

Ceremonies - Poke What?

Summary

Students will examine cultural characteristics of Japan.

This lesson is created as part of a series of lessons to compliment the Center for Documentary Expression and Art's exhibit "Ceremonies: A Tale of Sister Cities", however this lesson can also be used independently of that exhibit. Lesson 3 of this same series provides an extension of this lesson.

Materials

New York Times article, ["Ideas & Trends: Japanese Family Values: I Choose You, Pikachu!"](#) by Stephanie Strom, November 1999

Pokemon video clip (your choice -- you can find these at any local library)

Background for Teachers

Teachers should read the article to familiarize themselves with the content. Teachers should preview the Pokemon video and select a short clip that aligns with the intended lesson.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will examine characteristics that shape Japanese culture and attitudes.

Students will analyze how popular culture influences and shapes society.

Students will make comparisons and identify similarities and differences between Japanese cultural attitudes with the cultural attitudes of their community.

Students will practice active reading strategies.

Instructional Procedures

Ask students to discuss the Pokemon cartoon series exported from Japan.

What is Pokemon?

What makes Pokemon so popular in the USA?

What are the underlying messages in the Pokemon stories?

Discuss the concept of values.

What is meant when people talk about the values of a society?

Identify values as being what people believe are important characteristics.

Brainstorm a list of values that characterize your community.

Introduce the New York Times article, "Ideas and Trends; Japanese Family Values: I Choose You, Pikachu!"

Instruct students to read the article silently to themselves and highlight information that describes characteristics that are highly valued in Japanese society.

Students should circle any words or phrases they do not understand in the article

When students are finished reading the article, conduct a whole class discussion that clarifies the portions of the article the students circled.

Then, based on what students highlighted, list characteristics that are highly valued in Japanese society.

Are any of the Japanese characteristics that are valued by society also valued by society in the US? If so, discuss how they know?

Show a clip from a Pokemon series (there are several to choose from) that demonstrates one of the identified characteristics of Japanese society

This will introduce students who are unfamiliar with Pokemon to the Pokemon series
Process how the media is influential in helping society shape its values

Divide students into groups of 3-4.

Have students come up with a list of children's movies, cartoons or characters that represent characteristics that are highly valued in the US.

Share out each group lists and chart the responses.

Comparing the lists generated for both societies, ask students to identify any differences (if there are any).

How might watching a movie exported from the USA into Japan influence the Japanese perception of society in the US?

Synthesize: Ask students to respond to the following questions:

Now that we have explored characteristics that are valued in Japanese society, predict how those values might impact family roles, school experience, and business.

Authors

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