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Social Studies/English Language Arts
Grades 6, 7, 8

Section 5: Modern Japanese Fashion

Purpose: Students will be introduced to traditional and contemporary Japanese fashion; and explore Japan and Japanese street fashion to become aware of popular examples of Japanese street fashion trends. There will be discussions on contemporary Japanese fashion and its meaning to the younger generation in Japan (e.g. cosplay, youth culture and high fashion culture).

Students will be able to:

- Identify/ locate/color/label Japan on a world map/globe
- Describe clothing/garments
- Draw street fashion garments
- Write descriptive summaries
- Create fashion scrapbooks

Duration: Two 40 minute class periods (Two-day focus)

Materials:

World Map or Globe (teacher)

Map of Japan (students)

Japan and Japanese Street Fashion KWL graphic organizer (attached)

Colored pencils

Pencils

Notebook paper

Double pocket 3-ring folders

Glue

Scissors

White paper

Computer w/Internet access

Essential Questions (Two-Day Focus)

- What do you know about Japan?
- What do you want to know?
- What have you learned?
- What continent is Japan located on?
- Where is Japan?
- What types of clothes are popular?
- Who wears the styles?

Introduction to the History/Culture of Japan:

Japanese Fashion

When talking about fashion in Japan it is just impossible not to acknowledge the fact that the Japanese have an incredible sense of style. Fashion plays a huge role in the lives of the Japanese because they have a special outlook towards clothing. In Japan, fashion is considered as a way to

express yourself, set your own style, and show others that you are aware of the newest trends. These fashions can be seen in the largest cities in Japan, especially in Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka.

The supercool fashion of Japan is an explosion of the various Asian and Western cultural influences that have influenced Japan over the past 150 years. Youth wear clothing that mix these styles for lots of different personal reasons (exotic, futuristic and traditional styles). The Japanese designers like Issey Miyaki, Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo are among the most famous and innovative fashion creators today.

Traditional Fashion

The first thing that comes to mind when thinking of Japanese clothing is the *kimono*, which literally means “clothing.” This traditional outfit is one of the most recognizable parts of Japanese culture. Although it is not commonly worn anymore, Japanese women wear kimonos from time to time, for formal meetings, religious holidays or family ceremonies, such as weddings. There are different types of kimonos, with each worn according to the person’s age, marital status, season or event.

The *furisode* is a formal kimono type worn by young unmarried women. They are very colorful, bright, and rich with patterns and made of quality silk. The furisode kimono is mostly worn for social functions, as tea ceremony, Ikebana classes or a wedding ceremony.

Another formal kimono type is called the *tomesode*. It has the same social function as furisode with one basic difference, namely it is worn by married and older women only. It has short sleeves, with solid designs and light colors. Tomesode can be basically broken down into categories based on the social functions they have.

The other main type of traditional Japanese kimono is called *yukata*, a summer, casual kimono worn by both men and women. For more formal occasions this kimono type can be worn with wooden sandals, called *geta* and an *obi* belt wrapped around the waist. Yukata is a lightweight cotton kimono with very brightly colored designs on it. It is mostly worn for summer festivals and religious ceremonies such as Bon-Odori.

Modern Fashion

Japan is known for its amazing street fashion. One of the most popular Japanese fashion styles is associated with *Cosplay*, a part of Japanese subculture concentrated at dressing in a similar way as popular characters from Hello Kitty, manga, anime, video games and fantasy movies. The word “Cosplay” is a contraction combining the English words “costume” and “play” and explains the meaning of the whole idea of this fashion movement. Cosplay fans consider this way of dressing up as a hobby and often take part in many clothing contests.

The other popular Japanese street fashion trend is known as Lolita style. This look is inspired by children’s clothing and adults sophisticated costumes from Victorian era. There are a number of categories of the Lolita movement. The most common style is Gothic Lolita, which is a blend of a porcelain doll look with Goth and Punk styles. Another example of the Lolita look is Sweet Lolita, whose characteristic features are pastel-colored clothes and lots of lace and ribbons. The last look is the Classic Lolita, which seems to be more traditional with its light-colored and more mature-looking outfit.

Another very popular fashion movement in Japan is *kogal*. This look is very common among young Japanese woman living in a big cities who want to emphasize their income and unique test in fashion, music and social activities. This look is the best way to show that you are aware of the newest clothing and cultural trends. The most typical features of this style, besides very fashionable way of dressing up, is “Californian tan,” and imitates a well-tanned California so-called “Valley Girl.”

The last, very dressy Japanese fashion look is *ganguro*, which means “black face.” This movement involves a deep tan accompanied by bleached hair, artificial lashes, white lipstick, both black and white eyeliners, platform shoes, and brightly colored clothes. Popular Japanese singer named Amuro Namie and others began this trend in the mid-1990’s.

Day 1

Introduce students to Japan by telling them they will be learning about Japan and Japanese fashion. Distribute KWL graphic organizers. Ask: What do you Know about Japan? Have student list what they know to complete the “K” column. Ask students to share what they wrote. Ask: What do you Want to know about Japan? Have students list what they want to learn in the “W” column. Ask for volunteers to share ideas.

Display the world map and/or globe. Begin the activity by asking, “What continent is Japan located on?” “Where is Japan located?” Have students identify and locate Japan on a world map and/or globe. Describe where Japan is located. Explain to students that China and Korea are also located on the continent of Asia.

