

UNIT 1: FROM ISOLATION TO ADAPTATION: JAPAN

VOCABULARY AND PRONUNCIATION SHEET

WORD	GUIDE FOR PRONUNCIATION	MEANING OF DESCRIPTION
Sengakuji	Sen-ga-koo-jee	An area in the city of Tokyo, a temple
Asano Naganori	A-san-noh Na-ga-noh-ree	A lord in the Japanese court
Daimyo	die-myoh	Title of a lord, estate holder, or noble family in japan
Samurai	sa-moo-rai	A warrior in service to a lord
Shogun	shoh-gun	Military head of state, usually appointed by the Japanese emperor to lead the country
Tokugawa Ieyasu	Toh-ku-ga-wah	Leader of the Tokugawa clan that rose to shogun and started the Edo Period of Japan
Seppuku	sep-pu-koo	Ritual suicide
Kira Yoshinaka	Kee-ra Yoh-shee-na-kah	A master of ceremonies in the imperial court
Ronin	roh-nin	A warrior without a master
Toyotomi Hideyoshi	Toh-yo-toh-mee Hi-de-yoh-shee	A Japanese lord and unifier of the clans
tanegashima	Tah-ne-ga-shee-ma	An early matchlock musket used by the Japanese
Sekigahara	Seh-kee-ga-ha-rah	A town and place of an important feudal battle
Koshaku	Ko-shah-koo	Title given to the Tokugawa family after the Edo Period, meaning Prince or “Magnificent Lineage”
Edo	Ee-doh	City in Japan, now called Tokyo
Meiji	Mai-jee	Period of Japan when Emperor Mutsuhito ruled
Shinto	Shin-toh	Traditional religion of Japan
Confucius	Con-fyu-shus	Writer and philosopher
Buddhism	Bud-dizm	A religion and philosophy from central Asia
Kendo	Ken-doh	Japanese sport of fencing and sword mastery
Ukiyo	Yu-kee-yoh	Japanese art movement about the everyday life and interests of common people
bushido	Bu-shee-doh	Military code of discipline, behaviour and honour
kumadori	Koo-ma-dohr-ree	A style of make-up for dramatic presentations
Ainu	Ai-noo	Indigenous people of the Japanese islands
Chrysanthemum	chry-san-the-mum	Large, majestic flower
Tsuda Umeko	Tsoo-dah U-me-koh	Japanese child diplomat who lived in the USA and changed education for women in Japan
homogeneous	ho-moh-jee-nee-us	The same or similar nature
Kurile	Koo-ril	A group of islands near Japan
Ryukyu	Ri-yoo-ki-yoo	A chain of islands near Japan
Karafuto	Kair-ra-foo-toh	An island between Russia and Japan
Nogi Maresuke	No-gee Mair-re-soo-keh	A general devoted to the Emperor Meiji

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CULTURAL ISOLATION DURING THE EDO PERIOD

LEARNING INTENTIONS:

Values, Attitudes, Knowledge, and Understanding

- Students will appreciate the roles of time and geographic location in shaping a society's worldview.
- Students will appreciate how a society's worldview can foster the choice to remain an isolated society.
- Students will analyze the effects of cultural isolation during the Edo Period by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues.

Skills and Processes

- Students will develop skills of critical and creative thinking.
- Students will develop skills of historical thinking.
- Students will develop skills of geographic thinking.
- Students will apply the research process.
- Students will demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution, and consensus-building.
- Students will demonstrate skills of oral, written, and visual literacy.
- Students will demonstrate skills of media literacy.

SUCCESS CRITERIA:

- correctly identify the geographic, historical, economic, and political features of Japan's Edo Period.
- arrange corresponding dates and events with key details or key figures in the historical development of the Edo Period.
- communicate with oral, visual, and written information how people of Japan's Edo Period

managed the consequences of isolation, military control, artistic expression, and adaptation.

