Interdisciplinary Challenge

Visit the Forbidden City

For centuries, only members of the emperor's household could pass through the gates of China's famous Forbidden City. Today, however, *you* are there to plan a TV feature about the palace complex. This collection of massive buildings with curving, golden-tiled roofs is actually a city within a city within a city. The Forbidden City is a square within the larger Imperial City, which is at the center of Beijing's Inner City district. The first things you see are huge buildings and broad, open squares. Stone carvings and fantastic animal figures decorate pillars and gateways.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING On these pages are challenges you will encounter as you visit the Forbidden City. Working with a small group, choose one of these challenges to meet. Divide the work among group members. You will find helpful information in the Data File. Keep in mind that you will present your solution to the class.
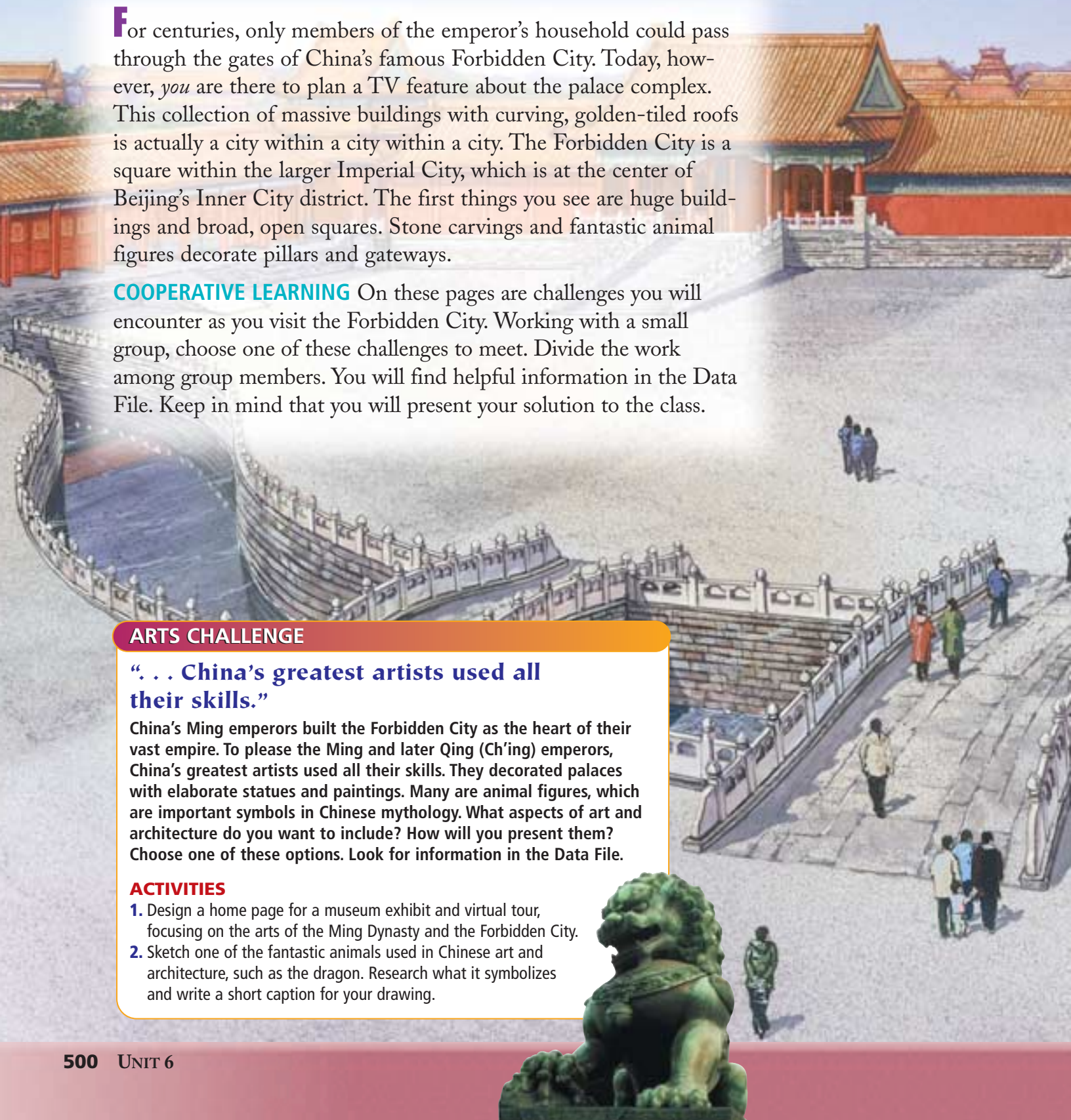
ARTS CHALLENGE

