

Young & Restless in China Teacher's Guide

www.pbs.org/frontline/youngchina/

ABOUT THE FILM

In *Young & Restless in China*, FRONTLINE presents intimate portraits of nine young Chinese over the course of four years, examining the reality of their lives as they navigate their way through a country that is changing daily. They are westernized, savvy about today's interconnected world, ambitious – and often torn between their culture and their aspirations.

A NOTE TO TEACHERS

Teachers can either assign the film for viewing as homework or show the film in class. The lessons and activities in this guide can be used in the classroom without having viewed the film. This guide is intended for classes in social studies, civics and government, language arts, current events, media studies and history; Grade Level 9th – 12th. Teachers can use the guide in its entirety or select specific portions to use. Teachers should feel free to adapt this guide to their specific needs.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This guide includes a list of questions for students to discuss after viewing *Young & Restless In China*.

FEATURED LESSON PLAN

Pushing And Pulling Migrant Workers In China

Students will:

- Understand the “push” and “pull” factors behind China's internal migration
- Evaluate the impact of 150-200 million migrant workers on modern China
- Examine a migrant worker's dilemma and role play on her behalf

ADDITIONAL LESSON IDEAS

- **FRONTLINE's *China in the Red***
- **Wide Angle: Extreme Global Makeover: Migrant Workers**
- **POV – Escuela Debate**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

An annotated list of relevant Web sites.

PURCHASING THE FILM

Young & Restless In China can be purchased from Shop PBS for Teachers.

Also, teachers and students can watch the film streamed on FRONTLINE's Web site www.pbs.org/frontline/youngchina/

CREDITS

This teacher's guide was developed by Simone Bloom Nathan of Media Education Consultants. It was written by Debra Plafker Gutt, Stuyvesant High School, New York. Advisers were Ellen Greenblatt of The Bay School, San Francisco, and Greg Timmons, curriculum writer and educational consultant.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

After viewing the entire program, discuss the following questions with students.

- 1 Why do you think Miranda Hong describes her generation of Chinese as “confused”?
- 2 Why do you think the Chinese government has nicknamed the young people coming home from abroad “returning turtles”?
 - How do you think their work or educational experiences abroad have affected their ambitions in China?
 - Why do you think these young people have returned to China?
- 3 In what ways do you think Ben Wu, the entrepreneur launching the Internet café, is representative of the “new” China?
- 4 What do you think are important historical, social or economic factors that have shaped the outlook of the Chinese generation profiled in the film?
 - What do you think are important historical, social or economic factors that have shaped earlier generations in China?
 - What differences or similarities do you see between these two generations?
- 5 Why do you think that several of the profiled characters have turned to religion or spiritual outlets?
- 6 Lu Dong likens Chinese ambition to a poor kid going into a candy store and grabbing too much candy because he has been hungry for so long.
 - Is this an apt analogy about China?
 - Propose another analogy to describe Chinese ambition.
- 7 To what extent are the struggles of the rapper, Wang Xiaolei, unique as a Chinese artist?
 - Do you think that his life is typical of artists elsewhere? Explain your position.
- 8 Who do you think is the happiest of the young people profiled in this documentary and why?
- 9 Why do you think FRONTLINE producers named this program *Young & Restless In China*?
 - Do you think this is an appropriate title? Why or why not?
 - What other titles would aptly describe this program?

FEATURED LESSON PLAN

Pushing And Pulling Migrant Workers In China

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Understand the “push” and “pull” factors behind China’s internal migration
- Evaluate the impact of 150-200 million migrant workers on modern China
- Examine a migrant worker’s dilemma and role play on her behalf

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Internet access www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/youngchina/
- Internet access or class copies of *Migrants Are China’s “Factories Without Smoke”* <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/02/01/china.migrants/index.html> (NOTE: The print option is 1.5 pages.)
- Copies of Student Handout *Clearing The Smoke: Understanding China’s Internal Migrations* (NOTE: Two pages.)

