

Activity from [Regions of the World](#)
Activity

Exploring Perspectives on China

Learning Objectives

Students will work independently and collaboratively to interpret, articulate, and assess diverse perspectives on contemporary issues in China.

Length

One 60-90 minute class session

Materials

[Asia: The Essentials](#)

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[Activity Worksheet](#)

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[Activity Slides](#)

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Instructional Plan

1. (Homework) - Assign students the Asia readings linked above. Each student should come to class with a completed version of the linked activity worksheet.
2. (Classroom Set-Up) - Organize desks into two concentric circles. The inner circle should include at least four chairs; the outer circle should have enough chairs for the rest of the class. If class is held in a lecture hall, set up a minimum of four chairs in panel-style seating at the front of the auditorium.
3. (5 min) - Engage students in a brief discussion about the main themes of their assigned homework.
4. (5 min) - Introduce the idea of a “Fishbowl” discussion and use the attached slides to explain the rules (linked above).
5. (40 min) - Conduct four, 10-minute rounds of discussion based on the following prompts from the worksheet:
 1. *Describe the historical factors that underpin China’s current foreign policy. What concerns might be motivating Chinese leaders’ decisions regarding its neighbors, the South China Sea, and the rest of the world (through the Belt and Road Initiative)?*
 2. *Why might China choose to invade Taiwan? How should the United States respond to this hypothetical invasion? Why? What are the risks and benefits of intervening versus doing nothing, both for populations in Asia and populations in the United States?*
 3. *What factors have enabled China’s rapid economic growth over the past thirty years? How beneficial (or detrimental) has a more open trade with China been, both for China and the rest of the world? To what extent has a more open trade between China and the West enabled reform in China itself?*
 4. *How has China’s rapid economic growth benefited and challenged its residents? What are the long-term effects of this growth for Chinese populations? Would you want to be a young person in China today? Why or why not?*

6. (10 min) - Conclude the session by asking students to reflect on how they think the discussion went and what they learned from it. Possible questions to guide this reflection include:
1. *How did the different panels support or challenge your initial understanding of the topics?*
 2. *What new insights did you gain from listening to your classmates?*
 3. *What did you think about the fishbowl activity?*
 4. *How would you improve this activity in the future?*

Notes

- This activity uses a “fishbowl” strategy to encourage students’ oral communication and active listening skills.
- Given time constraints, it is unlikely that all students will be able to participate as panelists in larger-sized classrooms. To encourage participation from each student, instructors might use a [randomized name selector](#) to select panelists, provide participation points to audience members who ask the panelists questions, and/or collect student notes at the end of the session to gauge each students’ engagement with the activity.