

**Historian tip # 5:** Historians analyze historical songs to learn information about people's everyday lives.

## Today's investigation: **The Daily Lives of the Ancient Chinese**

**Outcome of the investigation:** Our historians will be able to

1. analyze song lyrics for historical content, creating a list of daily and periodic activities of common ancient Chinese farmers
2. draw conclusions about the lives of these farmers based on the activities.

**Vocabulary:** harvest  
sow  
reap

**Materials:** a verse of song from the Book of Songs (for the overhead)  
additional verses (for group work)

**Mini lesson:** Historians can use songs that were popular at a certain time period to learn more information about the period. By looking at an ancient Chinese song, we can learn about some of the activities of ancient Chinese farmers. Let's look at this first section of the song together. (Put first section of the poem from the **Book of Songs** on the overhead. Songs can be read as a shared reading.) What are some of the activities of ancient Chinese farmers that we can learn about through this poem? (chart responses). Now, if we close our eyes and actually picture the farmers carrying out some of these activities, our minds can become full of details which aren't included in the song. For example, when the song talks about cutting the berry tree, I picture red dye getting all over the farmers' hands and clothing. Turn to a partner, and in your own words, talk about details you can picture in your mind when reading this section.

**Activities:** Each of five cooperative learning groups will receive another section of the song. With their groups, they are to list farmer activities extracted from the section as done in the mini-lesson. They should then have a conversation about some of the details they imagine being part of these activities. Notes for each of these activities should be jotted in their Historian's notebooks. Let students know that each group of historians will be presenting their findings to the rest of the class. (Allow about 15 minutes for the activities.)

**Group share:** Groups come back together, and each group reports

their findings.

**Connecting past to present:** Look at popular song lyrics and see what they can tell us about life in today's world.