

Bringing East Asia into the classroom: Lesson Plan

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Lesson Title: American Imperialism and Its Japanese Encounter

Time Range: 1-2 class periods (45 minutes)

Ohio Standard: American History

Topic: Foreign Affairs from Imperialism to Post-World War I (1898-1930)

The industrial and territorial growth of the United States fostered expansion overseas. Greater involvement in the world set the stage for American participation in World War I and attempts to preserve post-war peace.

Content Standard: 15

As a result of overseas expansion, the Spanish-American War and World War I, the United States emerged as a world power.

Content Elaborations:

With the closing of the western frontier, Americans developed favorable attitudes toward foreign expansion. Pushed along by global competition for markets and prestige, an expanded navy and a sense of cultural superiority, the United States engaged in a series of overseas actions which fostered its move to global power status.

Grade Level Indicators: American History 10

Introduction/ Lesson Summary:

This lesson will focus on the idea of American Imperialism and its interaction with Japan. We will look at Commodore Perry's voyage and how he helped negotiate a treaty between the United States and a previously closed Japan.

We will be looking at the following primary sources:

1. A Cross-section of the Susquehanna
2. Visualizingcultures.mit.edu
 - a. A cross-section of the Susquehanna
 - b. Black Ships and Samurai: Commodore Perry and the opening of Japan
 - c. Encounters, Black Ships and Portraits
3. President Filmore's letter to the Emperor of Japan, delivered July 14, 1853
4. Japanese Reply to President Filmore's Letter
5. Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the United States of America and the Empire of Japan (Treaty of Amity and Commerce, Harris Treaty)

Students will read the material and answer questions, in a think, pair, share form, as well as class discussion.

Materials:

Primary Sources:

1. A Cross-section of the Susquehanna

https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/black_ships_and_samurai/cross01.html

2. Black Ships and Smaurai

https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/black_ships_and_samurai_02/bss_visnav01.html

This is the main page. Students will navigate this website using the tabs on the left side of the page in a blue box. Each section will have its own title and two sections discussing the Western's and Eastern's view of this topic. These will be called: Facing East and Facing West.

Visual Narratives:

- Encounters
- Black Ships
- Portraits

Document A:

President Filmore's letter to the Emperor of Japan, delivered July 14, 1853

https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/black_ships_and_samurai/presletter.html

Document B:

Japanese Reply to President Filmore's Letter

https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/black_ships_and_samurai/presletter.html

Document C:

Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the United States of America and the Empire of Japan (Treaty of Amity and Commerce, Harris Treaty)

1. <http://worldjpn.grips.ac.jp/documents/texts/pw/18580729.T1E.html> (Longer Version)
2. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Harris_Treaty (Shorter Version)

Lesson:

We will begin with a brief background of the idea of American Imperialism and how Commodore Perry was sent to engage Japan. After the discussion of imperialism and Americas response to this, you will tell students they will be looking at various primary sources showing the interactions between the United States and Japan. The goal is to see how the two cultures met and signed a trade agreement benefiting the United States.

1. Brief introduction to American Imperialism and Commodore Perry's voyage to Japan.
2. Show students a cross-section of the Susquehanna; one of the boats used on the voyage. Discussion on boat, components, and information provided in visual.
3. Break class into three groups. Assign each group one of the visual narratives.
 - a. Encounters, Black Ships, and Portraits
 - b. Students will look at how the East and West portrayed the meeting and what it says about each country and their view of each other. Have students explain how these pieces of art display their culture and interpretation of this meeting.
 - c. Have main page displayed on the board and ask the group to briefly explain the east and west version of each section to the entire class, answering their prompt. Have them choose one piece of art from the West and East to compare and explain to the class.

4. Break students into pairs. Students will now look at: President Filmore's letter to the Emperor of Japan, delivered July 14, 1853 and the Japanese reply to President Filmore's Letter.
5. Have them read, highlight, and annotate the documents. Answer questions that pertain to the documents with their partner.
6. Go through documents and discuss findings as a class.
7. Depending on time or ability of your students they will finish by looking at the Harris Treaty. As a class they will read through the document noting the main points of the document and who gained more from this treaty and why.
8. Extension/ Class Discussion questions time permitting.

Reading and discussion questions:

Document A:

1. When was this document written? Who is involved with this document?
2. What does the author mean when they state "The United States and Japan should live in friendship and have commercial intercourse with each other"? How do they propose to do this? What is important about the word "friendship?"
3. Why do they give a history of the United States?
4. How they state the United States and Japan are similar or different?
5. What role(s) does Commodore Perry play?

Prior to reading Document B ask students to write down how they think the Japanese should have responded to this request?

Document B:

1. When was this document written? Who is involved with this document?
2. How did Document A influence Document B?
3. What major points brought up in this response?
4. What was the same or different about how the Japanese responded prior to you reading the document?

Document C:

1. When was this document written? Who wrote it?
2. What is important to the Americans according to this document?
3. What did the Japanese get out of signing this treaty?
4. If you were a Japanese citizen how would you feel about this document?
5. How is this an example of American Imperialism? Please provide two examples.

Class discussion or extension questions:

1. How do these documents and sources back up the idea of American Imperialism?
2. Why was the United States able to get Japan's co-operation in signing the Harris Treaty?
3. What were the short and long-term implications of this? (The United States and Japan)

