

Michelle Miller
Japan Lesson Plan
9-10, 45 minute class periods

Japanese Theatre

PURPOSE: To explore and learn about the three main types of Japanese theater; Noh, Kabuki and Bunraku.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. What are the different types of Japanese theatre? (Bunraku, Noh, and Kabuki)
2. What is Bunraku? (It was developed in the Tokagawa period. It uses puppets to tell the story)
3. What is Noh? (It was the first type of theatre. It uses all males to perform. They wear elaborate costumes and masks and perform music and dance. The stage is bare and open to the audience on all sides.)
4. What is Kabuki? (It was founded by Okuni. It began as all female theatre with skits and music. The women dresses up like men and used elaborate scenery.)

RATIONALE: To expose students to Japanese society and culture.

MATERIALS:

Social studies text chapter on Japan. I used "History of our World" by Prentice Hall, 2005

"The World and its People", Silver Burdett and Ginn, 2005.

www.japan-zpne.com

www.japanguide.com

www.ric.edu/parmental/japan/japanlinks.html

www.kisho.com

www.etext.lib.virginis.edu/japanese

www.artelino.com

"All Japan: The catalog of Everything Japanese" by Oliver Statler

"East Asia: A New History", by Rhoads Murphey

ACTIVITIES

*Teacher introduction to Japanese theatre. The teacher gives a brief lecture on the history of each form of Japanese theatre, while students take notes. The brief history is available on pages 225, 255, 263 of Rhoads Murphey book. (1, 45 minute period)

*The class is split into research teams. There should be two teams researching each type of theatre. Team one of each type of theatre will create a model of what the theatre and stage would look like. Team 2 will create a sample costume, mask or puppet for their assigned type of drama. (2, 45 minute periods)

*Each group will present and explain what they have created to the class. (1 45 minute period)

*Teams one and two for each form of drama will join together to rehearse a famous play of their form of drama. They will be responsible for creating any props or costumes needed. (2-3, 45 minute periods) Plays are available on the following websites. www.etext.lib.virginis.edu/japanese/noh, www.etext.lib.virginis.edu/japanese/kabuki, www.japan-zone.com/bunraku.

*The joined teams will present their rehearsed performance to the class. (2, 45 minute periods)

*Students will be assessed on their knowledge of Japanese drama by the quality of stage, costume, mask or puppet they create. Their performance will also be assessed on the accuracy of presentation. The costumes and props should follow the teaching presented. A written test may be created and administered following the performances. The teacher may also wish to create a rubric to assess the plays. (1, 45 minute class period)

GRADE ADAPTATION: This lesson was created for a 7th grade Geography class. The class I teach is at a K-8 parochial school. There are 28-34 students in each classroom. I meet with grades 6-8 each day for approximately 2 hours. The amount of time designated by this lesson plan can be adapted and doubled up for block scheduling where there are larger amounts of class time. The curriculum I follow has a chapter on Japan and a section on Japanese culture. Students may enjoy the extra time spent on an interesting aspect of Japanese life. The amount of work may be added or omitted depending on the grade taught. Teachers may wish to only assign one group to each type of theater and make the group responsible for completing both tasks. The teacher may also omit the performance portion of the activities.