

Name _____ Date _____

CHINA

The People's Republic of China in Asia is one of the largest countries in the world. The only countries bigger than China are Russia, Canada, and the USA. China is about 3.7 million square miles in area, only slightly smaller than the United States. Fourteen countries and the Pacific Ocean border China: Russia, India, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, Kazakhstan, North Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Vietnam all surround China. China's landscape is very diverse. The magnificent Himalayan Mountains on the Tibetan plateau are located in the western part of China. In the southwest there are many deep gorges, waterfalls, underground caverns and limestone rock formations. In the center of China is the Taklamakan Desert, the second largest desert in the world. The Turpan Depression is also in the center of China. The Turpan Depression is the lowest point in China, and the second lowest land depression in the world. Because China is so large, and has so many different regions, many different animals are able to live there. Unfortunately many of these animals are either rare or endangered because their homes have been destroyed. Many large animals make their homes in China, including snow leopards, elephants, wild yaks, reindeer, moose... and of course, the giant panda!

China has 1.3 billion people, with 13.8 million people living in the capital city of Beijing. The two major Chinese languages are *Putonghua* (Mandarin) and *Yue* (Cantonese). Putonghua is the language spoken in Beijing, and is the official language of mainland China and Taiwan. Yue is mainly spoken in Hong Kong, in the Guangdong and Guangxi provinces, and in most overseas Chinese communities in North America, Europe and Australia. Both languages are *tonal*. This means that there are different tones for the same sound of word, and each tone has a different meaning. Mandarin only has four tones, but Cantonese has more than six. Even though people that only speak Mandarin cannot understand Cantonese, and people that only speak Cantonese cannot understand Mandarin, they can still communicate through writing. Most of the characters used in both languages are the same.

The government of China is different from the governments of most Western countries: China is a communist country. China is officially atheist, but the Chinese Constitution provides for freedom of religion and recognizes five official religions: Buddhism, Islam, Taoism, Catholicism and Protestantism. The money in China is called the yuan or the Chinese *renminbi*, which means "people's money". One US dollar is equal to just over 8 Chinese renminbis.

China has several public holidays throughout the year. Although they celebrate their own New Year in February, China also celebrates the international New Year on January 1st. On March 8th is International Women's Day. On this day women will get a paid day or half day off, while all men must still go to work! May 1st is International Labor Day. May 4th is Youth Day, in memory of the first mass student movement in 1919. June 1st is Children's Day. Cinemas, museums and entertainment complexes are free to children on this day, and parents give presents to their children. July 1st is celebrated as the birthday of the Chinese Communist Party. August 1st is the anniversary of the founding of the PLA (People's Liberation Army). October 1st is the last public holiday of the year. It is National Day and celebrates the formation of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

China is rich in culture and history. It has huge modern cities and small mountain villages. There are deserts, mountains, wild rivers and grassy plains. China is a beautiful country with a lot to offer.

Name _____ Date _____

Answer the following questions on China

1. Where is China, and what countries surround it?

2. What two interesting natural features are in the middle of China?

3. What are some of the large animals that can be found in China?

4. What is the capital city of China?

5. How many people live in China, and how many people live in the capital city of China?

6. What are the two main Chinese languages?

7. What are the main differences between Mandarin and Cantonese?

8. What are the five recognized religions in China?

9. What is the Chinese currency (money)?

10. What are the nine major public holidays in China?

Name _____ Date _____

Answers to China

1. China is in Asia. Russia, India, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, Kazakhstan, North Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Vietnam all surround China.
2. The Taklamakan Desert and the Turpan Depression are both in the middle of China.
3. Snow leopards, elephants, wild yaks, reindeer, moose and the giant panda are some of the large animals that live in China.
4. Beijing
5. 1.3 billion people live in China, and 13.8 million people live in the capital city of Beijing.
6. Putonghua (Mandarin) and Yue (Cantonese) are the two main languages in China.
7. Mandarin is the official language of mainland China and Taiwan. Cantonese is mainly spoken in the provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi, Hong Kong and in most overseas Chinese communities in North America, Europe and Australia. Both languages are *tonal*. Mandarin only has 4 tones, but Cantonese has more than 6
8. Buddhism, Islam, Taoism, Catholicism and Protestantism
9. Chinese renminbi or yuan
10. January 1st – International New Year, February – Chinese New Year, March 8th – International Women’s Day, May 1st – International Labor Day, May 4th – Youth Day, June 1st – Children’s Day, July 1st – birthday of the Chinese Communist Party, August 1st – founding of the PLA and October 1st – National Day