

Section 5: JAPAN

- How did the Meiji Constitution and Constitution of 1947 Frame Social and Political Order in Japan?

This lesson focuses on the great social and political changes in Japan in the first half of the twentieth century, framed by the two Constitutions, yet is also sensitive to the persistence of cultural elements even as Japan experienced democratic reform. The goal is to make a place and time as distant as early-twentieth century Japan accessible to American high school students; ethnographic approaches invite students to put themselves into ‘the other’s’ shoes. The lesson extends over two weeks or six one hour sessions as part of a larger study of Japan in the context of the IB Topic *Democratic States*.

This lesson connects to questions of peace and war as we explore them regarding the inter-war period war (Treaty of Versailles), the central question being why was there a World War II when the international community was so determined to make and keep peace? It also connects to further explorations of the history of Japan, in particular Japanese aggression and expansion into SE Asia, and, towards the end of the semester, the political economy of high-growth post-war Japan. The formal curricular framework for these studies are the two IB Regional Options, *the Impact of the World Wars on S and SE Asia* and *Asia’s Global Impact* in the second half of the twentieth century.

From a Montessori perspective, the main developmental task of the older adolescent (15 - 18) is preparation for adult life. When I create a course (or lesson) I evaluate everything I prepare from that perspective. Concretely I ask the question of relevance, for history that is: "how have we come to the here and now?", and the question of personal engagement: "how can I (the adolescent) relate?". In order to create and maintain engagement, I aim to draw the student in with a "hook" that (sometimes unconsciously) appeals to the adolescent, given her needs for orientation to the adult world of the here and now. The purpose of the history course is to explain the contemporary world the adolescent is about to enter as a contributing member through exploration of the past, and hence enable her to project and be part of a better future.

In Montessori pedagogy, a lesson is structured in three periods: the first period provides essential information, often in didactic format; it could be a "sweep story" to provide overview; the second period is a period of exploration: students actively work with texts, materials, do research, etc. to deeply engage with the topic. Second period work is often driven by student interest and questions and offers choice. Third period is the time to synthesize and share in a variety of formats such as research papers, debates, presentations, performances, e.g. dramatis personae.

Week One:

First Period: Didactic lesson on Japanese history and culture, supported by a keynote.

Second period: Students read three articles from *The Economist* on Japan and are asked to isolate persistent Japanese culture elements in these readings. They also explore images from the time of the American Occupation. Readings are assigned one week prior to third period lesson. Students have at least one hour a week for in-class reading/preparation.

Third period: Students report back on their explorations, whole-class discussion on readings and images with special attention to culture and historical change.

Week Two:

First period: Didactic lesson on the historical context of Meiji Constitution and Constitution of 1947, supported by a keynote.

Second period: Students read required and optional texts on the American Occupation and democratic reform, as well as the Meiji and 1947 Constitutions and prepare for a formal academic debate on the Proposition: “Resolved that Japan will have a standing army”.

Students are asked to complete the following **WRITTEN PREPARATION**: 1. Compare and discuss the [Meiji Constitution](#) and the [1947 Constitution](#), drafted by the American occupiers and presented to the Japanese authorities for translation and enactment. How do the documents differ? Note, in particular, substantial changes in where sovereignty is vested, the role of the emperor, the rights and responsibilities of the Japanese people, and the position of women under the law. A comparison of the 1947 Constitution to the U.S. Constitution might also be enlightening, as some commentators have suggested that the Japan’s “MacArthur” Constitution is even more progressive than our own.

They may also complete the following **OPTIONAL WRITTEN PREPARATION**:

2. Use photographs from the Occupation as primary sources. The image of [MacArthur and Hirohito](#) was widely distributed and is one of the most famous photographs in the history of modern Japan. What attitudes and power relationships do the clothes, postures, and expressions of MacArthur and Hirohito suggest? Why was the Occupation so eager to have both the Japanese and American publics see this photograph? The documentary photographs of Japan during the Occupation available online present a different vision of Japanese life under American rule. Based on these images, how would you characterize the lived experience of “average” Japanese people during the Occupation? Imagine that they were in General MacArthur’s position. Which aspects of the 1947 Constitution they would keep and which they would alter. Why?

Source for prompts: Japan Society: <http://aboutjapan.japansociety.org/index.cfm>

Third period: **The debate** is set up between an affirmative and a negative team. The two teams are seated on two sides of the classroom, with a podium for the speaker in the middle. An adult supervises the proceedings and keeps time. The students do not know in advance what the Proposition for the debate will be, nor whether they argue the affirmative or negative side to

encourage them to read both Constitutions carefully and be ready to argue both sides. Once the students come in, they are assigned to their respective teams. The schedule for the debate is as follows:

- a. Teams prepare for arguing their side: they may use their readings and computers (internet) to substantiate their position. They also elect their first and second speakers (20 minutes).
- b. The first speakers of each team present their arguments. Both teams evaluate the speakers (see evaluation form); (6 minutes per team).
- c. The teams prepare a rebuttal (5 minutes).
- d. The second speakers of each team have 3 minutes each to present their rebuttal. Both teams evaluate the speakers (see evaluation form).
- e. Vote and discussion on the debate. Students take a blind vote on what team won and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each team.
- f. Teacher collects evaluation forms as part of student assessment.

Assessment of how well students have absorbed material are class discussions, written debate preparation, as well as students' ability to integrate what they learned into the debate. Knowledge about Japan's transition to democracy will also be assessed in a mid-term review exam, as well as final IB external assessments at the end of students' senior year.

