

e-Edition Plus

A current events feature for teaching with electronic editions.

By Peter Landry

United States puts focus on human rights in China

The United States and the People's Republic of China are two of the most important countries in the world.

The United States has the largest economy in the world, and China has the second largest. That means that the two countries produce and sell more goods and services than any other countries on Earth.

They also occupy a great deal of the Earth's space. The United States is the world's third largest country with 3,794,100 square miles of land in its states and territories.

The Asian nation of China is the fourth largest country by area, with 3,705,407 square miles of land in its provinces.

China also has the most people of any country on Earth, with a population of more than 1.3 billion people (the United States has 310 million).

How China's people are treated is far different than how people are treated in the United States.

Last week, as Americans prepared to celebrate Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month, leaders of the two nations met to discuss the rights and freedoms China offers to its people.

As a democracy, the United States gives its people a wide range of freedoms, from choosing their leaders by voting to the freedom to practice any religion they want.

In China the government is controlled by one party, the Communist Party, and people do not have the right to practice different religions, speak out, or vote for candidates of different parties.

An export power

China is often in the news because its economy and its political power throughout the world are growing.

The main reason China's economy is growing so quickly is because it is the world's biggest exporter of goods its people have made.

China makes everything from shoes to ships and then sells the products to other countries, including the United States. China exports more products to the United States than it does to any other nation.

In return, China buys products made in the United States and is now the fastest growing destination for U.S. goods in the world.

Its banks also have loaned billions of dollars to the United States government to cover expenses the U.S. has

not been able to pay for through money raised by taxes.

Crackdown

Last week's talks between the United States and China were scheduled at a time when the Asian nation is cracking down on protests from its citizens.

Lawyers, political activists and artists have been arrested and detained by Chinese officials, who are said to fear that protests could become violent, as they have in the Middle East.

The talks were planned as "in-depth" discussions on the rule of law, freedom of expression and religion, and worker and minority rights, according to the U.S. State Department.

But at the last minute, Chinese officials warned the United States not to push for greater "human rights" in China because that would be seen as "interfering" in Chinese national affairs.

With differences like this, the relationship between these two powerful nations grows more complicated every day.

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The People's Republic of China makes a wide variety of products that are sold in other countries. It is now the world's leading nation for such sales.

Talk About the News

- The United States and the People's Republic of China are two of the most powerful countries in the world. They each have influence with other countries, and their economic interests are connected through the products they buy and sell with each other. As a class, talk about different ways the U.S. and China are important to each other. Then brainstorm a list of issues the two nations should talk about or work on together.

Learning Standards: Engaging peers in constructive conversations about topics of interest or importance; describing the diverse places, cultures and communities of major world regions and nations; evaluating U.S. foreign policy positions in light of national interests and American values.

Explore Your e-Edition

- China and the United States make news in many ways. Look through the e-Edition and find a story about China and the United States. Read the story and write a paragraph about what the story says about the relationship between the two countries. Share with the class.

Learning Standards: Explaining various ways that nations of the world interact with each other; evaluating U.S. foreign policy positions in light of national interests and American values.

- As a democracy, the United States is very interested in promoting human rights in other countries. As a class, discuss the importance of such human rights as freedom of religion, freedom of speech and the right to elect leaders. Then find a story in the e-Edition involving human rights or political rights in another country. Write a paragraph describing the human rights involved and why they are important.

Learning Standards: Describing the influence of the American concept of democracy and individual rights in the world; understanding the roles the United States plays in the international arena.

- Both China and the United States make and sell products to other countries. This helps businesses and provides jobs in each country. In the e-Edition, find a story about a business that makes products in your community or state. Design an ad for the e-Edition promoting these products as things another country should buy.

Learning Standards: Describing how trade generates economic development and interdependence; describing how businesses are involved in trade as producers, distributors, importers and exporters; identifying the current and potential contributions of national and world regions to trade.



How Well Did You Read?

Understanding what you read is a skill that will help you all your life. Review the story about the United States and China by answering the questions below.

1. What country has the world's largest economy?

A. China
B. Beijing
C. Russia
D. The United States

2. In terms of land area, China is:

A. The largest country in the world
B. The second largest country in the world
C. The third largest country in the world
D. The fourth largest country in the world

3. In terms of population, China is:

A. The largest country in the world
B. The second largest country in the world
C. The third largest country in the world
D. The fourth largest country in the world

4. What country imports the most goods from China?

A. Russia
B. Venezuela
C. The United States
D. Japan

5. Which of the following issues did the U.S. want to talk to China about last week?

A. The rule of law
B. Freedom of expression
C. Freedom of religion
D. All of the above