

EXPLORING ASIA:

POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY



ABOUT THE EXPLORING ASIA PROJECT AND THE POLITICS IN ASIA SERIES

Exploring Asia: Political Change in the 21st Century is a collaborative project between the Newspapers In Education program of The Seattle Times and the University of Washington's Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies Asia and Global Studies outreach centers. The project consists of a five-article series, a teaching guide, and a preseries workshop for secondary teachers. Designed with young readers in mind, each article in the online newspaper series focuses on major political changes in Asia. The five-part series begins with an overview of political change in Asia followed by articles featuring Burma, China, India and Central Asia. This teaching guide provides a lesson plan for each article and activities to do with students before, during and after reading the featured weekly article. Together the articles and accompanying lessons take students on an exploration of politics in several Asian countries, asking students to look at the issues from multiple perspectives and to explore how North America is becoming more and more connected to Asia. The points of view represented in the articles and the guide materials are a sampling of perspectives on these issues.

AUTHOR OF THE TEACHING GUIDE

The author of the teaching guide for *Exploring Asia: Political Change in the 21st Century* series is Tese Wintz Neighbor.

Tese Wintz Neighbor received a Master of Arts in China Regional Studies from the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington. For the past 12 years she has been working as the senior director of professional development for the Seattle World Affairs Council and has also taught intensive Asia seminars for the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia, regionally based at the University of Washington's East Asia Resource Center. Neighbor is the author of numerous curricula on Asia, including "Journey Down the Yangtze: From Dragon's Tail to Dragon's Head" (1998, East Asia Resource Center), "Teacher's Guide to Treasures From a Lost Civilization: Ancient Chinese Art From Sichuan" (2001, Seattle Asian Art Museum), "Understanding the World of Political Cartoons" (2003, Newspapers In Education), "China Matters" (2008, World Affairs Council) and "Global Health: Asia in the 21st Century" (2009, Newspapers In Education), co-author of "Exploring Asia: Human Rights" (2011, Newspapers In Education) and author of "Exploring Asia: Islam in Asia" (2012, Newspapers In Education).

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The East Asia Center

The East Asia Resource Center

The Ellison Center for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies

The Center for Global Studies

The South Asia Center

The Southeast Asia Center

The project lead for the 2013 series is Tikka Sears, outreach coordinator of the Southeast Asia Center.

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LESSON ONE: EXPLORING ASIA: POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Pair with “Changing Asia” by Resat Kasaba (article appears in *The Seattle Times* on May 1).

INTRODUCTION

The lessons in this teaching guide, paired with five articles appearing in The Seattle Times’ Newspapers In Education series, will introduce students to political, social and economic changes taking place in Asia today. We will focus on Burma, China, India and Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). In this first lesson, students will begin to explore some of the political and economic changes taking places in Asia today. This broad overview will provide a foundation as the students discuss various reading assignments over the next few weeks.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will build their geographic knowledge of Asia.
- Students will learn about some of the political and economic changes in Asia.
- Students will begin to think about the growing connections between Asia and the United States.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. How do political and economic changes in one country affect neighboring populations?
2. What are the opportunities and challenges facing the United States as Asia grows in power?

MATERIALS

- The Seattle Times article “Changing Asia”
- Computer/Internet access

ACTIVITIES

Before reading

1. Assess students’ prior knowledge of Asia. What countries are located in Asia? Exactly where are they? Project this Asia geography quiz on the wall and ask for few volunteers to take this quiz; if there are enough computers, students could group together and quiz themselves: www.lizardpoint.com/fun/geoquiz/asiaquiz.html.
2. Next, project the following map on the board and have one student point out the countries that will be discussed in this NIE series: Burma, China, India and Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan): http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sino-Indian_Geography.png. Which of these Asian countries have been in the news recently? Why? What do students know about the current politics and economics of these countries?
3. View the websites listed below to build students’ knowledge. As students view these websites, ask them to jot down on a piece of paper any information related to the political system of each country addressed in this series (form of government, leadership, citizen status and demands, etc.).

BBC Country Profile. Full profiles provide an instant guide to history, politics and economic background of countries and territories, as well as background on key institutions. They also include audio and video clips from British Broadcast Corporation archives: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm.