Tell students that fashions are popular in Japan. Ask: What types of clothes are popular? Have students give descriptions of how clothes may look and who would wear the styles. Distribute notebook paper and pencils. Have students view pictures of Japanese street fashion online and list words describing clothes, shoes, accessories, hairstyles, etc. Have students to share their findings.

Have students watch a video of Fasshon Koshien and role play as judges. Ask students to choose the best designs, and explain why. Ask students to write explanations for choices on notebook paper for the next day.

Assessment:

Have students complete the “What I Learned” column on KWL chart. Have students share again answers in the **K** column and clear up misconceptions. Have students share answers in the **L** column and clear up misconceptions.

Closure:

Collect KWL graphic organizers. Tell students to begin thinking about designs for Japanese fashion.

Day 2

Review explanations for choices from the previous day and the location for Asia and Japan. Review the **L** column of the KWL graphic organizer. Explain to students that they will be introduced to traditional and contemporary Japanese fashion. Ask students to describe the clothes. Have students list answers on notebook paper. Ask: Who wears the styles? Have

students read the book, *Suki's Kimono* by Chieri Uegaki (2005). Discuss the Japanese *kimono* and cultural diversity. Clear up misconceptions.

Explain to students that they will become designers of Japanese fashion. Distribute colored pencils, pencils, double pocket 3-ring folders, glue, scissors, notebook paper, and white paper. Have students to design (draw) garments and write, cut-out and glue short summaries on drawing pages describing designs and themes (e.g., Rei, Shunpei). Have students to organize drawings and summaries in 3- ring notebooks to create Japanese Fashion portfolios.

Assessment:

Have students add additional information on Japanese fashion to the “What I Learned” column on KWL chart. Have students share again answers in the **K** column and clear up misconceptions. Have students share answers in the **L** column and clear up misconceptions.

Invite other classes as guests for a portfolio presentation. Have students present portfolios to the class and guests. Have students explain what they learned about Japan, describe Japanese fashion, and answer questions about their designs and descriptions.

Closure:

Collect KWL graphic organizers and portfolios from students. Display portfolios on the bulletin board.

Extension Activities:

Print out the “To Wear” worksheet from the Japanese Clothing and Fashion website <http://www.japteach.com/clothing-and-fashion.html>. The sheet uses pictures, labels and vocabulary to explain the four verbs for “to wear” in Japanese and English. Have students to practice the differences between kabute かぶて, kite きて, shite して and haite はいて います. Print out the “He is Wearing” worksheet and have students describe in Japanese what Chris Brown is wearing. Print out the “She is Wearing” worksheet and have students describe in Japanese what Beyoncé is wearing. Use the same website for higher ability students. Give students printout of “Fashion Magazine” and have them read the description of each person’s clothes. Then have students to cut-out a picture of a famous person from a magazine and write a description in English and Japanese on the magazine blank sheet printable.

Suggested Readings:

Christine R. Yano. “Wink on Pink: Interpreting Japanese Cute as It Grabs the Global Headlines,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* (2009), 68: pp. 681-688.

Japanese Fashion; a Cultural History by Toby Slade (2009). Berg Publishers; New York, NY.

Japanese Schoolgirl Inferno by Izumi Evers and Patrick Macias (2007).

Section 6: Resources

Cities Around the World by Kathleen Leslie (1998). Steck-vaughn Company: Austin, Texas.

Count Your Way Through Japan by Jim Haskins (1987).

If the World Were a Village: A Book About the World's People by David J. Smith (2002).

Japan by Ena Keo (1998).

Suki's Kimono by Chieri Uegaki (2005). Kids Can Press.

<http://www.japteach.com/clothing-and-fashion.html>.

Japanese clothing and fashion website. Japanese language teachers exchange site that provides a variety of activities, worksheets, PowerPoints, interactive games, art and crafts, flash cards, songs, videos, useful links on the Japanese clothing and fashion (what I wear and dress ups), and much more.

<http://www.japanesestreets.com/>.

This Japanese street fashion website is inspired by the creative street fashion that exploded on the streets of Tokyo and Osaka in the late 1990's; photo-journalist Kjeld Duits started the site on November 22, 2002. This makes JS one of the first fashion blogs on the net, and the very first to cover Japanese street fashion. JS uploads many thousands of photos every year and regularly publishes interviews with designers and artists and reviews of cool shops. Since 2005, JS also covers the Japan Fashion Week in Tokyo. The site additionally offers a simple fashion directory with information about Japanese fashion magazines, fashion brands and fashion schools.

<http://www.toonippo.co.jp/tv/teen/fashion/2010fashion.asp>.

This site provides a video of Fasshon Koshien, the nation-wide fashion competition for high school students, held in Hirosaki, Aomori once a year. In 2010, they received over 4400 entries from 233 schools all over Japan. The winner of 2010 was sent to Paris as a delegate celebrating the 10th anniversary of the competition.

<http://web-japan.org/trends/index.html>.

Online magazine presented by the Japanese Network about contemporary Japanese culture. Of particular interest is the "Evolving Trends" section, which features articles about fashion, lifestyle, Pop Culture, Street Style, robotics, anime, and cell phones.

Name _____ Date _____

Japan and Japanese Street Fashion KWL Chart

What I <i>Know</i>	What I <i>Want</i> to Know	What I <i>Learned</i>