

Topic outline – The Founding of the People’s Republic of China

Overview

This topic outline is intended to offer useful additional material to that which is provided in the Cambridge Pre-U Mandarin Chinese syllabus (syllabus code 9778 and 1341). Key areas of study have been identified that both learners and teachers need to think about and cover for Paper 4 (9778 Principal) / Paper 2 (1341 Short Course) – Chinese Culture, Section 1: The Founding of the People’s Republic of China (for examination in 2013, 2014 and 2015). The topic outline broadly deals with the period 1937–1956, however, some knowledge of the key issues in earlier and later periods will help ensure a deeper understanding about what happened during the period of 1937–1956.

Recommended prior knowledge

Learners need to have a basic understanding of the following concepts: bourgeoisie, capitalism, class struggle, communism, democracy, dictatorship, feudalism, nationalism, private v state enterprise, proletariat, socialism, totalitarianism. Learners also need to understand that there are different interpretations of key historical events by historians.

Teacher support

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An editable version of this course outline is available on Teacher Support. Go to <http://teachers.cie.org.uk>. The course outline is in Word doc format and will open in most word processors in most operating systems. If your word processor or operating system cannot open it, you can download Open Office for free at www.openoffice.org

Resources

- Hinton, W. *Fanshen* Vintage Books (1968) ASIN: B0012VPVLY
Hsü, I. *The Rise of Modern China* Oxford University Press, USA (2000) ISBN: 9780195125047
Lynch, M. *The People’s Republic of China Since 1949* Hodder Education (2008) ISBN: 9780340929278
Marx, K and Engels, F *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)
Melby, J.F. *The Mandate of Heaven: Record of a Civil War; China 1945–1949* University of Toronto Press (1968) ISBN: 9780802015204
Snow, E. *Red Star over China* Grove Press / Atlantic Monthly Press (1994) ISBN: 9780802150936
Spence, J. *Mao* Phoenix (2000) ISBN: 9780753810712
Spence, J. *The Search for Modern China* W. W. Norton & Co, UK (1991) ISBN: 9780393307801
Stewart, G. *China 1900–1976* Heinemann (2006) ISBN: 9780435327699
Wu, H. *Bitter Winds* John Wiley & Sons ISBN: 9780471114253

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Time	Areas of study	Key issues	Knowledge and understanding	Learning resources
1936	Xi’an Incident	The reluctance of Chiang Kai-shek to engage the Japanese forces directly before 1937	Chiang Kai-shek captured by the Young Marshal, a Manchurian warlord. Chiang was forced to agree to a Second GMD / CCP United Front to resist Japan.	
1936–1949	Second United Front against Japan	The importance and nature of the Second United Front The hopes which the CCP and GMD each had of this temporary alliance	Understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extent to which CCP was able to consolidate as a result of the United Front • mutual suspicion of GMD and CCP • extent to which the Second United Front did actually involve a ceasefire between GMD and CCP 	
1935–1947	Yan’an Period	The role the Yan’an period played in the development of the CCP The institutional structures and ideas which came out of this period The effect of Mao’s ideas on the role of culture on the arts in post-1949 China	Understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maoism: Mao’s sinification of Marxism • growth of CCP doctrines: party control based on indoctrination, the Mass Line, class struggle • Yan’an Rectification Movement and thought reform movement; establishing Party discipline (1942–1944) • Mao’s lectures on literature and art in 1942 	Snow, E. <i>Red Star over China</i>
1943	Mass Line	The nature of ‘democratic centralism’ and its importance for the development of the CCP	Understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concept of democratic centralism • balance between consultation of the masses and mass participation versus necessity for central control and leadership • concept of enemies of the people / purges 	

