

Resisting Empire, Resurging Empire: Hong Kong

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Guiding Question: Why do people risk acts of resistance in an authoritarian regime?

History Standards:

10.10 Students analyze instances of nation-building in the contemporary world in at least two of the following regions or countries: the Middle East, Africa, Mexico and other parts of Latin America, and China.

10.10.3 Discuss the important trends in the regions today and whether they appear to serve the cause of individual freedom and democracy.

Framework excerpt (p. 363):

Since the 1980s, several Asian countries (particularly China, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Japan) became notable economic success stories. China, in particular, skyrocketed as a major manufacturer of inexpensive goods, which increasingly included electronics. Many historians and political scientists have debated the degree to which China's capitalism is likely to prompt changes in its authoritarian, single-party government.

Some economists project that China, along with India, may lead to Asia's re-emergence as the center of the global economy sometime in the twenty-first century. To understand the full complexity of these new centers of power, students may consider the degree to which governments in these regions support democracy and individual liberties, especially as they seek to confront violence and instability. As students explore future economic trajectories in these regions, they may consider the relationship between capitalist economies and varying degrees of democratic forms of government.

Common Core State Standards/ Literacy Skill Addressed:

Reading, grade 9-10:

1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.
6. Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
9. Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Writing, grade 9-10:

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
9. Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.



Please note that some of the content and source materials we will cover uses violent and sexist language, and includes outdated and offensive terms and images not in use today. We welcome all discussions about what is, is not, or could be appropriate for classroom instruction. Images are high resolution and may be resized for classroom use.

Note on Permissions

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Lesson overview: The resources in this unit on the current events in Hong Kong were developed as a result of the workshop hosted by the [UCI History Project](#) and [UCI Teacher Academy](#) on February 23, 2023. The available materials include [Google Slides](#) for the teachers, [recording of the workshop](#), a timeline, and a student handout below.

Online Resources

Articles and Outlets:

[Hong Kong Free Press Website](#)

[The Guardian, “View on Hong Kong Freedoms”](#)

[The Best Books on the Hong Kong Protests](#)

[CBC Canada, Hong Kong Timeline](#)

[Council on Foreign Relationship, China’s Massive Belt and Road Initiative](#)

[Council on Foreign Relationship, Hong Kong’s Freedoms: What China Promised and How It’s Cracking Down](#)

[Amnesty International, “Hong Kong Protests Explained”](#)

[BBC, “Why are there protests in Hong Kong? All the context you need”](#)

Video Resources:

[History of Hong Kong](#)

[Frontline documentary “Battle for Hong Kong”](#)

[Vox video, “China is erasing its border with Hong Kong”](#)

[Vox video follow up, “Hong Kong’s huge protests, explained”](#)

[NY Times video – “Meet Hong Kong’s Teenage Protesters”](#)

[60 Minutes Australia video, “How Hong Kong is being beaten into submission by China’s regime”](#)

Podcasts:

Apple Podcasts. [How to Become a Dictator. Hong Kong Silenced: Add Oil](#)

New York Times. [Listen to ‘The Daily’: Hong Kong’s Missing Bookseller](#)

Timeline of important events in Hong Kong

1842	Britain acquired Hong Kong island under the terms of the Treaty of Nanking, which ended the 1st Opium War
1984	<p>Sino-British Joint Declaration – dictated the terms under which Hong Kong would be returned to China.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Basic Law – city’s constitutional document enshrined the city’s “capitalist system and way of life” and granted it a “high degree of autonomy” including executive, legislative and independent judicial powers for fifty years (until 2047). ● Hong Kong is allowed to forge external relations in certain areas – including trade, communications, tourism and culture – but Beijing maintains control over the region’s diplomacy and defense. ● People of Hong Kong are supposed to be guaranteed freedoms of the press, expression, assembly and religion, as well as protections under international law.
1997	Britain officially returned control of Hong Kong to China under “One Country, Two Systems” policy
2003	<p>Protests against the proposed Article 23 of the Basic Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It would have allowed the local government to enact laws to protect the city’s national security. ● The bill is shelved indefinitely.
2004	<p>China rules that its approval must be sought for any changes to Hong Kong’s election laws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gave Beijing the right to veto any moves towards more democracy, such as direct elections for the territory’s chief executive.
2006	Tens of thousands of people rally in support of full democracy.
2007	<p>New rules aim to restrict the number of pregnant women from mainland China who come to Hong Kong to give birth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Many had been drawn by the prospect of gaining Hong Kong residency rights for their children and evading China’s one-child policy.
December 2007	Beijing says it will allow the people of Hong Kong to directly elect their own leader in 2017 and their legislators by 2020.
2008	Hong Kong’s pro-democracy camp wins more than a third of seats in the legislative elections, retaining a key veto over future bills.
2009	<p>Tens of thousands of people attend a vigil in Hong Kong on the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The territory is the only part of China to mark the anniversary.
2012	Protests against Patriotic Education

