

EAST ASIAN LESSON PLANS

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**NEWSCASTS FROM TIANANMEN SQUARE
(Lesson Plan-3 to 4 class periods (50 minutes each))**

Purpose: To understand the issues surrounding the Tiananmen Square Massacre through student-produced newscasts.

Essential questions:

1. What tensions led to the Tiananmen Square Massacre? Did different groups have different intellectual and political ideas for China?
2. How did it feel to be a part of the events at Tiananmen Square?
3. What role did the media play in the events of the Tiananmen Square Massacre?
4. What were the consequences of the Tiananmen Square Massacre? Could it have been avoided? Why or why not?
5. What connections can be made between this student-led protest and that of African American leaders during the Civil Rights Movement?

Rationale: Students will gain understanding into the intellectual and political climate surrounding Tiananmen Square, as well as experience the emotion and history of it through student-produced newscasts.

Materials: “China after Mao” (World History: The Human Journey by Holt, Rinehart, Wilson, pp.662, 663)
School media center &/or Internet
Directions for Tiananmen Square Massacre Newscasts handout
Canadian journalist Jan Wong’s “Eyewitness to the Massacre” (The History Of Nations, China by C.J. Shane, pp.162,163)
“China ‘frees democracy activists’”
(<http://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/asiapcf/03/04/china.dissident.ap/index.html>)
Teacher &/or student props to facilitate the newscasts

Activities:

1. Students read, “China after Mao” to understand the intellectual and political climate of the times surrounding the Tiananmen Square Massacre. Teacher reviews salient points emphasizing the call for political reforms. Include transitioning with why 1989 promised to be an anniversary year of special significance for China (marked the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution,

- seventieth anniversary of the May Fourth movement, the fortieth birthday of the People's Republic, and the ten years time passed since officially renewed relations with the U.S. The calls for political reforms became stronger in this historic year, which would now also become remembered for the Tiananmen Square Massacre.)
2. Explain to students that they will be working in groups of six to create a 5-7 minute newscast of the events at Tiananmen Square.
 3. Explain that one student will play the role of the on-scene reporter with each of the remaining students within the group taking a particular role as an interviewee to showcase the spectrum of views that existed at this time: Students (of history department at People's University in Peking (Beijing)), workers (of Peking) hard-line government officials (Deng Xiaoping, Premier Li Peng), moderates (Zhao Ziyang Secretary General of the CCP), Mikhail Gorbachev, President Yang Shangkun, People's Liberation Army (PLA), Twenty-Seventh Army (Commander was a relative to President Yang Shangkun).
 Note: Possible modifications include that students who take on two roles might receive extra credit, the teacher might allow students to choose from the selections, or the teacher could expand the group size.
 4. Review the directions for creating the newscast which include (1) conducting research specific to your role and taking notes (2) brainstorming ideas for the newscast (3) planning the presentation including writing down and learning your lines (on-scene reporter must develop and coordinate questioning for each interviewee) (4) gathering props (5) rehearsing the newscast.
 5. Allow groups adequate time to prepare their newscasts (2-3 periods). Students will want to reference their media centers &/or make use of the Internet for additional research. As students prepare, help them with troubleshooting as necessary.
 6. Proceed, when appropriate, with newscasts one group at a time. Following each group newscast, allow the groups to field any questions from other students about either the content or style of their newscast. Following the newscasts, the teacher should review key points raised in the newscasts and answer any remaining questions.
 7. Teacher will lead a debriefing of the newscasts:
 How did it feel to be a part of the events at Tiananmen Square?
 Why was there so much tension? Did different groups have different intellectual and political ideas for China?
 What role did the media play in the events of the Tiananmen Square Massacre?
 What were the consequences of the Tiananmen Square Massacre?
 Could it have been avoided? Why or why not?
 In what ways was this student-led protest similar to the protests used by African Americans in the Civil Rights Movement?
 8. Explain the homework assignment (see below).
 9. Upon completion of the assessment, ask for student volunteers to share a few responses with the class. Then, share an actual eyewitness account of the massacre with students as written by Canadian journalist Jan Wong.

10. Teacher shares the current events article, “China ‘frees democracy activist’” to give currency to the Tiananmen Square protests and to spark discussion on current U.S.-Chinese relations.

Assessment:

Students will assume the role of a journalist who observed the Tiananmen Square Massacre first-hand as it unfolded. Write an eyewitness account of what you see and how you feel as you watch these events unfold. Your response should be at least one page in length.

Grade Adaptation:

Intended Grade Level: 9th grade (World History)

Scale down for middle school by preparing pre-made lines for students to use in their skits or provide more guidance in the research process, writing of their skits, and rehearsing of their skits.

Allow additional time and monitoring of students meeting the requirements on a set schedule.

Lessen the length of the assessment as necessary.

TIANANMEN SQUARE MASSACRE NEWSCASTS

Directions:

1. After choosing your role(s), conduct the necessary research to learn your part.
2. Brainstorm ideas for your newscast.
3. Plan the presentations, including writing down and learning your lines (on-scene reporter must develop and coordinate questioning for each interviewee).
4. Gather props as necessary.
5. Rehearse your newscast.