

The Way of the Warriors: Comparing the Samurai and the Knight
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Purpose:

A system of feudalism developed in both England and Japan. This lesson will give students the opportunity to compare and contrast the Japanese samurai and the English knight. Students will discover that the samurai and the knight were not the same thing with the samurai being deeply rooted in education and the arts.

Target Grade Levels: 6th-8th grades.

Instructional Note:

This lesson will be taught as part of a chapter on Feudalism in Europe and Japan. This lesson will be taught to 7th grade students.

Essential Questions:

1. What were the requirements for entry into the feudal society as a samurai or a knight?
2. How were the samurai and knights alike?
3. How were the samurai and knights different?
4. How successful were the samurai and knights?
5. What factors led to the decline of the feudal knight?
6. How did the samurai "reinvent" themselves to avoid decline and disappearance in Japanese society?

Rationale:

- Help students understand the importance of the samurai and knight to feudal society.
- Assist students in analyzing the similarities and differences between the lives of the samurai and the knight.

Ohio Academic Content Standards:

History

- Grade 6-8 Benchmark C: Describe the characteristics of feudal societies and the transition to the Renaissance and Reformation in Europe.
- Grade 7, Grade-Level Indicator 3: Describe the conditions that gave rise to feudalism, as well as political, economic, and social characteristics of feudalism, in Asia and Europe.

Materials:

Smart Board

Textbook: Human Heritage Glencoe-McGraw Hill 1999.

Images of knights and samurai

Resource books for information

Video clips: Discovery Channel- Times Medieval, PBS Home Video- Japan: Memoirs of a Secret Empire.

Compare and contrast chart

Activities:

Please note that this lesson was designed to fit into one 75 minute class period as my school uses block scheduling. A modification may be necessary to fit into different time schedules.

1. Review the concept of feudalism previously taught and the feudal hierarchy.
2. Hook activity: Give students two minutes to write down words that come to mind when they hear the word, **knight**. Repeat this activity using the term, **samurai**. Give students an opportunity to share their lists with the class.
3. Think- Pair- Share Activity: Using the smart board, show various images of the samurai and the knight. Working as a team, students discuss and list the similarities and differences they see between the two people.
4. Video clips:
5. Power point: Teacher presents information about the samurai and knight using a power point presentation. Students complete the vocabulary sheet and information sheet while listening to and discussing the material presented in the power point.
6. After discussion, students return to their brainstorm lists and see if what they thought they knew about the samurai and the knight were accurate or not.
7. Discuss the fall of the knight and the samurai and their change in status. Explain how unlike the feudal knights, the samurais reinvented themselves and went on to become government officials and catalysts to change.
8. Closing connection: Connect the codes of bushido and chivalry to today. What in these codes of honor do people practice today? Allow students time to think about this question and volunteer answers if they choose to. Explain how the samurais and knights, while adhering to a code of honor, were vastly different and not the same thing.

Post Assessment:

- There will be questions on comparing and contrasting the samurai and the knight as part of the test on feudalism.
- Students will compete and turn in a completed Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the samurai and the knight.
- A possible field trip to the Art Museum (when it reopens) to see the Armor and Weapons room could be planned with an essay given to describe what the students saw in the exhibit.

Resources:

Armento Beverly J. et al. Across the Centuries. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003, 271-274.
Cook, Harry. Samurai: The Story of a Warrior Tradition. New York: Sterling Pub. Co., 1993.
Gravett, Christopher. Eyewitness Knight. London: DK Publishing, Inc, 2007.
Greene, Carol. Enchantment of the World: Japan. Chicago: Children's Press, 1983, 56, 74-77.
Mitsui Kure. Samurai: An Illustrated History. Boston: Tuttle Publishing Company, 2001.
Leverson, Peter-Spry and Peter Kornicki. Japan. New York: Facts on File Publications, 1987.
Steffoff, Rebecca. Major World Nations : Japan. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 1999.
Tames, Richard. Journey Through Japan. Mahwah: Eagle Books Limited, 1991, 12-13.

www.japan-guide.com

www.jref.com

www.vikingmud.org

www.library.thinkquest.org

www.google/images/samurai/knights.com

www.edtech.floyd.edu/~lnewby/feudal_japan.htm

Discovery Channel: Times Medieval, 2001.

PBS Home Video: Japan: Memoirs of a Secret Empire, 2004.

Vocabulary Sheet

1. feudalism-

2. lord-

3. vassal-

4. fief-

5. king-

6. shogun-

7. samurai-

8. knight-

9. chivalry-

10. bushido-

**Comparison/ Contrast Chart
Samurai and Knights**

Samurai	Knights
Training:	Training:
Weapons& Armor:	Weapons & Armor:
Code of Conduct:	Code of Conduct: