Opening New Doors

Weighing the gains and limits of Nixon's diplomacy

USH.C.6.3.I "Analyze the political and economic impact of President Nixon's foreign policies including détente and the opening of China."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline political effects of Nixon's policies and circle economic effects. Write 1 and 2 beside two details that limit a claim of success.

Two Rivals, New Talks

1 In February 1972, President Richard Nixon stepped off a plane in Beijing and met with Chinese leaders. The United States had treated the communist People's Republic of China as an adversary since 1949. China and the Soviet Union were also bitter rivals, despite both being communist states. Nixon hoped that meeting China's leaders would give the United States more room to bargain with the Soviets. This approach joined two policies: an opening to China and détente, or an easing of tensions, with the Soviet Union. Neither policy meant that the United States had stopped competing with communist powers.

2 Nixon's China visit led to a joint statement called the Shanghai Communiqué. Both governments agreed to keep talking, but they did not settle the dispute over Taiwan. Washington did not formally recognize Beijing until 1979. The opening gave Nixon a new diplomatic channel and signaled to Moscow that Washington had other options. The United States loosened trade restrictions, and trade with China began to grow from a very low level. Yet major business opportunities remained limited because the countries lacked full diplomatic relations and China's economy was largely closed to foreign commerce.

3 Détente brought agreements with the Soviet Union. In 1972, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks agreements, known as SALT I, limited certain missile launchers and restricted antiballistic missile systems. They slowed parts of the arms competition but left many weapons untouched. The United States also sold large amounts of grain to the Soviet Union in 1972. These sales benefited American exporters and farmers but added to pressure on U.S. food prices. Cooperation did not erase conflict: the two powers still backed opposing sides in struggles abroad. Nixon's policies produced bargaining channels and economic gains while leaving security disputes and costs for consumers.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could opening talks with China strengthen Nixon's position in talks with the Soviet Union?

2. How did the unresolved Taiwan dispute limit the political impact of the opening to China?

3. What did SALT I change about the arms competition, and what did it leave unchanged?

4. Who benefited from the 1972 grain sales to the Soviet Union, and who faced a possible cost?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are advising Congress in 1973. In five sentences, recommend whether to continue Nixon's approach to China and the Soviet Union, using evidence about both relationships, a political gain, an economic effect, and a limitation.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.6.3.I

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline political effects of Nixon's policies and circle economic effects. Write 1 and 2 beside two details that limit a claim of success. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could opening talks with China strengthen Nixon's position in talks with the Soviet Union?	**Because China and the Soviet Union were rivals, talks with China gave Washington another diplomatic option and signaled that option to Moscow.**
2	How did the unresolved Taiwan dispute limit the political impact of the opening to China?	**The two governments kept talking, but the Taiwan dispute remained unsettled, and Washington did not formally recognize Beijing until 1979.**
3	What did SALT I change about the arms competition, and what did it leave unchanged?	**It limited certain missile launchers and restricted antiballistic missile systems, but many weapons remained untouched.**
4	Who benefited from the 1972 grain sales to the Soviet Union, and who faced a possible cost?	**American exporters and farmers benefited, while U.S. consumers faced added pressure on food prices.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would continue both policies in 1973, but I would watch their costs instead of calling either a final peace. Opening talks with China gives Washington another diplomatic option when dealing with Moscow, even though Taiwan remains disputed. SALT I places limits on some missile launchers, but it does not end the arms competition. Grain sales to the Soviets help American farmers while adding to pressure on food prices for families. I would keep negotiating and trading while checking whether each new agreement protects U.S. security and consumers.

Accept either recommendation if the five sentences use accurate evidence about both relationships and weigh a political gain, an economic effect, and a limitation. Students may cite limited trade growth with China instead of grain sales as the economic effect.