

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. China's leader will change the addresses of millions of China's poor. T / F
- b. The leader announced new spending to appease disgruntled farmers. T / F
- c. He said he would increase agricultural taxes and boost urban incomes. T / F
- d. A digital divide threatens social stability in China. T / F
- e. Wen Jiabao placed elevating China's poor high on his agenda. T / F
- f. The Premier refused to tell how quickly the economy will take off. T / F
- g. The Premier wasn't backward in coming forward about his ambitions. T / F
- h. Mr. Wen will be helped in his lofty ambitions by runaway growth. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| a. redress | historical |
| b. disparity | measures |
| c. disgruntled | steadfastly |
| d. initiatives | shy |
| e. track | divergence |
| f. resolutely | change |
| g. reorient | target |
| h. backward | rectify |
| i. epoch-making | grand |
| j. lofty | aggrieved |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. it is time to redress | of agricultural taxes |
| b. social spending to appease the | runaway economic growth rate |
| c. He announced the scrapping | the world's largest economy |
| d. narrow the ever-increasing | China's poor high on his agenda |
| e. keep China on track to become | the disparity in wealth |
| f. Wen Jiabao placed elevating | one third of those in cities |
| g. there's no | in coming forward |
| h. their disposable income is just | disgruntled farming communities |
| i. The Premier wasn't backward | income divide |
| j. helped in his lofty ambitions by a | telling how quickly |

THE ARTICLE

China increases spending on rural poor

China's government has decided it is time to redress the huge disparity in wealth between the affluent city dwellers and their largely impoverished rural counterparts. Premier Wen Jiabao opened the annual session of parliament yesterday with promises of massive new social spending to appease the disgruntled farming communities in China's largely left-behind countryside. He announced the scrapping of agricultural taxes and the boosting of spending on rural infrastructure and education. He said newly introduced initiatives would narrow the ever-increasing income divide that threatens social stability. He expressed his belief that this would help accelerate economic growth and keep China on track to become the world's largest economy.

Wen Jiabao placed elevating China's poor high on his agenda, saying: "We need to resolutely work to reorient investments by shifting the government's priority in infrastructure investment to the countryside." Managed correctly, this may mean growth figures in double digits. Once the rural poor get spending, there's no telling how quickly the economy will take off. Sixty percent of China's population lives in the countryside, although their disposable income is just one third of those in cities. The Premier wasn't backward in coming forward about his ambitions, stating: "This is a change of epoch-making significance." Mr. Wen will be helped in his lofty ambitions by a runaway economic growth rate of nine percent plus per annum.