Remembering June Fourth

Trace the protests, the crackdown, and the struggle over public memory.

TOT.C.10.1 "Describe the causes and events of the Tiananmen Square Massacre, including suppression by the Chinese Communist Party and the continuing denial regarding the massacre."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two causes of the protests, number three events in the order they happened, and circle two actions used to suppress or deny the massacre.

What Happened in Beijing?

1. In April 1989, thousands of people gathered in Beijing's Tiananmen Square to mourn Hu Yaobang, a former Communist Party leader who had supported reform. Their grief became a protest. Students and other citizens criticized official corruption, rising prices, and limits on free speech. They called for greater political openness and accountability. As demonstrations spread to other cities, protesters held marches and, in May, hunger strikes. The square became a place where demands for change were visible to the world.

2. Chinese Communist Party leaders disagreed over how to respond. In May, the government declared martial law, but crowds initially blocked troops from reaching central Beijing. On the night of June 3 and into June 4, 1989, soldiers with armored vehicles moved toward Tiananmen Square. They fired on civilians along nearby streets and cleared the square. Many people were killed or injured, including protesters and bystanders. The exact death toll remains unknown, although estimates commonly range from hundreds to thousands.

3. After the crackdown, authorities arrested protest leaders and others linked to the demonstrations. The Chinese Communist Party restricted reporting, censored images and discussion of the killings, and defended the military action as necessary to restore order. To this day, the government does not publicly acknowledge the events as a massacre and blocks many public efforts to remember the victims. Families seeking answers and people sharing accounts of June 4 can face surveillance or punishment. This continued denial makes firsthand testimony and independent records especially important.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did mourning Hu Yaobang grow into a protest, and what changes did people seek?

2. How did the government's response change from May to June 4?

3. How did authorities suppress people connected to the protests after the crackdown?

4. How does the government's continuing response deny that a massacre occurred?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 95 word museum label for a visitor who knows nothing about June 4, 1989. Link a cause to the protests, explain how the crackdown unfolded, and contrast the government's continuing response with accounts of the killings.

ANSWER KEY

Remembering June Fourth

HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.10.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two causes of the protests, number three events in the order they happened, and circle two actions used to suppress or deny the massacre. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did mourning Hu Yaobang grow into a protest, and what changes did people seek?	**Mourners joined students and other citizens who opposed corruption, rising prices, and limits on speech. They sought greater political openness and accountability.**
2	How did the government's response change from May to June 4?	**The government declared martial law in May. On June 3 and 4, troops moved toward the square, fired on civilians in nearby streets, and cleared the square.**
3	How did authorities suppress people connected to the protests after the crackdown?	**Authorities arrested protest leaders and others linked to the demonstrations. People sharing accounts of June 4 can also face surveillance or punishment.**
4	How does the government's continuing response deny that a massacre occurred?	**The government defends the military action as necessary, does not publicly acknowledge it as a massacre, and censors discussion and remembrance of the victims.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1989, mourning for reform-minded leader Hu Yaobang helped turn anger about corruption, rising prices, and limits on speech into public protests. Students and other citizens gathered in Tiananmen Square, and some began hunger strikes. After declaring martial law, the government sent soldiers toward central Beijing on June 3 and 4. Soldiers fired on civilians in nearby streets, killing many people. Authorities later arrested participants and censored discussion. Although officials reject calling the violence a massacre, accounts of the killings preserve what happened.

Accept different causes and examples of suppression if they are supported by the passage. Responses should distinguish the killings from the government's continuing refusal to acknowledge them as a massacre.