

China's Long March

Purpose: Students will understand the transition period from China during its feudal society to its communist state. They will learn of the Long March of the Communist Party during the year form 1934-35.

Essential Questions: Why do revolutions occur? Does the “little guy” ever win?

Rationale: Provide students an opportunity to understand and empathize with China's Communist Party.

Materials:

1. We will use as our main text: Fritz, Jean. China's Long March, 6000 Miles of Danger. G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1988.
2. The map of the March and a look at the key leaders from:
www.paulnoll.com/China/Long-March/history-map-alternate.html
3. Some excerpts about the background of the Chinese Revolution, (more for background for myself), from:
www.iusb.edu/~journal/1999/Paper8.html
4. Dramer, Kim. People's Republic of China. Children's Press.1999. pp. 45-63.

Activities: 1. After learning about feudalism in Europe in the Middle Ages and then in Japan, students will learn about the history of China. All students will first read pp. 45-63 from the People's Republic of China book to get a brief historical background of China.

2. After reading briefly about the history, we will have a discussion about the problems of feudalism and the attraction of Communism. We would discuss the *theory* of Communism and the reality of it.

3. We will then read about the key leaders of the Long March, (#2 in materials).
4. Each day I will read an excerpt from the Jean Fritz book, China's Long March, 6000 Miles of Danger.
 - a. I will start with pp. 11-12, which discusses China before the March. As we go we will mark on our map of China the route the Red army took throughout the year of their march.
 - b. Read pp.42-43 and discuss the Three Rules of Discipline of the Red Army. I will read these rules in page 4 of #3 of the materials section. Discuss if they think these rules would be effective, and why Mao chose those rules.
 - c. P. 44 the section on women's role in the military. Discuss the role of women in China during this time period. Read p.49, which discusses the birth of Mao's son and what they did with him during the march.

- d. Pp71-74 the crossing of the Dadu River. Tells of the difficulty of that particular crossing.
- e. Pp.75-84 the crossing of the Great Snowies. The mountains that reached up 16,000 feet and the losses they encountered there.
- f. Pp87-90 The reunion of the first and fourth regiments
- g. 94-99 crossing the grasslands; losses were greater there than crossing the mountains.
- h. Pp.105-115, end of the book. Conclusion of the march and the aftermath, including the Cultural Revolution.

Assessment: After finishing our reading and discussion of the book, students will be assigned an essay. They are to pretend they are a peasant during the time of the March in China. They have been mistreated by Warlords and have very little in their homes. They have been approached by the Red Army to join forces with them. What will they do? They are to write down their thoughts, pros and cons of joining, and their final decision.

Grade Adaptation: This lesson is targeted for a 7th grade social studies classroom. I'm not sure this topic would be appropriate for elementary students, but they can discuss the lives of peasants and why revolutions occur. The book is low level for high school, but a more in-depth study of Communism, comparing Communist Russia and China.