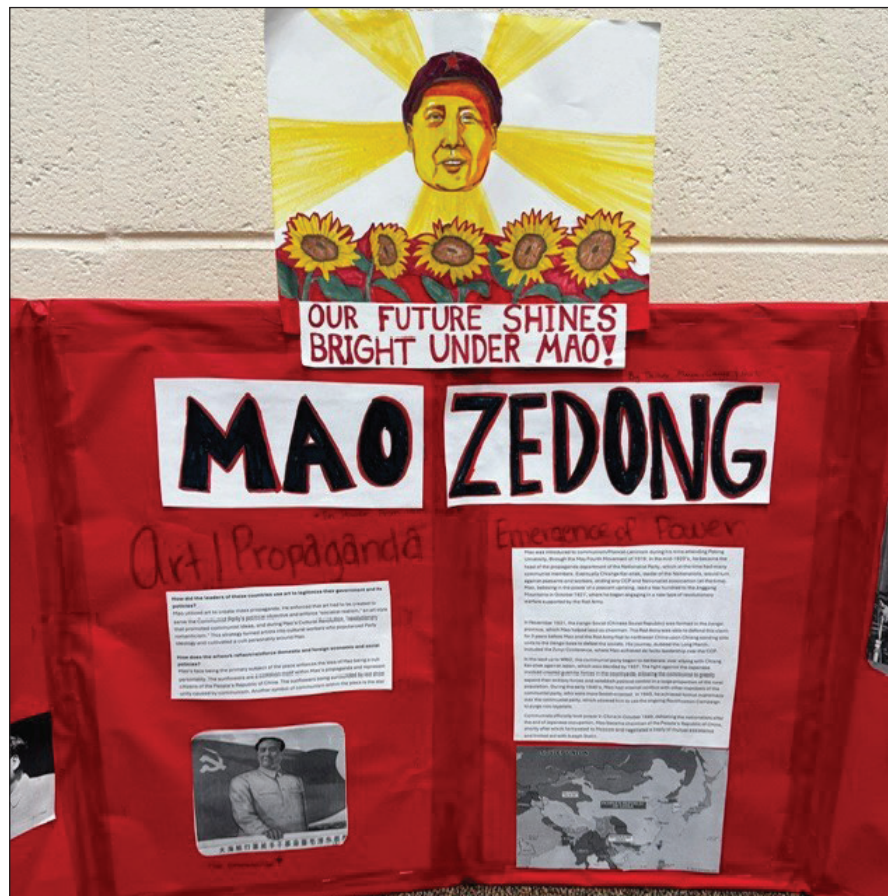


Mao Propaganda: Promotion or Publicity?

by Angela Peck

EDITOR'S NOTE: This lesson plan accompanies the article “Stories from the Revolution in Mao’s China: Teaching Students to Think about Socialism and Communism” by Aminda Smith and is intended for students in grades 10–12.

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This lesson is intended for students in grades 10–12. It can be used as part of the International Baccalaureate History curriculum's study of authoritarianism or complement any modern world history or AP World History curriculum's study of global conflict or spread of communism. If this lesson is part of a larger unit on Mao, it is recommended that the students understand how Mao emerged and rose to power, as well as a general timeline of the Mao Era. Additionally, this lesson can be adapted as part of a larger examination of how authoritarian leaders use propaganda to consolidate and maintain power.

About the Lesson

Working in small groups of 3–5, students will use primary source visuals and quotations to create an informative gallery exhibition for one event during the Mao Era (1949–1976). The students will research a campaign and how Mao Thought and propaganda were used to consolidate or maintain power during that period. Since Mao's policies and propaganda countered previous societal norms for women and youth that they were often some of his most ardent supporters, the students will analyze the role/s of women and youth during his campaigns.

Time needed for the lesson: three or four 60-minute classes for research and one class for the exhibition

