

# Asian Studies Unit

(6 weeks)

## Japan

### **Purpose:**

Although similar in some cultural and historical aspects, China, Japan, and Korea are distinct societies with unique history, traditions, and lifestyles.

Essential Questions:

1. What are some shared traits?
2. What are some differences?
3. How does geography affect the culture of a place?
4. What are some basic facts about Japan?

### **Rationale:**

To familiarize students with some key concepts, ideas, and facts about Japan.

### **Materials:**

A reference library and Internet options for research about Japan.  
A guest speaker.  
Art materials for projects.

### **Activities:**

1. In groups, students will research specific information about Japan.
2. Students will write 6 paragraphs sharing their research.  
Paragraph #1 will include a summary of their required research.  
Paragraphs #2-6 will summarize their findings on their chosen topics.
3. Students will construct a paper kimono and origami fish.
4. On the outside of the kimono, students will decorate it using traditional Japanese designs and colors.
5. On the inside of the kimono, students will display their researched items.
6. Students will present their kimonos to the other groups.
7. Culmination activity: Students will make an origami fish and attach it to their kimono.

**Handout J-1:** List of required and elected items for research.

**Handout J-2:** List of terms and explanations.

**Handout J-3:** Directions for making a Japanese kimono.

**Handout J-4:** Directions for making an origami fish.

**Handouts:** Information about Japanese Kimonos: types, designs and history.

### **Assessment:**

Pre-assessment:

Students will make a list of what they know about Japan. This list will be collected by the teacher and used as part of the final assessment.

Post-assessment:

Following the entire project (five lessons), students will return to their lists of “what they know” about each country. They will cross off any information that they have learned is erroneous and will add new information learned about each culture. Their ability to determine which information is false will show a high level of understanding of the purpose and essential questions of the unit.

10 facts = C

15 facts = B

20 facts = A

Student projects (fans) will be assessed based on effort and accuracy of information as well as fulfilling all information.

### **Grade Adaptation:**

These lessons are targeted to 7<sup>th</sup>-grade students in a World History/language arts inclusive class.

To use these lessons with elementary students, you would select books on their reading level and make certain that reference materials were available on various levels. You could eliminate some of the requirements for the projects and presentations.

To use these lessons with high school students, you would select higher-level reading and research materials. You might also add more requirements to the projects and presentations.

## Handout J-1

### Project/Presentation Requirements – Japan

Your group will make a Japanese kimono using paper and other materials. It will be designed and decorated in traditional Japanese style. On one side you will include the following information, which you will have discovered during your research. Each student will also make an origami fish which will be attached to the kimono.

#### Required Items:

- A timeline of at least 5 significant historical events.
- A tracing of the country from an atlas which will include:
  - time zone
  - distance from Columbus, Ohio
  - 2 lines of latitude /longitude
  - current population
  - one significant landmark
  - major resource(s)
  - capital
- Where our name for the country came from as well as what the natives call the country.
- Information about the major religion(s) practiced or historically practiced.
- The current country flag draw and colored and on it include:
  - current government: type and leader
  - year flag was adopted

#### Selected Items:

Students will then need to add 5 more researched items from the list below. Students may select other items not found on the list, with teacher permission.

music	education	marriage
clothing	food	heritage
art	language	written language
symbols	family	holiday
celebrations	inventions	past-time for teens

For each item you may want to include a bulleted list or words and phrases rather than paragraphs since your space will be limited, and your project should be visually interesting.

An example of a finished project will be displayed in class.

## List of Terms and Explanations

J-2

**Art:** information about traditional arts and art forms in Japan.

**Symbols:** these could be traditional symbols or symbols you feel are important to the culture and country today. Include an explanation.

**Family:** information about the traditional family structure in the country. How are women treated? How are children treated? The old? What groups have high and low status in the family or community?

**Education:** information about who gets an education, what type of education is offered, and an education valued by the people of Japan. Are certain subjects focused on more than others? Describe a typical school day for a 12-13 year old Japanese student. Can compare past to current.

**Music:** information would include traditional music, major instruments, and occasions for which music is played. Can compare past to current.

**Clothing:** information would include traditional dress for men, women, boys, girls, old, etc. Do people still wear the traditional clothing today? If so, when? And if not, what do the people of Japan wear today?

**Inventions:** What inventions came from Japan? What impact did these inventions have on the country of Japan and on other countries, particularly the United States?

**Food:** What are some traditional foods of Japan? What foods do we readily eat in our country? What role does food play in celebrations and rituals?

**Language:** What is the language (s) of Japan. Did the language originally come from somewhere else?

**Written language:** What form of written communication do the Japanese use? Where did the written language come from? Supply a small sample.

**Past -time for teens:** information can include what a typical teenager did for entertainment and socialization in the past and currently.

**Marriage:** information could include average age of marriage, arranged marriages, and traditional wedding ceremonies.

**Heritage:** information could include anything interesting you find about Japanese heritage and how it is preserved within the country.

## Directions for Making a Kimono

1. Each group will need 2 pieces of paper 3 feet x 6 1/2 feet.
2. Fold the top part of one piece paper down 1 1/2 feet.
3. Cut a half circle in the center of the fold (this will be the space for your head to go through). Use the pattern provided. Allow for 4 inches on each side.
4. Staple to form sleeves.
5. Take the 2nd piece of paper and cut in half length wise. Trim off bottom to match length of the first piece
6. Staple the sleeves to the front of the kimono.

Japan References:

1. East Asia: A New History by Rhoads Murphey
2. Origami, Plain and Simple by Thomas Hull
3. Understanding Japanese Society by Joy Hendry
4. Comparing Cultures by Merry I. White, Sylvan Barnet
5. Kimono Fashioning Culture by Liza Crihfield
6. How to Make a Kimono [www.twilightbridge.com](http://www.twilightbridge.com)
7. Japanese Kimono: Fabric, Pattern, How to Make, and History  
[www.japanesekimono.com](http://www.japanesekimono.com)
8. History of Kimonos [www.jinjapan.org](http://www.jinjapan.org)
9. The Complete Illustrated Guide to Japanese Systems: Politics, Economics, Law and Order by Abe Naobumi and Ted Takahashi
10. The 100% Complete Illustrated Guide to Japanese Systems: Society, Customs, Health Care, Recreation, and Sports by Abe Naobumi and Ted Takahashi