

Name: _____ Date: _____

Great Leap Forward

Directions: Read the selection below, and then fill in the 2 column notes.

The Great Leap Forward (1958-1960)

In 1958, the Chinese Communist Party launched the Great Leap Forward campaign aimed at accomplishing the economic and technical development of the country at an immensely faster pace. Mao hoped to dramatically improve China's industrial and agricultural output in one great burst of national energy by taking maximum advantage of its massive manpower. The populations of villages and countryside alike were organized into communes and given high, government-set quotas for production. The communist government created about 26,000 communes, each composed of approximately 5,000 households.

Steel production was to be increased by setting up small-scale “**backyard furnaces**,” and agricultural output was to be raised by combining the collective farms into communes. The campaign turned quickly into a disaster. The peasants disliked living and working in the vastly impersonal communes. The quality of the steel produced in the primitive steel furnaces that were built in every village was bad and could not be used for anything.

The pressure for industrial output had resulted in the fields being ignored. After a year, the leaders admitted that the success of the program had been exaggerated. The people’s reluctance to join communes was stronger than expected, and the size of the communes had to be reduced. Domestic life in homes, as well as private plots of land for family use, had to be restored. The effect of the Great Leap Forward on the people and the economy was devastating.

In 1959 and 1960, the harvests failed, and famine devastated China. More than 23 million Chinese citizens starved to death. Mao took responsibility for the failure of his plan, withdrew to Shanghai, and took a less active role in the government.

Great Leap Forward Information

Years	
Definition	
Two areas Mao wanted to improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Two Characteristics of the Communes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Backyard Furnaces	
2 Negative Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••

Resources

"China, 1946–1976 (Overview)." *World History: The Modern Era*. ABC-CLIO, 2014. Web. 19 Feb. 2014.

"China." *Britannica School*. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2014. Web. 19 Feb. 2014.