
Che Guevara: Why so Popular?

Segment Length: 5:49 minutes

Lesson Description:

What do you know about Che Guevara? Do you own a Che t-shirt? Do you cringe when you see someone wearing one? This segment looks at Che, his deeds, and his reputation.

Vocabulary:

Decadent – (adj.) reflecting a state of moral or cultural decline; self-indulgent.

Turgent – (adj.) turgid; pompous or overblown; excessively ornate or complex in style or language.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- discuss some of Che Guevara's actions as a leader of the Cuban revolution.
- compare Che Guevara's values and beliefs with their own values and beliefs.
- hypothesize reasons for wearing Che Guevara t-shirts.
- Defend or criticize the popularity of products with Che Guevara's image.

Preview Activity and Questions:

Have students answer this question in their notebooks:

What do you know about Che Guevara?

OR

What is a good role model? What traits does a good role model have? Then pose this question: If there were a person who opposed freedom of the press and freedom of speech, supported dictatorship, and had his enemies executed, would you consider him a role model? Would you wear a t-shirt with his image on it?

OR

Distribute copies of the K-W-L worksheet to the class. Have students fill in the K and W sections. After showing the video, have students complete the L section and answer the questions at the bottom of the worksheet.

Viewing Guide:

It is recommended that teachers show the video segment twice: once to allow students to view the video and focus on the issues presented, and once to allow them time to complete the viewing guide. After they complete the viewing guide, allow students a few minutes to work in pairs sharing and verifying answers.

Answers to Viewing Guide:

1. newspapers
2. labor unions
3. music
4. read
5. Internet
6. communism

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Viewing Guide

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____

Teacher _____

Directions: As you watch the video, fill in the blanks with the correct words.

1. "We must eliminate all _____. We cannot make a revolution with a free press."
2. The first thing to say is he didn't fight for labor rights. The Cuban government outlawed independent _____ when they came to power in 1959.
3. He was a handsome guy, but he also banned _____ that was considered capitalist and decadent, like The Beatles in Cuba in the early 1960s.
4. Second of all, you know, what is the point of full literacy if you're not allowed to _____ what you want?
5. The reason there are cute old cars there is because the country is bankrupt. Internet access -- is that -- is that quaint, that there's no _____?
6. And the idea of _____ is a very simple one -- we should all share everything, right?

Now, take a few moments to reflect on the video and answer the questions below:

What do you think accounts for the popularity of Che Guevara? _____

What was the most interesting or most important information you learned from watching the video? _____

Discussion and Analysis:

1. Is this debate over Che Guevara simply a matter of taste or opinion? Why / Why not?
2. Do you think the people who wear Che shirts know much about him? If not, why wear the shirts?
3. What do you think about a teacher—such as the teacher in the video—not knowing very much about Che Guevara, yet wearing a Che shirt?
4. Should Che shirts be banned? Why / Why not?
5. If the press criticizes the government, should it be stopped? Why / Why not?
6. Should there be any limits on how much people can criticize the government?
7. Revolutionaries often use their speech and the press to build support against the current government. Once in power, they limit speech and ban the independent press. Why?
8. Michael Moynihan said that Che banned music that was considered capitalist and decadent, such as The Beatles. What is capitalism? What kind of music is capitalist?
9. Should government ban or regulate music? Why / Why not?
10. Michael Moynihan questioned the validity of the literacy rate in Cuba, which is supposedly 99 percent. He doesn't think the Cuban government is a trustworthy source. Why would a government overstate the literacy rate of its people?
11. Do you think overstating the literacy rate is more likely in a free society with a free press or in a dictatorship that does not have a free press? Do you think Cuba measures literacy the same way we do?
12. Why can't people in Cuba read *1984*? Why can't they read what they want?
13. Do you think there is a connection between banning books and banning a free press? What do you think is the motive?
14. What about the Internet? Why is there no internet in Cuba?
15. According to the video, the travel guide Lonely Planet says that "Cuba retains a refreshing preserved quality. It's a space that serves as a beacon for the future. Universal education, health care and housing are rights people -- the world over want." Do you agree? How does that account for the _____ of people who have risked their lives to escape from Cuba?