TIME NEEDED

- Approx. 10-15 minutes – *Images Without Sound*
- Approx. 20-30 minutes – *“Factories Without Smoke”*
- Approx. 40-60 minutes – *Should I Stay Or Should I Go?*

PROCEDURE

Step One: Opening the Lesson – Images Without Sound

This activity can be conducted as a pre-viewing activity/discussion or in lieu of or in addition to watching the entire documentary.

- 1 Ask the students how they would visualize young people (people in their 20s and 30s) in China. Jot down their comments on the chalkboard.
- 2 Play the opening scene of *Young & Restless in China* with NO VOLUME (up until 4:02, Lu Dong jogging).
- 3 Have students jot down elements from this short clip that could be familiar to them. If time permits, play the clip a second time to allow students to complete this exercise. Pose the following questions:
 - What images can be just as easily viewed in students’ home communities as they are depicted in this documentary set in China? Have students defend their observations.
 - What are distinctly “Chinese” elements in this short clip? Again, have students defend their observations.
 - Have students decide whether this clip is more foreign or familiar to them.
 - Have students propose what they think this documentary will be about.

ASSESSMENT

- Review students’ responses for clarity.

Step Two: “Factories Without Smoke”

- 1 Distribute copies of the CNN article *Migrants Are China’s “Factories Without Smoke”* or have students access the article online. (This article can also be assigned for homework reading the previous night.)
<http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/02/01/china.migrants/index.html>
- 2 Distribute copies of the Student Handout: *Clearing The Smoke: Understanding China’s Internal Migrations*. In groups of three, students will discuss the significant details of the article as they collaborate on completing the handout.
- 3 After the students have finished their discussions and worked on the handout, reconvene as a large group. Invite students to share their responses to the final question below. Encourage students to support or challenge their classmates’ views. In the final analysis, are the 150-200 million internal migrants a positive or negative phenomenon for:
 - China?
 - the workers themselves?Defend your position.
- 4 Invite students to draw connections between China’s current experience and other moments in global or United States history where societies have experienced similar waves of internal migration. Challenge students to reevaluate their critique based on historical precedents.

METHODS FOR ASSESSMENT

- Quality of student participation during class and group discussions
- Completion of *Clearing The Smoke: Understanding China’s Internal Migrations*

Step Two: Should I Stay Or Should I Go?

- 1 Students will watch a clip from *Young & Restless in China*. The relevant segment is Chapter 2, from 1:21 to 5:57, beginning with scenes of present-day Tiananmen Square and finishing with Wei Zhanyan bringing clothes in from drying outside.
- 2 After the clip finishes, lead the class through a discussion as the students reflect on what they watched. This can either be conducted in a large group or the following questions can be distributed for small group discussions.
 - What do you think are important parts of Wei Zhanyan’s biography to help understand her character? Why are these factors relevant?
 - What does Wei Zhanyan like about her new life?
 - What do you think bothers Wei Zhanyan about her new life?
- 3 Students will watch one more clip from *Young & Restless in China*. The relevant segment runs from the beginning of Chapter 5 to 6:04.

Again, conduct a discussion, using the following questions.

- What are some notable differences between Wei Zhanyan’s life in Beijing and her life in her father’s home?

- Consider each person's concerns about getting married or breaking off the engagement:
 - Wei Zhanyan
 - Wei Zhanyan's father and brother
 - Wei Zhanyan's fiancé
 - What was it like watching the scene between Wei Zhanyan and her fiancé?
How did it make you, the viewer, feel?
- 4 In groups of two or three, students will develop a dialogue between Wei Zhanyan and her father and brother where they discuss and debate whether she should remain engaged and get married or break off the engagement.
- Students can write a series of letters (a minimum of four representing two exchanges)
 - Students can write a scene (a minimum of three pages)

Students must try to represent the characters of Wei Zhanyan, her father and her brother as they were depicted in the documentary. Students can also pursue an additional option of developing a dialogue between Wei Zhanyan and her fiancé. Encourage students to consider the economic and social implications of Wei Zhanyan both returning to her hometown and getting married and breaking off the engagement and staying in Beijing.

