

## Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

### STORY

#### **China Cracks Down on Violent Protests in Tibet**, 03/24/08

[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/world/jan-june08/tibet\\_3-24.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/world/jan-june08/tibet_3-24.html)

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

[Student Worksheet](#) (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

### PROCEDURE

#### **1. WARM UP**

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

#### **2. MAIN ACTIVITY**

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

#### **3. DISCUSSION**

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.

### INITIATING QUESTIONS

- 1. Where is Tibet? Can you find it on a map? What countries does it border?**
- 2. Who is the Dalai Lama? What is his job?**
- 3. When in history have parts of a country tried to separate and form a new country?**
- 4. What are the conditions for a successful separation?**

### READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – [Student Worksheet](#)

- 1. What is happening in Tibet right now?**

#### ANSWER

Chinese paramilitary police have clamped down on anti-Chinese protesters in Tibet, the Himalayan region with a history of struggling against Chinese rule.

- 2. Where did these events begin? Why did they start?**

#### ANSWER

Protests began March 10 in Lhasa, the region's ancient capital, coinciding with the anniversary of a failed Tibetan uprising against Chinese governance in 1959.

Buddhist monks calling for the release of other imprisoned monks were soon joined by Tibetans making political demands, including a call for independence from China.

- 3. How did the Chinese respond to these events?**

#### ANSWER

After the initial 24 hours of protests, during which police seemed unsure how to respond, authorities cracked down on demonstrators with tear gas and guns. Paramilitary police searched Tibetan neighborhoods and seized suspects. One foreigner saw four Tibetan men beaten so savagely that the police sprinkled white powder on the ground to cover the blood, the New York Times reported.

#### 4. How is the Dalai Lama connected to the events in Tibet?

##### ANSWER

China has accused the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader of the Tibetan Buddhists, of masterminding the protests.

The Dalai Lama denied involvement and urged his followers to use only non-violent means of protest or he would resign as their leader.

"Violence is almost suicide. Even if 1,000 Tibetans sacrifice their lives, it will not help," the Dalai Lama told reporters in Dharamshala, India, where he now lives as the head of the government-in-exile. "If things are getting out of control ... resignation is the only option."

#### 5. Explain the ethnic tensions in Tibet.

##### ANSWER

In addition to financial aid, the Chinese government also encouraged a large migrant population of Han Chinese settlers to move to the region. The government hoped that by diluting the Tibetan population, they would prevent future calls for independence.

But many Tibetans resent the newcomers.

Conversely, many of the new Han migrants believe the Tibetans to be ungrateful, and anti-Tibetan sentiment is spreading in China.

#### 6. Why is the timing of the protests significant to China?

##### ANSWER

The protests come at a time of heightened international awareness in the run up to the summer Olympic Games in Beijing, China.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

**1. According to the Chinese government, the Tibet question is an internal matter. Others in the international community disagree. What do you think? Can you come up with a solution to the Tibet question that could please both Tibetans and the Chinese government? What is your plan?**

**2. Once again the Chinese government is in the spotlight in the run up to the summer Olympic games in Beijing, China. Why do you think protests like the one in Tibet are occurring now? Should the Olympic games be used as a political tool? Why or why not?**

**3. Consider recent and not-so-recent revolts: Kosovo, East Timor, India, Kenya (even the American revolution!) how are they similar or different from the situation in Tibet?**

##### Extension Activity

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra ([extra@newshour.org](mailto:extra@newshour.org)). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.