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

1. Aren't we Americans supposed to favor a free press?
2. I know he's a revolutionary who fought for labor rights and that's why I have him on right now. He's a good role model for all of us in terms of like standing for the people.
3. [H]e didn't fight for labor rights. The Cuban government outlawed independent labor unions when they came to power in 1959.
4. [H]e also banned music that was considered capitalist and decadent, like The Beatles in Cuba in the early 1960s.

5. The first thing is...the literacy rate, which was supposedly 99 percent. Those numbers we get from the Cuban government, by the way. And they're not a very trustworthy source.
6. If you want to go to a library in Central Havana and get a copy of "1984," good luck.
7. The reason there are cute old cars there is because the country is bankrupt.
8. Is that quaint, that there's no Internet?
9. And the idea of communism is a very simple one. We should all share everything, right?
10. In terms of the positive view of capitalism, it's not just the young people who don't get it. Age 30 to 49, only 50 percent have a positive view; 50 to 64, 53 percent, barely half.

Quotes for Discussion: Che Guevara Quotes

We must eliminate all newspapers. We cannot make a revolution with a free press.

Cruel leaders are replaced only to have new leaders turn cruel.

A revolutionary must become a cold killing machine motivated by pure hate.

If any person has a good word for the previous government that is good enough for me to have him shot.

It's a sad thing not to have friends, but it is even sadder not to have enemies.

We reject any peaceful approach. Violence is inevitable. To establish socialism, rivers of blood must flow.

The black is indolent and a dreamer; spending his meager wage on frivolity or drink; the European has a tradition of work and saving, which has pursued him as far as this corner of America and drives him to advance himself, even independently of his own individual aspirations.

Youth should learn to think and act as a mass. It is criminal to think as individuals.

My ideological training means that I am one of those people who believe that the solution to the world's problems is to be found behind the Iron Curtain.

If the nuclear missiles had remained, we would have used them against the very heart of America, including New York City.... We will march the path of victory even if it costs millions of atomic victims.

We believe that the state is capable of understanding the needs of the nation; as such, then, the state must participate in the administration and direction of the university.

In the future individualism ought to be the efficient utilization of the whole individual for the absolute benefit of a collectivity.

Much more valuable than rural recruits for our guerrilla force were American media recruits to export our propaganda.

Quotes for Discussion: Quotes about Che Guevara

Che was an inspiration for every human being who loves freedom. — Nelson Mandela

What has made Guevara a cultural icon is not his example for poor countries, but his capacity to provoke empathy among the spoiled youth of the affluent West. — Mark Falcoff

Long Live Che Guevara! — Jesse Jackson

He was a man full of hatred ... Che Guevara executed dozens and dozens of people who never once stood trial and were never declared guilty ... In his own words, he said the following: "At the smallest of doubt we must execute." — Armando Valladares

By the end of the 1950s, American cars were so reliable that their reliability went without saying even in car ads. Thousands of them bear testimony to this today, still running on the roads of Cuba though fueled with nationalized Venezuelan gasoline and maintained with spit and haywire. — P. J. O'Rourke

Activities:

1. Have students complete the K-W-L worksheet in class or for homework.
2. Survey students and teachers in your school about their familiarity with Che Guevara. (See link in Resources section for a guide to conducting surveys. Also, see links to surveys about Che in the Websites section of Resources.)
3. Develop some questions you would ask people about their familiarity with Che Guevara. Then, walk through the cafeteria during lunch and interview any students or teachers wearing Che shirts. This can also be done at a local shopping center, but be sure to work in pairs.
4. Produce a video in which you survey people about their familiarity with Che Guevara. You might want to produce this video as a news report. (See links in the Resources section for help in producing persuasive videos.)
5. John Lennon, of the Beatles, wrote a song called "Imagine" and considered himself an advocate for peace. Research John Lennon and Che Guevara and compare the two in an essay or slideshow. (See links in the Resources section for help in preparing a slideshow.)
6. According to Humberto Fontova, author of *Exposing the Real Che Guevara*, entertainers Angelina Jolie, Johnny Depp, and Carlos Santana are Che fans. He asks, are they ignorant or anti-American? Research one or more of these entertainers and report on their views about Che Guevara.

