



## Lesson Guide

# *Millennials without Borders: U.S. and China Millennials*

### Vocabulary List

**996:** Slang for working 9AM to 9PM, six days a week

**FOMO:** Abbreviation for “Fear of Missing Out”

**Millennial:** An individual who was born between the years 1981 and 1996.

**New Farmer Movement:** Encourages young people to take on farming, craftspeople, homesteaders. This often is not only to fend for themselves, but create change on their local economy including environmental impacts and resource limitations.

**Post-80s generation:** The generation in China born between 1980 and 1989; the first generation after the post-Cultural Revolution and grew up entirely within the Reform era. They are often characterized by consumerism, entrepreneurship and acceptance of China’s modern transformation into an economic superpower.

**Post-90s generation:** The generation in China born between 1990 and 1999; they are the second generation to grow up as only children and in the post-Tiananmen era and the first generation to be born after the protests. Many of their traits are similar to the post-80s generation, with the addition of having grown up in the digital age.

**Tangping or “lying flat” (躺平):** In response to the 996 working system, this “spiritual movement” outwardly rejects the idea of overworking and being content with attainable achievements. This prioritizes mental health above the “urban rat race.”

### Suggested Discussion Topics

- Millennials are often described as web-savvy, independent, tolerant, and sometimes even “spoiled” or “entitled” for having grown up in an era of technology, environmentally sustainable practices, and social change. Do you agree or disagree? How do they come up with their conclusions?



- What do the American and Chinese millennials have in common? How are they different?
- How do you think these generational distinctions differ for Asian millennials? Or Asian Americans?
- What slang is popular in your generation that others may not understand?
- How do “digital natives” and “non-digital natives” differ in their upbringing with technology? How does this impact each generation?
- An American millennial states that popular destinations for travel are Mexico, Canada, England, and Italy while the Chinese millennial goes to Thailand, Japan, Vietnam, and the U.S. Besides distance, what makes these areas attractive to younger people?
- Would you want to work a “996” work schedule? What are the pros and cons of this lifestyle?
- Why do you think education is affordable in China compared to American universities?
- How has the one-child policy impacted Chinese millennials? How has it impacted Asian Americans?
- Why are millennials joining the New Farmer Movement? What does this say about that society and its current direction?
- What do both Chinese and American millennials look for in jobs?
- What other information would you like to know about Chinese millennials?

## Activities

- Both characters state that millennials are what keeps the global economy going. How so? In pairs, find advertisements and/or commercials that are US and Chinese made products. What Chinese product is your favorite? How do they try to appeal to post-90s generation? Specify examples.
- In groups, compare and contrast Chinese and American millennials. How are they similar and different?
- With a partner, discuss your philosophy on work. What does it mean to “work” and what is its purpose? Who taught this to you? How did they learn about the meaning of work and do you agree/disagree?
- Read Insider’s [Meet the Typical Chinese Millennial](#) article. Choose three individuals to analyze and write a profile on them. Who are they and what are their concerns? How does their experience fit or not fit into the “millennial generation”?
- Read Time’s [How Millennial Leaders Will Change America](#) article. How are millennial politicians shaping the future of the United States?
  - In groups, choose one politician interviewed in the article and do more research. Who are they and what are their beliefs? What role do politicians play in our society and should they change to be more relevant to general society?
  - By yourself, write a reflection on the article. Do you agree or disagree? What are your personal values when it comes to voting? Would you vote for them?



- Separate your class into two teams for a debate: Is college needed for a better future? This can be applied to both American and Chinese societies. Alternative questions include: What role does college play in our society?

## Suggested Additional Filmography, Podcast, Videos:

### Read

- [A Shifting Landscape: Chinese Millennials in the workplace](#), 2015 Haworth Report
- Chesler, Russel, [The next Baby Boomers are China's Millennials](#), 2021 Financial Review
- Cools, Luisa [Why Rural Officials can't always lure Millennials back home](#), 2018. Sixth Tone
- Dychtwald, Zak. [Chinese millennials are about to kick US millennials' butts](#), 2018, NY Post
- French, Paul, [What do Chinese Millennials Want?](#), 2020 Chinese-Britain business focus, interview of Eric Fish
- Frey, William H, [The millennial generation: A demographic bridge to America's diverse future](#), Brookings Institute
- [How Millennials today compare with their grandparents 50 years ago](#). 2018. Pew Research
- Huang, Christine, and Silver, Laura. [U.S. Millennials tend to have favorable views of foreign countries and institutions, even as they age](#), 2020. Pew Research Center
- [Millennials Coming of Age](#), Goldman Sachs, Insights
- Tilford, Cale. The millennial moment - charts. 2018 FT series, Demographics and Population
- Yuan, Li, [China's 'OK Boomer': Generations Clash Over the Nation's Future](#). 2020, The New York Times

### Listen

- [China's Millennials: Ambitious, Bold, and Dissatisfied](#), 2016. Council on Foreign Relations
- [China's new youth, with Alec Ash and Stephanie Studer](#), 2021 Sinica Podcast powered by SupChina
- He, Huifeng, [China population: millennial couples decry 'unaffordable' childcare as fertility rate falls](#), 2021, South China Morning Post.
- [In China's New Age Communes, Burned-Out Millennials Go Back to Nature](#), 2021 Audio version by China Stories
- [Talking about my generation: Chinese Millennials](#), 2017, China File, Sinica Podcast
- [Under Red Skies - Inside the Minds of Chinese Millennials](#), 2019 Raddi Wo Men Podcast



### Watch

- [The American Dream through the eyes of Chinese millennials](#), 2017 SupChina
- [The Battle for Chinese Millennials Minds](#), 2018, NBC Left Field
- Dychtwald, Zak, [3 things the West gets wrong about Chinese Millennials](#), 2019 TEDxQingBoSt.
- [The Nature of Millennials \(The Nature of Things parody\)](#), 2018 CBC Comedy