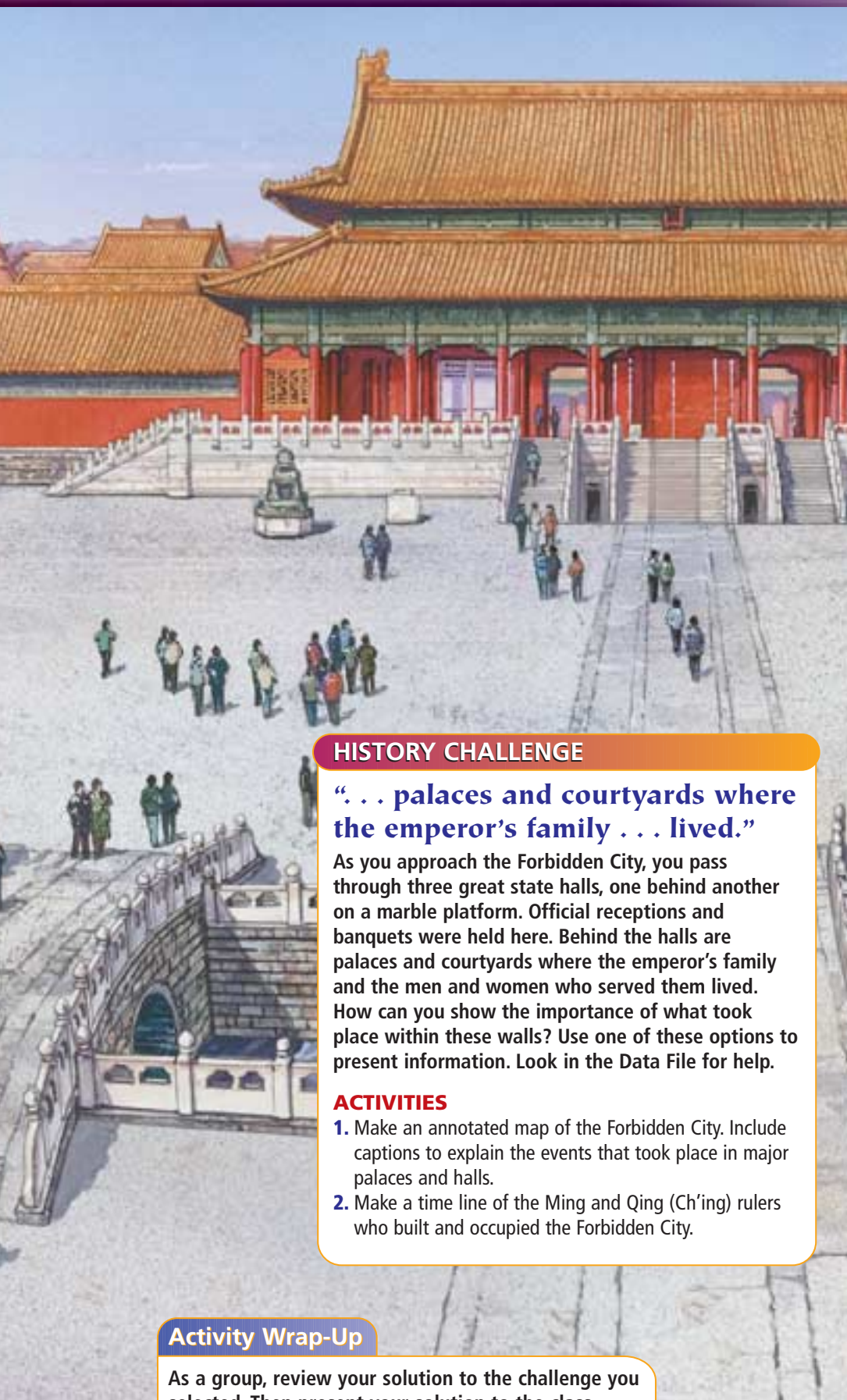### ". . . China's greatest artists used all their skills."

China's Ming emperors built the Forbidden City as the heart of their vast empire. To please the Ming and later Qing (Ch'ing) emperors, China's greatest artists used all their skills. They decorated palaces with elaborate statues and paintings. Many are animal figures, which are important symbols in Chinese mythology. What aspects of art and architecture do you want to include? How will you present them? Choose one of these options. Look for information in the Data File.

ACTIVITIES

1. Design a home page for a museum exhibit and virtual tour, focusing on the arts of the Ming Dynasty and the Forbidden City.
2. Sketch one of the fantastic animals used in Chinese art and architecture, such as the dragon. Research what it symbolizes and write a short caption for your drawing.

DATA FILE

FORBIDDEN CITY

- Completed in **1420** by the **Yung-lo** emperor of the Ming dynasty, who moved the capital to Beijing. Buildings have been enlarged and rebuilt.

- Major buildings in Beijing's Outer City and Inner City are built along a straight, north-south, 1.7-mile axis. The axis passes across **Tiananmen Square** through large parks to the gates of the Forbidden City. The city is surrounded by a moat and a wall, with watchtowers at each corner.

- The **entrance** to the Forbidden City is through the **Meridian Gate**, which leads to marble bridges over the moat. On the other side of the bridges is a great open square that leads to the **Gate of Supreme Harmony.** Through the Gate of Supreme Harmony lie the three state halls of the Forbidden City.

- **Outer Court:** three great halls of state—the **Hall of Supreme Harmony,** the **Hall of Complete Harmony,** and the **Hall of Preserving Harmony**—stand one behind another on a high marble platform.

- **Inner Court:** palaces, courtyards, and pavilions where the emperor, his family, and the palace staff lived.

MING DYNASTY (1368–1644)

- **Restored Chinese rule** after conquest and rule by Mongols.

- Extended China's empire into **Korea, Mongolia,** and **Vietnam.**

QING (CH'ING) DYNASTY (1644–1911)

- **Last emperors** of China; dynasty established by Manchus.

- Dynasty troubled by wars and rebellions; **overthrown by revolution.**

To learn more about the Forbidden City, go to

RESEARCH LINKS
CLASSZONE.COM

HISTORY CHALLENGE

"... palaces and courtyards where the emperor's family ... lived."

As you approach the Forbidden City, you pass through three great state halls, one behind another on a marble platform. Official receptions and banquets were held here. Behind the halls are palaces and courtyards where the emperor's family and the men and women who served them lived. How can you show the importance of what took place within these walls? Use one of these options to present information. Look in the Data File for help.

ACTIVITIES

1. Make an annotated map of the Forbidden City. Include captions to explain the events that took place in major palaces and halls.
2. Make a time line of the Ming and Qing (Ch'ing) rulers who built and occupied the Forbidden City.

Activity Wrap-Up

As a group, review your solution to the challenge you selected. Then present your solution to the class.