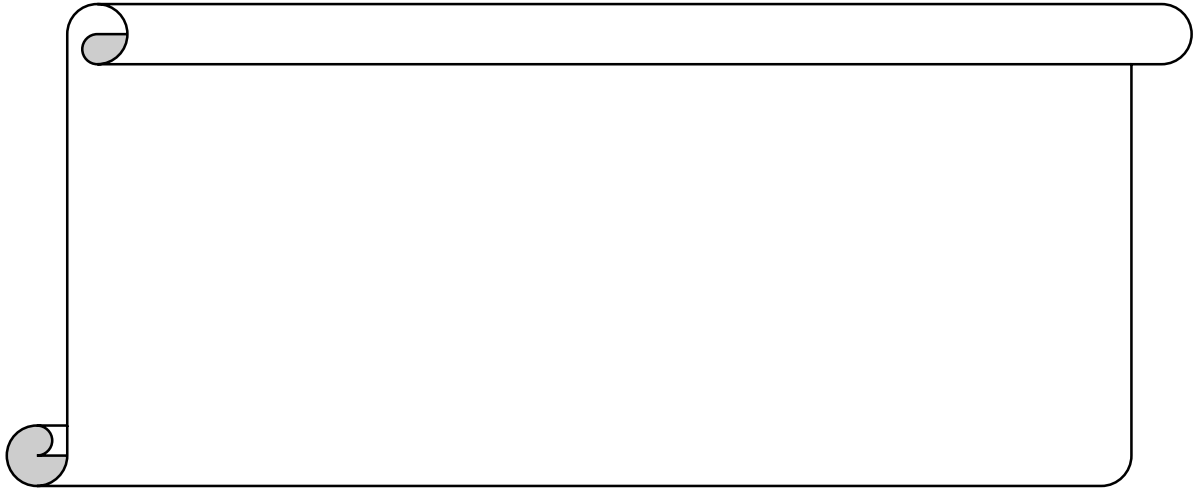
Click on the link below and take the following steps to ensure that you get the most out of this important learning resource.

Tick each step as you complete it on the table below. Remember, **repetition, repetition** is a key trick for successful language learners. You'll listen to the short audio five times (don't worry it's only one minute long!) *but don't skimp on it!*

<http://bit.ly/TCB-Dogs>

Tick each step as you complete it:

Tasks	✓
Listen to the audio without looking at the text. Jot down in pinyin any words you recognize in the scroll below.	
Listen to the audio again while reading the text.	
Listen to it again while reading the text.	
Hover your mouse over the words you don't know; the website will give you the translation.	
Listen to it again while reading the text.	
Click on 'Comprehension Questions' and do the exercises.	
Choose five Chinese characters that are new to you, use the Stroke Order and Writing Tool to check and practice stroke order for those characters.	
Listen to the audio one more time without reading the text. Enjoy how much better you understand it now!	



☆	Task 6 complete	
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Task 7: Spooky stories from the Forbidden City

With so many hundreds of years of history and so many dramatic events taking place within its walls, it's no wonder that there are lots of stories of ghosts and strange sightings in the Forbidden City. Some people have heard flute music echoing from empty buildings, others have seen a woman in white drifting past. Packs of ghost dogs are said to roam the palaces at night. Here's a fun Chinese phrase worth learning by heart.....

太邪门了！

tài xié mén le!

"So weird!"



Maybe the woman in white is the ghost of Consort Zhen, who drowned in a well as the Forbidden City was about to be invaded by foreign troops in 1900. Did she jump? Was she pushed? No one knows, but the well (井 jǐng) is known as the Concubine Zhen Well (珍妃井 zhēn fēi jǐng) and is on the tourist trail.

Task 7a

Here's a short story in Chinese about a visiting student from England having a spooky encounter in the Forbidden City. The sentences are jumbled up so try to work out the correct order and number them accordingly. Two have been done for you.

Order	
	走路三个小时以后，我开始觉得又热又累
	我站起来，走来走去，什么出口都找不到
	她只对我说一个字“来！” 我就随着她走了
	我突然见到了一个女人
	她走到一个门口，让我出去
1	我是一个英国学生， 上十年级， 中文学了四年了
	有一天我们去参观北京故宫， 天气非常热
	最后， 我们导游对我说“肯定是故宫的一个鬼帮助你了！”

	我回头要对她说“谢谢”，她已经消失了
	去年我们班去了中国旅行
	最奇怪的是虽然没有下雨，她的衣服却湿淋淋
	一觉醒来，我发现天黑了，一个人都没有。故宫关门了！
9	她的衣服很奇怪，她穿着白色的长衣
	我在一个安静的墙角坐下来休息，马上要睡觉了！

Now here's a challenge...translate the story into English. Take your time, use a dictionary if needed as well as the glossary below. You could illustrate it if you like!

Glossary

突然	tū rán	suddenly
让	ràng	to make, let (someone do something)
导游	dǎo yóu	tour guide
肯定	kěn dìng	be sure, have no doubt
鬼	gǔi	ghost
消失	xiāo shī	to disappear
湿淋淋	shī lín lín	soaking wet
墙角	qiáng jiǎo	corner (junction of two walls)

A spooky story from the Forbidden City: My translation

★	Task 7 complete	
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Task 8: A Symbol of Modern China

The millions of visitors who now enter the Forbidden City pass under a portrait of the most famous Chinese man of the twentieth century. You probably already know who he is. Research the answers to the following questions:



1. Write his name here in Chinese characters and pin yin

2. He is also known as 毛主席 . Write the pinyin and the English translation of this.

3. Copy the Chinese characters that are on the red poster either side of his portrait and translate them into English.

4. A new version of the portrait is hung up every year on the same day. What day is that and why is it significant?

☆	Task 8 complete	
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Task 9: Reviewing this project

Which tasks in this project did you find most interesting and why? Which tasks were the hardest? Which task did you not enjoy doing and why?

Complete the following three sentences **in Chinese characters**. You'll find some useful vocabulary in the box below:

1. 我觉得最有意思的练习是 task number..... 因为

.....

2. 我觉得最难的练习是 task number..... 因为

.....

3. 我不喜欢 task number..... 因为

.....

Language Tips!

练习	<i>liàn xí</i>	"task/exercise"
难	<i>nán</i>	"difficult"
有意思	<i>yǒu yì si</i>	"interesting"
没意思	<i>méi yì si</i>	"boring"



Your Achievements

Congratulations on completing 1 MEP Project!

- You now know lots about the most famous site in China, the Forbidden City.
- You've learnt about its history and its mysteries, you'll be well set now to show people round it when you visit.
- You've practiced talking about directions in Chinese.
- You've learnt more about Chinese symbols.
- And you've added lots of new words and expressions to your knowledge of the Chinese language.

*If your teacher
signs you off,
you will collect 1
Badge!*