

Teacher Overview Objectives: *Chinese Civil War and Communist Revolution*

NYS Social Studies Framework Alignment:

Key Idea	Conceptual Understanding	Content Specification	Objectives
<p>10.7 DECOLONIZATION AND NATIONALISM (1900–2000): Nationalism and decolonization movements employed a variety of methods, including nonviolent resistance and armed struggle. Tensions and conflicts often continued after independence as new challenges arose. (Standards: 2, 3, 4, 5; Themes: TCC, GEO, SOC, GOV, CIV,)</p>	<p>10.7d Nationalism in China influenced the removal of the imperial regime, led to numerous conflicts, and resulted in the formation of the communist People’s Republic of China.</p>	<p>Students will trace the Chinese Civil War, including the role of warlords, nationalists, communists, and the world wars that resulted in the division of China into a communist-run People’s Republic of China and a nationalist-run Taiwan.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain what led to the overthrow of the Qing and the start of the Chinese Civil War. 2. Explain why the Communists won the Chinese Civil War.

1

What led to the Chinese Civil War?

Objective: Explain what led to the overthrow of the Qing and the start of the Chinese Civil War.

Introduction

Directions: In the space below, write down what you remember about Chinese history in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Use the terms below to help you recall the events during that time.

imperialism	Opium War	Treaty of Nanjing	unequal treaties	Boxer Rebellion	Spheres of Influence

Historical Context: The Fall of the Qing Dynasty and Start of the Chinese Civil War

In 1912, the Qing Dynasty, founded in 1644, was overthrown, ending thousands of years of dynastic rule in China. Each of the events below contributed to the weakening of the dynasty and the increasing Chinese frustration with their government.

Directions: Examine each of the images below, recall the historical event, and explain how it might have weakened the Qing government, made the Chinese people frustrated with the Qing, and led to the overthrow of the dynasty.

Imperialism (1793-early 1900s)

Starting with the Portuguese in the 18th century, European countries and later Japan came to China to trade, eventually forcing to the Chinese to do so.



A political cartoon entitled, *The reception of the diplomatique and his suite, at the Court of Peking*, by James Gillray (died 1815), published 1792.

Source:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_reception_of_the_diplomatique_and_his_suite_at_the_Court_of_Pekin_by_James_Gillray.jpg

Opium Wars (1839-1842)

The Opium Wars were fought between the Chinese and the British. The Chinese resisted against the British sales of opium in their country which led to a war that the British won.



Painting of The East India Company's iron steam ship *Nemesis*, commanded by Lieutenant W. H. Hall, with boats from the *Sulphur*, *Calliope*, *Larne* and *Starling*, destroying the Chinese war junks in Anson's Bay, on 7 January 1841 during the first Opium War.

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Destroying_Chinese_war_junks_by_E._Duncan_\(1843\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Destroying_Chinese_war_junks_by_E._Duncan_(1843).jpg)

1. How might this event have weakened the Qing Dynasty, frustrated the Chinese with their government, and led to the overthrow of the dynasty?

2. How might this event have weakened the Qing Dynasty, frustrated the Chinese with their government, and led to the overthrow of the dynasty?

Treaty of Nanjing (1842-1843) and Other Unequal Treaties

After the Opium Wars, the Chinese were forced to sign “unequal” treaties with Europeans and Japan that gave imperial powers control over sections of China.



A French political cartoon from 1898 entitled, “China- the cake of kings and...of emperors.”
Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:China_imperialism_cartoon.jpg

First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895)

The Chinese lost the Sino-Japanese war to an increasingly industrialized and powerful Japan. They lost the war and Korea as a result.



Political cartoon from 1894 showing Japan's defeat of China.

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:JapanPunch29September1894.jpg>

Boxer Rebellion (1900-1901)

In response to foreign powers in China and the Qing dynasty's inability to fight against them, a group known as the Boxers led a revolt against the Europeans and Japanese. The Rebellion was put down.



Photograph of a Chinese Boxer, 1900.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Boxer1900.jpg>

3. How might this event have weakened the Qing Dynasty, frustrated the Chinese with their government, and led to the overthrow of the dynasty?

