

## Japanese Lesson Plan

Kathy Swanger  
Marion Harding High School

### Analyzing Japanese Imperialism

Purpose: Analyze the motives for Japanese imperialism  
Compare and contrast Japanese imperialism to European and United States imperialism

#### Essential Questions:

1. Should Japan have the same imperial rights as Great Britain, Germany, or the United States?
2. Why does the white race believe that it is superior to all other races?
  - Josiah Strong
  - Rudyard Kipling
  - “The world has grown so much accustomed to the idea of white races dominating all others, and overcoming them with comparative ease whenever occasion arises, even in self-defence, to strike the first blow.” --Cowen, Thomas
3. Was the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor an act of war or an imperialist move?

Rationale: To have students interpret imperialism from a different perspective

Materials: Japanese Imperialism Handouts

- A. Desire to be a Western-style imperialism power
- B. Concerns for security and safety
- C. Belief in its leadership role for Asia
- D. Provocation by Western powers
- E. Security of economic interests

Maps

- Imperialism in Asia
- Colonial empires (1914)
- Age of Imperialism

Activities: Introduction – Land Grab – students will be broken into groups to represent the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and Japan

- each group will be given 5 tags (post-it notes, different shapes or colors)
- groups will be given 5 minutes to survey the classroom and determine the most valuable assets
- on command group members will begin tagging (claiming) assets (first claim wins)
- activity is culminated with a discussion on why certain items were claimed, what happened when your item was taken first by another claim, what would the “real countries” have been claiming, and why would they want certain areas

Group Work (Response Group) – Understanding Japanese Imperialism

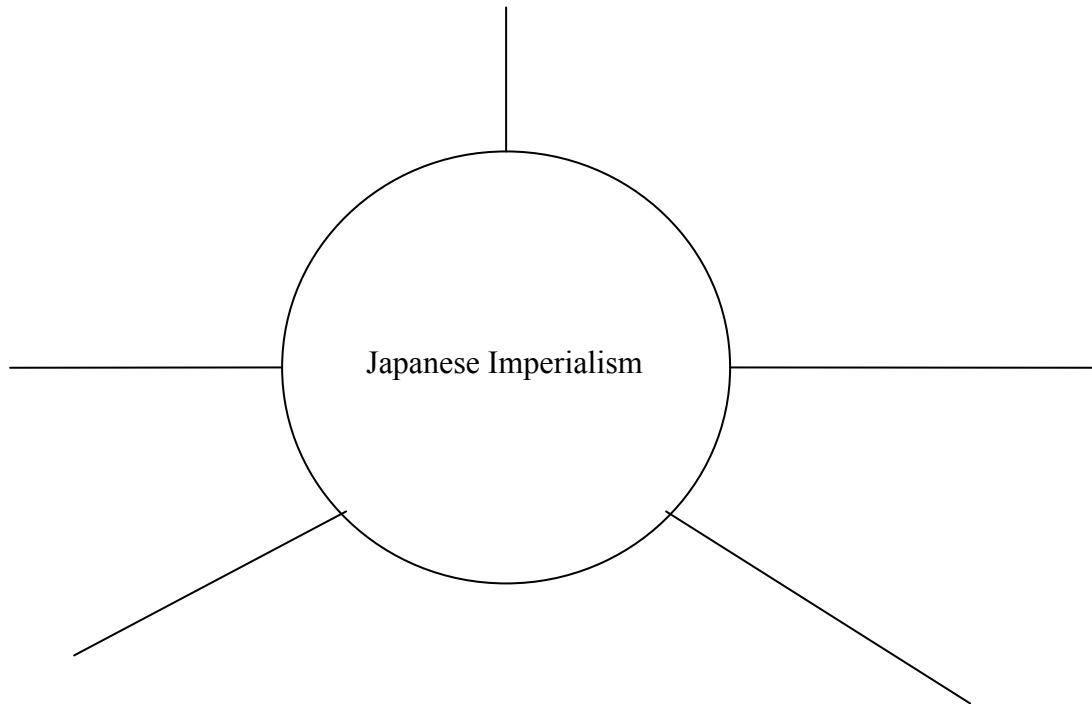
- Divide the class into groups of 3
- Each group will receive one of the handouts Japanese Imperialism
- Each group will be given 5-10 minutes per handout to read it, discuss it, and answer the critical thinking questions
- Groups will exchange handouts and repeat the process for all 5 handouts

- When each group has it's final handout, the group will become the experts on that issue of Japanese imperialism and report out to the class
- All groups will report out giving a brief description of Japanese imperialism and their answers to the critical thinking questions

