



LESSON PLAN: The Chinese Cultural Revolution

INTRODUCTION

Chen Yi's life as a musician and composer becomes a more compelling story when students are aware of the significant political and cultural events that impacted her as an adolescent, the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Born in 1953, Chen Yi was 13 years old and coming into her own as a musician when the Cultural Revolution erupted in May, 1966. Awareness of her experiences as a teen also helps illuminate students' understanding about this significant historical era in a more personal way.

LEARNING GOAL

Drawing on prior knowledge plus what they learn when reading an article about the Chinese Cultural Revolution, students will summarize what they know about this key historical era and make initial connections between Chen Yi's biography and the historical events.

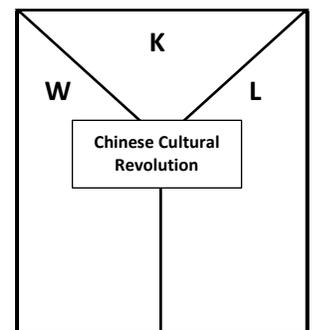
MATERIALS

- A large, blank Y chart used for collecting responses
- Copies of "An Overview of the Chinese Cultural Revolution," an historical resource for students and teachers
- Chen Yi's print biography and the PowerPoint, "Chen Yi and the Chinese Cultural Revolution" (see [Teacher's Guide](#))
- Youtube video of [Chen Yi speaking on the Chinese Cultural Revolution](#).

PROCESS

In preparation, ask social studies colleagues if the Chinese Cultural Revolution is an event addressed in your school district's middle school social studies curriculum. This will provide some clues as to how much prior knowledge students will or will not have. Then determine if your focus is **recalling** prior knowledge or **learning** about the history of the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

1. Write the words **Chinese Cultural Revolution** in the center of the Y chart and ask students to reflect and respond with what they already know. Write responses in the top "K" section of the chart. Do not worry if they have little or nothing to say. This historical era may not be included in your district's Social Studies curriculum.
2. Read the contents of the "K" section out loud. Ask if they have questions or things they **want** to know and add them to the "W" section of the chart.
3. Distribute copies of the article "An Overview of the Chinese Cultural Revolution." After reading, direct them to discuss what they learned with a partner and select one fact or idea to share with the class.



4. Reconvene, ask the partners to share what they learned, and add their comments to the “L” section of the Chart.
5. With the KWL chart visible, review or view Chen Yi’s biographical PowerPoint and written biography. Then pose these questions as a framework for a discussion:
 - How old was Chen Yi when the Cultural Revolution began?
 - Where was she sent?
 - Why was she sent to labor in the mountains of rural China?
 - What did she do to keep music in her life during these years?
 - How did she maintain her technical skills?
 - What effect do you think these events had on her personal life? On her musical life and her development as a performer and composer?

Wrap up the discussion by asking students to add more information to the KWL chart.

Assessment

Informally assess students’ ability to make relevant connections between an historical event and the music and musicians of the time period during their discussions about Chen Yi and the impact of policies and actions during the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

Extensions

- Videos of Chen Yi talking about these events are posted on the American Composers Forum website. In [this video](#), she talks about her childhood and the “dark period” of the Cultural Revolution, what hauling concrete was like, and how her education was delayed. Hearing the person tell the story makes a more memorable tale.
- Some or all of these activities can be assigned as homework activities. Students can read the article posted on the Choir web pages, and find blank copies of the KWL chart to record information, questions, and comments.

OPTIONAL Provide paper copies of the Y chart for students to use to record what was shared in class, or to use to record information if the work is assigned as a homework activity.

What do we KNOW about the CR?

WHAT do we want to know?
What are we curious about?

What else did we LEARN from the article?

Chinese Cultural Revolution

Name(s) _____ Date _____

