

## Section II: Publishable Materials

### *Education across the Seas*

Lesson designed for grades 9-12  
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#### Rationale:

One of the challenges teachers face is incorporating cultural studies into the classroom. This lesson is designed to provide students with an introduction to the Japanese educational system. The students will read/research information about the Japanese school system. In addition, the lesson pulls on current issues with a discussion of current US rankings in international educational polls.

#### Objective:

*Education across the Seas* is designed to provide students with a greater understanding of the Japanese educational system and daily life for teens in Japan. Students will analyze a Japanese school day (start/end times, activities, teacher involvement, duration of the school year, etc.) and compare it to a typical American school day. Students will also think critically as they compare and contrast the two school systems.

#### Essential Questions:

1. What is the structure for a Japanese school day?
2. How does the Japanese educational system compare to the American system?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the two systems?

#### Duration:

The lesson plan is designed for a two 50 minute class periods. Those operating on a block schedule may be able to complete the lesson in a single class meeting.

#### Materials:

Introduction to Japanese Junior Highs and High Schools (taken from the series *History Alive*), laptops/internet, *World Education Rankings* (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news>), *International Education Rankings Suggest Reform can Lift US* ([www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov))

### Background Information:

Japanese students typically attend school 240 days a year, six days a week, six hours a day. The curriculum is generally standardized by the Japanese government. Students are required to wear uniforms and are expected to maintain a strict dress code. The dress code is meant to ensure uniformity. Teachers are highly respected in Japanese school systems and are often closely involved with students and their families. Parents, especially mothers, play a significant role in their child's education.

### Procedure:

Students will be divided into small groups. They will be directed to create a chart comparing and contrasting the Japanese and American school systems. Students will be directed to compare the two based on the following: school calendar, curriculum, teachers and instruction, parental involvement, extracurricular activities, and preparation for post secondary studies.

After listing all that they can for the American system, the students will read an overview of the Japanese educational system. Following the reading, students will fill out the chart for the Japan.

When the charts are completed, I will prepare students for a debate. Half of the class will argue that America's educational system is superior; the other half that Japan's educational system is superior. After taking some time to prepare their arguments, the debate will begin.

Following the debate I will lead the students in a discussion of America's place in current international educational rankings. The following questions will be addressed: In what areas are American students strong? In what areas are American students weak? Why do you think American students are slipping behind their international counterparts? What can the American government do to improve the performance of American students?

### Assessment:

Students will be asked to turn in their completed charts. In addition, they will be asked to respond to the following prompt: Which educational system do you believe is superior? Support your answer by citing three examples from the lesson.

Indicators: (Based on the Ohio Department of Education's curriculum guidelines)

#### **Standard:**

*People in Societies (9-10)*

Students use knowledge of perspectives, practices and products of cultural, ethnic and social groups to analyze the impact of their commonality and diversity within local, national, regional and global settings.

#### **Benchmark:**

C: Analyze the ways that contacts between people of different cultures result in exchanges of cultural practices.

#### **Indicators:**

5. Explain the effects of immigration on society in the United States
  - c. Education system

**Standard:***Geography (9-10)*

Students use knowledge of geographic locations, patterns and processes to show the interrelationship between the physical environment and human activity, and to explain the interactions that occur in an increasingly interdependent world.

**Benchmark**

**A:** Analyze the cultural, physical, economic and political characteristics that define regions and describe reasons that regions change over time.

**Indicators:**

1. Interpret data to make comparisons between and among countries and regions including:
  - d. Education levels

**Bibliography:**

Introduction to Japanese Junior Highs and High Schools (taken from the series *History Alive* series of texts)  
*World Education Rankings* (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news>)  
*International Education Rankings Suggest Reform can Lift US* ([www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov))