

Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

STORY

Chinese President's Visit Aims to Improve U.S.-China Relations

01/21/2011

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/us/jan-june11/china_01-21.html

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

Student Worksheet (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

PROCEDURE

1. WARM UP

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

2. MAIN ACTIVITY

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

3. DISCUSSION

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.

INITIATING QUESTIONS

1. What do you know about China?
2. What is a “superpower”? What are some advantages and disadvantages of being a world ‘superpower’?
3. Why is international trade important?
4. What are human rights? Why are they important?

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What kinds of people attended the state dinner at the White House?

The Obamas hosted a lavish state dinner at the White House, which was attended by many prominent Chinese-American actors, politicians, athletes and artists, such as movie action hero Jackie Chan and fashion designer Vera Wang.

2. What is China’s currency called?

The Yuan

3. Why does China want to keep the value of its currency low?

Keeping the value of the yuan low makes Chinese products much cheaper and more attractive to buyers.

4. How do the Chinese and American economies rely on each other?

The currency issue is especially delicate because the United States is by far the leading importer of Chinese goods. In turn, China takes the money the United States pays for its goods and invests it in the U.S. Treasury market, basically loaning the U.S. government money and making both countries' economies heavily reliant on one another.

5. What kinds of things does China buy from the Midwest region of the U.S.?

China is a big buyer of cars, steel, aerospace equipment, pharmaceuticals and crops from the Midwest.

6. What are some examples of human rights violations that other countries accuse China of committing?

For example, certain websites are blocked in China, the government often controls where people may live and work, and people who speak out against the Communist Party, are frequently jailed and their families punished.

7. Why is the U.S. concerned about China's relationship with North Korea?

China and North Korea, also a communist country, have a close relationship, and the United States has been urging China to put more pressure on North Korea to stop its nuclear program.

8. What did China's president say about his country's military issues while visiting the U.S.?

On China's military issues, Hu stated that China is "not a military threat to any country" and will never seek to expand outside its borders. However, he firmly defended China's claims to Tibet and Taiwan, which have struggled for decades to be free of China.

9. What did Hu do on a visit to Chicago?

Hu also visited Chicago to meet with leaders of key businesses and visit a school where students learn Mandarin Chinese alongside English.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of other examples from history when the U.S. competed for 'superpower' status with another country?

2. What do you think the U.S. needs to do to stay competitive in the global economy?

3. Based on what you read in this article, why is the relationship between China and the U.S. an important one? How do the two countries rely on one another?

4. Why do you think China's president was invited to tour Chicago? How might his visit help businesses and the economy in that area?