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Rise of Chinese Nationalism, Sun Yat-sen and the Wuchang Uprising

▶ Watch [this biography of Sun Yat-sen from About.com](#) and read the text below, then answer the questions that follow.

Though the Qing Dynasty attempted to modernize their army and started other “self-strengthening” policies after the Boxer Rebellion, nationalist groups who opposed imperial powers like the Europeans and Japanese and who thought the Qing government did not do enough grew. One revolutionary named Sun Yat-sen was particularly active. Sun Yat-sen was a Chinese nationalist who was educated in Hawaii where he learned English, became a United States citizen, and was exposed to Christianity which he later converted to. Returning to China, Sun became increasingly frustrated with the Qing Dynasty’s policies and China’s lack of technology compared to what he observed in Hawaii. Sun created a group in Hawaii called the Revive China Society in 1894 to raise money from Chinese living abroad for revolutionary groups in China. After participating in a failed attempt to capture the city of Canton from the Qing government in 1895, Sun was exiled [sent out of the country and not allowed to return]. For the next sixteen years he joined and led many groups that supported revolutionary activities in China. He also traveled to Europe, the United States, Canada, and Japan to raise money to overthrow the Qing government in favor of a republic.

In October 1911, an uprising in the city of Wuchang, caused by the discovery of an anti-government plot and the mutiny of disgruntled Qing soldiers, led to an armed revolt against the Qing government. As a result of the uprising and growing discontent because of a poor economy, the last Qing Emperor abdicated [gave up the thrown].

The fall of the Qing Dynasty led to decades of disorder and the Chinese Civil War. Sun Yat-sen immediately returned to China where he was made the leader of a nationalist party called the Kuomintang (KMT). He and his followers declared the start of a new Chinese government called the Republic of China in 1912. Sun and his military leader, Chiang Kai-shek, fought against local warlords and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for control of China.

Sun gained support for his cause through speeches, diplomacy, and his *Three Principles of the People*. The *Three Principles*, which Sun hoped would be the foundation of a new China, included nationalism, democracy, and the people’s livelihood. Through his leadership there was some cooperation between the KMT and the Communists, and there were hopes of a unified China. After Sun died of cancer in 1925 at the age of 58, this fragile alliance could not be kept together.

Source: “Sun Yat-sen.” New World Encyclopedia. http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Sun_Yat-sen



Sun Yat-sen

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sun_Yat-sen_2.jpg

1. Who was Sun Yat-sen and what was his role in Chinese history?

2. What effect did Sun Yat-sen’s death have on China?

2

Why did the Communists win the Chinese Civil War?

Objective: Explain why the Communists won the Chinese Civil War.

Introduction

Directions: Examine the image and text below, then answer the questions that follow.



Source:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lenin-Trotsky_1920-05-20_Sverdlov_Square_\(original\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lenin-Trotsky_1920-05-20_Sverdlov_Square_(original).jpg)

***Peace, Land,
and Bread!***

Contextualize the image and phrase above by answering the questions below.

1a. Who is pictured in the image?

1b. What revolution did he lead?

1c. Where did the revolution take place?

1d. When was the revolution? What other events occurred at around the same time?

2. Explain what the quote “Peace, Land, and Bread” means and how it is related to the revolution led by the man in the image.

3. Why was the revolution led by this man successful? How did the phrase “Peace, Land, and Bread” contribute to that success?

Two Sides of the Chinese Civil War and Their Leaders

After the fall of the Qing Dynasty, two nationalist groups fought one another in a Civil War that had only brief breaks in hostility until it ended in 1949.

Directions: Read about those two factions and their leaders below, then answer the questions that follow.

The Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMT)		The Chinese Communist Party (CCP)	
<p>Leader: Chiang Kai-shek</p>  <p>Chiang Kai-shek, 1943</p> <p>Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chiang_Kai-shek%EF%BC%88%E8%94%A3%E4%B8%AD%E6%AD%A3%EF%BC%89.jpg</p>	<p>Party History and Beliefs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Party created by Sun Yat-sen ● China should become a democracy ● Anti-communist, supported capitalism ● Supported by wealthy Chinese ● Allied with the United States after WWII 	<p>Leader: Mao Zedong</p>  <p>Mao Ze Dong's Official Portrait</p> <p>Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mao_Zedong_portrait.jpg</p>	<p>Party History and Beliefs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● China should be a communist nation like Russia ● The government should take over private property and redistribute it to all equally ● Supported by the peasants and poor ● Supported by the USSR
<p>1. Who would you support if you were a wealthy landlord? Why?</p>			
<p>2. Who would you support if you were a peasant? Why?</p>			

Major Events of the Chinese Civil War

Directions: Read the text, examine the images, and watch the video clips about each of the major events of the Chinese Civil War, then answer the questions that accompany each event.

Cooperation with the Soviet Union and the Expulsion of the Communists from the Nationalist Party

After the fall of the Qing and for a few years after Sun Yat-sen's death in 1925, the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party worked together with the leadership of the Soviet Union to create a military and defeat warlords in China who supported bringing back a monarchy to rule the country.

The Soviet Union's government believed that it was their duty as the first communist nation in the world to support the creation of other communist nations. In addition, China was an important ally to the Soviet Union because they shared a long border and both felt threatened by the increasing power of the Japanese. The Soviets invited leaders of the KMT and CCP to Moscow where they were trained to create a Soviet-styled government and military. The USSR also sent advisors to China to assist in the creation of a socialist state.

Though they were allied against the warlords, there were disagreements between the KMT and CCP. The Communists were set on the idea of starting a revolution in China led by the peasants, while the Nationalists were more concerned with gaining control of the country and reforming it through the leadership of their government. As a result, Chiang Kai-shek, the military leader of the KMT, refused to allow Communist Party members to hold important positions in the government.

During a successful military campaign called the Northern Expedition in which the alliance defeated many warlords, the Communists started peasant revolts that led to violence against landlords and other rural power holders and encouraged industrial workers in cities to strike. This event led to a division in the party. The Communists wanted to continue their alliance with the Soviets, which the KMT were more and more weary of, and the Communists were afraid that the KMT might ally itself with imperial powers from Europe and Japan to get what they wanted.

Chiang Kai-Shek and those loyal to him in the KMT expelled the Communists from their party in 1927. KMT troops arrested many communists, and executed large numbers of them. The KMT conservatives then established a Nationalist government in Nanjing.

Communist uprisings against the KMT were unsuccessful. The CCP lost most of its membership by death and defection. A few leaders and some scattered military bands then began the process of creating military bases in the mountains and plains of central China, remote from centres of Nationalist power.

Sources for readings in this document: *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "China", accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/place/China/Riots-and-protests>.; *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Long March", accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/event/Long-March>.; *New World Encyclopedia*.

Chinese Civil War. http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Chinese_Civil_War



Communists being rounded up by the KMT in one of the purges.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Communist_purge.jpg

1. Why did the Nationalists and Communists separate?

2. At this point in the civil war, which side do you think will win (circle one)?

Nationalists	Communists
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Why?

The KMT Consolidates and Expands its Power

Between 1928 and 1937, the Nationalist Party, led by Chiang Kai-shek had a string of military successes. They defeated rival warlords and pushed the Communists back away from important cities. Chiang owed his success to great financial resources and foreign weapons he gained from trading with other countries, including Europeans and the United States.

Sun Yat-sen established the KMT to bring democracy to China, but under Chiang Kai-shek the military ruled. The Nationalists did much to create a modern government and a coherent monetary and banking system and to improve taxation. They expanded the public educational system, developed a network of transportation and communication facilities, and encouraged industry and commerce.

Urban and wealthy Chinese benefited from living in Nationalist controlled areas of China. The KMT did little to modernize agriculture or to eradicate disease, illiteracy, and underemployment in the villages, hamlets, and small towns scattered over a continental-size territory. With conscription [required military service] and heavy taxation to support civil war and a collapsing export market for commercial crops, rural economic conditions may have grown worse during the Nationalist decade.