Asia Society: “Countries and History: Country Profiles.” This site provides an alphabetical listing of all countries in Asia. Each country’s page includes a map, which can be expanded to show all of Asia or zoomed in to focus within the country. Basic data is provided for each country: <http://asiasociety.org/countries/country-profiles>.

LESSON ONE: EXPLORING ASIA: POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

During and after reading

1. Ask students to highlight geographic, political, demographic, etc., information that is new to them as they read the article.
2. Next, ask students to form small groups and discuss the following: What is the author's main point? What have they heard recently in the news and/or learned at school that supports or challenges this point? Underline a sentence or passage they would like to discuss further.
3. Finally, ask each group to discuss the following passage (or the one they just underlined): *"When they realize the disparities between their lives and that of their peers elsewhere, people start to make demands on their rulers and put pressure on their institutions. Or existing institutions find it hard to cope with the pressures of rapid change. They start to give and ultimately break down, ushering in new institutions and new ways of organizing."* Discuss what these statements mean to each student in the group. Have students collect evidence supporting and refuting each of these statements.

ASSESSMENT

1. Organize students into groups of six (three students debating another team of three students). Prepare students for organizing a formal debate. Ask each group to discuss the author's opening sentence: *"When historians look back at the period we are living in now, there is little doubt that they will mark it as the beginning of a major shift in global balance of power from North America toward Asia."* What do they think the author means by his opening statement? What have they heard recently in the news and/or learned at school that supports or refutes this statement? Should the United States be worried about this power shift? How might the United States view this shift in power as a challenge? How might it be viewed as an opportunity? Brainstorm and jot down six possible challenges and six possible opportunities.
2. Next, ask three students from each group to find articles or reports that support the "challenges" (i.e., competition for jobs and industry, natural resource disputes, military buildup, etc.) and three to find "opportunities" (i.e., growing consumer markets, military alliances, cultural exchanges, etc.). For Western sources, students may want to check news organizations such as The New York Times, Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs, Christian Science Monitor, BBC, The Economist and National Public Radio; and research organizations such as the Council on Foreign Relations, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Carnegie Endowment, Woodrow Wilson Center, Brookings Report, Congressional Research Service or Asia Society Reports.
3. Ask each group to practice their "debate." (Note: debates are usually structured around a statement. They may want to debate the following statement — or write one of their own: "The growing strength of Asian countries in relation to the United States is an opportunity for the United States.") Each side will have five minutes to clearly describe the challenges (or opportunities), convey substantive evidence and deliver a convincing argument. If time allows, ask one or two groups to volunteer to debate in front of the entire class.
4. Allow time to debrief. Which side "won" the debate? Since this is not a true "pro-con" debate, the "winners" would be the side that most clearly described the challenges or opportunities and conveyed the most substantive evidence. Discuss that this particular topic is not so black and white. This issue regarding global balance of power (similar to many other geopolitical issues) includes both challenges *and* opportunities. Task students to read between the lines when they pick up articles that focus on only one side of a world issue. (An excellent resource for debate training and topics is the International Debate Education Association: <http://idebate.org/>.)

LESSON TWO: EXPLORING ASIA: POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Pair with “Not Possible A Year Ago” by Mary Callahan (article appears in *The Seattle Times* on May 8).

INTRODUCTION

The article paired with this lesson introduces students to political changes that are taking place in Burma today. Also known as Myanmar, this country has been ruled since 1962 by a powerful military junta that has stifled almost all dissent. The first general election in 20 years was held in 2010. In March 2011, Thein Sein was sworn in as president of a new, nominally civilian government. (He served as a general and then prime minister under the junta.) Since then, a series of reforms have been instituted. This lesson encourages students to explore these new changes and consider how much or how little these reforms will affect the international community as well as the everyday lives of the ordinary Burmese.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the recent political changes taking place in Burma.
- Students will consider how these changes might impact the lives of the people.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. What is so historical about these political changes?
2. What might be the hopes and dreams of individual Burmese now that times are changing?

