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Global Studies
China Lesson Plan

Lesson Plan #1 – Cultural Revolution: “Reality vs. Government Claims”

Unit Overview: The purpose of this lesson is to analyze the point of view of the Cultural Revolution from the Government’s perspective and from the reality of those experiences in the Cultural Revolution. The use of propaganda was widespread in China at the time and it is important for students to understand and analyze the different perspectives and the motivations behind each perspective. This can be a portion of a larger lesson plan on China.

Target Audience: This lesson is geared to a freshman Global Studies class.

Number of days: 4-6 days

Essential Questions:

- What were the causes and effects of the Cultural Revolution in China?
- How did the opinions or views of the Chinese government and the people differ about the Cultural Revolution?
- What insight do primary sources give us into historical events? What do they leave out?

Learning Objectives: The students will be able to state the significance and analyze differing perspectives of the Cultural Revolution. Students will become familiar with the Red Guards, Mao Zedong’s Cult of Personality, propaganda and censorship during this tumultuous time in Chinese history.

Lesson:

1. Day 1: Begin with an overview of Chinese History in the 20th Century. Have the students read a textbook to gather some background information about the end of the Chinese dynasties and the rise of the communist party in China. Make sure to cover topics such as the Chinese Civil War, The Nationalist, Mao Zedong and the Great Leap Forward. A good source are two powerpoints from <http://www.pptpalooza.net/>
 - a. Imperialist China--Qin to Ming
 - b. The Road to Communism in China
2. Day 1-2: Show or read article from CBS News, “The Legacy of Mao Zedong” to begin to narrow in on the topic of the Cultural Revolution. The video clip is approximately 14 mins long and covers the rise of the communists to the controversy over the Beijing Olympics. It does a nice job of showing the differing perspectives of the Cultural Revolution.
3. Day 3-6: (or just Day 3) Show the movie “To Live”. This covers the end of the Qing dynasty to the end of the Cultural Revolution. The entire film is very relevant, but in the essence of time, you can just show the last 50 minutes which focuses on the Cultural Revolution.
4. Day 7: Read either an excerpt from Anchee Min’s *Red Azalea* or the article from Harper’s Magazine, “Little Red Guard.” Have students discuss the reading. Talking about their own experiences as a student and could they have been a part of the Red Guards.
5. Day 8: Have students Brainstorm the differing perspectives of the Cultural Revolution. Read the documents from the Cultural Revolution and analyze them.
6. Day 9: Write a four-paragraph essay answering the DBQ questions.

Assignments: Video guides and worksheets for all above materials, a document based question examining the differences between the government’s perspective on the Cultural Revolution and the reality. Students will write a four-paragraph essay that examines four primary source documents. (see attached)

Ohio Academic Content Standards:

Modern World History

11. Imperialism involved land acquisition, extraction of raw materials, spread of Western values and maintenance of political control.
26. Emerging economic powers and improvements in technology have created a more-interdependent global economy.
28. The rapid increase of global population coupled with an increase in life expectancy and mass migrations have created societal and governmental challenges.

Resources:

PowerPoints:

- The Road to Communism in China (www.powerpointpalooza.com)

Books

- Textbook, Modern World History
- *Red Azalea* by Anchee Min

Articles

- “Little Red Guard” *Harper's Magazine*, Feb94, Vol. 288 Issue 1725, p22-25, 4p. Interview with Anchee Min

Videos

- “The Legacy of Mao” CBS Sunday Morning video clip. Article: http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-3445_162-4317524.html
- *To Live*, film by Zhang Yimou (in need of time, just the last portion can be shown about the Cultural Revolution)

The Cultural Revolution Document Based Question

Historical Context: The documents below provide information about China's Cultural Revolution, the movement during the 1960s that sought to rid China of its old ways and create a society in which peasants and physical labor were the ideal.

Question: How did the government's claims about the Cultural Revolution differ from the reality of the revolution?

Document 1: Mao and the Army

The poster below was created during 1969, at the height of the Cultural Revolution. It shows Mao watching over a group of Chinese soldiers, most of whom are holding a copy of the so-called "Little Red Book" - a collection of Mao's writings and political ideas. The Chinese characters at the bottom of the poster translate as "The Chinese People's Liberation Army is the great school of Mao Zedong thought."



