

Final Draft: "The Tank Man" Teacher's Guide

ABOUT THE FILM: On a fateful day in June 1989, the world became fixed on the bold image of a lone man staring down a procession of tanks in Tiananmen Square, Beijing. While trying to unearth the story behind this courageous man, the producers of "The Tank Man" uncover additional stories about the clash between the communist government of the People's Republic of China and those who advocate for a more open, democratic society. In this film, FRONTLINE explores a society in transition 17 years after the demonstrations at Tiananmen Square. China has become open for global business, but it remains closed to a free media and available information.

WATCHING THE FILM:

"The Tank Man" is 90 minutes long. If time permits, teachers can use the film in class, or it can be assigned as homework. Discussion questions and appropriate classroom activities are provided in this guide and can be used with or without the film.

A NOTE TO TEACHERS:

For classes in global history, U.S. history, government, language arts, current events, media studies and art history. Grade levels 9-12.

In this lesson, students will evaluate how access to open media can impact how the events of June 4, 1989, in Tiananmen Square are presented. The lesson can be used with or without the film, and can be tailored to suit each class's interests and requirements.

FEATURED LESSON PLAN:

A Picture is Worth How Many (unfiltered) Words?

Students will become familiar with:

- The Google search engine in and outside of China
- The events surrounding the confrontation at Tiananmen Square between Chinese forces and the Tank Man
- How censorship affects what the media reports and what the public learns

ADDITIONAL LESSON IDEAS:

How is Media "Free" or "Not Free"?

Students will consider China's rating by the media and human rights watchdog group Freedom House and what factors contribute to this rating.

Two Portraits in Front of Tiananmen Square

Students will examine two oil paintings set in front of Mao Zedong's portrait in Tiananmen Square to uncover important visual cues and consider the social and historical context behind these images.

Literature as a Window into Culture

In this lesson from FRONTLINE's "China in the Red" documentary, students will explore contemporary examples of banned Chinese literature and consider why these works have been banned.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The guide includes this annotated list of relevant Web sites and articles.

PURCHASING THE FILM:

"The Tank Man" can be purchased from Shop PBS for Teachers

[link] <http://teacher.shop.pbs.org/home/index.jsp>

Also, teachers and students can watch the film streamed in its entirety on FRONTLINE's

Web site [link]: <http://www.pbs.org/frontline/tankman>

CREDITS:

This teacher's guide was developed by Simone Bloom Nathan of Media Education Consultants. It was written by Debra Plafker Gutt, Stuyvesant High School, New York, NY. Advisors were Peter Gilmartin of Primary Source, Watertown, MA; Lisa Iverson, Cascade High School, Turner, OR; and Greg Timmons, curriculum writer and educational consultant.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think the Tank Man blocked the path of the tanks, and why do you think the tanks stopped at Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989?
2. What are differences between the democratic government of the United States and the government of China?
3. How has Chinese society changed over the last 30 years?
4. Although the United States is one of China's largest trading partners, the government continues to express concerns about China's human rights abuses. How has China allegedly violated the human rights of its citizens? If possible, explain the positions of the Chinese and U.S. governments on the issue of human rights.
5. Many people are hopeful that as China develops more economic reform and prepares to host the 2008 Olympics, they will address their human rights record. In your opinion, why will this affect or not affect human rights in China?
6. China maintains censorship over its media. What challenges can the Internet pose to this control? What benefits will the Chinese people derive from more access to information through the Internet?
7. How does China censor information on the Internet?
8. Why do you think Internet companies like Google were motivated to create modified search engines for Internet users in China?
9. Think about your and your family's Internet activities. What typical Internet use would the Chinese government find objectionable? Which sites would be blocked? Why?

FEATURED LESSON PLAN:
A Picture is Worth How Many (unfiltered) Words?

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

Students will become familiar with:

- The Google search engine in and outside of China
- The events surrounding the confrontation at Tiananmen Square between Chinese forces and the Tank Man
- How censorship affects what the media reports and what the public learns

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Computers and Internet access
- Copies of student worksheet "Searching the Internet for Truth: June 4, 1989"
- Copies of BBC article "On This Day: 4 June 1989" [link]
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/low/dates/stories/june/4/newsid_2496000/2496277.stm
- Copies of student worksheet: "Censor It"
- Red markers or pens for each student

For classrooms without access to computers or the Internet, teachers should print and distribute the following materials:

- Copies of Google.com search page [link]
<http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=tiananmen+square>
- Copies of Google.cn search page [link] <http://www.google.cn/search?hl=zh-CN&q=Tiananmen+Square&meta=cr%3DcountryCN>

TIME NEEDED:

5-10 minutes for general group discussion

90 minutes to watch "The Tank Man"

10-15 minutes to conduct the Opening Activity. (This can be assigned for homework.)