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students at the Chinese University of Hong Kong boycott classes over the government’s proposed plans to mandate a Chinese school curriculum.
June 2014	<p>More than 90% of the nearly 800,000 people taking part in an unofficial referendum, vote in favor of giving the public a say in short-listing candidates for future elections of the territory’s chief executive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beijing condemns the vote as illegal.
July 2014	<p>Tens of thousands of protesters take part in what organizers say could be Hong Kong’s largest pro-democracy rally in a decade.</p>
August 2014	<p>Chinese government rules out a fully democratic election for the Hong Kong leader in 2017, saying that only candidates approved by Beijing will be allowed to run.</p>
September-November 2014 	<p>Umbrella Movement began with goal of creating a true democracy in Hong Kong.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pro-democracy demonstrators occupy the city for weeks in protest of the Chinese governments’ decision to limit voter choice. The name ‘Umbrella Revolution’ was coined by Adam Cotton on Twitter on September 26, 2014, in reference to the umbrellas used for defense against police pepper spray. The name was later rejected by some supporters of the Occupy Central campaign, fearing that the movement would be mistaken as supporting violent overthrow of government. They emphasized that the movement was a demand for free and fair elections and proposed the name ‘Umbrella Movement’ as an alternative. More than 100,000 people took to the streets at the height of Occupy Central protests.
2016	<p>A new generation of pro-independence activists win seats in the Legislative Council elections in the highest turnout since the 1997 handover from Britain to China.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The high court disqualifies pro-independence legislators Sixtus Leung and Yau Wai-Ching from taking their seats in the Legislative Council after they refused to pledge allegiance to China during a swearing in ceremony.
2016-2017	<p>The disappearances of several booksellers, media executives and a Chinese billionaire heighten concerns about Beijing’s creeping control.</p>
2017	<p>Chinese President Xi Jinping visits Hong Kong to swear in new Chief Executive, Carrie Lam, and uses his visit to warn against any attempt to undermine China’s influence over the special administrative region.</p>
June 2019	<p>Thousands take to the street in protest against the government’s proposed extradition bill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports of police brutality, including the excessive use of tear gas and rubber bullets, exacerbated tensions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activists were demanding electoral reforms and an independent investigation into police violence.
September 2019	Chief Executive, Carrie Lam, withdrew the bill – but the protests continued until the Covid outbreak in early 2020.
November 2019	A record number of voters participate in elections. Pro-democracy candidates win more seats than ever before.
Spring 2020	Coronavirus pandemic stalls protests.
June 2020	<p>Beijing passed a National Security Law which gave broad new powers to punish critics and silence dissenters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The law effectively criminalized any dissent and adopted extremely broad definitions for crimes such as terrorism, subversion, secession, and collusion with foreign powers. ● Also allows Beijing to establish a security force in Hong Kong and influence the selection of judges who hear national security cases. ● Pro-democracy activists and lawmakers decried the move and expressed fears that it could be “the end of Hong Kong” ● In the months that follow, police arrest dozens of pro-democracy activists, including activist and politician Lester Shum. ● Police have arrested at least 170 people under this law ● Thousands more have been arrested for participating in the 2019 protests ● Beijing and the Hong Kong government have also curbed media freedoms. Newspapers have closed after journalists were harassed and jailed. ● These moves have by and large ended mass public protests and silenced many Hong Kong residents who fought for democracy. ● Thousands have fled the city.

Source info: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-16526765>

Essential Question:

Why do people risk acts of resistance in an authoritarian setting?

Part 1: Setting the Historical Context

Directions: Answer the following context questions using the *TIMELINE* provided.

- Hong Kong became a colony of which European empire in the 19th century?
- In what year was control of Hong Kong returned to China under the “One country, Two Systems” agreement?
- What freedoms were the people of Hong Kong supposed to be guaranteed under the Basic Law?
- Under the Basic Law, Hong Kong will enjoy the privileges of the “One country, Two Systems” agreement until what year?
- According to the timeline, in what year did the people of Hong Kong first take to the streets in protest?
- According to the timeline, what was the GOAL of the Umbrella Movement?

Part 2: Introductory VIDEO

- Where is Hong Kong?
- What does extradition mean?
- Why were the people of Hong Kong so worried about the proposed Extradition Bill in 2019?
- According to the video, the protests in 2019 did not resolve the problems. WHAT is the long term goal for Hong Kong protesters?

PODCAST



Podcast title: *This American Life*
Episode 686: Umbrellas Up [Acts 1 & 2]

The Cursed Generation

Ira Glass:

Interviewed these individuals who were all born in Hong Kong in 1997.

Jennifer:

Alice:

Tiffany:

Alex:

Podcast ACT 1 – The Cursed Generation

1. All of the people interviewed were born in 1997 and have become known as the ‘cursed generation.’ Why were they called this?
2. Why have these 22 year-olds chosen to protest in the streets?
3. When the interviewer asks what they think their lives will be like in 2047 when China takes control of Hong Kong, what is their response?
4. Many of the interviewees said they don’t think the protests will bring about change – so why do they continue to protest?

Podcast ACT 2 – The Fight

- Why do all protesters wear the same clothes?
- Describe what it was like for the protesters out on the streets.
- According to Jennifer, what is the goal of the protesters?

Conclusion:

Now that we've studied the reasons for the protests in Hong Kong and listened to firsthand accounts of those protesting, answer the essential question. Remember to use specific examples from our learning to support your answer!

Why do people risk acts of resistance in an authoritarian setting?