

Red Scarf Girl Webquest



Chairman Mao, the Red Sun of the East

The Chinese Cultural Revolution

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Introduction

The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) was a period of great tumult in China. Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution for two reasons: to rid China of vestiges of pre-Communist society and culture, and to secure his own hold on power within the Chinese Communist Party. The Red Guards, youths in their teens and twenties, heeded Mao's call to stamp out the Four Olds: old habits, old ideas, old customs and old culture. Society was turned upside down as schools and hospitals were closed, art and artifacts were destroyed, books were burned and the work force was thrown into chaos. The Red Guard generally targeted intellectuals and Party members thought to be practicing or harboring anti-revolutionary ideas. Violence was common and many suffered at the hands of mobs driven by their devotion to Mao and his call for action. The Red Guards themselves broke up into factions and they clashed, sometimes with guns and other weapons. Eventually Mao turned to the Red Army to restore order in society, as the Red Guard were disbanded and sent to the countryside. But not before Mao's hold on power was absolute and Chinese society was changed.

Task

Your task is to create a virtual museum exhibit for the Cultural Revolution. The exhibit is to include six artifacts from this historical period. Some examples could include:

1. Diary entry of a Red Guard member
2. Diary entry of a teacher
3. Diary entry of Ji Li Jiang, author of *Red Scarf Girl*
4. Political song
5. Chairman Mao buttons
6. Mao's Little Red Book (two quotations)
7. Political Posters
8. Poetry
9. Photographs of important individuals
10. Art
11. Photographs of uniforms
12. Da-zi-bao/Big Character Posters



Young Red Guards and the ubiquitous Red Book

Procedure

You will begin this webquest in conjunction with our reading of *Red Scarf Girl* by Ji Li Jiang. Using the information in this book and information found in the resources, select or create six artifacts for your museum. You will present your artifacts in the presentation software found in AppleWorks. The presentation should include a minimum of nine slides: a cover page, an introduction summarizing the Cultural Revolution, a slide for each artifact, and a conclusion in which you will reflect on the significance of the artifacts. Each artifact must have an identifying caption and a statement explaining its relevance to the Cultural Revolution. Full instructions and due dates available [here](#).

Resources

Gao Yuan. *Born Red*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987.

Hunter, Alan and John Sexton. *Contemporary China*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

Jiang, Ji Li. *Red Scarf Girl*. New York: Harper Trophy, 1997.

Pietrusza. *The Chinese Cultural Revolution*. San Diego, California: Lucent Books, 1997.

Roberts, J.A.G. *A Concise History of China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Schoppa, R. Keith. *The Columbia Guide to Modern Chinese History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Spence, Jonathan. *Mao Zedong*. New York: Penguin Books, 1999.

Yang, Rae. *Spider Eaters: A Memoir*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997.

History:

<http://asterius.com/china/china4.asp>

<http://www.culturalbridge.com/cnadd.htm>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/peoplescentury/episodes/greatleap/jingzhitranscript.html>

Buttons:

<http://home.swbell.net/groetsch/mao/>

<http://www.sayreschool.org/klus/mao/index.htm>

Poetry and Posters:

<http://www.iisg.nl/exhibitions/chairman>

<http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/exhib/poster/exhibintro.html>

<http://www.iisg.nl/~landsberger/index.html>

<http://www.chinesestamps.net/Posters/default01.asp>

Music/Opera:

<http://metalab.unc.edu/pub/multimedia/chinese-music/>

<http://www.hnh.com/rahome/ramocr.htm>

Conclusion

The Cultural Revolution was a period of tremendous upheaval in China. Hopefully you have gained some insight into the causes and the results of this period of chaos. But what lessons can be learned? Who was responsible? Was it Mao or the Gang of Four? Was it the Chinese population who deified Mao and bought into his cult of personality? Was it the political system that allowed power to accumulate in the hands of a few? Perhaps more importantly, we should ask how an entire society can turn on itself so readily. Similar experiences dot the historic landscape: Germany in the 1930's; Yugoslavia in the 1980's; the United States during the Red Scare of the 1950's. History has many examples of societies that, for whatever reasons, become so convulsed that citizens become the victims of their neighbors who believe that they are the carriers of some ultimate Truth. We are advised to study these, to arm against them, and to protect ourselves from the forces of repression, blind conformity, and prejudice. Learn these lessons well, for as George Santayana said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Examples:

[Barnhill](#)

[Curtz](#)

Four samples of student work are provided here.

[Truitt](#)

[Miller](#)

Evaluation: See the basis for grading this project [here](#).

Thanks to Jean L. Moore, Rosemont School of the Holy Child, for creating this project for others to use.