MATERIALS

- The Seattle Times article
- Computer/Internet access

ACTIVITIES

Before reading

1. What have students learned about Burma so far? Where in Asia is it located? Why has this country — after being isolated for decades from much of the world — been in the news so much this past year? What specific reports have they heard about Burma?
2. Explain to students that The Seattle Times article about Burma focuses on some of the political changes taking place there over the past year. If they are unfamiliar with these changes, you might first assess students' knowledge of Aung San Suu Kyi, perhaps the most famous Burmese person. Ask students to describe what they know about this 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner. For her BBC profile and timeline, see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11685977>. Here is an excerpt from this site that you might share: “Like the South African leader Nelson Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyi has become an international symbol of peaceful resistance in the face of oppression. The 66-year-old spent most of the last two decades in some form of detention because of her efforts to bring democracy to military-ruled Burma. In 1991, a year after her National League for Democracy (NLD) won an overwhelming victory in an election the junta later nullified, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. ... She was sidelined for Burma's first elections in two decades on 7 November 2010 but released from house arrest six days later. As the new government embarked on a process of reform, Ms. Suu Kyi and her party rejoined the political process. On 1 April 2012 she stood for parliament in a by-election, arguing it was what her supporters wanted even if the country's reforms were 'not irreversible.' She and her fellow NLD candidates won a landslide victory and weeks later the former political prisoner was sworn into parliament, a move unimaginable before the 2010 polls.”

LESSON TWO: EXPLORING ASIA: POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

During and after reading

1. In this article, the author writes, “Yet much that was not possible is possible now.” Ask students to read the article and circle the new changes and possibilities that are taking place in Burma. After everyone is finished reading, ask one student to compile these changes into one list on the board. Discuss other changes that have taken place since this article was first written in early 2013 and add these to the list.
2. Last year, Mary Callahan was an eyewitness to many of these changes. Envision her debating “democratic civilian control of the military” with senior military officers and then discussing this same topic with recently released political prisoners. Divide the class into small groups for discussion. Ask them to imagine being in Mary Callahan’s shoes. Task them to compare the various perspectives: hers, the senior military officers’ and the political prisoners’.
3. In preparation for their final assessment exercise, encourage these small groups to expand this “what are they thinking?” discussion. In what ways, do they think, have the recent political changes affected the lives of a Burmese Buddhist monk or nun, farmer, bicycle rickshaw driver, street vendor, fisherman, public bus driver, student, teacher, journalist or tour leader, etc.? What might be their hopes for the future? Ask the students to jot down some of these thoughts. Finally, ask each student to write down two to four questions they would ask if they could interview someone in Burma.

ASSESSMENT

Ask each student to imagine themselves “wearing a pair of Burmese sandals” for a day. Encourage students to search both Western and non-Western sources for articles about a Burmese Buddhist monk or nun, farmer, bicycle rickshaw driver, street vendor, fisherman, public bus driver, journalist or tour leader, etc. (Some Burmese publications include The Irrawaddy News <http://www.irrawaddy.org/> and The Myanmar Times <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news.html>). Ask them to write a 500-word essay in the first person. Encourage students to be creative in this essay; they will need to use the voice of the person they have chosen, expressing their unique hopes and fears for their livelihood, family, community and country. If the students want, they could be President Thein Sein or Aung San Suu Kyi for a day. The point of this exercise is to “get to know a Burmese citizen.” (They could add a picture of “them” and/or their work environment.) For those who want to write a slightly different essay, they could don Hillary Clinton or President Barack Obama’s shoes by researching one of their landmark visits to Burma and writing an essay from one of their perspectives covering the changes, some of the people they met and their hopes for U.S.-Burma relations. Former Secretary of State Clinton was the first senior U.S. official to visit in 50 years (December 2011); President Obama was the first sitting American president to visit (November 2012).

EXTENSION

Students who are interested in delving deeper into Burmese politics might want to do an independent study of its complex history of ethnic tensions. Burmese government control over many of its ethnic minorities has stirred up protests and separatist rebellions. Some minority groups include Karen, Shan, Rakhine, Mon, Rohingya, Chin and Kachin. Encourage interested students to choose one ethnic group and give a short presentation of its past history and the current challenges it faces in this new political climate.

LESSON THREE: EXPLORING ASIA: POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Pair with “China’s 18th Chinese Communist Party Congress and the Challenges of the 21st Century” by David Bachman (article appears in *The Seattle Times* on May 15).