Chiang Kai-shek inspecting KMT soldiers with shoes made of straw, 1945

Source:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1945_Chiang_Kai-shek_inspected_Chinese_soldiers_with_shoes_made_of_straw.jpg

1. Why were the Nationalists successful between 1928 and 1937?

2. Which social groups benefitted from Nationalist rule? Which social groups did not?

3. At this point in the civil war, which side do you think will win (circle one)?

Nationalists	Communists
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Why?

Communists Support the Peasants and the Long March

▶ Watch an excerpt of [this documentary about The Long March \(9:25-14:41\)](#) then read the text below and answer the questions that follow.



The Nationalists controlled most of the China's cities in the 1930s, but the Communists were able to consolidate power in regions of the south where they instituted communist reforms. In fifteen rural bases in central China, they took land from wealthy warlords and redistributed it to the peasants.

In 1934, the Nationalist army started another campaign to defeat the Communists. Outnumbered and with less well trained and equipped army, the CCP and the peasants that followed them decided to retreat.

The retreat, led by Mao Zedong, is known as the Long March. The march lasted a year and covered around 6,000 miles ending in Northwest China. Along the way, the Communist army confiscated property and weapons from local warlords and landlords, while recruiting peasants and the poor into their ranks. The Communist supporters marched over difficult terrain across rivers, over mountains, and through drastic changes in weather. Of the 90,000-100,000 people who began the Long March, only around 7,000-8,000 arrived at their final destination. The Communists had marched to safety and Mao Zedong became the leader of their new settlement.



Mao Zedong, 1935

Map depicting The Long March (1934-1935) during which Mao Zedong led the Communists away from KMT troops to safety in the North where they could consolidate their power for later offenses.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_Long_March_1934_-_1935.PNG

1. Why did Mao and the Communists take the Long March?

2. How did the Communists benefit from the Long March?

3. At this point in the civil war, which side do you think will win (circle one)?

Nationalists	Communists
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Why?

The United Front Against Japan and Rise of Communist Power (1937-1945)

In 1937, the Japanese invaded China. With a common enemy to face, the Nationalists and Communists stopped fighting one another for a limited time to defend against the Japanese. Though they were on the same side, the two parties rarely fought with one another.

At the start of the war, the Japanese won victory after victory, eventually taking the capital Nanjing, where Japanese troops engaged in a brutal campaign called the Nanjing Massacre, sometimes referred to as the Rape of Nanjing.

The Nationalist government, which was in control of Nanjing before the Japanese invasion, suffered. They lost the best of their modern armies, their air force, and access to the country's major industries and railways. In areas of China controlled by the KMT, the people suffered as well. Manufactured goods were scarce, and prices went up. The government did not have the ability to produce the food it needed to feed the population. Morale amongst the military and civilians in Nationalist controlled areas of China was very low in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Corruption spread in the bureaucracy and the armed forces. As the war dragged on, government measures to suppress dissent grew oppressive. Secret police activity and efforts at thought control were aimed not only against communists but also against all influential critics of the government or the KMT.

The Japanese invasion and WWII had the opposite effect on the CCP. The communist leaders had survived 10 years of civil war and had developed a unity, camaraderie, and powerful sense of mission. They had learned to mobilize the rural population and to wage guerrilla warfare. In 1937, the CCP had about 40,000 members and the poorly equipped Red Army numbered perhaps 100,000. By 1945, the party claimed to have an army of more than 900,000 and a militia of more than 2,000,000. It also claimed to control areas with a total population of 90,000,000. These claims were disputable, but the great strength and wide geographical spread of communist organization was a fact. There was convincing evidence that the areas under communist control extended for hundreds of miles behind Japanese lines in northern and central China.

