China resists calls to slow AI

LEVEL C1


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I. WARM-UP

1. What worries you most about rapid AI progress?
2. When should governments limit new technology, if ever?
3. How do export controls affect innovation and rivalry?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

receptive
Willing to listen to or accept a new idea or suggestion.

sovereignty
A state's independent power to control its own affairs.

export control
A rule that limits sales of certain goods to other countries.

fearmongering
Spreading fear to influence opinions or actions.

governance
The way rules and decisions are made and enforced.

iteration
One version in a series of repeated updates or designs.

recursive
Able to act on and improve itself again and again.

autocracy
A system where power is held by one ruler or a small group.

III. READING

China is pushing back against US warnings about rapid AI development. In Silicon Valley, insiders have warned of a "loss of control" over frontier systems. Dario Amodei of Anthropic proposed a worldwide pacing of the frontier that would require cooperation with China, and continued export controls on advanced chips.

He argued democracies should keep their lead over autocracies. Analysts say Beijing is not receptive. Lian Jye Su at Omdia argues the government treats AI as a core sovereignty capability and believes slowdown calls aim to lock in a US lead.

China's foreign ministry said fearmongering, confrontation and vicious competition would disrupt global AI governance. Not only has Beijing tightened oversight, it has also released a third iteration of its AI safety governance framework.

Gabriel Wagner of Concordia says it maps major risks, including agents, cybersecurity threats from frontier models, and the recursive self-improvement of future systems. He sees more common ground than many assume. By contrast, US president Donald Trump called wipeout fears a hoax. He is due to meet Xi Jinping in Washington next week, though few expect a breakthrough.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **The Guardian***: "Why China is pushing back on US warnings...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What global proposal did Dario Amodei make?
2. Why does Beijing reject a slowdown, according to Lian Jye Su?
3. What new AI safety document did China release?
4. Which three risks does Gabriel Wagner highlight?
5. Where are Donald Trump and Xi Jinping expected to meet?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should frontier AI be slowed for safety? Why or why not?
2. Do export controls make AI safer or fuel rivalry?
3. Where could the US and China realistically cooperate on AI?
4. Does centralised control help or harm AI safety?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Adding emphasis - inversion with negative adverbials

Start a sentence with a negative adverbial (Never, Rarely, Seldom, Under no circumstances). This causes inversion: auxiliary + subject + main verb (e.g. 'Never have they ...').

"Never **have so many experts warned** *about AI risks."*
"Rarely **has a country tightened** *oversight so quickly."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Never (have we seen / we have seen) such rapid change. _____
2. Rarely (rivals have shared / have rivals shared) safety data. _____
3. Seldom (do analysts agree / analysts do agree) on policy paths. _____
4. Under no circumstances (we should / should we) ignore risks. _____
5. Not until leaders meet (will we know / we will know) more. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension, 10 minutes grammar, 12–15 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach key terms with quick examples (receptive, sovereignty, export control, governance, iteration, recursive, fearmongering, autocracy).
- Run a two-pass reading: first gist (positions and motives), then detail (named risks and policy tools). Sensitive topic flag: national identity and political systems arise; keep discussion policy-focused and allow students to speak about the news rather than about themselves.
- Differentiate during discussion: assign roles (industry, regulator, researcher) to stronger students; give sentence starters and a word bank to others (risk, pace, oversight, cooperation).

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Poll the room first, then pair students with someone who disagrees and ask for two reasons each.
2. Split the class: one side argues safety benefits, the other rivalry costs; then swap sides.
3. Have groups list two concrete areas (standards, research) and specify one joint action for each.
4. Elicit examples of centralised and decentralised systems; push for one advantage and one risk.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Debate: In teams, prepare 90-second opening statements for or against a global AI slowdown and deliver them.

Writing: Write a 120-word policy note advising Amodei or Su on one step to build cross-border trust.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Adding emphasis - inversion with negative adverbials

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What global proposal did Dario Amodei make?
   A worldwide pacing of frontier AI with cooperation from China and continued export controls.
2. Why does Beijing reject a slowdown, according to Lian Jye Su?
   Because AI is treated as core to sovereignty and a slowdown is seen as locking in a US lead.
3. What new AI safety document did China release?
   The third iteration of its AI safety governance framework.
4. Which three risks does Gabriel Wagner highlight?
   Agents, cybersecurity threats, and recursive self-improvement.
5. Where are Donald Trump and Xi Jinping expected to meet?
   In Washington.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Start a sentence with a negative adverbial (Never, Rarely, Seldom, Under no circumstances). This causes inversion: auxiliary + subject + main verb (e.g. 'Never have they ...'). (Examples constructed.)

> *"Never* **have so many experts warned** *about AI risks."*
>
> *"Rarely* **has a country tightened** *oversight so quickly."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Never (have we seen / we have seen) such rapid change. **have we seen**
2. Rarely (rivals have shared / have rivals shared) safety data. **have rivals shared**
3. Seldom (do analysts agree / analysts do agree) on policy paths. **do analysts agree**
4. Under no circumstances (we should / should we) ignore risks. **should we**
5. Not until leaders meet (will we know / we will know) more. **will we know**