INTRODUCTION

The article paired with this lesson introduces students to the challenges facing the new leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. The great post-18th Party Congress test is whether the CCP can direct the politics of growth by increasing domestic consumerism while addressing serious environmental degradation, the widening gap between the rich and poor, serious corruption at all levels of government and other looming issues.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will expand their knowledge of the Chinese Communist Party and the myriad of challenges that it faces in the 21st century.
- Students will examine challenges through multiple perspectives.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. What challenges does the CCP leadership face in governing China?
2. How might social media play a role in bringing about political and economic change in China?
3. What opportunities and challenges do Chinese citizens face today? How have these impacted their world view?

MATERIALS

- The Seattle Times article
- Computer/Internet access

ACTIVITIES

Before reading

1. China is in the news every day. Ask students to think about things they have heard or read about with regard to China. Ask them to brainstorm a “China in the headlines” list. One student can record this random list on the board.
2. Review Resat Kasaba’s references to China in his introductory article (see Lesson One). He comments that the new leaders of China “face the difficult task of managing economic growth while continuing to suppress dissent.” What do they think the writer means by this statement? Share with students that “mass incidents” (citizen protests and demonstrations) according to government statistics have ranged between 50,000 and 100,000 per year. What news reports have they seen or heard that correspond with his assertion? Ask them to review the random list they have made on the board. Would any of these “headline news items” spur dissent? Why do they think Chinese citizens are protesting?
3. Next, ask students to compile a more specific list highlighting 15 to 20 issues or challenges facing China today. (Examples might include the growing gap between the rich and poor, environmental degradation, government corruption at all levels, food safety scandals, the lack of the rule of law, human rights issues, ethnic tensions, or rocky United States-China relations.) Ask each student to prioritize these in their notebooks and record what they think are the top five challenges facing China today. If time allows, students may be interested in the Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Project, which records Chinese concerns about corruption, inequality, food safety, etc.: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/10/16/growing-concerns-in-china-about-inequality-corruption/>.
4. Explain to students that The Seattle Times article on China looks at the new leadership that arose out of the 18th Chinese Communist Party Congress that took place in November 2012. Ask students to spend a few minutes writing down what they know about the CCP and its role in the government. Discuss the students’ responses. What questions do they have? For a short overview of the Chinese government (and to answer their questions), see BBC: How China is Ruled (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13904437>). Encourage students to click on the links to find out more information on how China is ruled. Also see Council on Foreign Relations, The Chinese Communist Party: <http://www.cfr.org/china/chinese-communist-party/p29443>. For a more comprehensive background report, see Congressional Research Service: “Understanding China’s Political System” www.fas.org/spp/crs/row/R41007.pdf.

LESSON THREE: EXPLORING ASIA: POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

During and after reading

1. As students read the article in The Seattle Times on China, ask them to highlight the author's main points. Bachman writes about "three kinds of politics that will play themselves off against each other." What is he referring to? What examples does he use to describe the politics of interests, passions and imperatives? Ask students to look at their earlier top-five-challenges list. Which challenges would they categorize under politics of interests, passions or imperatives?
2. Ask students to divide into groups of four to discuss Bachman's conclusion: "These three kinds of politics will play themselves off against each other over the next five to 10 years in China. If the leadership can successfully address popular outrage and various imperatives, it can ride out the coming storm. But if it cannot, dramatic developments lie ahead." Do students agree with his assessment? Why or why not? As noted earlier, in recent years popular outrage has resulted in tens of thousands of public protests a year. Chinese citizens are beginning to voice themselves in other ways. For example, former U.S. ambassador to China, Jon Huntsman, commented (in a 2011 interview): "Thirty years ago, talk about the rule of law and civil society was the purview of a few intellectual salons in China. Today, these issues are subject of Internet chatter, discussions in leadership circles, driven by some 100 million bloggers and nearly 350 million Internet users." Note: Internet users in China tend to be urban, middle-class, educated and young (teenage to 40 years old). Discuss how social media might play a role in bringing about political and economic change in China.
3. Next, ask students to find an article or a blog by a Chinese person living in China that calls for a political, social or economic reform. Here is one example published in the government newspaper China Daily: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2012-12/07/content_15993912.htm. Students who have read articles about the Chinese firewall (Internet censors) may be surprised to hear that people are finding ways to publish their opinions online. It is true that some postings may be deleted (and some writers may be arrested), but students today can access up-to-date articles and/or blogs addressing issues facing China today at the following English-language sites. Alert students that these sites include opinions by Chinese citizens as well as non-Chinese. The following sites post a broad spectrum of diverse and independent viewpoints:

