



Infrastructure: A Bridge Out of Poverty

Major Field of National Security	Module	Unit	Topic
Economic Security	The Individual and Society	Human Rights	Infrastructure: A Bridge Out of Poverty

Suggested Levels: S4-6

Summary of the Learning Topic:

The learning topic aims to guide students to understand the importance of safeguarding our country's economic security, and how this can be achieved through infrastructure development and poverty alleviation.

Learning Objectives:

Content

To explore and develop understanding of the following:

- the importance of safeguarding the economic security of our country;
- the strategies implemented to safeguard economic security in our country; and
- how students can raise their schoolmates' awareness of economic security at school.

Language

To develop English language knowledge and skills, e.g.

- the use of passive voice to place emphasis on the action and/or result; and
- the use of a variety of sentence patterns to explain reasons and consequences and compare different scenarios or outcomes.

Learning Tasks:

- **Part 1 – Warm-up Activities:** Students understand through a video the importance of infrastructure development to economic security.
- **Part 2 – Group Interaction:** Students participate in a group discussion about the issue of safeguarding economic security in our country.
- **Part 3 – Individual Presentation:** Students respond to a question relating to enhancing competitiveness and success in the high-quality economic development of the country.

Part 1 – Warm-up Activities

- i. Before exploring the topic, write down in the box below what you know about economic security.

You may refer to the webpage on “Major Fields of National Security” (https://www.nsed.gov.hk/national_security/index.php?l=en&a=national_security_main_focus&d=economic_security) for some ideas.



Suggested answers:

- Economic security is a country’s capability to resolve potential risks and resist external impacts to ensure sustained, rapid, and healthy economic development.
- Economic security is the foundation of national security, providing the necessary safeguards for a country’s prosperity and strength, people’s happiness and wellbeing, as well as social harmony and stability.
- Economic security is the process of coordinating development and security by improving a country’s competitiveness and its ability to prevent and manage major risks and challenges.

- ii. Watch the following video from *The China Current* and answer the questions that follow.

Poverty is in the Past for this Asian Community



<https://chinacurrent.com/story/23944/poverty-is-in-the-past-for-this-asian-community>

1. What role do infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges and railways play in alleviating poverty?

[00:08 – 00:24] Infrastructure projects open up basic services like health and education, to communities that were once isolated.

2. How has the Beipanjiang Bridge impacted travel between Liupanshui and Xuanwei?

[01:31 – 01:42] The Beipanjiang Bridge reduced the travel time between Liupanshui and Xuanwei from five hours to one hour.

3. How has Guizhou Province been impacted by public infrastructure projects?

- (A) They have made Guizhou the most populated province in China.
- (B) They have transformed the living and economic environment of the province.
- (C) They have ensured that all travel between cities takes under one hour.
- (D) They have resulted in the province becoming entirely independent of trade.

A	B	C	D
<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. How did China contribute to the global reduction in the number of people living in extreme poverty? Name the three “pivot points” that help make this change happen.

[2:12 – 2:50] A total of 800 million people in China were lifted out of poverty over the past 40 years, reducing the number of people living in global poverty by 75%. The three pivot points are transportation, access to resources and connection to community.

Part 2 – Group Interaction

Situation: Your class is going to discuss the issue of safeguarding economic security. Your group has found some relevant information online about maintaining sustained, rapid, and healthy economic development in rural areas of China. Read the article and **conduct a discussion of 10-15 minutes in groups of 3-4**. You may make use of information from the video in Part 1 and the text below.

Poverty alleviation in China, up close

In 2018, I visited a village in Yunnan province. At the time of my visit, the village looked very modern, with paved roads, electricity, street lights and other public utilities. During my trip, the villagers showed a picture of their home from two years before. **Compared to** the half-ruined dwellings, the current infrastructure was significantly more extensive, **resulting in** improved living conditions and greater economic viability. The source of this remarkable transformation was an unlikely one: Cactus! **Due to** support from a government poverty fighting team, microcredits were given to the locals, and several greenhouses were built to raise cacti.

Living far from large cities where potential customers could be found, the villagers faced two issues: How to keep the business growing, and how to deliver the products to customers. A solution to the first problem was in the fast-developing e-commerce sector. The farmers created an account on the e-commerce platform Taobao, where they posted pictures and product listings. Customer inquiries were replied to by the farmers in turns, and their marketing strategy was structured through collaborative effort. **As a result of** their hard work and consistency, their cacti became popular among plant-lovers throughout China.

To make extreme poverty a thing of the past, the first step the Chinese government took was to build roads, bridges, railways and stations. **While** infrastructure does not directly target poverty, it offers a more sustainable solution than short-term aid by facilitating easier access to markets. The latter stages of poverty alleviation, what is called targeted poverty alleviation, was even more complicated. Officials were assigned to live in poor villages for one to three years. These working team members had to live in the villages for a long time to understand local problems and to gain trust. The Chinese model includes providing microcredit and sending specialists so that their knowledge, information and skills could be shared.

My encounter with poverty alleviation and socioeconomic development in China led me to appreciate China's unique methods of governance, which required a great deal of courage to find developmental model that works for itself. I believe countries all over the world should focus on their internal issues and build their own models to govern according to their specific characteristics and history.

