

Parallels between England and the Yangzi Basin of China in the 18th Century: Prelude to Industrialization?

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- I. Introduction
 - II. Resources
 - III. Guiding Questions
 - IV. Learning Objectives
 - V. Grade Level and Time Required
 - VI. Class Activities
-

Introduction

During the 18th century, both England and the Yangzi River Basin in southeast China experienced economic development that led to increased productivity before the age of industrialization. Despite many parallel achievements—widespread use of contracts, proto-industrial machinery such as waterwheels, government encouragement of competition, and so-forth—only England launched into the industrial age. What are the explanatory factors?

Resources

This lesson uses the **China and Europe, 1500-2000 and Beyond: What is “Modern”?** module on the Asia for Educators Web site to compare and contrast the experiences of China and England. Teachers will need internet access for each pair of students. A SmartBoard or LCD projector is useful for whole-group presentation of some of the interactives.

Guiding Questions

- How were economic developments in England and the Yangzi Basin of China similar in the 18th century?
- Why did England industrialize, but the Yangzi Basin did not?

Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe conditions that are necessary for a modern economy
- Compare and contrast economic development in England and Qing China in the Yangzi Basin

- Define industrialization
- Explain the role of resources and geography in industrialization

Grade Level and Time Required

Grades 9-12; 1-2 class periods

Class Activities:

1. Anticipatory Set:

Students start with an anticipation set:

“What are the features of a modern economy? ”

This can be conducted as a “think, pair, share” activity. Students have five minutes to brainstorm on their own, two minutes to discuss with partners next to them, and five minutes to share their thoughts with the whole class.

2. Show the interactive for **China and Europe: New Units of Analysis**.

<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/chinawh/web/s4/index.html>

- “Why is it unfair to compare England and all of China?”

3. Ask students to skim the section **China and Europe: 1500-1800**

<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/chinawh/web/s5/index.html>

a. Provide students with an organizer (see template below) and tell them they are searching for features of a modern economy and the reasons why those features are significant. Students should work with their partner. (20—30 minutes)

b. Review students’ findings and create a “master organizer” on the SmartBoard.

c. Pose the next essential question: “Why did England begin industrialization but the Yangzi Basin did not?”

4. Review the term “industrialization.” Elicit definitions from students and distill them into a class definition on the SmartBoard.

5. View the interactive **Comparing Core Areas**.

<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/chinawh/web/s5/index.html>

Invite a student to come to the Smart Board and navigate through the interactive.

- Geographically, what advantages do both of these regions have in common?
- What industries do England and the Yangzi Basin have in common?
- What products are specialties of the Yangzi Basin?

- What resources does England have that the Yangzi Basin does not?
- How do you think resources played a role in England's industrialization?

6. View map: **New World: Both Periphery and Market**

http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/chinawh/web/s6/s6_2.htm

This map is located in the section "China and Europe, 1780-1937" under "What Happened?" – scroll to the final section under this topic.

- What other resources has Europe gained access to by the 18th century?

7. Concluding discussion:

- Discuss the role of resources and geography in industrialization

Organizer:

Compare and Contrast England and Yangzi Basin in China

Economic Feature	Importance	England?	China?