China Digital Times: <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/>

Chinadialogue (environment focus): <http://www.chinadialogue.net/>

Thinking China: <http://www.thechinastory.org/thinking-china/>

ChinaGeeks: <http://chinageeks.org/>

The following sites reflect official Chinese government/CCP views:

Beijing Review: <http://www.bjreview.com/>

China Daily: <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/index.html>

Xinhua: <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/china/index.htm>

This site is based in Beijing but reflects a somewhat independent view:

Caixin: <http://english.caixin.com/>

LESSON THREE: EXPLORING ASIA: POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

ASSESSMENT

Ask students to write a 750-word blog from the perspective of a Chinese netizen (student, teacher, farmer, factory worker, government official, senior citizen, migrant worker, environmentalist, artist, etc.). First, ask them to review the list of challenges that they have collected. They should choose an issue that interests them.* Taking the point of view of a Chinese netizen (as mentioned earlier), ask them to describe the issue, how it has affected him or her at a local or national level, and lay out suggestions in how the government can be more responsive to their needs, including specific reforms that they would advocate and why. After they have finished their blogs, they may want to post them on a (physical) blog wall in the classroom or, if time permits, read them in class or in small groups. Creative students may want to design a political cartoon that corresponds with their blog perspective.

**They will need to do some background research before they write their blog. In addition to the sites mentioned earlier, you could also recommend the following extensive 66-page resource from the World Affairs Council titled "From Mao to Now: What Our Students Need to Know About China" at http://www.world-affairs.org/?attachment_id=3370. (This link is located on the World Affairs Council's home page: <http://www.world-affairs.org>.)*

EXTENSION

Over the past three decades, Chinese citizens have experienced a number of pendulum swings with regard to press and Internet censorship. A number of pro-government reform writers have been arrested over the years; many still remain in jail. Students who are interested in delving deeper into this topic may be interested in reading Charter 08 and learning about its co-writer, Liu Xiaobo. Charter 08 called for 19 reforms, including judicial independence and the end to one-party rule. It has been signed by 10,000 people since it was published December 10, 2008.

Charter 08 translated into English by Perry Link:
en.rsrf.org/IMG/pdf/Charter08-2.pdf

Cowriter Liu Xiaobo was sent to prison for inciting subversion — an 11-year term he is still serving. He was the first Chinese to win the Nobel Peace Prize (2010) and one of only three recipients to receive it while in prison. Much has been written about Liu, who has been engaged in promoting peaceful change in China (starting with his activities in the 1989 Tiananmen protest movement). Students will easily find information on Liu. Here are two sites to start them on their way:

http://www.tsquare.tv/film?About_Liu_Xiaobo.html

http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2010/

Note: Don't miss last year's NIE "Exploring Asia: Human Rights" issue featuring lesson plans on Liu Xiaobo:
<http://depts.washington.edu/nie/curriculum.htm>

Liu Xiaobo is just one of many calling for political, economic and social reform. Students may be interested in researching other activists who have been imprisoned or lived under house arrest: Ai Weiwei, Cheng Jianping, Shi Tao, Huang Qi, Guo Quan, Zhao Lianhai, He Weifang, Ding Zilin, Huang Jinping, Tsering Woeser, Ilham Tohti or Xu Zhiyong.

LESSON FOUR: EXPLORING ASIA: POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Pair with “Politics and the 2011 Census of India” by Sunila Kale (article appears in *The Seattle Times* on May 22).

INTRODUCTION

The article paired with this lesson introduces students to India, the world’s largest democracy. India is home to 1,210,193,422 people, making it the second-most-populous country in the world. We know this fact because in 2011 India carried out its decennial census, an epic exercise in counting. The article explores how we can think of the census in India “as a political exercise — both a product and a component — of the Indian landscape.”

