

## UNIT 4 TOPIC 6 OCCUPATIONS AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES IN CHINA

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### Pre-knowledge

Before class, students should Unit 4 Topic 6 and information on the Internet to gain a basic understanding of various occupations in China and the opportunities available for young people and foreigners.

### Aim and Objectives

Topic 6 aims to equip students with some knowledge of the historical development of some occupations in China and the Chinese concept of a job. It will also equip them with some knowledge of the changes in occupations and work opportunities following rapid social and economic development in China.

### Teaching and Learning Activities

#### Activity 1

Have your students research online how the status of merchants in China has changed over time.

#### Activity 2

Have your students collect information on disappearing jobs in both China and Australia. They then have to analyse the reasons why these jobs are disappearing.

#### Activity 3

Divide your students into groups of four or five. Then have each group discuss the role of technology in the labour market.

#### Activity 4

Have a class discussion on the role China plays in the global labour market. Share ideas on how Australia and China can collaborate with each other and benefit from such collaboration.

#### Activity 5

Divide your class into groups of four. Then have each group discuss and create a set of guidelines for foreigners planning to work in China. Their guidelines may include these aspects: preparation, essential skills, manners to observe, food and lifestyle.

#### Activity 6

Divide your class into groups of four. Then have each group reflect on the employment situation in China and think about how to improve her industrial structure. They then have to write a 600-word research report in English of their reflections and suggestions.

#### Activity 7

Ask your students to do Exercise 6 of the Workbook according to your teaching needs and progress.

### Resources/Materials

Apart from those listed in the activities, you may also consult these resources/materials:

1. Ho, Wing-Chung (2018), *Occupational health and social estrangement in China*. Manchester University Press.
2. Jacques, M. (2009), *When China Rules the World: The Rise of the Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World*. London: Penguins Books.
3. KLoet, J. & Fund, Y. H. (2016), *Youth Cultures in China*. John Wiley & Sons.
4. Ghose, A. K. (2005), "Employment in China: recent trends and future challenges". *Employment Strategy Paper*. 2005/14. Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_elm/documents/publication/wcms\\_114032.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_elm/documents/publication/wcms_114032.pdf)
5. Hay, J. (2008). "Types of Jobs in China: Engineers, State Workers, Pole Men and Grasshopper Salesmen". *Facts and Details* [Online]. Available at: <http://factsanddetails.com/china/cat9/sub60/item366.html>
6. "Employment in China". Statista [Online]. *Statista: The Statistics Portal* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/topics/1317/employment-in-china/>

### Assessment

1. Collect the notes taken by your students during all group and class discussions.
2. Prepare some questions and assess your students when they answer them verbally.
3. Students are required to list out 20 types each of traditional and modern occupations in China.
4. Students are required to prepare some notes for a group or class discussion on whether traditional occupations should be protected.
5. Students are required to prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the labour market in China, examining its past, today and future.
6. Students are required to write a 500-word research report on the impact scientific and technological advancements in China has had on her labour market.

### Workbook Answer Key

1. What were the four divisions of occupations in ancient China? Why were some groups excluded from these categories?

Students should consider these points:

- The four divisions of occupations: 士, 农, 工, 商
- A central part of the feudal social structure, this categorisation was developed by either Confucian or Legalist scholars as early as late Zhou Dynasty.
- From existing evidence, commoner rankings in China were employed for the first time during the Warring States Period. The Eastern-Han historian Ban Gu (32-92) asserted, however, in the *Book of Han* that the four divisions of occupations had existed in the Western Zhou era. It is now known that these divisions as Ban Gu understood them did not exist until the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.
- Ban Gu explained the social hierarchy of each division in descending order:

- 士 (scholars): people who studied in order to occupy positions of rank
- 农 (peasants): people who cultivated the soil and planted food
- 工 (artisans): people who had skills and made utensils and equipment
- 商 (merchants): people who transport valuable articles and sold commodities
- Many social groups were excluded from these four categories in the social hierarchy, including soldiers and guards, religious clergy and diviners, eunuchs and concubines, entertainers and courtiers, domestic servants and slaves, prostitutes, and low-class laborers other than farmers and artisans.
- There were various reasons for the exclusion of these social groups.

