

## Debating an Issue

# China's Move Forward

This issue's lesson plan calls on students to incorporate what they learn by reading "China Rising?" (pp. 8-10) with their broader knowledge of political and social systems. It also encourages students to think beyond their own points of view.

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### OBJECTIVES

- Identify and explain the challenges facing China.
- Demonstrate higher-level thinking skills through discussion and debate.
- Exhibit decision-making skills by developing and articulating a rationale based on the facts.

### INTRODUCTION

After reading the *JS* article "China Rising?," students should be able to identify some of the human-rights issues that were of concern during the Olympics. They also should be able to discuss challenges that face China now that the Olympic Games have ended.

The restructuring of China's economy has been under way for some time, but other aspects of life have been slower to change. Before and during the Olympics, China's government took care to show its best side to the international media. What will happen now that most of the media are gone? Will the government become stricter on dissidents within the country?

### TOPIC QUESTION

Explore these and other questions by holding a formal debate in class. The key question to be debated: "Considering all that China has undergone in the past year, which policy should the U.S. encourage China to emphasize: developing a strong and free-enterprise-based economy, or strengthening the human rights of all Chinese citizens?"

Before holding the debate, lead your students into a discussion of the possible effects of each choice on the Chinese people, China's government, and international relations.

### DEBATE PROCEDURE

Divide the classroom into two sides, with one side for the "economy team" and the other for the "human-rights team." The center can be used, temporarily, for students who are undecided.

However, make it clear that everyone will have to take a side eventually. (*Option:* You may prefer to choose teams arbitrarily, requiring students to argue in sup-

port of one side, whether or not they personally agree with it.)

Have students line up on their side of the debate floor, and appoint one person per team to serve as record keeper. Each record keeper should make a list of his or her side's rationales on the board, to be reviewed as the discussion progresses.

Only one side can speak at a time. After a speaker has expressed his or her opinion, supported with reasons and examples, he or she will choose the next speaker. Each side can have no more than two speakers in a row, in order to allow each side to speak.

Students may switch sides within the debate, but set a limit of switch times. If a side is stumped, you can help by prompting it with additional considerations in order to keep the conversation going.

### FOLLOW-UP

After the debate, have students write their own answers to the topic question. They should include a clear explanation of their reasoning.