OBJECTIVES

- Students will explore how the census is used in India as a political tool.
- Students will prepare oral reports of one of the 28 states of India.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. How does the census in India impact politics?
2. How and why are societal relations slowly changing?
3. What are some of the opportunities and challenges facing the diverse regions and states of India?

MATERIALS

- The Seattle Times article
- Computer/Internet access

ACTIVITIES

Before reading

1. Assess students’ prior knowledge of India. What do they know about its population? Are they familiar with India’s caste system? What do they know about the government of India? Project a map of India on the screen: <http://www.mapsofindia.com/>.
2. Share these facts with students:
 - a. India is the world’s largest democracy and second-most-populous country, with 1.2 billion-plus people.
 - b. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of the Congress Party was re-elected in the last national election (2009).
 - c. India has a fast-growing economy with a growing middle class. Yet poverty is widespread among the vast rural population, and the lives of many remain influenced by a caste (or social status) system.
 - d. Today caste discrimination is illegal, and societal relations are slowly changing in some areas of India. India’s growing and modernizing economy is providing more education and work opportunities for more and more people.
 - e. There are 16 major languages in India. English is the most important language for national, political and commercial communication; Hindi is the national language and primary tongue of 41 percent of the people; there are 14 other official languages: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu; Hindustani is a popular variant of Hindi-Urdu spoken widely throughout northern India but is not an official language: <http://asiasociety.org/countries/country-profiles/india>.
3. Ask students to discuss the following question (the first line of the article): “How does the world’s largest democracy, India, make decisions about who gets government support, who is allowed to vote and many other issues?” Have them brainstorm ideas, and ask one student to be in charge of writing students’ thoughts on the board. They may want to consider the “tools” that the U.S. government uses to make decisions. When they have finished this discussion, inform students that the article is about how census is used by the Indian government as a “tool” for making important decisions.

LESSON FOUR: EXPLORING ASIA: POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

During and after reading

1. Read the article in The Seattle Times about politics and the 2011 census. Ask students to underline ways that the Indian government uses the census as a tool. The author writes, “We can think of the census as a political exercise — both a product and a component — of the Indian political landscape.” Ask students as they read the article to jot down examples of census as a product and a component.
2. Divide your class into small groups (each group will need a computer) and assign them the following tasks:
 - a. Ask students to discuss the following excerpt from the article: “Information from the census is used by political parties, social movements, nongovernment organizations and ordinary Indian citizens to build political claims, adopt new tactics and make sense of the polity and society in which they live.” Ask one person from each group to draw four columns on a sheet of paper, each with the following headings: political parties, social movements, nongovernment organizations, ordinary Indian citizens. What type of information might each group advocate to be included in a census? Why? Ask the designated scribe to add this information in the appropriate column.
 - b. For the first time in 80 years, the Indian government took a “caste census” as part of its 2011 census. This major policy shift proved to be quite controversial. Why? Ask each group to spend a few minutes discussing the pros and cons. (For additional background information, see the short Wall Street Journal article “India Shifts Policy, Adding Caste Query to 2011 Census”: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703960004575481690129581902.html>.)
 - c. Next, ask each group, using a computer, to pull up this animated dashboard that includes numerous 2011 census results: <http://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/censusinfodashboard/index.html>. Ask students to record in their notebooks at least three observations and/or questions as they explore this website. Give them enough time to look at each of the 17 graphs. Finally, ask them to click once on each state in India and observe the vast demographic differences. Then have them click twice and check out the demographic differences within each province. What areas do they want to learn more about?
 - d. If time permits, encourage students to explore the India census site (<http://censusindia.gov.in/>) for vital statistics, caste and tribe populations, census maps, religious composition, etc. Two good places to start are the site for Census Data Summary (<http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-common/CensusDataSummary.html>) and the Census Info Dashboard (<http://www.devinfolive.info/censusinfodashboard/>). (This comprehensive site includes demography, education, access to drinking water, electricity, sanitation, cooking fuel, and assets such as computers, bikes, cars, mobile phones, etc.) Encourage students to record questions from their findings to quiz their classmates, such as: “If the state of Uttar Pradesh were a country, how many other countries in the world would have larger populations?”

