

Ceremonies - Once Upon a Castle

Summary

Students will learn about the castles in Japan, how and why they were built, and in particular, the history of Matsumoto Castle.

Materials

Puzzle packets of Matsumoto Castle for students (working in small groups) Puzzle can be made by downloading pictures of Matsumoto Castle, backing it with construction paper, then cutting puzzle pieces.

- [Fact Sheet](#)

Pictures of castles around the world

Background for Teachers

Because castles in the United States are almost non-existent*, students have a curiosity about them. Studying Matsumoto Castle is an opportunity to learn more about the medieval period of Japan and the role of castles in their history.

*Iolani Palace in Hawaii is the only known castle in the United States

Intended Learning Outcomes

Using Matsumoto Castle as an example, students will learn about Japanese castles, when and why they were built, and what they looked like. They will also learn about the castles' role during the feudal period of Japanese history.

Instructional Procedures

As an introduction to the lesson, without telling them what it is, have students in small groups (2-4) put together a puzzle of Matsumoto Castle. Ask students if they know what the picture is of. Introduce the topic of castles, noting that for Americans this is information with which we are not familiar.

A comparison and contrast can be drawn between European and Japanese castles. Using information from fact sheet, students can learn about the purposes of Japanese castles and compare them with what they know about European castles. They will probably find that they are much alike.

In conjunction with what students see in the sister-city exhibit about Matsumoto, the teacher could then give information about one of the highlight locations of that city (see fact sheet for more information). There are a number of websites that will show pictures that can be used.

As a final discussion with students, the teacher could make a connection to buildings in the United States that we consider similar to Japanese castles. We have national and state capitols, military bases located all across the nation, and a few surviving forts.

Extensions

This would be a great bonus project for students who like art, with them drawing or designing a castle of their own. The Matsumoto puzzles could be given as rewards to students who showed extra efforts in learning about Japanese castles.

Bibliography

- [This History of Castles](#)

- [Matsumoto Castle](#)
- [The Castles of Japan](#)
- [japan-guide.com - Castles](#)

Authors

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