10-15 minutes for reading and discussion of BBC article

10-15 minutes for "Censor It"

PROCEDURE:

Opening Activity:

1. Distribute copies of the worksheet "Searching the Internet for Truth: June 4, 1989."
2. Direct students to complete this task in groups of three or four.

Main Activity – Part One:

3. Reconvene as a class, distribute and read the BBC article together. (Students will need to save the BBC article to use in the "Censor It" activity.) Discuss the following points:

- a) Why were students protesting at Tiananmen Square?
- b) Why did the government clash with student protesters?
- c) What was the result of this clash? Why are accurate numbers of casualties difficult to determine?
- d) Why do you think Google-China's search engine and the Chinese government block access to sites like this BBC story?
- e) To what extent do you think that the BBC article reflects a bias?

Main Activity – Part Two:

4. Write the following nine terms on the board:

Tibet	Democracy China	Freedom China
Taiwan China	Dissident China	Justice China
Equality	Revolution	Counterrevolution China

5. Explain to the class about *The Empirical Analysis of Internet Filtering in China*:

In 2002, researchers at Harvard University tested Google Internet access in China to determine which search terms were frequently blocked. The researchers checked to see if the search terms typed in Chinese locations would connect to the same sites that a Google search in the United States would yield. For example, when the researchers typed terms such as "equality" or "democracy china" into Google's search engine in the United States, they were linked to media organizations such as the BBC or *Time Inc.* or to universities such as Stanford University or Columbia University. In China, these same sites were frequently blocked.

Source: Edelman, Benjamin and Jonathan Zittrain. "Empirical Analysis on Internet Filtering in China." The Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard Law School. 20 March 2003.
<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/filtering/china/google-kw-chart.html> (15 March 2006).

6. Instruct the students to examine the nine terms that are a sampling of the blocked search terms. (These terms were blocked during *at least 50 percent* of attempted searches.)

7. Discuss the following questions:

- What are some of the issues surrounding Taiwan and Tibet that cause the Chinese government to restrict access to these terms?
- Why do you think the Chinese government restricted and continues to restrict access to some sites pertaining to "equality," "democracy" or "dissidents"?
- What other terms do you think the Chinese government would censor? Why?
- Are there any search terms that the U.S. government might monitor or censor? Identify these terms and explain.
- Is a censored Google in China better than no Google? Explain.

8. Divide the students into pairs and distribute the "Censor It" handout. The students will complete the task – blackening out words in the BBC article on the Tiananmen Square protests that the Chinese government would find objectionable. After the pairs censor the article, they will analyze how censoring the information affects their understanding of the events and evaluate its impact on controlling information. (These directions are also listed on the students' handout.)

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT:

- Student participation in large group and small group discussions
- Written responses to questions on handouts

Student Worksheet: *Searching the Internet for the Truth: June 4, 1989*

Note to Students:

Imagine that two high school students are conducting research on the same event in history: the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989. One student is researching the subject from her school in the United States, while the other is researching the *same* event from his school in the People's Republic of China. You will simulate both students' initial research by using two different search engines operated by the same company.

Option: Take a tour of historic Tiananmen Square at [link] <http://www.tsquare.tv/tour/> to learn about its long presence in Chinese history.

I. American student's search: Go to the search engine Google's Web site [link] www.google.com and type in "Tiananmen Square."

1. How many links can be accessed by this one search?
2. Scan through the first five sites. What seems to be the content of these links?
3. What words are repeated?

II. Chinese student's research: Go to Google-China's Web site [link] www.google.cn. (Don't worry if the Chinese characters are replaced by squares.) In the search box, type "Tiananmen Square."

4. How many links can be accessed by this one search?
5. Again, scan through the first five sites. What seems to be the content of these sites?
6. What sites are linked to this Google-China search term?

With your group, discuss the following questions and write down your ideas.

7. How does the content of these search pages differ from each other?
8. Why do you think the content of Google.com's search page differs from Google.cn's search page?

ADDITIONAL LESSONS OR EXTENSION IDEAS

How is Media "Free" or "Not Free"?

Students will consider China's rating by Freedom House, a non-profit organization that defines itself as "a clear voice for democracy and freedom around the world." Students will discuss what factors contribute to this rating. They will contrast the state of Chinese media by evaluating what make the press "free." In addition, students will see the relationship between political freedom and a free press. Students will examine the Freedom House Map of Freedom of the Press at [link]

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=16&year=2005&country=6715> to discover what other countries have media organizations that are "not free" and what countries have "free" press.

Two Portraits in Front of Tiananmen Square

Students will examine two oil paintings set in front of Mao Zedong's portrait in Tiananmen Square. One was painted right before the Cultural Revolution and the other painted a few years after the 1989 protests. They will "read" the painting to uncover important visual cues and they will consider the social and historical context behind these images.

