

“The Japanese Revolution”

Purpose:

To understand the harsh government and oppressive nature of the Tokugawa Shoguns during late 1700s Japan through colonial American parallels.

Learning Objectives:

Students will investigate the practices of oppression, censorship, and widespread loss of freedoms upheld by Tokugawa Shoguns of the late 1700s through the perspective of the common citizen.

Students will investigate the practices of oppression, censorship, and widespread loss of freedoms felt by American colonials under British rule.

Students will parallel the circumstances of Shogun-Era Japanese with the plight of colonial Americans.

Students will examine the U.S. Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights and use them as patterns for the creation of a Japanese “Bill of Rights”

Students will understand that the desire for fundamental freedoms is not culture specific.

Rationale:

Feudal Japan, the Tokugawa Shogun system of government, American Revolutionary ideals, the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights are required benchmarks in the Ohio state curriculum. The understanding and connection of cultures is an additional point of emphasis within the Ohio state curriculum. Furthermore, these topics are addressed on the eighth grade Ohio Achievement Test for social studies and the Ohio Graduation Test.

Lesson Summary:

For this activity the students will become Japanese “rebels.” The student rebels will be divided up into 6 groups: soldiers, poor farmers, fishermen, merchants, wealthy aristocrats and craftsmen. They are sick and tired of the oppression and isolationism of Tokugawa rule. Inspired by the newly independent United States, the “rebels” look to America for guidance. For added drama, each student will play the role of his or her own gender and use his or her unique circumstances to develop the arguments.

Grade level – 7th grade

Time – 4 class periods of 40 minutes each

Materials –

For each student: a copy of the Declaration of Independence, a copy of the Bill of Rights, a copy of the grievances and rights worksheet

For the class: a clear and visual way to compile various lists provided by the class.

Days 1 and 2 – Set up

Note: Prior class periods have been devoted to the discussion of the Tokugawa Shoguns. This will be a culminating activity designed to bring together all of the ideas presented and correlate them with concepts that are more applicable and “real” to the students.

Through discussion, review the circumstances in America during the colonial period leading up to the American Revolution. Key concepts to address are the strict class structure, taxation without representation, excessive taxation, elements of protest (the Boston Tea Party, boycotts), the Intolerable Acts, quartering acts, and gender and racial prejudices.

Distribute a copy of the Declaration of Independence to each student. In pairs, allow them time to evaluate the document and find specific examples of grievances addressed during the opening discussion. Compile these connections in a class list. Students are encouraged to highlight these grievances as they are discovered by the groups. As the class begins to get the idea that the Declaration explains, in very specific terms, why the colonies rebelled, lead them towards the creation of our Bill of Rights. At this point distribute a copy of the Bill of Rights to each student. Allow some time for the students, still in pairs, to explore this document. Now have them find specific references in the Bill of Rights that correspond to the grievances listed in the Declaration. As before, compile the correlations into a class list as the students identify them. Properly guided through this discussion, the students will understand the logic of these documents.

Day 3 - Activity

After a brief recap of the previous day’s discussion, (about 5 minutes) explain to the students that they are now Japanese “rebels” fed up with the oppressive Tokugawa rule. They have heard about the American Revolution and have been inspired by the American Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights. They desire similar freedoms for themselves and their countrymen. To this end, they are to compile a list of grievances against the Tokugawa Shogunate and create a bill of rights that corresponds to those grievances. They will look to the American documents as models.

The following points will be addressed:

- Discriminatory taxation
- Discriminatory land distribution
- Travel restrictions
- Religious restrictions
- Trade restrictions
- Social class discrimination
- Gender discrimination

Distribute a grievances and rights worksheet to each student. Using material from past classes and the worksheet as a guideline, each student will list a specific grievance associated with the list above. Each student will then propose a right that corresponds to each specific grievance. These rights will be compiled in to a Japanese Bill of Rights on Day 4.

Day 4 - Conclusion

Using the students’ statements, compile a class list of grievances against the Tokugawa Shogun. Using the grievances and the rights proposed by the students, create a Japanese Bill of Rights. It is important that every student feels that he/she is part of this decision. Once the Bill of Rights is created, conduct a formal vote to adopt or reject each clause. Revise clauses as needed to get the document passed. End the period with a discussion about the similarities of people regardless of culture, ethnicity, or race.

For Further discussion, I want to caution the students about his lesson. While we as Americans often regard “our way” as the right way. We need to be wary of pushing our influence onto others. What has worked for us may not apply everywhere. It is important to have the students keep this in mind as we wrap our lesson. It would also be a good exercise to have the students prepare a brief follow up essay discussing what

elements of our American system would be problematic for other cultures and what elements would be applicable.

The Declaration of Independence

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.-- That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.
He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.
He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:
For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:
For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:
For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:
For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:
For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:
For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences
For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:
For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:
For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.
He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.
He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.
He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.
He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.
He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

The Bill of Rights of the United States

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment II

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment III

No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense.

Amendment VII

In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

	Grievances Against Tokugawa Shoguns	Statements of Rights for Japan
Discriminatory Taxation		
Discriminatory Land Distribution		
Travel Restrictions		
Religious Restrictions		
Trade Restrictions		
Social Class Discrimination		

Gender Discrimination		
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