QUESTIONS FOR INQUIRY:

- In what ways did Japan isolate itself from the rest of the world?
- How did isolation during the Edo Period lead to changes in Japan?
- How did the changes resulting from isolation affect Japan economically, politically, and socially during the Edo Period?
- How did the physical geography of Japan affect its worldview?
- How did the shogun use the feudal system and the hierarchical social classes to maintain control of Japan?

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- a copy of *Japan's Edo Period – Feudal Lords and Samurai Warriors* Pages 15-17 for each student
- a copy of *Japan's Edo Period – Military Dictators and Strict, Stable Peace* Pages 18-22 for each student
- a copy of *Japan's Edo Period – Timeline of Leaders and Events* Pages 23-27 for each student
- a copy of *Japan's Edo Period – How Can Culture and Art Flourish in Isolation?* Pages 28-32 for each student
- a copy of *Japan's Edo Period – The Fall of Edo* Pages 33-37 for each student
- pencils, pens, paper, organizers or binders
- video or visual display equipment, internet access

- map of the world, globe, map of Japan, historical artwork from Japan of 1600s, 1700s, 1800s
- photos of the geography and natural environment around Japan and the Pacific Coast

PROCEDURE:

1. Introduce students to the theme words for the course of study - *Isolation, Adaptation, Exchange, and Conflict*. In order to fully develop an appreciation for each of these themes, students will need a good understanding of the difference between phrases such as worldview, point of view, and perspective. Here is a sample conversation starter:

One important idea in the social studies program is to examine worldviews, and how a worldview affects how we see and look at things, and relate to places around us.

A worldview is a collection of beliefs about life and the world held by an individual or group that helps interpret the world around them. A worldview helps a person or group experience, understand, verify, and even participate in different events of life.

I'm going to create a list of elements that go into a worldview. With each one, we are going to talk about how each element can affect a person's point of view and perspective.

Write up a list for the class, including elements of worldviews such as this list below:

Elements of a Worldview:

Geography	Language
Time	Customs and Events
Society	Beliefs
Values	Economy and Trade
Knowledge	Education

For each element, ask the class how the element might affect a person's point of view and perspective. For example, a geographic area with a lot of plains may affect food grown and animals hunted. Language can affect what people see as masculine and feminine (the French language may provide examples) or

what is considered good or bad character in a person. Use items from the classroom or from the community that help illustrate elements of a worldview – electronic devices, colourful clothing, lunches, and more.

2. Discuss with your class the relationship between worldview, point of view, and perspective and the four themes of *Isolation, Adaptation, Exchange, and Conflict*. Here is a sample conversation starter:

Life will throw challenges at you. Some might be easy but others very tough. Every challenge gives us a choice. There are consequences to every choice, whether we like it or not. The four words in the title of this social studies course are examples of what choices we have when something in life challenges us. We can choose, for example, isolation, adaptation, exchange, or conflict.

Lead the class in a discussion to find descriptions, definitions and examples of the four words. For example, isolation has to do with separation or withdrawal from others. Here is another sample:

Hospitals isolate patients in critical care to make sure nothing in the outside world makes things worse for the patient. Families isolate themselves during pandemics. Whole countries isolate themselves to avoid threats or influences from other countries. Isolation can be good or bad. It is important to take responsibility for the choice you make when you decide to isolate yourself from others.

3. Turn the attention of students to Japan with a map or globe. Assess student past knowledge with a discussion about Japan's history. Some key vocabulary words that might help include: samurai, bushido, calligraphy, shogunate, feudal system.

Explain to students how they will be exploring the Edo Period of Japan. This was a time when Japanese culture chose isolation. This was a time of strict military control, but also a time of great development in art, culture, and peace; however, Japan could not stay in isolation forever, and eventually had to face adaptation.

