Explain the impact of the Cultural Revolution on the development of China.

The Cultural Revolution caused a huge damage to the development or the modernization of China. It lasted for more than 10 years. Its impact seems that China cannot recover within a short period of time.

During the Cultural Revolution, many leaders of Chinese Communist Party were purged down by the movement: the president, the members of National People’s Congress, the Standing Committee of Politburo in the NPC, the premier, even the district administrative officials. For example, Liu Shaoqi was purged down by the Red Guards, Deng Xiaoping was purged down by ‘Gang of Four’. These officials were criticized or even persecuted. For example, Liu was purged and regarded as the ‘capitalist-roader’. He was treated cruelly and died after a year. As a result, the operation and the administration of PRC under the CPC was damaged and cannot function normally even after the end of the Cultural Revolution.

Secondly, the culture development and education were badly damaged. Relics, historical monuments, books were destroyed by the Red Guards. The history or the culture development was put on a halt. Moreover, schools and universities were closed down during the Cultural Revolution. That means no students went to school during this period. Under the influence of Mao’s personality cult, the students thought that their parents and teachers were not as important as their president Mao. Therefore, even their teachers and parents were criticized. Besides closing the schools and teachers were criticized, the idea of no education was also spread among them, e.g. the slogans of ‘the more of knowledge, the more of reactionary’ or ‘the more you studied, the more stupid you become’. These created a generation of ‘know-nothings’.

Thirdly, social order was destroyed during this period. As the Red Guards believed that they were reasonable and given authority to attack or criticize others, they usually attack or criticize other people without any evidences. They regarded those people as reactionaries, rightists or capitalist-roaders. These frightened people and caused the social instability and social disorder in China. During the time of Cultural Revolution, laws and rules in China were broken. The only law was the words from Mao.

Moreover, during the time of Cultural Revolution, all productions were nearly stopped as youngsters went to be Red Guards. This damaged the economy system.
People had to face serious problem such as food shortage. Famine was found in many parts of China. About 300 million of people died of starvation during this period. The leaders after the Cultural Revolution had to use a long time to recover the economy. An amount costing RMB300 billion was lost for Cultural Revolution. There was even a slogan among the Red Guards and people: it’s better to eat the grass of communism but not the grains of capitalism. The Cultural Revolution nearly destroyed the development of economy for the 30 years of the establishment of PRC.

Next, the diplomatic relationship between China and the world was further intensified. It is because there was no communication with the world during the Cultural Revolution. The distance between China and the world became further as there was no development and China was left behind again compared with the west. Therefore, the diplomatic isolation was intensified.

Lastly, the Cultural Revolution was a very meaningful lesson to the leaders of PRC later. They can learn the destruction from the Cultural Revolution and avoid doing the same thing. For example, Deng Xiaoping learnt from the Cultural Revolution as he was purged down for three times. He used the term ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’ to regard his policies which had the features of capitalism. It is important for the leaders to avoid carrying out this kind of movement as they can learn from the destructive of the Cultural Revolution.

To conclude, the Cultural Revolution brought destructive damages to PRC for 10 years in cultural, education, political, social and economic aspects. It just liked a disaster to PRC. The only advantage or positive impact of it was to provide a lesson for the leaders of PRC later to avoid doing the same thing.