ASSESSMENT

Prepare students for their final assignment. Divide them into teams of two and ask each team to present a short oral report on one of the 28 states in India: Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Ask them to use three sources — one source from India (such as the state’s website), one from outside of India and one from the following census site: http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/States_at_glance/state_profile.aspx.

Their oral report can include a PowerPoint presentation, a poster or a handout. This presentation should be divided into three parts:

- a. Brief overview of geography, demographics, history and culture
- b. Challenges facing this state
- c. Top three areas in which they need federal government assistance (including examples of what this might look like).

LESSON FIVE: EXPLORING ASIA: POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Pair with “Central Asian Challenges Since Independence” by Scott Radnitz (article appears in *The Seattle Times* on May 29).

INTRODUCTION

The article paired with this lesson introduces students to the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. When the Soviet Union dissolved more than two decades ago, these five Central Asian states were thrust into independence. The challenging process of establishing independent states has varied across the region and over time. This lesson looks at the challenges, uncertainties and opportunities facing each country and the region as a whole.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the political changes that have taken place in Central Asia since the fall of the Soviet Union.
- Students will consider the importance of Central Asia through the eyes of Russia, China and the United States.
- Students will prepare an exam to test their fellow students on facts about Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. What impact has the dissolution of the Soviet Union had on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan?
2. What are the current domestic and international issues facing each of these countries?
3. Why is it important to study Central Asia?

MATERIALS

- The Seattle Times article
- Computer/Internet access

ACTIVITIES

Before reading

1. Project a map of Central Asia on the wall in order for students to locate the five Central Asian countries — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan: <http://images.asc.ohio-state.edu/is/image/eHistory/origins/images/2-10-map492.jpg?qlt=100&wid=1200&fmt=jpeg>. While looking at the map, ask students to discuss how Russia, China and the United States might see Central Asia as a region of both growing importance and growing challenge. (Inform students that the importance of this region is not new. As part of the ancient Silk Road, it provided a great conduit between the great civilizations of the East and West.)
2. Ask students to share what they know about this region from looking at the map, from reading the news and/or from other classes. During this quick brainstorming session, ask one student to compile this list on the board. These can be statements about specific countries (i.e., President Islam Karimov has held an authoritarian grip on power since since Uzbekistan became a republic in 1991.) Or they can record broader statements about Central Asia, such as the following:
 - Varied geography (high mountain, vast deserts, grassy steppes)
 - Approximately 50 million people
 - Vast deposits of gas, oil, gold and uranium
 - Countries share historical and political similarities
 - Resurgence of Islam since the dissolution of the Soviet Union

If there is time, you might want to ask each student to record one question that he or she has about this region in their notebooks or on the board.

LESSON FIVE: EXPLORING ASIA: POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

During and after reading

1. Read the article in the The Seattle Times about Central Asia. Ask students to imagine what it would be like to be living in a country that suddenly became independent for the first time in history with a poor and limited economic base, without a currency, army or embassy. Ask students to underline information that particularly interests them.
2. Ask students to pair together and choose a country to research for their final assessment project explained below. Teachers may want to list the countries and categories and have each pair chose a different country and category. Ask each group to collect 10 to 15 facts about this country from one of the following categories: geography, history, religion, economics, politics or international relations. Ask students to write these down in a notebook or laptop and record where each fact was found. Teachers might find it useful to discuss the difference between fact and opinion.
3. Ask students to gather facts from at least three different sources. Encourage them to use country government sites listed below:

Embassy of Kazakhstan: <http://www.kazakhembus.com/>

Embassy of Kyrgyzstan: <http://www.kgembassy.org/>

Embassy of Tajikistan: <http://www.tjus.org/>

Embassy of Turkmenistan: <http://turkmenistanembassy.org/>

Embassy of Uzbekistan: <http://www.uzbekistan.org/>

Besides BBC, Asia Society and CIA country profile sites, encourage students to download this extensive 35-page PDF report from the Asia Society where they can easily glean factual information (as well as opinions) about their chosen country: <http://asiasociety.org/policy/task-forces/central-asias-crisis-governance>.