4. Distribute Pages 15-17 for each student. Read as a class or use as independent reading work. Check for understanding and assign questions and exercises from the worksheets. Monitor student progress and review material with class as needed in a group exercise or assessment of personal worksheets.
5. Distribute Pages 18-22 for each student. Read as a class or use as independent reading work. Check for understanding and assign questions and exercises from the worksheets. Monitor student progress and review material with class as needed in a group exercise or assessment of personal worksheets.
6. Distribute Pages 23-27 for each student. Read as a class or use as independent reading work. Check for understanding and assign questions and exercises from the worksheets. Monitor student progress and review material with class as needed in a group exercise or assessment of personal worksheets.
7. Distribute Pages 28-32 for each student. Read as a class or use as independent reading work. Check for understanding and assign questions and exercises from the worksheets. Monitor student progress and review material with class as needed in a group exercise or assessment of personal worksheets.
8. Distribute Pages 33-37 for each student. Read as a class or use as independent reading work. Check for understanding and assign questions and exercises from the worksheets. Monitor student progress and review material with class as needed in a group exercise or assessment of personal worksheets.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND EXTENSIONS

Worksheets can be completed in pairs or groups, as needed. Worksheet answers can be written or given orally, depending on individual student development.

To end this part of the unit, review with students the words *isolation* and *adaptation*. Direct students to apply these words to the history of Japan in the Edo Period. *What was a benefit of isolation? What was a drawback? What were the signs that isolation could no longer be maintained? Do you think the leaders and the people of Japan were ready and could adapt to the changing world around them?*

For another perspective on the art and style of Edo Japan, consider introducing students to works of art from the period. Here is a resource of samples and ideas – <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-asia/art-japan/edo-period/a/edo-period-an-introduction>

Japan's Edo Period – Feudal Lords and Samurai Warriors

Japan's Feudal System and the Sengakuji Temple



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Sengakuji Temple

On December 14 of every year, the Sengakuji Temple holds a festival in memory of Lord Asano Naganori and the 47 Ronin. Sengakuji is a zen buddhist temple and the burial place for Lord Asano and his 47 warriors. Why do you think such warriors would be buried at such a peaceful temple? Why would a religious centre hold a festival every year for warriors and lords?

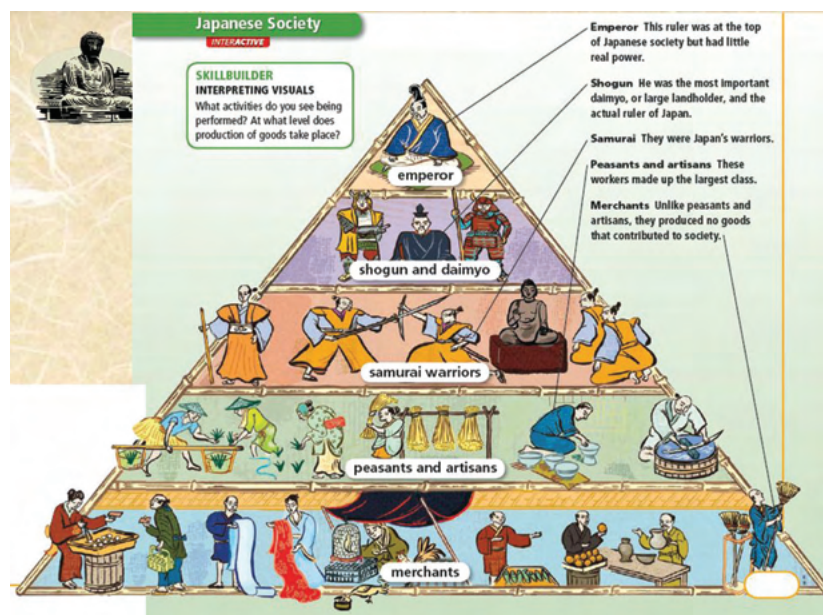
The Story of the 47 Ronin holds the key to unlocking many of the mysteries that make up the Japanese worldview during the Edo Period. The Edo Period started around 1600 and lasted until the late 1800s – about 300 years. The story shows us just how much power a feudal lord could have over others. But it also shows us the role of loyalty and honour in feudal Japan.

In a feudal society, royalty, noble families, and land-owners provide protection and leadership to tenants in exchange for loyalty and service. An emperor ruled Japan, but this rule was very symbolic and spiritual. In service to the emperor, a **shogun** acted as military leader. The shogun also made decisions on how the land was governed and how noble families served the emperor.