- 5 If time permits, invite a few groups to perform their scenes or read their letters. Hold a brief discussion about what were the compelling issues they considered when depicting Wei Zhanyan and her family's views on the issue of marriage and duty.
- 6 **DO NOT REVEAL THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION UNTIL THE END OF THE LESSON:** At the conclusion of the activity share with the students that with her father's eventual blessing, Wei Zhan broke off her engagement. She also met another migrant worker in Beijing and at the time of the documentary's taping, they were pursuing a romantic relationship. Hold an informal debate about whether breaking off the engagement was the right decision for her to make.

METHODS FOR ASSESSMENT

- Quality of student participation during discussions
- Creativity and completion of writing exercise

STUDENT HANDOUT

Clearing The Smoke: Understanding China's Internal Migrations

Directions: Read the CNN article, *Migrants Are China's "Factories Without Smoke."* In groups of three, discuss the following questions and provide complete responses.

- 1 Why do you think Chinese migrant workers are labeled "factories without smoke"?
- 2 Gross domestic product (GDP) is the total market value of all final goods and services produced within the borders of a country in one year. Why is it significant that migrant workers account for 16% of China's GDP growth?
- 3 Migrant workers are employed in what type of jobs?
Why do you think they work in these areas?
- 4 Like immigrants who have crossed oceans and borders in their pursuit of a new life, internal migrants are motivated by the same "push" factors that encourage them to leave their homes and "pull" factors that draw them to a new place. Identify the "push" and "pull" factors that are behind this Chinese internal migration.
- 5 Describe the quality of life for migrants in their new life. Provide examples from the article to support your depiction.
- 6 Reflecting beyond this article, what changes are created by China's pace of growth throughout Chinese society, socially, economically and environmentally?
- 7 In the final analysis, are the 150-200 million internal migrants a positive or negative phenomenon for:
 - China?
 - the workers themselves?Defend your position.

ADDITIONAL LESSON PLANS

■ FRONTLINE's *China in the Red*

www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/red/

FRONTLINE's *China in the Red* explores economic reform in China and its implications for contemporary Chinese society. This series of lesson plans complements the documentary as well as provides the examination of Chinese literature as a “window” to look at contemporary China.

■ Wide Angle: Extreme Global Makeover – Migrant Workers

www.thirteen.org/edonline/wideangle/lessonplans/extremeglobal/procedures.html

In learning activity #2, students are introduced to the lives of migrant workers in China. Students explore the Chinese government's reaction to migration pressures and examine the urban vs. rural conflict that is evident in contemporary China.

■ POV – Escuela Debate

www.pbs.org/pov/pov2002/escuela/classroom_lessonplano1.html

The topic of migrant workers is broadened to include the experiences of immigrants from Latin America to the United States. Students will debate policy issues affecting undocumented immigrants.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A Note about Internet Resources

Students need to be aware that Web sites sometimes only present one view of an issue. Encourage them to think about Web sites even as they are reading. Guiding questions as they review Web sites are: What did you learn from this site? What didn't you learn from this site? Who sponsors this site? What bias might the sponsor have? How current is the site?

■ FRONTLINE:

Young & Restless in China

www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/youngchina/

The companion Web site to the *Young & Restless in China* documentary features on-demand video streaming of the full program, an interview with producer Sue Williams, a roundtable discussion about China today, and samples of some of the music featured in the film.

China in the Red

www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/red/

The companion Web site for the *China In the Red* documentary features on-demand video streaming of the program, a round table discussion on "Democracy, Sooner or Later," an introduction to Beijing's music scene, a teacher's guide, and more from producer Sue Williams and experts on China.

The Tank Man

www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tankman/

The companion Web site for *The Tank Man* documentary features a timeline of the student democracy movement, eyewitness accounts, interviews and analyses, a teacher's guide, and the full program online.

■ PBS NEWSHOUR

www.pbs.org/newshour/

Conducting a search with terms like "migrant workers in China" or "contemporary China" or even "China" pulls terrific articles and interviews from NewsHour.

■ Student Voice – Returning to China

www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/speakout/world/jan-june08/china_2-19.html

Seventeen year old Tian Yang writes about modern day China. She includes her observations about population pressures, environmental concerns and the wide gap between economic classes.