Goals

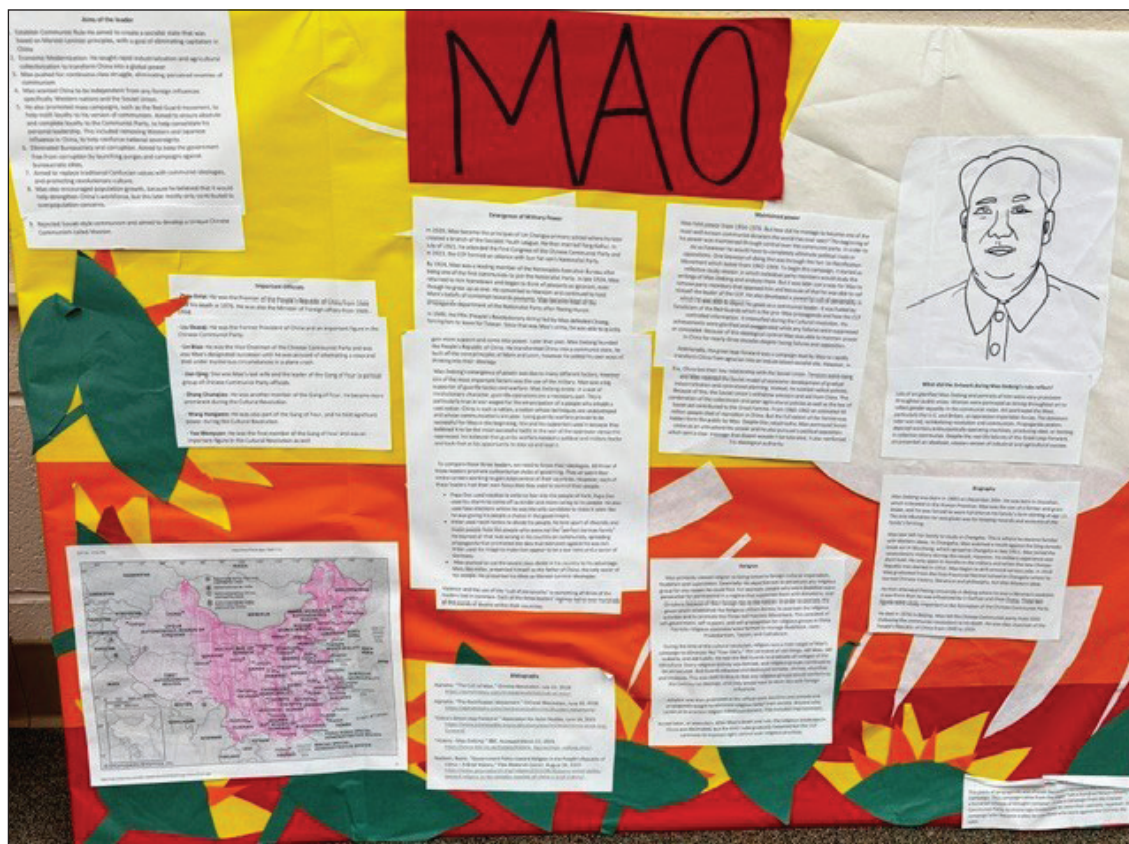
- Students will understand how propaganda was used to promote programs such as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.
- Students will understand how Mao's image and Mao Thought was used to maintain power.
- Students will understand the role of women and youth in the consolidation or maintenance of power.

The display will include

- A description of the event that includes how the event worked to consolidate or maintain power
- two visual sources: try to find two that differ in content
- four quotes from Mao that are from this time period or relate to the goals during this campaign
- How the event met the party goals and how propaganda and Mao thought were used to achieve those goals
- an explanation of how the visuals and quotes they selected promote the goals for this campaign
- A short explanation of the roles of women and youth during this campaign

Possible extension could include:

- Students create a piece of propaganda in a similar style to their chosen propaganda
- Students must use excerpts from Mao's own writings as well as visual sources
- Students add a layer of historiography to the lesson by including two contrasting historians' perspectives on their events



Sources

- “Chinese Propaganda Posters | Chinese Posters.” n.d. Chinese posters.net. <https://chineseposters.net>
- Mao Tse Tung. 2019. “Quotations from Mao Tse Tung.” Marxists.org. 2019. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/red-book/index.htm>

Additional sources, such as instructor approved texts or online sources can be added at teacher discretion.

Student groups may select from the following campaigns:

- Hundred Flowers Campaign (1956–57)
- Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957)
- The Great Leap Forward (1958–61)
- The Cultural Revolution (1966–76)
- Socialist Education Movement (1962)
- The Destruction of the “Four Olds” (1967)
- Up to the mountains, down to the villages (1968)

Format of the Exhibition

Teachers can have the students compile all of the information in hard copy format or digitally. Students can use a tri-fold poster, poster board, or other display format to have an in-person gallery. Teachers can also use <https://www.classtools.net/3D/> or other tools like Canva to create a virtual display that the students can share online.

Worksheet

Student Name: _____

Campaign and Years	Description of the campaign. How did it help maintain or consolidate power?	How did Mao thought and visuals promote the goals of the campaign?	Describe the roles of women and youth