7. Conduct a “No More Che Day” at your school. Students can research more about Che Guevara and prepare handouts for other students and teachers. Students can also prepare a slideshow and show it to the class or offer to show it to other classes. (See links in the Resources section for help in preparing a slideshow. Also, see link for No Che Days in the Websites section of Resources.)
8. Research the life of Che Guevara and write an obituary of him. (See links in the Resources section for help in writing an obituary.)
9. Research the life of Che Guevara and write a biography of him. (See links in the Resources section for help in writing a biography.)
10. Print the “Can You Tell Who Said What” questionnaire and survey teachers, shoppers in a local mall, or other adults. Be sure to cover up the answers at the bottom of the questionnaire.

<http://www.yaf.org/uploadedFiles/Events/Current/Che%20Poster.pdf>

11. Research the Shining Path in Peru and its activities. Report your findings in a report, slideshow, or on a poster board. (See links in the Resources section for help in preparing a slideshow.)
12. Write a persuasive essay about Che Guevara or people who wear Che t-shirts. Be sure to address the opposing side of the argument in your essay. (See links in the Resources section for help in writing persuasive essays.)
13. Read one of the articles in the Resources section and either write a summary of it or take Cornell Notes as you read the article. (See links in the Resources section for help in taking Cornell notes.)
14. Read one of the books in the Resources section and write a book report. (See link in the Resources section for help in writing a book report.)
15. Write a tweet, poem, or song about Che or people who wear Che t-shirts.
16. There is a picture on the Internet of Che Guevara and John Lennon of the Beatles playing guitar together. If your music were banned by a government, would you play guitar with the person who did that? Research the picture and the explanations for it.

Resources: Guides

A good explanation of K-W-L, with a sample chart, and a chart for downloading:

<http://www.readingquest.org/strat/kwl.html>

How to write a biography:

<http://www.infoplease.com/homework/wsbiography.html>
<http://homeworktips.about.com/od/biography/a/bio.htm>

How to write a book report:

<http://www.infoplease.com/homework/wsbookreporths.html>

How to write a persuasive essay:

https://www.scribendi.com/advice/how_to_write_a_persuasive_essay.en.html
<http://www.infoplease.com/homework/writingskills7.html>

How to conduct a survey:

http://www.ehow.com/how_16596_write-survey-questionnaire.html
<http://www.mathsisfun.com/data/survey-conducting.html>

For a clear, simple explanation of the Cornell note-taking system:

<http://coe.jmu.edu/learningtoolbox/cornellnotes.html>
<http://www.bucks.edu/~specpop/Cornl-ex.htm>

Preparing effective slideshow presentations:

A fun slideshow with audio:

<https://www.wiredsafety.org/wiredlearning/AvoidingPPP/index.htm#slide=1>

Also helpful:

http://www.ehow.com/how_5032561_prepare-effective-powerpoint-presentation.html
<http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/showcase/details.aspx?uuid=22f09a63-cecb-4260-a44f-8223d07dd031>

How to write an obituary:

<http://howtowrite.weebly.com/how-to-write-an-obituary.html>
<http://www.obitsarchive.com/obituary-resource/obituary-template>

Articles

“13 reasons you should throw away your Che Guevara T-shirt”

<https://www.ihatethemedia.com/13-reasons-you-should-throw-away-your-che-guevara-t-shirt>

“Che Guevara: The Man, the Myth, the Atrocities” by Ashley Pratte

<http://townhall.com/columnists/ashleypratte/2014/10/09/che-guevara-the-man-the-myth-the-atrocities-n1902951/page/full>

“Cuba and Iran, Melancholy Twins” by Robin Wright

<http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/cuba-and-iran-melancholy-twins>

