

### *Tiananmen Square and The Tank Man*

#### **Searching the Internet for the Truth: June 4, 1989**

##### Note to Students:

Imagine that two high school students are conducting research on the same event in history: the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989. One student is researching the subject from her school in the United States, while the other is researching the *same* event from his school in the People's Republic of China. You will simulate both students' initial research by using two different search engines operated by the same company.

Option: Take a tour of historic Tiananmen Square at <http://www.tsquare.tv/tour> to learn about its long presence in Chinese history.

1. **American student's search:** Go to the search engine Google's Web site [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and type in "Tiananmen Square."
  1. How many links can be accessed by this one search?
  2. Scan through the first five sites. What seems to be the content of these links?
  3. What words are repeated?
  
2. **Chinese student's research:** Go to Google-China's Web site [www.google.cn](http://www.google.cn). (Don't worry if the Chinese characters are replaced by squares.) In the search box, type "Tiananmen Square."
  1. How many links can be accessed by this one search?
  2. Again, scan through the first five sites. What seems to be the content of these sites?
  3. What sites are linked to this Google-China search term?

With your group, discuss the following questions and write down your ideas.

- How does the content of these search pages differ from each other?
- Why do you think the content of Google.com's search page differs from Google.cn's search page?

*Conduct a Google search of 4 of the following 9 terms using both the U.S. and the Chinese Google site.*

Tibet

Democracy China

Freedom China

Taiwan China

Dissident China

Justice China

Equality

Revolution

Counterrevolution China

1. What were your findings when searching these topics on both versions of Google?

2. Why do you feel there are differences between the two searches?

## **1989: Massacre in Tiananmen Square, BBC**

**VIDEO :** [Kate Adie reports from the scene of the massacre](#)

Several hundred civilians have been shot dead by the Chinese army during a bloody military operation to crush a democratic protest in Peking's (Beijing) Tiananmen Square.

Tanks rumbled through the capital's streets late on 3 June as the army moved into the square from several directions, randomly firing on unarmed protesters.

The injured were rushed to hospital on bicycle rickshaws by frantic residents shocked by the army's sudden and extreme response to the peaceful mass protest.

Demonstrators, mainly students, had occupied the square for seven weeks, refusing to move until their demands for democratic reform were met.

The protests began with a march by students in memory of former party leader Hu Yaobang, who had died a week before.

But as the days passed, millions of people from all walks of life joined in, angered by widespread corruption and calling for democracy.

Tonight's military offensive came after several failed attempts to persuade the protesters to leave.

Throughout the day the government warned it would do whatever it saw necessary to clamp down on what it described as "social chaos".

But even though violence was expected, the ferocity of the attack took many by surprise, bringing condemnation from around the world.

US President George Bush said he deeply deplored the use of force, and UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said she was "shocked and appalled by the shootings".

Amid the panic and confusion students could be heard shouting "fascists stop killing," and "down with the government".

At a nearby children's hospital operating theatres were filled with casualties with gunshot wounds, many of them local residents who were not taking part in the protests.

Early this morning at least 30 more were killed in two volleys of gunfire, which came without warning. Terrified crowds fled, leaving bodies in the road.

Meanwhile reports have emerged of troops searching the main Peking university campus for ringleaders, beating and killing those they suspect of co-ordinating the protests.

### **In Context**

The demonstrations in Tiananmen Square have been described as the greatest challenge to the communist state in China since the 1949 revolution.

They were called to coincide with a visit to the capital by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, by students seeking democratic reform.

Troops were used to clear the square despite repeated assurances from Chinese politicians that there would be no violence.

It has been suggested that the Communist leader Deng Xiaoping personally ordered their deployment as a way of shoring up his leadership.

Hundreds, and possibly thousands, of people were killed in the massacre, although it is unlikely a precise number will ever be known. (Peking has since become more widely known as Beijing.)

## *Tiananmen Square Essential Questions*

1. Why were students protesting at Tiananmen Square?
2. Why did the government clash with student protesters?
3. What was the result of this clash? Why are accurate numbers of casualties difficult to determine?
4. Why do you think Google-China's search engine and the Chinese government block access to sites like this BBC story?
5. To what extent do you think that the BBC article reflects a bias?



## *CLOSING QUESTIONS*

1. Why do you think the Chinese government restricted and continues to restrict access to some sites pertaining to "equality," "democracy" or "dissidents"?
2. What other terms do you think the Chinese government would censor? Why?
3. Are there any search terms that the U.S. government might monitor or censor? Identify these terms and explain.
4. Is a censored Google in China better than no Google? Explain.