Assessment: Response group answers to the critical thinking questions will be written in the notebook  
Scored Discussion – using the information from the response groups, students will discuss the critical thinking questions in a scored discussion

Homework Assignment – to be completed in the notebook

- Create a web of the 5 Principal Reasons for Japanese Imperialism



- Take one of the 5 principles and create a flow chart with at least 3 boxes that explains the principle using graphics/symbols and words

Grade Adaptation: American history – grade 10  
Modern world history – grade 9

## Response Groups

### Principal Reasons for Japanese Imperialism

#### 1. The desire to be a Western-style imperialist power.

- Make Japan a first-rate nation
  - Prestige
  - Power
  - Gaining foreign territorial possessions
- Demands for rights and privileges in other Asian nations

#### Critical Thinking Questions

1. Does Japan have the right to be as imperialistic as the United States and other European powers? Why or why not?
2. Should Japan have the right to create a first-rate nation? Why or why not?
3. Should Japan have the right to enter other Asian countries for their own advancement? Why or why not?
4. How is Japanese imperialism in Asia different or similar to European imperialism in Africa and Asia and U.S. imperialism in the Pacific and Caribbean?

## Response Groups

### Principal Reasons for Japanese Imperialism

#### 2. Concerns for security and safety

- Provide defense
  - Against Russia
  - Against other Western powers
- Fears of being invaded
  - By Russia
- Western powers could cause China to collapse
  - Profound implications on Japan's security
- Need to control Korea
  - Essential element to protect Japan
  - Geographical location
  - Borders with China and Russia

#### Critical Thinking Questions

1. Do countries have the right to provide a defense of their borders? Why or why not?
2. Does a fear of invasion justify imperialism? Why or why not?
3. Should a country have the right to intervene in other countries affairs to protect themselves? Why or why not?

## **Response Groups**

### **Principal Reasons for Japanese Imperialism**

#### **3. Belief in its leadership role for Asia**

- Manifest Destiny
  - Free Asian countries from Western imperialism
  - Lead other nations to collective strength and prosperity
- Japan was the first Asian country to defeat a Western power
  - Russia – Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05
  - Encourage other Asian countries to stand up to Western imperialist designs
- Ultra nationalist groups wanted to expel foreign powers

#### **Critical Thinking Questions**

1. Should one country in a region have the right to control other nations in the region? Why or why not?
2. How can a country aspire to be a Western-style imperialist power, yet try to free Asian countries from Western imperialism?
3. Does it help a country to expel one foreign power and be under the control of another country? How?

## Response Groups

### Principal Reasons for Japanese Imperialism

#### 4. Provocation by Western Powers

- A series of coercive acts, insults, and provocations by Western nations (1850s to 1930s)
  - Caused great anger to foster among Japanese people
- 1921-22 Washington Conference
  - forced on Japan an unfavorable battleship ratio – 5:5:3 (U.S.:Great Britain:Japan)
- London Naval Conference of 1930
  - Coerced Japan to accept the same ratio for heavy cruisers
- Paris Peace Conference
  - Western countries rejected the simple Japanese request to have a racial equality clause in the League of Nations Covenant
- U.S. slights – affronts to Japanese pride and status
  - California passed anti-Japanese legislation (1905)
  - San Francisco school board ordered Japanese and other Asian children to attend segregated schools (1906)
  - Japanese Exclusion Act (1924) – shut off Japanese immigration

#### Critical Thinking Questions

1. Was Japan treated fairly/justly by international organizations? Why or why not?
2. Did the United States play a significant role in slighting Japan that may have led to Japanese imperialism? Why or why not?
3. Was Japan offered equal treatment at the Washington Conference? Why or why not?

## Response Groups

### Principal Reasons for Japanese Imperialism

#### 5. Security of Economic Interests

- Japan's heavy dependence on foreign trade
  - Hurt by world depression (1930s)
- Economic growth required strong exports
  - Japanese textiles
  - Other goods
- Required imports of raw materials to supply manufacturing
  - Invasion and seizure of Manchuria (1931)
  - Resources of iron and coal
- Maintain its self-sufficiency
- Japanese population increase
  - Between 1918 and 1930 expanded dramatically
  - Outstripped the capacity of the nation's resources to support it
  - Food imports greatly needed

#### Critical Thinking Questions

1. If a nation's population increases and it has a greater demand for resources, does it have the right to acquire resources through imperialism? Why or why not?
2. When a nation outgrows its boundaries does it have the right to attempt to gain more land through imperialism? Why or why not?
3. How is Japan different from the U.S. in term of imperialism? (consider Cuba and Hawaii)