Analysis:

1. How is Mao depicted in this poster?
2. Does this document support the government's claims or the reality regarding the Cultural Revolution?

Document 2: The Song of Ox-Ghosts and Snake Dreams

This song was composed by a Chinese student and quickly spread throughout the country during the Cultural Revolution. The Red Guards punished certain teachers in part by forcing the teachers to sing this song several times a day. If the singing was unsatisfactory, the teachers would be beaten or otherwise punished.

I am an ox-ghost and snake-demon.
I am an ox-ghost and snake-demon.
I am guilty. I am guilty.
I committed crimes against the people,

So the people take me as the object of the dictatorship.
I have to lower my head and admit my guilt.
I must be obedient.
I am not allowed to speak or act incorrectly.

If I speak or act incorrectly,
May you beat me and smash me,
Beat me and smash me

Analysis:

1. What are the singers of the song allegedly guilty of?
2. Does this document support the government's claims or the reality regarding the Cultural Revolution?

Document 3: Violence Against Teachers

This excerpt from a 1966 paper written by historian Youqin Wang describes the violence against teachers that was common during the Cultural Revolution.

In the afternoon of August 5, 1966, some tenth grade students at the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University started [beating]... a group comprised of three vice principals and two deans... Many students came to join them. The students... forced them to kneel on the ground, hit them with nail-spiked clubs, scalded them with boiling water, and so on. After three hours of torture, the first vice principal, Bian Zhongyun, lost consciousness and was put into a garbage cart. Two hours later she was sent to the hospital across the street. There, she was later found to have been dead for some time...

In most cases, beatings were a collective activity, conducted not by single students but by a group of Red Guards. A group of Red Guards acted together, inciting each other and encouraging hostilities. Sometimes, a beating happened in front of hundreds of people... Bian Zhongyun, the first victim of the violence of 1966, died after being beaten by many students. During the several hours of torture, no one at this school of more than 1,600 students tried to dissuade the beaters from these inhuman actions... at the student dining hall some talked loudly about how they forced her to eat dirt from the toilet or how they fetched hot water to scald her. There was no sense of guilt, but rather an excited, giddy atmosphere.

Analysis:

1. What does the author of this excerpt say that Red Guards did to teachers?
2. How does this description of the Cultural Revolution differ from that shown in Document 1? Does it support the government's claims or reality of the Cultural Revolution?

Document 4: The Cultural Revolution's Goal

The document below is from a June 7, 1966, editorial in the People's Liberation Army Daily, the official newspaper of the Chinese military.

The current great socialist cultural revolution is a great revolution to sweep away all monsters and a great revolution that remolds the ideology of people and touches their souls. What weapon should be used to sweep away all monsters? What ideology should be applied to arm people's minds and remold their souls? The most powerful ideological weapon, the only one, is the great Mao Tse-tung's thought.

In this great, stormy cultural revolution, the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers are playing the role of the main force - this is the result of their efforts in creatively studying and applying Mao Tse-tung's thought and arming their ideology with it.

Chairman Mao is the radiant sun lighting our minds. Mao Tse-tung's thought is our lifeline. Those who oppose Mao Tse-tung's thought, no matter when they do so and what kind of "authorities" they are, will be denounced by the entire Party and the whole nation.

Analysis:

1. What are the goals of the Cultural Revolution?
2. How will the "weapon" described here help win the Revolution?

3. Does this document support the government's claims or the reality regarding the Cultural Revolution?

Assessment Rubric

The Cultural Revolution DBQ

Criteria	Points Possible	Points Earned
Thesis is clear and answers question	4	
The topic and concluding sentence of body paragraph I directly relates to defending the thesis	2	
Government – 2 examples and 2 different documents to support <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mao is a demi-god, watching over• Red guards were happy• Cultural Rev. glorious• Ridded society of old ways• Peasants & workers were ideal• Great school of Mao Zedong's thought• Mao's teaching would help rid China of old ways	4	
Reality - 2 examples and 2 different documents to support <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brutally violent• Red guards beat & tortured intellectuals (teachers)• Did not actually rid society of old• Red guards became Mao's militia	4	
The topic and concluding sentence of body paragraph I directly relates to defending the thesis	2	
All 4 documents are used	4	
Total	20	