The Communists' success was the result of many factors. Communist troop commanders and political officers in areas behind Japanese lines tried to mobilize the entire population against the enemy. Party members led village communities into greater participation in local government than had been the case before. They also organized and controlled peasants' associations, labor unions, youth leagues, and women's associations. The party experimented with various forms of economic cooperation to increase production; one of these was mutual-aid teams in which farmers temporarily pooled their tools and draft animals and worked the land collectively. In areas behind Japanese lines, some mutual-aid teams evolved into work-and-battle teams composed of younger peasants: when danger threatened, the teams went out to fight as guerrillas under direction of the

1. Which country invaded China in 1937? How did that country's invasion affect the Chinese Civil War?

2. What effect did the Japanese invasion and WWII have on Nationalist controlled areas of China?

local communist army; when the crisis passed, they returned to the fields. The party recruited into its ranks the younger leaders who emerged from populist activities. Thus, it penetrated and to some extent controlled the multitude of villages in areas behind Japanese lines. As the Japanese military grip weakened, the experienced communist armies and political organizers spread their system of government ever more widely.



Japanese occupation (red) of eastern China near the end of the war, and Communist bases (striped), 1945.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Situation_at_the_End_of_World_War_Two.PNG

3. What affect did the Japanese invasion and WWII have on the Chinese Communist Party?

3. At this point in the civil war, which side do you think will win (circle one)?

Nationalists	Communists
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Why?

The End of WWII and Defeat of the Nationalists



Pictured here is former Chinese Chairman Mao Zedong announcing the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1 1949.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mao_proclaiming_the_establishment_of_the_PRC_in_1949.jpg

In 1945, the United States used two nuclear bombs against the Japanese. The Japanese surrendered soon after. As a result, they withdrew their troops from China and hostilities between the KMT and CCP reignited.

From 1945 to 1949, the two groups engaged in an all out civil war. The Communists continued to gain support from the peasants, expand their territory, and promote propaganda that painted the Nationalists as too loyal to the United States to act in China's best interests. As the Communists conquered more regions of China, they brought the land reforms to peasants throughout that country that made them so popular in the Northwest. They encouraged peasants to seize landlords' fields and other property. The party leaders believed that to crack the age-old peasant fear of the local elite and overcome the traditional respect for property rights required unleashing the hatred of the oppressed. Teams of activists moved through the villages, organizing the poor in "speak bitterness" meetings to struggle against landlords and Nationalist supporters, to punish and often to kill them, and to distribute their land and property. Rural China went through a period of terror. Yet the party gained from the revolutionary dynamism; morale was at fever pitch, and, for those who had benefited from land distribution, there was no turning back.

The Communists won military victory after military victory against the Nationalists. All along the way their armies grew with enthusiastic peasants joining the ranks. By the end of 1949, Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT retreated to Taiwan, an island off of the coast of China where they established their own country called the Republic of China. Mao Zedong and his Communist supporters unified the rest of China and on October 1, 1959, declared the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

1. Based on this and all of the previous readings, why did Mao Zedong and the Communists win the Chinese Civil War?



Regents Multiple Choice Check for Understanding

1. The difficult, year-long journey made by Mao Zedong and his Communist followers in 1934 through China's mountains, marshes, and rivers was called the

- (1) Cultural Revolution
- (2) Great Leap Forward
- (3) Boxer Rebellion
- (4) Long March

2. In the Chinese Civil War (1945 - 1949), support for Mao Zedong's Communist forces came primarily from the

- (1) peasants
- (2) landowners
- (3) industrialists
- (4) Confucian scholars

3. The French Revolution, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and the Communist Revolution in China were similar in that all three

- (1) brought about few political changes
- (2) were influenced by the peasants' desire for more land
- (3) were inspired by Marxism
- (4) were supported primarily by the nobility

4. What was a major reason for the Communist victory in the Chinese civil war (1949)?

- (1) The Nationalists had been supported by the Japanese.
- (2) Many Chinese warlords supported the Communists.
- (3) The Communists had superior military equipment.
- (4) The Communists promised land to the peasants.

5. During the Communist-Nationalist civil war, Chiang Kai-shek lost the support of the Chinese people mainly because he

- (1) refused to accept support from foreign nations
- (2) defeated the forces of Deng Xiaoping
- (3) signed an alliance with Great Britain
- (4) ignored the needs of the peasant population