



Propaganda during Mao's Great Leap Forward

Lesson Plan by: Molly Long, Avonworth High School, NCTA 2021 (The Ohio State University seminar)

Title: Propaganda during Mao's Great Leap Forward

Theme/Topic: Life in China under Mao

Introduction (2-3 sentence summary of lesson): Students will be introduced to the mindset of Mao and his attempts to garner support for his programs through the examination of propaganda. Focus will be given to the goals and methods of the Great Leap Forward.

Subject(s)/Grade level(s): World History/10th grade

Duration of lesson: One block period

Connection to standards/common core (2-3 standards):

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

Essential Questions (2-3 questions):

- What type of life was created under the leadership of Mao in China during the 1950s and 1960s?
- How successful was Chinese propaganda in supporting the Great Leap Forward?

Learning Objectives (2-3 objectives):

- Students will be able to analyze various pieces of propaganda created during the Great Leap Forward to discern meaning and impact.
 - Students will evaluate Great Leap Forward propaganda as a means of controlling and persuading the population.
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Materials Needed:

- Computers
- Smartboard
- [Crash Course in World History #37](#)
- Website: "[The Art of Chinese Propaganda](#)"



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- Website: "[Chinese Posters: The Early Years](#)"
- Worksheet on propaganda analysis
- Google Form Exit Ticket

Pre-Assessment of Prior Knowledge:

Students will be asked to write down what they know about Mao and China as an exit slip during the previous class. This will provide insight as to what students already know as well as what areas require clarification by the teacher.

Lesson Activities/Instructional Strategies (5-7 steps):

Class will begin with the teacher posting the following statements on the Smartboard for students to view:

- 1) *"New things always have to experience difficulties and setbacks as they grow. It is sheer fantasy to imagine that the cause of socialism is all plain sailing and easy success, without difficulties and setbacks or the exertion of tremendous efforts." - 1957*
- 2) *"In times of difficulty we must not lose sight of our achievements, must see the bright future and must pluck up our courage." - 1944*
- 3) *"A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another." -1927*

Students will be asked to summarize each of the statements in their own words, of no more than 10. After students have summarized each statement, students will make a general statement about what life would be like using these ideas as their guide. After several minutes of individual work, students will share their responses with a neighbor before coming together as a large group and sharing responses.

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After the discussion has concluded, the teacher will inform students that these are all statements from Mao's Little Red Book and reflect his views on life and the future of China. (10-15 minutes)

After orienting students to some of the views of Mao, the teacher will provide a brief lecture on the early years of Mao's rule in China with a focus on the Great Leap Forward. The lecture will be followed up with a portion of Crash Course World History #37, up through minute 9:50 (20 minutes).

Class will continue through evaluating pieces of propaganda created by Mao's regime to build support for the Great Leap Forward. The teacher will display the propaganda piece to the right on the board (this piece is image 8 of 19 from NPR's "[The Art of Chinese Propaganda](#)") along with its caption. Students will be instructed to list the images included in the propaganda piece on a piece of paper as well as actions; these elements will be shared as a group. Students will attempt to determine the symbolic meaning of these images/actions during a group discussion. Once the class has decided on a meaning, students will individually assess the effectiveness of the piece as the teacher poses the question on the board: "What makes this piece of propaganda successful?" Students will work to individually craft responses before sharing their thoughts with the class. (15 minutes)



Students will now begin the main activity of class. Students will be directed to the website *Chinese Posters: Early Years (1949-1965)*. Students will select TWO propaganda posters from the time of the Great Leap Forward (1958-1962). They will complete the accompanying handout, mimicking the analysis done as a class for the two pieces of their selection; this can be done individually or with a partner. After 20 minutes, the class will come back together and share some of their selected pieces and their analysis of them. (25 minutes)

Resources:

- <https://www.npr.org/sections/pictureshow/2012/11/16/164785930/the-art-of-chinese-propaganda>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUCEeC4f6ts>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/11/the-cultural-revolution-50-years-on-all-you-need-to-know-about-chinas-political-convulsion>
- <http://www.iisg.nl/exhibitions/chairman/chnintro.php>
- <https://terebess.hu/english/maotse1.html#1>



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Closing/Reflection Activity:

To end the activity, students will complete a Google Form exit ticket that contains both essential questions. Student responses will be submitted before the end of class.

Post-Assessment:

Students will examine a previously unseen propaganda piece concerning the Great Leap Forward to determine its meaning. This piece will be selected by the teacher and provided to students as a conclusion to their unit investigation on life under Mao.

Extension Activities/Extending the Lesson/Cross-Curricular Connections (2-3 ideas):

- Compare and contrast Mao's propaganda with American propaganda of the same time period.
 - Students can use their understanding of the Great Leap Forward to create their own piece of propaganda reflecting similar techniques and strategies to what was examined in class.
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