Section 6:

Resources:

Week One First Period Resources:

The following resources anchor the lesson in the present and give students a chance to explore how cultural elements persist over time, yet take on different shapes in contemporary life:

“The Future of Japan - The Japan Syndrome: The Biggest Lesson the Country May Yet Teach the World is about the Growth-Sapping Effects of Ageing”. *The Economist*. Nov. 18, 2010 (print).

“Coping with Japan's Nuclear Disaster - Living with Radiation: A Spreading Cloud of Economic and Human Costs”. *The Economist*. Apr. 7th 2011 (print).

“From Tsunamis to Typhoons: The Damage to the World Economy from Japan's Disaster, Europe's Debt Crisis and War in Libya is Uncertain. That in Itself is Damaging”. *The Economist*. Mar 24th 2011 (print).

My lesson is based on

Henshall, Kenneth, 2004. *A History of Japan: From Stone Age to Superpower*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. 2nd edition.

“Old and Modern Japan”. *New York Times*, Feb.13, 1890. <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/-free/pdf?res=9B00E5D6143BE533A25750C1A9649C94619ED7CF>

Beckmann, George. 1957. *The Making of the Meiji Constitution: The Oligarchs and the Constitutional Development of Japan, 1868-1891*. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press.

George Akita. 1967. *Foundations of Constitutional Government in Modern Japan, 1868-1900*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999).

Inoue, Kyoko. 1991. *MacArthur's Japanese Constitution: A Linguistic and Cultural Study of Its Making*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Matsui Shigenori, Matsui. 2011. *The Constitution of Japan: A Contextual Analysis*. Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2011.

and includes the following student hand-out:

Democratic States
Japan
Regina M. Feldman

KEY: THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORY AND CULTURE

Some key values from ancient period (- 13th century)

- desire to make Japan a strong and respected nation
- willingness to learn
- preference for hierarchy
- avoidance of moral judgments as good and evil

Some key values in medieval Japan (13th to 17th century)

- preference for the indirect
- fatalism instead of individual conscience
- idea of discipline among warriors

Some key values in Tokugawa period (early 17th century to 1860)

- widespread obedience to authority
- collective responsibility and punishment
- high regard for education

Some key values of Meiji Restoration (1869 - 1912)

- revival of reverence for emperor
- ability to mix old and new, native and foreign
- idealization of family values
- control of worldview through propaganda and education
- self-help ideology grows strong

Some key values from end of Meiji to 2000 (1912 - 2000)

- suspicions and unease towards foreigners
- suspicion and unease towards freedom and democratic values
- reverence for the emperor
- a certain fatalism
- awareness of importance of economy
- determination to succeed
- resilience
- relatively easy-going morality
- increasing adoption of western value such as human rights
- suspicion and unease towards unrestrained democracy
- continuing national pride
- partial revival of Japanese sense of racial supremacy
- disorientation and anxiety when goals are not clearly defined

Source: Henshall, Kenneth, 2004.
*A History of Japan: From
Stone Age to Superpower.*
New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Week Two First Period Resources:

My lesson is based on

Henshall, Kenneth, 2004. *A History of Japan: From Stone Age to Superpower*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. 2nd edition.

Week Two Second Period Resources:

Required Readings:

The “[MacArthur Constitution](#)” (1947) and the [Meiji Constitution](#) (1889). Both texts can be found online through the [Hanover Historical Texts Project](#).

The September 27, 1945 photograph of General MacArthur meeting Emperor Hirohito at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, available at [wikimedia](#).

Documentary photographs of Japan during the Occupation, available online [by anthropologist John W. Bennett](#) and [from the Walter A. Pennino Postwar Japan Photo Collection](#), courtesy of the Center for Japanese Studies, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

The Allied Occupation of Japan by Peter Frost , March 26, 2008.
<http://aboutjapan.japansociety.org/index.cfm>

The Occupation of Japan and Democratic Reform by [William Tsutsui](#) , May 27, 2009.
<http://aboutjapan.japansociety.org/index.cfm>

Optional Readings:

Framing Twentieth-Century Japan: A Top-Ten List by [William Tsutsui](#) , September 7, 2007.
<http://aboutjapan.japansociety.org/index.cfm>

Nature and the Environment in Postwar Japan by [William Tsutsui](#) , May 15, 2009.
<http://aboutjapan.japansociety.org/index.cfm>

Popular Culture and Japan’s Gross National Cool by [William Tsutsui](#) , June 2, 2008.
<http://aboutjapan.japansociety.org/index.cfm>

Week Two Third Period Resources:

Debate Evaluation Form:

Montessori High School at University Circle

DEBATE AUDIENCE JUDGING FORM: Resolved that Japan will have a standing army.

Please circle the number indicating who you think did the best job of presenting their views, 3 being the highest ranking.

1st affirmative speaker

1st negative speaker

statements support topic 1 2 3

statements do not support topic 1 2 3

speaker stated sources 1 2 3

speaker stated sources 1 2 3

points clear/persuasive 1 2 3

points clear/persuasive 1 2 3

2nd affirmative speaker

2nd negative speaker

responds to points presented
by negative speaker and
summarizes your affirmative
arguments 1 2 3

responds to points presented
by affirmative speaker and
summarizes your opposing
arguments 1 2 3

In your studied opinion, which team, collectively, did the best job of presenting and affirming their point of view?

Thank you for participating in this debate! Please sign your name and hand to Regina.