

Name: _____ Date: _____

Cultural Revolution and Red Guards Handout

Directions: Read the following information and then complete the 2 column notes.

Part I: Cultural Revolution and the Red Guards

The most important period of political change in China since the creation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) created mandatory reforms instituted by the government to eradicate (get rid of) precommunist Chinese culture and to halt (stop) the increasingly capitalist leanings of the Chinese people.

This brutal reform movement was the brainchild of Mao Zedong, the leader of communist China during that time. The revolution officially began in August after the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee passed a resolution calling for a total revamping of Chinese culture to purge Western influences. Mao relied heavily on the Red Guards, an organization of violent cultural critics sanctioned by the government. Mao viewed the Cultural Revolution as a useful way to train another generation of procommunist youth to continue the fight against capitalism both at home and abroad.

The first phase of the revolution entailed the control of cities, factories, and university campuses by the Red Guards. Workers and students were put in turmoil as Mao's forces instituted a military takeover of cultural institutions previously tolerated by the Maoist regime. By late 1967, chaos compelled Mao to order the Red Guards to stabilize production. Overly zealous, the Red Guards ran amuck. They were soon sent into the countryside to free urban China from their raiding influence, which had helped to stagnate the Chinese economy.

By the mid-1970s, when both Maoism and the Cultural Revolution had waned in influence, China became a military-controlled state. From the standpoint of Mao, the revolution was largely a success. The revolution had been an excuse for Mao to purge the Communist Party of any threatening reformers. Moreover, Liu Shaoqi, Mao's first successor, who had been criticized as a "revisionist" by Mao, was imprisoned by the end of the revolution. Mao thus was able to remain in power. Although Deng Xiaoping, considered by Mao supporters as a friend to capitalist reforms, lost power as a result of the revolution, he escaped death through alliance with military leaders and would later lead the Chinese nation. Other leaders also survived the revolution and would exert influence following Mao's death in 1976.

The Cultural Revolution led to 2 million deaths, mostly the professional and educated class of Chinese people. Some professors were even killed by mobs of their own students. Chinese youth had become a particular force within the revolution due to young people's greater susceptibility to indoctrination than adults.

Remembered as a time of wasteful destruction and death, the Chinese now view the Cultural Revolution in a less favorable light. Since 1978, many of the institutional changes wrought by Mao during the revolution have been overturned, which has led many to believe that capitalism will one day overtake communism in China.

Common Core Objective:

R.H.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.

Part II: The Red Guards

The Red Guards was a group of teenagers and students formed in China in 1966 to attack the real or perceived enemies of Mao Zedong during the Cultural Revolution. The students were allowed to leave their homes, employment, and even families to join. Those who participated saw the Red Guards as a means to assert themselves, wreak revenge on past enemies, and loyally serve Mao.

The youthful members of the Red Guards were notorious for their zealotry in attacking the "four olds" (old ideas, habits, customs, and culture). Fervently devoted to Mao, they attacked, persecuted, and violently assaulted people labeled as "bourgeois," "capitalist roaders," "rightists," or "counterrevolutionaries." Intellectuals were especially targeted. The accused were openly humiliated with violent insults and accusations during "struggle sessions," which were carried out in public settings. Many were forced to wear dunce caps labeled with accusations and parade through the streets. Numerous victims were in fact ardent supporters of Mao, and some even served directly under him. The burden of proof was always on the accused, who were advised to confess in exchange for leniency. Many victims were subjected to harsh prison terms, where ideological indoctrination, torture, and even murder was common.

Members of the Red Guards broke into homes, smashed personal property, and pasted vitriolic posters outside. They destroyed priceless artwork. They were especially responsible for the distribution of the "Little Red Book," a collection of Mao's quotations, and for spreading images of Mao throughout the country. They also partook in mass rallies in support of the Cultural Revolution and usually traveled to such rallies free on trains and buses, often commandeered for their own use.

During 1967-1968, the Red Guards virtually seized control of China, which was on the brink of civil war. China ground to a halt as the government was shut down, and much production was suspended. Even hospitals were affected as doctors were sent to do hard labor in rural camps, with their places taken by untrained Red Guards.

The members of the Red Guards began to squabble among themselves as factions grew based on class background and ideological purity. In 1968, Mao called in the People's Liberation Army to disband the Red Guards and reestablish control. Many in the Red Guards saw this as a betrayal. Memoirs written by former Red Guards attest to disaffection. The Cultural Revolution was ended in 1969, although many felt it continued until Mao's death in 1976.

Sources:

"Cultural Revolution." *World History: The Modern Era*. ABC-CLIO, 2013. Web. 13 May 2013.

"Red Guards." *World History: The Modern Era*. ABC-CLIO, 2013. Web. 13 May 2013.

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Cultural Revolution and Red Guards 2 Column Notes

Directions: Using the Cultural Revolution and Red Guards sections of the handout, complete the following chart with a pen.

Years of the Cultural Revolution	
Basic definition of the Cultural Revolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
Purpose of the Cultural Revolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
Two effects of the Cultural Revolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Define the Red Guards and what they did	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Define the "4 olds."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
Three types of people the Red Guards attacked	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Three ways the people from the question above were attacked	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Define the "Little Red Book."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•