In Front of Tiananmen, Sun Zixi, 1964 [link]

<http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/exhib/gug/indxs/new/newoilpgs/C4136.html>

Taking a Picture in Front of Tiananmen, Wang Jingsong, 1992 [link]

http://kaladarshan.arhist.arts.ohio-state.edu/studypages/internal/HA690/1990s-present/oilptg/pgs/*C20_371M.htm

At these sites students will compare and contrast these two images set at the same place. The class will review modern China's timeline and consider the messages implicit in these paintings. Special attention should be paid to the artists' generation for the students to evaluate the relationship between the artist and the setting. Are these positive or negative images? Are these critical messages or neutral moments? For further work, students can research the impact of the 1989 democracy movement on Chinese art -- both from the perspective of the artists and the government's support or crackdown on art.

Literature as a Window Into Culture [link]

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/red/postviewing.html#literature2>

In this lesson from the FRONTLINE documentary "China in the Red", students will explore contemporary examples of banned Chinese literature and consider why these works have been banned. Students can also visit the American Library Association's Web site at [link]

<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/bbwlinks/100mostfrequently.htm> to discover what works of literature have been frequently banned by different communities in the United States. Students will consider the difference between banning access to the arts or information by a community or a government.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: A Note about Internet Resources

Students need to be aware that Web sites sometimes present only one view of an issue. Encourage them to think about Web sites even as they are reading. Guiding questions as they review Web sites are: What did you learn from this site? What didn't you learn from this site? Who sponsors this site? What bias might the sponsor have? How current is the site?

WEB SITES:

"The Tank Man"

www.pbs.org/frontline/tankman

The companion Web site to the FRONTLINE documentary offers dramatic first-hand accounts and photos of what it was like to be in Tiananmen Square on June 3-4, 1989; the sharply contrasting Chinese and Western press accounts of the event; further analysis on why Tiananmen '89 was a momentous turning point for China; and extended interviews with those featured in the report.

"The Gate of Heavenly Peace"

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gate/>

This companion Web site to the FRONTLINE documentary offers an interactive tour of Tiananmen Square, a chronology of Chinese 20th century history, readings, and an extensive bibliography related to the 1989 democracy protests.

"China in the Red"

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/red/view/>

Follow the lives of ten Chinese people as they tell the story of China's development from their own perspectives. This companion Web site to the FRONTLINE documentary offers a timeline detailing China's economic transformation, interviews, relevant links and readings and additional lesson plans.

Tiananmen Square 1989 – The Declassified History A National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book

<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB16/documents/index.html>

This George Washington University page offers previously classified U.S. government documents. Students can read the official reactions from the United States to the unfolding 1989 democracy movement and the Chinese government crackdown. These documents have been scanned and would make excellent handouts to trigger class discussion.

Human Rights Watch – 15 Years On Where are Some of the "Most Wanted" Participants Today?

<http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/china/scholars/t15/>

Students can find out what happened to the leaders of the 1989 democracy movement in China since they were placed on China's "most wanted" rolls.

Internet Filtering in China in 2004-2005: A Country Study

<http://www.opennetinitiative.net/studies/china/>

A collaborative effort between the University of Toronto, Harvard University and Cambridge University, the Open Net Initiative monitored Internet access in Tunisia, Bahrain, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Burma, Yemen, Iran and China. The China Country Study studies access to political sites, news organizations and controversial topics such as the Falun Gong, Taiwan and Tibet.

ARTICLES

"Google in China"

Official Google Blog

January 27, 2006

<http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2006/01/google-in-china.html>

Teachers and students can go to this site to understand Google's perspective in creating a modified search engine in China. Google's blog offers an adequate amount of background to understanding the development this search engine.

"Google to Censor Itself in China"

<http://www.cnn.com/2006/BUSINESS/01/25/google.china/>

Students can access background information, participate in CNN's poll on this issue, and view its results.

"China Cracks Down on Internet Free Speech"

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/july-dec05/china_10-19.html

This comprehensive article from "The NewsHour" chronicles how the Chinese constitution protects speech unless it conflicts with state interests. The article also provides a link to discussion questions.

"Exporting Censorship"

By Xení Jardom

New York Times, Section A, p. 23, March 9, 2006

This editorial details factual information about the Congressional hearings on China's search engines that are sold and managed by American Internet companies. It offers a strong criticism of this practice.

"Politics and Economics: Chinese Government Defends Its Restrictions on Internet Use"

By Jason Dean

Wall Street Journal, February 15, 2006

This article reports on China's restricted Internet use. China claims they are preventing the spread of "harmful" information and their practices are consistent with the international community.

"Sellout.com"

By Andy Kessler

Wall Street Journal, January 31, 2006

In this strongly worded editorial, Google is described as "[caving] to the Communists."