## 2. Group Discussion

We have learnt about five types of traditional professions in China that are in danger of disappearing due to modernisation. In a group of three or four, choose two of these professions and discuss ways to keep them alive. You may imagine how to rejuvenate their roles and how to get the young interested in taking either of them up as an occupation. Share with your classmates your suggestions.

Students should consider these points:

- Refer to pages 237 and 238 of the Textbook for the five types of traditional professions.
- Both the government and private enterprises should invest in rejuvenating these traditional professions.
- The government can
  - provide incentives for people to take up these occupations.
  - establish some special technical schools or offer special courses in technical schools.
  - provide protection for masters of these traditional professions.

## 3. Internet Search + Pair Work

With a partner, find out two other types of traditional professions in China that are in danger of disappearing due to modernisation. Write down what the people engaged in these professions do and explain briefly why they may disappear.

Students may consider these occupations:

- Street barbers: First documented in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, barbers first set up shop on the streets of China. Some were travellers moving from town to town. Their equipment consists of a chair and a wooden box filled with razors, scissors and brushes. They cut the hair, shaved the faces and cleaned the ears of their customers. Nowadays, street barbers can only be found in the old neighbourhoods of cities, villages and the less developed areas of China, on sidewalks, down winding alleys and in parks. But they are likely to disappear soon.
- Travelling village opera troupes: The performers travel from village to village performing for villagers. They impersonate many different characters as they act out timeless stories from China's history and literature. Their faces are covered with make-up, the colours and designs of which are symbolic of the rank and function of each character and whether he is good or bad. Every movement and every word they make and sing have been crafted from over 1,200 years of tradition. They glide over the stage like living relics of a forgotten time, performing old stories for old people, sharing a vision of a China that is now disappearing.
- Cormorants fishing: There are still fishermen in China who use cormorants to gather fish for them. They go out on rivers and lakes in boats that typically have perches for the birds to ride on. When they come to a good fishing ground the cormorants have their necks tied and are sent out into the water. They swim and dive, hunt fish and then carry them in their throats back to the fisherman.

4. Internet Search + Class Discussion

Are there traditional professions that are in danger of disappearing in Western countries? Share two examples with your classmates. As a class, discuss if they should be protected. Write down all the professions that have been discussed.

Students may consider these professions:

- Jobs that have disappeared in recent times: Pog designer, lamplighter, elevator operator.
- Other jobs that have disappeared: Bowling alley pinsetter, human alarm clock, ice cutter, pre-radar listener for enemy aircraft, rat catcher, log driver, switchboard operator, lector (someone who entertained factory workers).
- Some jobs should be let go of or replaced by machines or technology as they free human beings from heavy or dangerous working conditions.
- Some jobs should be protected as they are traditional crafts or showcase human talents.

5. Pair Work

Imagine that you are a billionaire who wishes to create a new occupation in China. What would you do? With a partner, write down what this new occupation is, your reasons for creating it and how you plan to introduce it.

Students may consider this occupation:

- Robot developer: to design and make robots to relieve people who work in factories or rural areas from heavy manual labour.
- Plan for developing robots: Financing, creating a research centre, manufacturing, promoting and marketing

6. Pair Work

More and more foreigners are willing to work in China. Imagine you are the Human Resource Personnel of a Chinese company. With a partner, prepare a PowerPoint presentation to persuade talents to join your company. You may include the benefits and career development opportunities your company offers. Your presentation should last about five minutes.

Students should consider these points:

- A general introduction of your company
- The uniqueness of your company and its specialty
- What your company has achieved in the last few years
- The types of benefits available
- Career development opportunities

Note: All URLs listed herein were ascertained to be accessible on 10 September, 2020.