“Cuba’s Democrats Need U.S. Support” by Mary Anastasia O’Grady

<http://cubanspring.blogspot.com/2016/01/mary-anastasia-ogrady-cubas-democrats.html>
<http://www.wsj.com/articles/cubas-democrats-need-u-s-support-1453670191>

“Cuban artists still condemned to silence” by Ryan McChrystal

<https://www.indexonensorship.org/2016/01/cuban-artists-still-condemned-to-silence/>

“Shopping in Cuba” by Barbara Demick

<http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/shopping-in-cuba>

“The Truth About Che Guevara” by Michael J. Totten

<http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/blog/michael-j-totten/truth-about-che-guevara>

Books

The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression by Jean-Louis Panné, et al.

Che: The Diaries of Ernesto Che Guevara by Ernesto Che Guevara

Che: A Memoir by Fidel Castro

Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life by Jon Lee Anderson

The Che Guevara Myth and the Future of Liberty by Alvaro Vargas Llosa

Exposing the Real Che Guevara: And the Useful Idiots Who Idolize Him by Humberto Fontova

Guerrilla Warfare by Ernesto Che Guevara

Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War: Authorized Edition by Ernesto Che Guevara

Websites

“Can You Tell Who Said What” questionnaire

<http://www.yaf.org/uploadedFiles/Events/Current/Che%20Poster.pdf>

The Cuban Spring

<http://cubanspring.blogspot.com/>

English Lesson Plan on Che Guevara - Famous People Lessons.com. This document contains multiple worksheets for teachers.

http://famouspeoplelessons.com/c/che_guevara.html

Museum on Communism

<http://www.museumoncommunism.org/>

No More Che Day

<http://www.yaf.org/eventdetails.aspx?id=7123>

Surveys about Che

<http://allpoetry.com/column/7525379-Che-Guevara---Survey--by-Thimoty>
www.surveymonkey.com/r/?sm=yTpKCB51z1uObaEM6%2BO44A%3D%3D

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Per _____

Teacher _____

Che Guevara: Why so Popular? K-W-L Chart

Directions: Complete the **K** and **W** sections prior to watching the video. After you have seen the video, complete the **L** section and answer the two questions below the K-W-L chart.

K	W	L
What I think I know about Che Guevara:	What I want to know about Che Guevara:	What I've learned about Che Guevara:

If you had the chance, what one question would you ask Che?

Based on what you knew, and what you have learned, what would you tell others about Che?

CAN YOU TELL
WHO
SAID
WHAT?



CHE GUEVERA

or



ADOLF HITLER

1. "Youth must refrain from ungrateful questioning of governmental mandates. Instead, they must dedicate themselves to study, work and military service."

CHE **HITLER**

2. "These hyenas (Americans) are fit only for extermination."

CHE **HITLER**

3. "Hatred is the central element of our struggle! Hatred so violent that it propels a human being beyond his natural limitations, making him a violent and cold-blooded killing machine."

CHE **HITLER**

4. "We reject any peaceful approach. Violence is inevitable. To establish Socialism, rivers of blood must flow."

CHE **HITLER**

5. "I'd like to confess, Papa, at that moment I discovered that I really like killing."

CHE **HITLER**

6. "Youth should learn to think and act as a mass. It is criminal to think as individuals!"

CHE **HITLER**

7. "The victory of Socialism is well worth millions of atomic victims!"

CHE **HITLER**

8. "If the (nuclear) missiles had remained, we would have fired them against the very heart of the U.S., including New York City."

CHE **HITLER**

9. "Judicial evidence is an archaic bourgeois detail. When in doubt, execute."

CHE **HITLER**

10. "We must do away with all newspapers. A revolution cannot be accomplished with freedom of the press."

CHE **HITLER**

11. "Cuban workers have to start getting used to life under socialism. By no means can they go on strike."

CHE **HITLER**

*Source: Humberto Fontova, *Exposing the Real Che Guevara and the Useful Idiots Who Idolize Him*

Answer Key: 1. Che, 2. Che, 3. Che, 4. Che, 1. Che
Che, 5. Che, 6. Che, 7. Che, 8. Che, 9. Che, 10.