

Ceremonies - Introducing Japan

Summary

Students will gain a spatial perspective of the physical and human characteristics of Japan. Teachers can adapt this lesson to more specifically focus on any physical or human characteristic more deeply depending on the time they have.

This lesson is created as part of a series of lessons to compliment the Center for Documentary Arts' exhibit "Ceremonies: A Tale of Sister Cities", however this lesson can also be used independently of that exhibit.

Materials

- World Atlas for each student
- ELMO projector or overhead projector and transparencies of maps from the same Atlas
- Blank map of Japan
- Colored pencils

Background for Teachers

Teachers should review this lesson and study various maps of Japan in order to become familiar with the physical and human characteristics shaping Japan. Teachers should also study a map of Japan in the context of the same types of world thematic maps to gain familiarity of Japan's physical and human characteristics in relation to other parts of the world.

Intended Learning Outcomes

- Students will develop analytical skills, critical thinking skills and map skills.
- Students will identify the location of Japan.
- Students will become familiar with various physical and human characteristics of Japan and how they may influence each other.
- Students will make comparisons between Japan and the United States.

Instructional Procedures

- Using a world political map, locate Japan
 - Identify the 4 main islands of Japan
 - Which island is the largest?
 - Identify the latitude and longitude of Japan
 - Which island lies the furthest north? The furthest south?
 - Based on the latitude and longitude, predict what the climate might be like in Japan.
 - Would the climate be the same on each island?
 - What other countries are located near Japan (consider all directions)?
 - Refer to a larger scale map of Japan. How many large cities are identified? What might that indicate about lifestyle, land use, and land value?
 - What other main cities in the world are located in the same latitude and longitude range as Tokyo?
- Now, study a world physical map. What does the physical map indicate about Japan's physical geography?
 - Do other major cities share any similar physical features? If so, discuss what the similarities are.
 - Predict how the physical features might influence settlement patterns.
- Using a World Atlas, study a variety of thematic world maps such as climate, land use, growing

season, population, etc.

Make a comparison between each of the maps. What patterns are revealed? For example, what is revealed when comparing the land use map with the population map? Were students earlier predictions about land use correct? How might the growing season present a challenge for Japan? What is the relationship between the climate map and population distribution? In what ways are the four main islands different? What do you notice about settlement patterns on each island?

Utilizing a Venn Diagram, make a comparison between Japan and the United States by referring to the thematic maps. Be sure to identify appropriate regions of either country when identifying similarities they share.

Identify the location of Matsumoto, Japan. Based on your understanding of Japan thus far, speculate how Matsumoto might compare to Salt Lake City, Utah.

Synthesize: Based on the study of various maps of Japan , answer the following questions:

How does the physical geography of Japan influence the settlement patterns and land use of Japan? Use examples to support your answer.

Authors

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