Under the shogun were many **daimyos**, or noble families governing territories and towns and farms. Each family would have **samurai**, or warriors that protected the land, policed the communities, and enforced the laws of the family.

Under the ruling class, farmers and labourers worked for the daimyos and provided food, goods, and trades. Artisans produced goods that served a trade or craft. Merchants were considered underneath all these other groups because they did not produce goods themselves. Instead, they sold or traded the work from the farmers and artisans. These groups made up the peasant class.

Another group came under the peasant class. The shunned groups of the community were outcasts, criminals, or the Ainu. Butchers and leather tanners were outcasts because much of their work was considered unclean. The Ainu people lived mostly in the northern islands. The Ainu kept to an indigenous way of life that came from before Japanese feudalism. The Japanese often treated the Ainu as outsiders or foreigners.





Japan's Edo Period – Feudal Lords and Samurai Warriors

The Story of the 47 Ronin

Lord Asano Naganori was a trusted member of the imperial court. He and his noble family served the **Tokugawa shogun** for generations.

In 1701, the shogun appointed Asano to act as host to noble guests in the imperial court. The highest-ranking officer of ceremonial matters, Kira Yoshinaka, was ordered to instruct Asano on these duties. Kira thought very highly of himself. He expected Asano would give him rewards and great gifts for teaching the proper manners and ceremonies of the court. The relationship between these two lords grew tense. Kira talked down to him and insulted him, even in front of other lords. Asano lost his temper. In anger, he confronted and then tried to kill Kira.

It was forbidden to draw a weapon in the imperial court like this. The shogun sentenced Asano to commit **seppuku**, or ritual suicide. Asano accepted the sentence immediately. As part of his suicide ritual, he wrote a short poem about cherry blossoms, the wind, springtime, and death. Then, he ended his life.

In feudal Japan, this disgrace meant the Asano family would no longer be a **daimyo**. Lands, riches, and farms could be given to another noble family. Asano's most trusted counsellor, Oishi Yoshio, moved the Asano family to safety. He informed the samurai under the Asano family they now had no lord. They were now **ronin** – leaderless warriors, which was a disgrace in feudal Japan. 47 of these warriors, including Oishi, swore they would avenge their lord and kill Kira, knowing this meant the end of their own lives as well.

The ronin went into hiding and became tradespeople, farmers, or monks. Two years passed. Kira Yoshinaka started to think highly of himself again in the imperial court. One night, Oishi and the ronin snuck into the royal estates and found Kira. They told Kira they had come because of their loyalty to Asano. They pushed Kira on to his knees and urged him to commit suicide with honour. Kira was very scared and froze in place.

Oishi decided they would kill Kira. They took off his head. As the morning sun came up, these warriors ran across the city to Sengakuji Temple so they could place the head of Kira before Asano's tomb. The warriors then turned themselves in to the monks of the temple and waited for the shogun to judge them.

According to the samurai code, these warriors were right to avenge their lord, Asano. According to the imperial court, they were wrong to defy the orders of a shogun. Were they heroes or criminals? They were sentenced to death, but the court ordered them to commit seppuku. This gave the warriors honour in death, and their actions made it possible to re-establish the Asano noble name in the feudal system with honour.



Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu



Oishi Kuranosuke

Japan's Edo Period – Feudal Lords and Samurai Warriors

Complete the following instructions and answer the following questions.

1. Write a sentence for each of these words explaining what is meant by the word.

shogun	_____
daimyo	_____
feudal system	_____
samurai	_____
ronin	_____
seppuku	_____

2. When did the Edo Period take place in Japan?

3. Why did Lord Asano Naganori confront and attack Kira Yoshinaka? Do you think he had any other choice in how to react? Why or why not? Describe one or two other ways Asano could have reacted in that moment.

4. From one point of view, the 47 warriors in the story were heroes. From another point of view, they were criminals. Give one reason people may have seen them as heroes. Give one reason people may have seen them as criminals.

5. The 47 ronin admitted to their actions and gave themselves up willingly. They did not run away or deny what they had done. If you were one of the 47, do you feel you would be able to do this? Why or why not?