ASSESSMENT

Ask each pair of students to write a quiz based on their research. They should come up with at least 10 questions. These could be short-answer, matching, true-or-false, graph or photo analysis questions, or a combination. Encourage them to be creative. For example, they could use maps, graphs and photos as part of their quiz. Ask them to hand in two quizzes: one without the answers and one with the answers (with each source cited). Finally, ask each pair of students to find another pair of students to test out their quizzes on one other. Leave time for them to grade their classmates and discuss the correct answers.

EXTENSION

For students interested in delving deeper into Central Asia's past and present geopolitics, encourage them to read this article from the Wilson Quarterly by S. Frederick Starr, chairman of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. It is titled "Rediscovering Central Asia": <http://www.wilsonquarterly.com/article.cfm?AID=1441>.

To spur their interest, share with them the beginning line: "To imagine Central Asia's future, we must journey into its remarkable past."

And the final paragraph: "The challenge to their international partners is to treat the regional states as sovereign countries, not as culturally inert objects to be shoved around on a chessboard. It is not enough to view them simply as a 'zone of [our] special interest,' as Vladimir Putin's [Russian] government does; as a source of raw materials, as the Chinese do; or as a fueling stop en route to Kabul, as the United States does. The better alternative is to acknowledge that somewhere in the DNA of these peoples is the capacity to manage great empires and even greater trading zones, to interact as equals with the other centers of world culture, and to use their unique geographical position to become a link and bridge between civilizations. Such an awareness will raise expectations on all sides, and encourage the region's international partners to view it as more than the object of a geopolitical game."

LESSON SIX: EXPLORING ASIA: POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

CONCLUDING ACTIVITY

This is a post-series activity.

INTRODUCTION

In this final lesson, students will continue to expand their political awareness of Asia. They will have a chance to explore new resources that are available online and develop their own.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will consider the different origins of political change.
- Students will make a timeline charting political and economic changes.
- Students will document political and economic changes.
- Students will collect and analyze political cartoons.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between economic change and political change?
2. Are photos a good resource for documenting political and economic changes? Why?
3. How are political cartoons different from other cartoons? From news articles?

MATERIALS

- Computer/Internet access
- Long sheets of butcher paper

ACTIVITIES

Choose from the variety of activities listed below to help extend your students' focus on Asia in the 21st century:

1. Political changes are taking place all around the world. Impetus for change can begin at the top (central government) or at the bottom (grassroots) or somewhere in between. Encourage students to think about the countries in Asia they have just studied and ask them to predict where they think the impetus of change will come from in each of these countries. When? Why?
2. Following this same theme, divide students up into small groups. Assign each group one of the countries that they have just studied: Burma, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Ask each group to make a timeline charting political and economic changes over the past 50 years. Post these on the classroom walls and give students a chance to view each other's timelines. What is the relationship between economic change and political change? After doing this exercise, would any of them change the predictions that they made in the first activity?
3. This next activity could be done individually or in small groups. Assign each person (or group) one of the countries that they have studied: Burma, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Ask them to find a dozen photos that document political and economic changes that have taken place in their assigned country over the past 12 months. They can put this together as a PowerPoint presentation or a poster. Ask them to include a caption that describes what is happening and when. Why are photos a good resource for documenting political and economic changes? For inspiration, you may want to share these examples with them:

BBC: Year in Pictures Asia 2012: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-20674959>

Caixin China Almanac 2012: <http://english.caixin.com/2012-12-31/100478975.html>

The New York Times: 2012 The Year in Pictures:

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/12/30/sunday-review/2012-year-in-pictures.html#/slide=12>

LESSON SIX: EXPLORING ASIA: POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

4. Similar to the last activity, assign each person (or group) one of the countries that they have just studied: Burma, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Ask them to find several political cartoons that document political and economic changes that have taken place in their assigned country over the past 12 months. Project these cartoons on the board or distribute copies and discuss the cartoons using the following questions.
 - a. Describe what is going on in this cartoon.
 - b. What message is the cartoonist trying to convey?
 - c. Is the cartoonist using any techniques such as irony or exaggeration to express his or her opinion?
 - d. Are any of the images being used as symbols to stand for larger concepts or ideas? What?
 - e. Why is it important to evaluate political cartoons?
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Continue learning and teaching about Asia with *Exploring Asia*, a project of the Asia and Global Studies outreach centers in the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies.

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