

the ARTICLE (for instructors)

The Chinese Olympics

Politics and the Olympics don't mix, and the success of the Games will be determined by the caliber of the athletes, the competition, and the friendship of the competing countries. The statement came from China's President, Hu Jintao, as he expressed the true meaning and spirit of the Games. In past years during the Cold War, nations regularly protested the Olympics due to political squabbles, and refused to allow their athletes to compete. Although there aren't any chances of similar disagreements marring the 2008 Summer Games, Hu was given the opportunity to put a positive spin days before August 8th.

China's president ignored the controversies which have dogged the games during the past months. He ignored the environmental degradation and pollution from which China suffers as it rushes to become an industrial superpower. He ignored the recent terrorist attack which killed sixteen policemen, as well as the threat to target "the most critical point of the Olympics." He ignored lapses in human rights and the strict restrictions China has placed on the media.

As a reminder, however, Hu said to the assembled reporters to respect China's laws and report fairly. The meeting was carefully controlled, as reporters had to submit questions in advance. When one reporter posed a question on human rights, Hu didn't respond.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to promote a friendlier China as it takes its place on the world stage, something China's government hopes this year's Olympics will also demonstrate.

Teacher's Notes:

* Underlined words in red typeface may be vocabulary unfamiliar to the students.

the ARTICLE (for students)

The Chinese Olympics

Politics and the Olympics don't mix, and the success of the Games will be determined by the caliber of the athletes, the competition, and the friendship of the competing countries. The statement came from China's President, Hu Jintao, as he expressed the true meaning and spirit of the Games. In past years during the Cold War, nations regularly protested the Olympics due to political squabbles, and refused to allow their athletes to compete. Although there aren't any chances of similar disagreements marring the 2008 Summer Games, Hu was given the opportunity to put a positive spin days before August 8th.

China's president ignored the controversies which have dogged the games during the past months. He ignored the environmental degradation and pollution from which China suffers as it rushes to become an industrial superpower. He ignored the recent terrorist attack which killed sixteen policemen, as well as the threat to target "the most critical point of the Olympics." He ignored lapses in human rights and the strict restrictions China has placed on the media.

As a reminder, however, Hu said to the assembled reporters to respect China's laws and report fairly. The meeting was carefully controlled, as reporters had to submit questions in advance. When one reporter posed a question on human rights, Hu didn't respond.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to promote a friendlier China as it takes its place on the world stage, something China's government hopes this year's Olympics will also demonstrate.

Notes:

STEP ONE

Brainstorm: Brainstorm with a partner(s) words and ideas associated with "the Olympics" for 2 minutes. Spend another 5 minutes or less discussing the words and ideas together.

STEP TWO

Discuss: Do you agree or disagree? Why?

a.	I'm very interested in the Olympics.
b.	The Olympics are politically motivated.
c.	The Olympics promote peace around the world.
d.	My home country often wins medals at the Olympics.
e.	Countries and sponsors spend too much money on the Olympics.

STEP THREE

The Article: Read the article, and work with a partner to understand it. Lastly, summarize in your own words.

STEP FOUR

Discuss: Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

a.	Did you like this article?
b.	Do you think President Hu should have talked about the problems China faces? Why/not?
c.	Why do you think President Hu commented about fair reporting and following China's laws? Please explain.
d.	What do you think about a possible terrorist attack at the 2008 Summer Games? Please explain.
e.	Do you agree that the Olympics let China show a new image to the world? And what exactly does this mean?
f.	How interested are you in the Olympics? What sports will you definitely watch? Please explain.

STEP FIVE

Role play: (Step One) Work with a partner and imagine three questions for China's president, Hu Jintao. You may write down any questions, including controversial ones. (Step Two) Imagine possible answers for your questions, including the controversial ones. (Step Three) Pair up with another student. One of you will be a reporter, another will be the president of China. Ask and answer questions. Switch roles and repeat.

question #1:
question #2:
question #3: