

# Is Mao Zedong a Hero or a Villain?

*SS7H3 The student will analyze continuity and change in Southern and Eastern Asia leading to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

*d. Describe the impact of Communism in China in terms of Mao Zedong, the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and Tiananmen Square.*

Directions: Read the passages and answer the questions.

Mao is the “sun in the sky.” He is considered the greatest leader in Chinese history. Mao freed China from its backwardness and transformed it into a modern nation. Under Mao’s leadership, China was transformed. What had taken centuries in the West, took only decades in China. China made the leap from a semi-colony to a Great Power.

1. Why is Mao considered the “sun in the sky” in Chinese history?

Mao liberated the Chinese people from economic exploitation and social oppression. He freed China from its Confucian past, gave women equal status in Chinese society, opened China to the west and expanded China’s economy. China’s economy grew at an average annual rate of 11% to 15% per year, thereby creating the industrial infrastructure that laid the basis for the economic transformation that took place during the rule of Deng Xiaoping.

**Liberated:** freed

**Exploitation:** mistreatment

**Infrastructure:** roads, communication systems

2. How did Chinese life improve under Mao’s leadership?

According to Lee Feigon, author of Mao – A Reinterpretation, the Cultural Revolution transformed (changed) China for the better. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao battled corruption, streamlined bureaucracy (government), strengthened the economy, promoted artistic and educational reform, and worked towards social justice and the feminist ideal.

**Transformed:** changed

**Bureaucracy:** government

3. How did the Cultural Revolution change China?

“Although urban schools closed for a time, Mao used the Cultural Revolution to dismantle elitist and formalistic educational system that the country had returned to in the early 1960s. He shifted resources to rural education, in the process radically expanding China’s educational system.”

- Dongping Han, “Impact of the Cultural Revolution on Rural Education and Development”

**Dismantle:** take apart

**Elitist:** limited to the rich

4. How did China’s educational system improved as a result of the Cultural Revolution?

The Great Leap Forward was a failure. Rather than a leap forward, it became a lurch sideways. By 1961, China was on the brink of economic ruin and internal collapse. As a result of the loss of fertile farmland and poor management of what farmland remained, the annual harvest declined. The result was widespread famine. Industrial output also fell. Even Mao himself was forced to admit that his idea was a disaster. He was forced to step down from his post as chairman of the CCP.

5. Why was Mao forced to step down from his post as chairman of the Chinese Communist Party?

*According to these quotes, why could Mao Zedong be considered a hero?*

*Write one paragraph about why Mao Zedong could be considered a hero.*

*Provide evidence to support your position.*

Mao launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966. The Cultural Revolution remains a titanic catastrophe in which human rights, democracy, the rule of law and civilization were crushed. During the decade that followed, literally millions of people were sacked, imprisoned and otherwise ostracized for their hidden 'bourgeois tendencies,' while tens of thousands were executed. Mao encouraged students to rebel against authority, inform on their politically incorrect seniors, and join the Red Guard – the ideological militia that pushed the Cultural Revolution forward. China collapsed into a state of near anarchy. Schools shut down, offices closed, transport was disrupted – it was so bad that even today, the full history is still far from known. While the Cultural Revolution 'officially' ended in 1969, and the worst abuses stopped then, the politically charged atmosphere was maintained until Mao's death in 1976.

**Titanic:** huge

**Catastrophe:** disaster

**Sacked:** killed

**Anarchy:** chaos

6. How did the Cultural Revolution affect China?

The Cultural Revolution had a disastrous effect on the educational system and the scientific community within China; an effect that was felt well into the late 80's. Those people in China who were between the ages of 15 to 25 during the period of the revolution are now referred to as the “lost generation.” This is because they are the ones who lost out: losing the chance for an education, losing the chance for a normal youth.

**Disastrous:** terrible

7. Who were the “lost generation?”

Mao's rule brought about more deaths of his own people than any other leader in history. The total death toll is only exceeded by all the dead people of World War II. Some 12 to 15 million deaths can be attributed to Stalin. The systematic elimination of the Jews under Hitler was approximately 6 million. Under Mao, over 40 million people lost their lives.

8. Was Mao's rule more brutal than that of Stalin or Hitler?

According to Chen Yuen, “Had Mao died in 1956, his achievements would have been immortal. Had he died in 1966, he would still have been a great man. But he died in 1976. Alas, what can one say?”

**Immortal:** everlasting

9. What conclusion can you draw from this statement?

*According to these quotes, why could Mao Zedong be considered a villain?*

*Write one paragraph about why Mao Zedong could be considered a villain.*

*Provide evidence to support your position.*

**Assignment:** Create a piece of propaganda showing that Mao Zedong is either a hero or a villain. On the back of your propaganda explain why. Provide evidence to support your position.

Questions /20	Questions /20	Questions /20
Hero Paragraph /20	Hero Paragraph /20	Hero Paragraph /20
Villain Paragraph /20	Villain Paragraph /20	Villain Paragraph /20
Propaganda /20	Propaganda /20	Propaganda /20
Opinion Paragraph /20	Opinion Paragraph /20	Opinion Paragraph /20
<b>Final Grade:</b>	<b>Final Grade:</b>	<b>Final Grade:</b>
Questions /20	Questions /20	Questions /20
Hero Paragraph /20	Hero Paragraph /20	Hero Paragraph /20
Villain Paragraph /20	Villain Paragraph /20	Villain Paragraph /20
Propaganda /20	Propaganda /20	Propaganda /20
Opinion Paragraph /20	Opinion Paragraph /20	Opinion Paragraph /20
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Questions /20	Questions /20	Questions /20
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Villain Paragraph /20	Villain Paragraph /20	Villain Paragraph /20
Propaganda /20	Propaganda /20	Propaganda /20
Opinion Paragraph /20	Opinion Paragraph /20	Opinion Paragraph /20
<b>Final Grade:</b>	<b>Final Grade:</b>	<b>Final Grade:</b>