Opening Cold War Doors

Trace the political and economic effects of Nixon's foreign policies.

USH.C.7.3.E "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 and circle economic effects in the passage. Write 1 beside effects of the China opening and 2 beside effects of détente to connect each policy to its impacts.

Two Rivals, New Openings

1 In February 1972, President Richard Nixon stepped off a plane in Beijing, the capital of a country the United States had not officially recognized. For more than two decades, Washington had treated the government on Taiwan as China's government. Nixon's meetings with Chinese leaders did not erase that dispute or create formal diplomatic ties. They did reopen talks after years of isolation. Because China and the Soviet Union were rivals, contact with Beijing gave Nixon another way to bargain with Moscow. The opening changed Cold War politics: the United States could deal with two communist powers separately instead of treating them as a single bloc.

2 The China opening also had an economic side, but its immediate gains were limited. Before Nixon's trip, the United States began easing restrictions on travel and trade with China. After the trip, American firms could seek new customers, while Chinese buyers could seek American goods. Years of restrictions and unresolved political tensions meant trade did not suddenly become enormous. The United States did not establish formal diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China until 1979. Nixon's move therefore mattered more at first as a diplomatic shift and a chance for future commerce than as an instant economic boom.

3 Nixon also pursued *détente*, a reduction of tensions with the Soviet Union. In 1972, the two countries signed SALT I agreements that limited certain nuclear weapons systems but did not end the arms race. Negotiating these limits aimed to reduce the risk of conflict and showed that rival governments could cooperate. Economic ties grew too: the United States sold large amounts of grain to the Soviets in 1972, bringing sales to American exporters and farmers. Yet the scale of the sales added to pressure on grain prices at home. Détente thus offered a political gain and new markets, while raising questions about costs for American consumers.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the opening of China change the United States' political position toward the Soviet Union?

2. Why was the China opening a chance for future commerce rather than an immediate economic boom?

3. What political benefit did the SALT I agreements offer, and what important limit remained?

4. Who benefited economically from the 1972 grain sales to the Soviet Union, and what cost could American consumers face?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise Nixon in 1973. In four or five sentences, recommend whether to continue both the China opening and détente if grain prices rise. Use evidence about each policy, explain one political benefit and one economic trade-off, and propose one practical response to the price rise.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.7.3.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline political effects and circle economic effects in the passage. Write 1 beside effects of the China opening and 2 beside effects of détente to connect each policy to its impacts. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the opening of China change the United States' political position toward the Soviet Union?	**Contact with China gave Nixon another way to bargain with the Soviet Union because the two communist countries were rivals.**
2	Why was the China opening a chance for future commerce rather than an immediate economic boom?	**Eased restrictions let American firms seek Chinese customers, but years of restrictions and unresolved political tensions kept trade from expanding suddenly.**
3	What political benefit did the SALT I agreements offer, and what important limit remained?	**The agreements showed that the rivals could cooperate on limits intended to reduce the risk of conflict, but they did not end the arms race.**
4	Who benefited economically from the 1972 grain sales to the Soviet Union, and what cost could American consumers face?	**American exporters and farmers gained sales, while the sales added to pressure on grain prices for American consumers.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would continue both policies, but I would watch grain sales closely. Talks with China give the United States another way to bargain with the Soviet Union. Détente has produced nuclear arms limits, though it has not ended the arms race. Grain sales help American farmers and exporters, but they can add to pressure on prices paid by consumers. I would review the size of future grain deals before approving them.

Accept other defensible recommendations in Part 3 if they use accurate evidence about both policies, address a political benefit and an economic trade-off, and propose a practical response to rising grain prices.