The Forbidden City is the former imperial palace in the centre of Beijing, China. Construction began in 1406, and the emperor's court officially moved in by 1420. The Forbidden City got its name because most people were barred from entering the 72-hectare site, surrounded by walls. Even governement officials and the imperial family were permitted only limited access. Only the emperor could enter any section at will.

The architecture of the Forbidden City conforms rigidly to traditional Chinese principles. All buildings within the walls follow a north-south line, and the most important ones face south to honor the sun. The designers arranged the other buildings, and the ceremonial spaces between them, to impress all visitors with the great power of the Emperor, while reinforcing the insignificance of the individual. This architectural concept was carried out to the smallest detail. For example, the importance of a building was determined not only by its height or width but also the style of its roof and the quantity of statuettes placed on the roof's ridges.

In recognition of the importance of **its** **unparalleled** architecture, UNESCO added the palace to its World Heritage List in 1987. Today, visitors from all over the world do not wait for an imperial invitation to walk about this palace, now a museum of imperial art.

One of the most impressive landmarks of the Forbidden City is the Meridian Gate, the formal entrance to the southern side of the Forbidden City. The gate, with its auxiliary wings on either side of the entry way, is 38 meters high at its roof ridge. When you stand in front of this majestic structure, you understand how awed people felt when they stood there listening to imperial **proclamations.**

As you walk through the gate, you come into a large courtyard, 140 meters long and 210 meters wide. Running through the courtyard is the Golden River, which is crossed by five parallel white marble bridges. These bridges lead to the Gate of Supreme Harmony, which, in turn, leads to the heart of the Forbidden City. Its three main halls stand atop a three-tiered marble terrace overlooking an immense plaza. The plaza has enough space to hold tens of thousands of subjects paying homage to the emperor.

At the northern most end of the Forbidden City is the Imperial Garden, which is totally different from the rest of the compound. Instead of rigid formality, you see a seemingly **spontaneous** arrangement of trees, fishponds, flowerbeds, and sculpture. Here is the place of relaxation for the emperor. The motion picture *The Last Emperor* (1987), which portrays the life of Hsuan-t'ung P'u-i, was filmed partly within the Forbidden City.

11. Which sentence in paragraph 1 explains who could go anywhere in the Forbidden City at any time ?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

A. Sentence 2
B. Sentence 3
C. Sentence 4
D. Sentence 5

12. How long did it take to build the Forbidden City?

A. About five years
B. About seven years
C. About ten years
D. About fourteen years

13. From the passage, it can be inferred that

A. Chinese architects borrowed ideas from many different countries
B. the design of the Forbidden City is dull and colorless
C. the architecture of the Forbidden City exemplifies traditional Chinese values
D. the garden of the Forbidden City was laid out in a strict, rectangular pattern

14. Which phrase is closest in meaning to the underlined word "**unparalleled**" as used in paragraph 3?

A. At an angle from the main line
B. A high quality found nowhere else
C. Partially designed in a foreign country
D. Careless of small details in design

15. Which word(s) does the underlined word "**its**" refer to in paragraph 3?

A. UNESCO
B. Architecture
C. Palace
D. World Heritage List

16. From the passage, it is implied that the main entrance area to the Forbidden City is

A. surrounded by three tall walls
B. painted gold and green
C. decorated with statuettes
D. not very impressive

LIVEWORKSHEETS

17. Which phrase is closest in meaning to the underlined word "**proclamations**" as used in paragraph 4?

A. Music composed for public ceremonies
B. Speeches encouraging soldiers to fight
C. Official public announcements
D. Poetry written for the emperor

18. All the following are found in the Imperial Garden EXCEPT:

A. fishponds
B. sculpture
C. white marble bridges
D. flowerbeds

19. According to the passage, what do the bridges over the Golden River lead to?

A. The Meridian gate
B. The center of Beijing
C. The Gate of Supreme Harmony
D. The Imperial Gardens

20. Which phrase is closest meaning to the underlined word "**spontaneous**" as used in paragraph 6?

A. Without meaning
B. Without thinking
C. Without planning
D. Without drawing

LIVEWORKSHEETS