

THE H.M.S INITIATIVE

DOCUMENT NUMBER 6.0.2

TITLE: MAY 4TH MOVEMENT CHEAT SHEET

Points of contention:

(As seen from past year questions)

1. The importance of the May 4th Movement / New Culture Movement / Intellectual revolution to Chinese History?
 2. Did the May 4th Movement change the course of Chinese History?
 3. Was the May 4th Movement more important or the 1911 revolution more important?
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Timeframe, Topic, Terms:

The May 4th Movement was part of an intellectual revolution against Chinese traditionalism and to introduce western thought that culminated in student mass demonstrations on the 4th May 1919.

It's importance can be defined as the extent at which it produced political changes in the form of the politicisation of the masses and the introduction of political thought, especially in comparison to another significant event in Chinese History, the 1911 revolution.

Arguments, interpretations and possible thesis:

<Set 1>

One interpretation is that the May 4th movement was important in Chinese history because it was the first legitimate mass movement, suggesting the entrance of public opinion and involvement into Chinese politics previously governed by monarchs.

In contrast, historian Peter Zarrow suggests that the 1911 revolution was more significant to Chinese history in introducing the idea of revolution.

<Set 1>

<Set 2>

One interpretation from historian Peter Zarrow is that the May 4th movement was most significant for 20th century Chinese history because of politicisation and the emergence of KMT and CCP because of it.

In contrast, some historians argue that the May 4th movement was a limited student demonstration that did not bring changes to the political system, especially compared to the 1911 revolution which overthrew the Qing government

<Set 2>

- A) By contextualising the movement in a period of Chinese history with events that showed the increase of nationalism and the gravitation towards western style modernisation, this essay argues that the May 4th movement was simply part of these trends by examining the politicisation of the masses and the introduction of political thought.
- B) By contextualising the movement as part of a series of events in the early 20th Century where China saw a change in governance, increasing anti-foreign and nationalistic sentiments, the May 4th movement was an important manifestation of these trends that influenced Chinese politics in the long-term, evident from the politicisation of masses and the introduction of new political thought.
- C) Examining the politicisation of the masses and the emergence of new political thought, this essay suggests that the May 4th movement was the most significant /

more significant than the 1911 revolution because of its long-term influence on 20th century Chinese history.

Theme/Criteria/Topic Sentence 1:

The May 4th movement was the most important to Chinese History because it was, arguably, an unprecedented bottom-up intellectual revolution that led to the politicisation of the masses in China.

Theme/Criteria/Topic Sentence 2:

The May 4th movement was the most important to Chinese History because it led to the creation of political ideas that influenced Chinese history in the long term, especially when compared to the limited long-term benefit of the 1911 revolution.

