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Medieval Cities—Great Zimbabwe and Timbuktu Student Page

Introduction:

There is a ruin that stands in the southern African nation of Zimbabwe which is known as “Great Zimbabwe.” The word “Zimbabwe” means house of stone, or possibly the great house of a chief. Historians are not sure exactly why or how the structure was built. In this lesson, you will study images of the ruin and propose a reasonable explanation for its construction. In the second part of the lesson, you will study a description of the West African city of Timbuktu written in the 16th century by Leo Africanus. Be attentive to the details Leo Africanus uses in his description, and imagine what it would have been like to visit Timbuktu during this time.

All Web links for this lesson can be found at:
<http://www.socialstudies.com/worldlinks.html>.

Directions:

Great Zimbabwe Ruins

<http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~anthro/courses/306/Great%20Zimbabwe.html>

Scroll down and study the images.

1. Describe the environment surrounding Great Zimbabwe.
2. What materials does the ruin appear to be made of?
3. If you estimate the man in the photo is about 6 feet tall, about how tall is the wall?

