

Ping Pong Diplomacy: A Rally For U.S.- China Relations

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Junior Group Website

Word Count: 1195

Multimedia Length: 2:51

Process Paper Word Count: 500

Process Paper:

After hearing about the 2022 theme, “Debate & Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences,” our team immediately wanted to explore the topic of U.S.-China relations in the last decade. U.S.- China relations dominates media outlets with reports of unstable economic and diplomatic relations.

U.S - China relations is a topic that has always interested our team. The situation’s complexity and volatility prompted us to wonder when diplomatic channels were opened between the two countries and what that relationship looked like. Using a Chronology of U.S-China Relations from the United States Office of the Historian, we first learned about Ping-Pong Diplomacy and Kissinger’s subsequent visit to China. The event of Ping-Pong Diplomacy stood out to us because it was the only event listed that was not the result of traditional diplomatic channels. Therefore, after intense deliberation, we decided that Ping Pong Diplomacy was a very fitting topic for the 2022 competition.

To start our research, we viewed databases such as the State Department’s Office of the Historian. In addition, we went to the library and picked up *On China* and *Diplomacy* by Henry Kissinger and *Ping Pong Diplomacy* by Nicholas Griffin. After reading *Ping Pong Diplomacy*, we figured that we needed to do a section dedicated to the Communist background of Ping Pong with regards to Ivor Montagu and Ping Pong in China after the PRC was established. However, after feedback from the State round, we realized that the background information about Ivor Montague was not relevant to U.S.-China relations, so we decided to discard it in favor of a page dedicated to diplomatic relations after the establishment of the PRC. Next, our team also decided that we needed a section about the physical Ping Pong Diplomacy (When the American Ping Pong Players went to China). Finally, we decided we needed a section on “State Diplomacy” when Henry Kissinger and President Nixon went to China, to sum up the overall Ping Pong Diplomacy.

We used the NHD Web Central website platform and spent a week playing around and testing its features. Next, we spent two weeks getting the general design of the website. Plus another to refine and streamline the overall style of our website. We decided to go with a “China Red-Gold” theme and an “American Blue-Silver” theme on our website to signify the cooperation between the two nations. The word count was not that big of a problem because we found many quotes from notable historical figures that would suffice for illustrating scenarios without adding to our word count.

We believe that Ping Pong Diplomacy was the gateway for diplomatic steps between Nixon and Mao and to the stronger U.S.-China relations we have today. We also believe it strongly ties in with this year’s topic, Debate & Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences, because Ping Pong Diplomacy was a massive success for both the United States and China. It severely hampered Sino-Soviet relations but helped further propel the end of the Cold War.