



**CALIFORNIA CONTENT
STANDARD 10.9.4**

Transformation in China

Specific Objective: Analyze the Chinese Civil War, the rise of Mao Tse-Tung, and the subsequent political and economic upheavals in China (e.g., the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and the Tiananmen Square uprising).

Read the summary to answer questions on the next page.

The People’s Republic of China

Between 1946 and 1949, civil war raged in China between Nationalist and Communist forces. In October 1949, the Communists were victorious. Their leader, Mao Tse-Tung, renamed the country The People’s Republic of China. The communists promised a number of changes:

- Price controls to prevent inflation
- Redistribution of land from owners to workers
- Large-scale industrial development
- A simplified system of Chinese writing, to increase literacy

It was the first time in decades that China was free of Japanese domination. Some of these changes improved life for many in China. But others were disastrous.

The Great Leap Forward

One of Mao’s most ambitious programs was the **Great Leap Forward** (1958), which created group farms known as **communes**. At each commune, thousands of people farmed together and lived together in dormitories.

Mao envisioned the Great Leap Forward as a new economic model—China’s alternative to the industrial emphasis of Russian communism. Instead, poor planning and severe droughts brought widespread starvation. The program ended in 1960.

The Cultural Revolution

In 1966, Mao launched the **Cultural Revolution** (1966)—a campaign to create an equal society of peasants and workers by purging China of intellectuals, capitalists, and other alleged “counterrevolutionaries.” The purge was carried out by militia units of young people, mostly teenagers, known as **Red Guards**.

Chaos followed. The Red Guards imprisoned, tortured, and executed civilians—and destroyed art, antiquities, and other materials of China’s heritage. The campaign ended around the time of Mao’s death in 1976.

Tiananmen Square

Tiananmen Square, a public plaza in the city of Beijing, has been the site of many political events—but none as well known as the protests of 1989. Students began the protests for **democratic reform**, and in the six weeks that followed were joined by more than a million Chinese from every walk of life. The government crackdown was brutal. Tanks and troops entered Beijing to suppress the protest, killing and injuring thousands of protesters.



PRACTICE

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Directions: Choose the letter of the *best* answer.

“The most important problem does not lie in understanding the laws of the objective world and thus being able to explain it, but in applying the knowledge of these laws actively to change the world.”

—from *Selected Works, Vol I*,
Mao Tse-Tung

1 The quotation reflects Mao Tse-Tung’s commitment to

- A communism.
- B education.
- C science.
- D revolutionary action.

2 What was Chairman Mao’s *main* goal for communist China?

- A economic independence and stability
- B a permanent end to civil war
- C preservation of agricultural tradition
- D unity with other Asian countries

3 The Great Leap Forward indicated China’s desire to

- A build a People’s Army.
- B end Western investment.
- C modernize agriculture.
- D struggle against imperialism.

4 In the late 1950s, in China, a *main* part of the Great Leap Forward program was

- A identifying people according to social class.
- B establishing communes, or collective farms.
- C relocating many rural schools to cities.
- D funding and encouraging political think tanks.

5 Which group was a *main* target of persecution during China’s Cultural Revolution?

- A intellectuals
- B peasants
- C party leaders
- D foreign capitalists

6 The Chinese government’s response to the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests showed that

- A they opposed democratic reforms.
- B they recognized the will of the people.
- C China was beginning to cooperate with the West.
- D communist leaders were losing their hold on power.