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1937–1945	Sino-Japanese War	<p>The main motives of the Japanese in attacking China</p> <p>How the war with Japan generated a feeling of national identity and purpose in China</p>	<p>Understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Japanese aggression; the Nanjing Massacre Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist response, relations with the USA role of the Communist base in Yan'an relations with the USSR assessment of the role of the USA and its contribution to the outcome of the conflict role of guerrilla warfare 	
1945–1949	Civil War	<p>The inability of the CCP and GMD to settle their differences after the defeat of Japan</p> <p>The Nationalists' initial triumph and their later overthrow</p> <p>The reasons for the ultimate Communist victory</p>	<p>Understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> origins of the Civil War main campaigns, battles and events key turning points in the war reasons for ultimate Communist victory (military, political, economic, popular support, international intervention, leadership) 	<p>Melby, J.F. <i>The Mandate of Heaven: Record of a Civil War; China 1945–1949</i> A diary of the war written from an American perspective.</p>
	Sino-Soviet relations	<p>How national rivalries between the USSR and China eclipsed ideological similarities between the two Communist parties</p>	<p>Understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mutual suspicion of Mao and Stalin territorial rivalries in certain areas such as Xinjiang solidarity as Communist powers fear of US imperialism 	

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	Nationalists	<p>The relative strengths of the Nationalists and the Communists at the outset of the Civil War</p> <p>The success of the tactics of the Fifth Encirclement Campaign of 1934–1935</p>	<p>Understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengths and weaknesses of the Nationalist government during World War II • role and influence of Chiang Kai-shek • Chongqing government and its policies • Second United Front against Japan • Encirclement Campaigns against the Communists 	
	The structure and control of the PRC	<p>The imposition of Party authority</p> <p>The relationship between the Party, the administration and the military</p>	<p>Understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administrative structure • imposition of military control in Tibet, Xinjiang and Guangdong • registration (danwei, hukou, dang'an) • political control and party structure, including thought reform (see also mass campaigns below) • Mao's relationship with the Party and the administrative bureaucracy • role of Mao 	
1950–1953	Korean War	<p>China's involvement in the Korean War</p> <p>The effect of the Korean war on the development of the new Chinese state</p> <p>The cost to China of its involvement in the war</p>	<p>Understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what exactly happened – Stalin's role, Mao's reaction, China's contribution to the war • how the new government used the Korean war to its advantage to accelerate process of building new China • why the Korean war was a success for the new government (international respect, patriotism, military confidence) • harmful results of the war 	<p>Lynch, M. <i>The People's Republic of China 1949–76</i></p> <p>Stewart, G. <i>China 1900–1976</i></p> <p>Spence, J. <i>Mao</i></p>

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	Land Reform	<p>The extent to which land reform policies were successful</p> <p>The effect of land reform on the lives of the people involved</p>	<p>Understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transition from feudalism to socialism • early land reform: liquidating the landlords • spread of land reform • collectivisation of agriculture: the causes of collectivisation, its effects on peasants, Chinese society, the CCP • process of collectivising agriculture and the changing pace of reform: mutual-aid teams, Agricultural Producers Cooperatives, full collectivisation • twelve-year Agricultural Programme • CCP attitudes to the countryside • effects of central planning • changes in the CCP approach towards land reform • importance of agriculture in Chinese economy and the tensions between peasant aspirations and long-term Communist aims 	<p>Hinton, W. <i>Fanshen</i> A detailed account of land reform in one Chinese village.</p>
1953–1957	First Five-Year Plan	<p>The reasons for the Five-Year Plans</p> <p>The success or otherwise of the first Five-Year Plan</p> <p>The extent to which economic planning achieved rapid economic growth</p> <p>The lessons that could be drawn from the first Five-Year Plan</p>	<p>Understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • industry and the first Five-Year Plan • Mao's economic aims for China • social reforms and ideology • role of and relationship with Soviet Union • political control of CCP and transition to People's Republic of China • plans for the second Five-Year Plan 	

Time	Areas of study	Key issues	Knowledge and understanding	Learning resources
1949–1956	Education	The extent to which the CCP was successful in revolutionising education in the period 1949–1956	Understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reshaping traditional attitudes: Transition from revolutionary war to government and the need to control thoughts and behaviour of Chinese people expansion of primary education public health campaigns 	
	Politics in command – mass campaigns in the fifties	The purpose and key features of the mass campaigns The methods that made them possible Their successes and failures	Understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> context in which the CCP established its rule over China and Mao's role within the system of government land reform / collectivisation resist America – aid Korea patriotic health campaign suppression of counter-revolutionaries campaign combat illiteracy campaign Three Antis Campaign Five Antis Campaign 	

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