



## **A Lot of Pros and Khans: The Attempted Mongol Invasions of Japan**

**Lesson Plan by:** Amy McKibben, Berkshire Middle School, NCTA 2021 (The Ohio State University seminar)

**Title:** A Lot of Pros and Khans: The Attempted Mongol Invasions of Japan

**Theme/Topic:** Mongol Invasions of Japan, 1274 - 1281

**Introduction** (2-3 sentence summary of lesson): In this module, students will continue their study of the spread of the Mongol empire by focusing on the Mongol failure to conquer Japan and the results of that failure. We will use various tools, including Google Earth Pro and PearDeck to explore this topic, the geography of the region, and the ramifications of the Mongol defeat.

**Subject(s)/Grade level(s):** Grade 7 Social Studies/ World History

**Suggested Duration of Lesson:** 2 class periods

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### **Connection to Standards/Common Core (2-3 standards):**

GEO.7.13 Geographic factors promote or impede the movement of people, products, and ideas.

HIST.7.4: The Mongols conquered much of Asia which led to unified states in China and Korea. Mongol failure to conquer Japan allowed a feudal system to persist.

*\*NOTE: The wording of this standard comes directly from the Ohio Standards; however, the truth of the outcome of the Mongol invasions is more nuanced. Most scholars see the outcome of the Mongol invasions as the major factor behind the eventual demise of the Kamakura shogunate. See the actual slideshow/ lesson presentation for more information.*

### **Essential Questions (2-3 questions):**

Why were the Mongols unable to conquer Japan?

How did the Mongol failure to conquer Japan affect Japanese society and culture?

Why was the Mongol failure to conquer Japan important to world history as a whole?

### **Learning Objectives (2-3 objectives):**

Students will be able to...

Explain why Japan's geographic location and topography made conquest difficult

- Limited places to mount an attack (harbors)
- Likelihood of storms (typhoon, kamikaze)

Describe the effects of the Mongol failure on Japanese society and, ultimately, world history

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### **Materials Needed:**

Teacher needs: Projector, computer, access to PearDeck, large chart paper to gather what students already know about Japan

Students need: Computer, access to Internet, access to PearDeck, pencil, Cornell notes sheet with timeline on the back Both are linked in slide presentation if student or teacher wishes to do this electronically - also linked here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LNWkq1G7zSOcbE8ADefxT5dIoD6MdtLD8zpybRvOOaE/edit?usp=sharing>

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/11J4uqWILteY3vj-33-q-A6WoZMmb5E7AKU1r4SoTZLw/edit?usp=sharing>



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**Pre-Assessment of Prior Knowledge:** *How will students show what they already know about the topic?* Students will answer some prior knowledge questions on PearDeck as pre-assessment. This is in the middle of a larger unit about Mongol conquests, so the teacher should already have a pretty good idea of where students are in terms of their “Mongol knowledge”!

**Lesson Activities/Instructional Strategies (5-7 steps):**

1. Pre-Assessment: informal check on Pear Deck (what do you already know about Japan?)
2. Students explore Japan via Google Earth shared file (KMZ file from NCTA Seminar)
3. Discuss findings whole class; remind students what they have already learned about the Mongols
4. Predict: what happens if the Mongols attempt to invade Japan?
5. Explore teacher-created Google Earth link/ fill out timeline (on paper or electronically, perhaps with partners)
6. Watch video: fill out Cornell notes and correct/ add to timeline
7. Complete Cornell notes/ timeline and turn in as formative assessment

**Resources:**

Cartwright, M. (n.d.). The Mongol invasions of Japan, 1274 & 1281 CE. In *World history encyclopedia*.

The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation. Retrieved July 28, 2021, from

<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1415/the-mongol-invasions-of-japan-1274--1281-ce/>

*Mongol invasion of Japan: Maps, animation, and timelines* [Video]. (2020, July 3). Past to

Future. <https://youtu.be/gpguP8emkYc>

Rossabi, M. (2021). *Mongols in World History*. Asia for Educators, Columbia University.

Retrieved July 28, 2021, from <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/mongols/>

**Closing/Reflection Activity:** *How are students engaging with ideas from another culture? What does it mean for them?*

While exploring Japan via Google Earth, students will see various structures, pictures, and engage with ideas that are specific to Japanese culture (for example, the long-lasting idea of the *kamikaze* and the national identity that sprung from that idea).



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**Post-Assessment:** *How will students demonstrate what they have learned about the topic from this unit?*

Students will explain how the Mongol failure to invade Japan affected Japan. They have an opportunity to show their learning about this topic through 3 possible choices:

- 1) write a “chunked” paragraph;
- 2) explain via a 1 minute Flipgrid;
- 3) create a series of pictograms, either drawn or created physically (like the human pictograms in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Opening Ceremony)

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**Extension Activities/Extending the Lesson/Cross-Curricular Connections (2-3 ideas):**

- The Mongol invasion of Japan is depicted fictionally in a popular video game, “Ghosts of Tsushima.” With parental permission, play the video game and write a review of the game.
- A natural disaster stopped the Mongols from invading Japan not once, but twice! Research natural disasters in Japan and create a short presentation explaining which 3 disasters have most affected Japan.
- A familiar type of poetry that originated in Japan is *haiku*. Write a haiku that expresses something you learned from today’s lesson - perhaps something you saw on Google Earth, something you heard during discussion or the video, or something you imagine about the attempted invasion of Japan.