(Adapted from <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202309/01/WS64f12f66a310d2dce4bb3483.html>)

Discussion Topic:

Your group is going to discuss the issue of safeguarding economic security in our country. You may want to talk about:

- the importance of economic security to our country

Possible ideas:

- Economic security is the foundation of national security, providing the necessary safeguards for a country's prosperity, strength, and social harmony. A strong and secure economy enables a country to eliminate potential risks and resist external impacts during development.
- **Due to** historical geographical barriers, many regions remained poor, so we must prioritise economic security to ensure every citizen has a basic standard of living.
- Economic security means not relying on a single source of income. By helping rural areas develop specialty industries, our country becomes more self-sufficient and less dependent on external aid.
- *(Students may also incorporate the content they have learnt from the website and/or video above in their discussion.)*

- how infrastructure development (physical and digital) contributes to safeguarding economic security

Possible ideas:

- Physical infrastructure (Roads, Bridges, and Railways):
 - Roads and bridges are built to connect rural villages to urban markets, making it easier to move goods and services across the country. This enhances trade and supports industries as transportation costs and time are significantly reduced.
 - Well-planned cities with modern infrastructure provide a more efficient environment for businesses to operate and for workers to commute, boosting overall economic productivity.
- Digital infrastructure (Internet and e-commerce):
 - The internet acts as a bridge that transcends geographic barriers. For example, using e-commerce platforms like Taobao, farmers can sell products (like cacti) to people all over the country.
- *(Students may also incorporate the content they have learnt from the website and/or video above in their discussion.)*

- what can be done to prevent poverty from returning

Possible ideas:

- Implement a transition period to monitor vulnerable groups and provide targeted support to prevent relapses into poverty.
- Deploy officials and experts to tailor assistance based on regional strengths and needs.
- Encourage sustainable agriculture and business practices that ensure long-term economic security for rural communities.

- How students can better prepare themselves to contribute to the economic security and development of our country

Possible ideas:

- Students can learn from the example of Yunnan villagers who used innovative ideas like e-commerce and Taobao to turn their cactus business into a success. By mastering new technologies, students can help build a more efficient and competitive economic system.
 - Students should learn about major national development initiatives like the “Guangdong-Hong Kong- Macao Greater Bay Area” and the “Belt and Road Initiative”. Understanding these plans enable students to identify future opportunities and contribute to strengthening our country’s connections with the global economy.
 - Students can use their knowledge, skills, or volunteer experience to support less-developed regions.
- anything else you think is important

Part 3 – Individual Response

In this part, each of the group members will take turns to **give a short speech of about one minute** on one of the following questions.

1. Apart from helping the poor, why is it important for our country to enhance its own competitiveness in the global market?

Possible ideas:

- When our country’s competitiveness is improved, its overall economic strength is enhanced. This allows our country to remain in a state of stable development and provides a higher standard of living for its people.
- A competitive economy is better equipped to resist external shocks such as global financial crisis or trade barriers.

2. Why is technology as important as infrastructure for a country’s growth?

Possible ideas:

Technology is crucial for a country’s growth because it allows people to connect globally for education, business and communication. For instance, online learning platforms can reach students in remote areas. On the other hand, physical roads are vital as they provide access to essential services like schools and hospitals. For example, healthcare can be quickly accessed in nearby cities by a village that has been connected by roads.

3. Other than economic benefit, name and explain one benefit of improving a country's transportation network.

Possible ideas:

- **Due to** better physical connectivity, communities in remote areas can access essential services.
- **While** traditional networks focus on trade, modern infrastructure is also built to ensure that medical help can reach citizens in emergencies.
- Students can travel to better schools in urban areas and commute to universities for higher education, thereby enhancing their competitiveness.

4. What can be done to encourage young people to take a greater interest in infrastructure development in our country?

Possible ideas:

- Schools can organise workshops to help students understand how infrastructure acts as a foundation for economic security.
- Social media platforms can be used to show how smart cities and high-speed rail create new career paths.
- Field trips to major project sites can be organised.

Teacher's notes:

Suggested language items and sentence patterns for different communicative purposes:

Language items	Communicative purposes & examples
1. Passive voice	To place emphasis on the action and/or result <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic security <u>was made much stronger</u> by a comprehensive campaign to end absolute poverty.• Experts and officials <u>were sent</u> to live in villages for years.• 1.88 million people in Guizhou <u>have been relocated</u> to areas where they can benefit from progress.
2. Explain reasons and consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due to the strategic construction of roads and bridges, previously isolated communities experienced a significant boost in economic activities, leading to increased local employment and improved living standards.• Because of the government's targeted interventions, which included sending experts to live in rural areas, tailored solutions were effectively implemented, resulting in long-term economic stability.

Language items	Communicative purposes & examples
3. Compare different scenarios or outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• While short-term financial aid provides immediate relief, comprehensive rural revitalisation programmes offer more sustainable solutions by fostering self-sufficiency and economic growth.• Compared to previous decades, the current infrastructure investments are more extensive, ensuring that even the most remote areas are connected and economically viable.