

Japanese Lesson Plan

Purpose

The major concept addressed in this lesson will be the distinctions between the four major class groups in Tokugawa Japan.

Essential Questions:

1. What were the four major classes during the Tokugawa dynasty?

Answer: Samurai, Farmers, Craftsmen and Merchants

2. What differences are there between the Tokugawa classes?

Answer: Samurai: Warrior class below only the shogun and daimyo; acted as guards, advisors, government officials, policemen and army; only group allowed to carry long swords; ronin samurai did not have their own master and often became teachers, some sold their services as a means of support

Farmers: Socially important because they produced food for the country; socially below the samurai; not allowed to leave their farms; shogun determined how much of the product the farmers were allowed to keep; during hard times this made the lives of the farmers quite difficult; some farming families eventually defied the shogun's rules and attempted to move to the city to better their lives

Craftspeople: Similar to the merchant class however considered higher because they created things. Their level within the class was determined based on what it was they created. For example, sword makers were held in high regard because they created goods for the samurai.

Merchants: Lowest social class because of the Confucian belief that you needed to produce something to be useful. They were, however, able to become wealthy. The shogun's rules that no vehicles were allowed on his roads made trade difficult.

3. Why was it important that there be no movement between Tokugawa classes?

Answer: In order to maintain the powers and privileges of the upper classes

4. How would this strict class structure affect the people of the Tokugawa dynasty?

Answer: The class structure would serve to keep people from advancing and confine them to the class they were born into. In theory, the class structure would have altered the perception that people of the Tokugawa dynasty had of themselves and others.

Rationale

This lesson is designed to give the students an understanding of the strict and rigid social classes that the Japanese people were forced to live under during the Tokugawa dynasty. Additionally students should gain an understanding of the affect that living under these conditions would have on the Japanese people.

Materials

- Index cards containing social class distinctions and instructions
- Overhead transparency outlining the class distinctions during Tokugawa
- Seating arranged in groups throughout the classroom

Activities

1. As students enter the classroom on the first day of this lesson, they should each draw a card. The card will determine what the student can and cannot do today. The cards should indicate varying degrees of freedom in the class itself. They are intended to be representative of the rights or freedoms that the four classes of the Tokugawa dynasty experienced.

Example Card Instructions:

1. You may sit in the front of the classroom. Throughout the day, if you would like to get up and move around the classroom you may. You may comment on the discussion at any time. You may interrupt any classmate you want at any time. You should not interact with people with any other kind of card.
 2. You may sit in the second section of the classroom. You may move around the room with the permission of the teacher. You may comment on the discussion only when people with the first card are not speaking. However, you may interrupt holders of the third or fourth card at anytime. You should not interact with people with any other kind of card.
 3. You may sit in the third section of the classroom. You may not move around the room. You may comment on the discussion only when people with the first and second card are not speaking. You may only interrupt people with the fourth card. You should not interact with people with the first or second cards. You may only interact with fourth card people sparingly.
 4. You must sit in the fourth section of the classroom. You may not move around the room. You may not speak if anyone else is speaking. Anyone else in the room may interrupt you at anytime. No one in the room is going to interact with you today unless they need to and you should not attempt to interact with them.
2. Once the students are seated in the appropriate areas, the teacher should outline for the students the overhead transparency that has been prepared regarding the class distinctions of the Tokugawa dynasty.
 3. With approximately 10 minutes remaining in the lesson, assign the students a one-page essay for homework. The essay should contain a paragraph on each class as well as another paragraph explaining which class that student believes he or she was a part of during the lesson. This paragraph should describe how the student felt about their placement, as well as how they feel the people of Tokugawa felt about their class structure.
 4. The following day encourage the students to share their essays with the class, paying particular attention to the final paragraph. The teacher should encourage discussion based on the students' ideas about class structure during the Tokugawa dynasty.

Assessment

Essays should be evaluated both as the students present them and as the teacher reviews them individually. The four paragraphs describing the classes should be factual, with points deducted for each incorrect statement. The final paragraph should be evaluated based on whether the student determined their class appropriately. Additionally points should be given for attempting to explain their feelings about their placement.

Grade Adaptation

This lesson is designed for a seventh grade social studies classroom. To adapt the lesson for a higher level of learner, students could be made responsible for researching their own class restrictions (once assigned to a group) and presenting them to a class. Following the assignment with an essay would still be recommended as a means of assessing understanding of all four classes.

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