

Play Ball!: Japanese Baseball Geography

Ryan Ryzner- 9th Grade Geography

Duration: Three (3) 45 minute class periods. Two (2) periods of instruction/presentation. One (1) period of review and assessment.

Purpose: As an ice breaker for Japanese Geography, students will be given a brief history of Japanese baseball. I will then divide the class and give each small group a team from the Nippon Professional Baseball League. They will then do some basic research on the team and be able to identify on a map where they play their home games. They should also take note of any additional geographical features such as mountains, bodies of water etc. that characterize the city with which their particular teams are associated. Hopefully, this set of lessons will give students information about the Japanese teams that famous Japanese Major League Baseball players in the U.S. played for before leaving Japan.

Materials:

- 1.) Computers or maps of Japan for groups
- 2.) Computers or pen and paper for notes
- 3.) Map of Japan (either physical or projected) to be viewed by all students

Websites:

- 1.) <http://www.npb.or.jp/eng/>
- 2.) <http://www.umich.edu/~wewantas/brooke/baseball.htm>
- 3.) <http://mcel.pacificu.edu/as/students/baseballjapan/sum.html>
- 4.) <http://www.japanball.com/teams.htm>
- 5.) <http://www.abcteach.com/japan/map1.htm>
- 6.) http://www.worldofmaps.net/uploads/pics/topographie_japan.jpg
- 7.) <http://www.wepa-db.net/policies/state/japan/japan.htm>

The Japanese Baseball history information can be found in the first 4 websites. If classes do not have computers, then the teacher should consider providing an information packet. The last site is a blank map which should be provided to the students if computers are not available. The same map should be projected for the class to view and for the map review/quiz. A topographic map is found on site #6. Bodies of water can be found on site #7.

Essential questions:

- 1.) What are the major cities in Japan and where are they located?
- 2.) What major geographical features surround these cities?
- 3.) How does baseball factor into Japanese history/culture? How do sports in general factor into Japanese history/culture?

Knowledge and Skills :

- 1.) Basic Map Reading skills
- 2.) Internet research/note taking skills
- 3.) Working as a group
- 4.) Public speaking/ presentation of researched information

Assessment Information:

- 1.) Map quiz on Japanese baseball cities and basic Japanese baseball questions
- 2.) Group discussion
- 3.) Group participation grade.

Procedures:

- 1.) Provide the background information about Japanese baseball (15-20 min)
- 2.) Split the class into groups. Each group will become an expert on the location and surroundings of that team's city. If the class is larger, use 12 groups and have each group research 1 team/city. If the class is smaller, use 6 groups and have each group research 2 teams/cities. Record data for submission. (20 minutes)
- 3.) Group presentations of findings (45 minutes)
- 4.) Review team locations and geographical surroundings (20 mins)
- 5.) Map/Japanese Baseball Quiz (25 minutes)