Changing Choices

Economic openings and political limits in Deng-era China

TOT.C.9.3.F "Deng Xiaoping's political and economic reforms."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show new economic choices, and circle two details that show political reforms or their limits so you can compare what changed and what stayed controlled.

Reform Without Open Competition

1 Imagine a family in rural China in 1978. For years, many farmers had worked on collective farms, where teams shared production targets and rewards. After Deng Xiaoping became China's leading figure, officials expanded the household responsibility system. Families contracted to farm plots of collectively owned land, delivered required amounts to the state, and could sell extra crops. Because extra harvests could bring extra income, many farmers had a stronger reason to increase production. Farm output rose during the early reform years. Land did not become private property, but daily decisions about growing and selling crops shifted toward households.

2 In cities, Deng's government allowed more businesses to respond to prices and demand while state-owned factories remained important. Starting in 1980, China created special economic zones, including Shenzhen, where officials offered favorable conditions to attract foreign investment and export industries. A factory there might make goods for overseas buyers instead of following only a central production plan. Shenzhen grew rapidly from a small border town into a major city. These policies did not end government direction of the economy. Rather, leaders tested market practices while keeping the Communist Party in charge of national policy.

3 Deng also supported changes in how the government operated. Leaders rebuilt legal institutions damaged during the Cultural Revolution and encouraged older officials to retire, seeking more regular rules instead of rule by one powerful person. The 1982 constitution set limits on certain state offices, although Deng himself remained influential without holding China's top formal state post. Political competition did not become open: the Communist Party kept its monopoly on national power. In 1989, troops suppressed protests in Beijing, killing civilians around Tiananmen Square. Economic choices widened for many people, but the government sharply restricted challenges to party rule.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the household responsibility system change farmers' choices without making land private?

2. How did the special economic zone in Shenzhen change production, and what control did the government keep?

3. What two changes to government did Deng support, and what problem were they meant to address?

4. What two details show that political reform did not bring open competition for national power?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence museum label for an exhibit titled “Changing Choices.” Make a claim about how Deng's reforms changed economic choices differently from political choices, use one rural and one urban detail from the passage, and explain a limit on political change.

ANSWER KEY

Changing Choices

HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.9.3.F

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show new economic choices, and circle two details that show political reforms or their limits so you can compare what changed and what stayed controlled. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the household responsibility system change farmers' choices without making land private?	**Families could decide how to farm their contracted plots and sell extra crops after meeting state requirements, but the land remained collectively owned.**
2	How did the special economic zone in Shenzhen change production, and what control did the government keep?	**It attracted foreign investment and let factories produce for overseas buyers. The government still directed national policy.**
3	What two changes to government did Deng support, and what problem were they meant to address?	**Leaders rebuilt legal institutions and encouraged older officials to retire. They sought more regular rules instead of rule by one powerful person.**
4	What two details show that political reform did not bring open competition for national power?	**The Communist Party kept its monopoly on national power, and troops suppressed protests in Beijing in 1989.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Under Deng Xiaoping, some Chinese families gained new ways to earn a living, but they did not gain the same freedom to challenge national leaders. Farm households could sell extra crops after meeting state requirements, giving them a reason to grow more. In Shenzhen, factories could produce goods for foreign buyers as the government welcomed investment. These economic openings still operated under a Communist Party that held national power. The suppression of protests in Beijing in 1989 shows how firmly leaders defended that political boundary.

Accept other passage-supported examples of economic change or political limits. The museum label should make a comparison, not merely list reforms.