

Tiananmen Square Massacre: The Parade of Death

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Junior Division Group Website

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In June of 1989, a series of student-led protests began in Tiananmen Square Beijing, China. The protests turned violent as the CPC (Communist Party of China) succeeded in suppressing pro-democracy demonstrations amongst China's youth by bringing in the People's Liberation Army. The debate for political reforms and a better overall economy in China was met with new stricter laws. The failed diplomacy sent China into a new era of true censorship. This year's theme for History Day is "Debate and Diplomacy." With the theme, we wanted to choose something with protests (as the debate). We also wanted a diplomatic response from the government. Considering all of our wants, we came across the Tiananmen Square Massacre. The Tiananmen Square Massacre was a series of protests, asking for political and economic reforms (among other things). The Chinese government got scared of what the people were asking for. As a result, they shot the protesters, not giving them at all what they wanted. In all, around 2,000 people died, and laws were made more strict, resulting in a lack of diplomacy.

With a topic having taken place in another country, we knew it would be hard to research. As we started to research, there were a fair amount of sites, but they were almost all repeating information. Although there is less information, we knew that the information was factual because it was backed up. Later, we went to the Minneapolis Public Library. There, we found some very good primary sources such as *Tiananmen Moon* which explained the protesters' experience and perspective. The information we gathered supported our thesis regarding the lack of diplomacy. As it was a struggle to find an interview, we finally stumbled upon Richie Li, a former Chinese citizen at the time. Because of the censorship, he had not heard of the massacre until he moved to the U.S.

This year we chose to do a website because we didn't find good enough film to use in a documentary. We also had knowledge from the previous year of the History Day website creator. Once we made the website, we sprayed our information into it, not focusing on the color theme or images yet. This made the process more efficient. We learned from creating this project that it may not be good at first, but it will eventually come around if you put the time and effort into it.

The Tiananmen Square Massacre had a very big impact on China, and the world. It showed how the Chinese government didn't want to recognize their people. Deng Xiaoping proved this by saying, "If I have to shoot 200,000 protesters to save China from another 100 years of disorder, so be it." In conclusion, the Tiananmen Square massacre fits into this year's theme "Debate and Diplomacy," because the debate between the protesters and the government caused a massacre resulting in a lack of diplomacy from the government. Overall, the failed diplomacy sent China into a new era of true censorship.