

Negotiating Relationships: How Do Nations Maintain Peace and Make War? Case Study: The United States and Japan, 1905-1933

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Introduction

Most students know that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, precipitating U.S. entry into World War II. But many know very little of the critical relationship between Japan and the United States that preceded this attack, particularly the relationship that developed from World War I into the early 1930s. This lesson focuses on the evolution and increasing tension in the U.S.-Japan relationship from the end of World War I to 1933, during which time several pivotal treaties and agreements were negotiated. The period ended with Japan's crucial decision to leave the League of Nations.

This lesson engages students in an examination of a small collection of diplomatic documents from the United States, Japan, and the international community, issued between 1919 and 1933. Through analysis of these documents, students consider multiple perspectives on the U.S.-Japan relationship during this time. They also consider how these two nations negotiated an increasingly complex relationship and how nations generally communicate with one another in an attempt to manage relationships. Students use a secondary text to construct a chronology of events from the end of the Russo-Japanese War to 1933. Then students analyze primary sources for intent and tone and consider how the structure of these documents impacted the U.S.-Japan relationship. Finally, students apply their analyses by writing their own communication from Japan to the United States or the United States to Japan, trying to maintain peace without making war.

Grade Level/Subject Area: Grade 9-10/World History

Time Required: 2-3 class periods

Materials

For Students:

Handout 1: Student Background Reading: The United States and Japan, 1905-1933

Handout 2: Timeline Worksheet

Handout 3: Primary Source Packet

Handout 4: Primary Source Analysis Chart

Handout 5: Culminating Activity Writing Directions

For Teachers:

Projection system

Handout 2 Answer Key

Handout 4 Answer Key

Objectives: At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be better able to:

1. Understand and explain the progression of the U.S.-Japan relationship in the early 20th century.
2. Identify the sequence of events as well as cause/effect relationships.
3. Analyze primary and secondary print sources.
4. Determine meanings of words and phrases as they are used in a text.
5. Develop perspectives from multiple viewpoints.
6. Determine a process of negotiating international relations.
7. Take and defend a position.

Essential Questions

- How do nations negotiate difficult relationships?
- How do nations maintain peace and make war?
- Specifically, how did Japan and the United States engage in these processes in the early 20th century?

Teacher Background

The government of Japan during the Meiji Era (1868-1912) strove to become a modern nation state and stave off imperialism by the West. To those ends, the government pursued policies it believed would establish Japan as a modern nation on a par with Western nations. Industrialization and imperialism were what modern nations did, so Japan too industrialized and launched the national project of building an imperial empire.

Japan's first conquest was China, which it defeated in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895. The victory over China shocked the world. When Japan defeated Russia in 1905, the West was forced to acknowledge that Japan had entered the international competition for imperial holdings and must be reckoned with. In an international and regional context, Japan perceived itself as the leader of Asia and regarded other Asian peoples and countries as inferior, backward nations that would benefit from its aid. This perception was given early voice in the late 1800s by the statesman and philosopher Fukuzawa Yukichi in an important essay entitled "Throwing Off Asia." (The title was "*Datsu-A Ron*" in the original Japanese. For an overview of this important essay, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datsu-A_Ron and David John Lu, ed. "Good-bye Asia [1885]" in *Japan: A Documentary History: The Late Tokugawa Period to the Present*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe. pp. 351–353.) Later, the idea of Japan as the leading nation and people of the Asian region would take shape in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere of Japan's World War II offensive. (For a brief overview, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_East_Asia_Co-Prosperity_Sphere.)

While Japan's victories in the Sino- and Russo-Japanese Wars had illustrated to Western nations the military and economic strengths of Japan, Western nations were unwilling to accept Japan as a full equal, which was clearly demonstrated in the Versailles Treaty following World War I.

During the first three decades of the 20th century, the governments of Japan and various Western nations entered into treaties and alliances befitting their mutually recognized status as the powerful nations of these decades. These relationships were often precariously perched on the brink of hostilities as each nation also pursued its own best interests and managed popular sentiments of hostility toward foreigners. These decades are often missed when teaching about 20th-century Japan and the road to World War II, but they are an integral part of a more complete understanding of what happened on December 7, 1941.

Preparing to Teach the Lesson

1. Read through the **Teacher Background** and all sources and questions to be familiar with the lesson content before presenting it to students.
2. Make copies for every student of Handouts 1, 2, 4, and 5.
3. Plan four groups for Step 5 of the lesson and make one to two copies per group of Handout 3.

Lesson Plan: Step-by-Step Procedure

1. Tell students the objective of this lesson is to understand what happened to the relationship between the United States and Japan from WWI up to the early 1930s. Explain that relationships between countries can sometimes resemble relationships between people.
 - A. Ask students to think about a serious disagreement they have had with a friend. Ask if there had been smaller disagreements or fights before the big blow-up. (*Students are likely to respond “yes.”*)
 - B. Draw a connection between students’ personal experience and tensions that arise between nations such as the United States and Japan. Explain that wars often happen between nations that had been friendly or, at least, had a working relationship. All relationships, whether between friends, romantic partners, family members, boss and employee, or allied nations, must be handled with care or they can dissolve into fighting. Negotiating and managing these relationships can be difficult.
 - C. Walk through the process of negotiation that will form the scaffolding for the student activity to follow. Ask students to think about how they negotiate disagreements and identify important steps. The following are key steps to bring out in analyzing this process:
 - Each side identifies a goal that *usually* suits their own interests.
 - Each side identifies points they are willing to compromise on easily.
 - Each side identifies points they absolutely will not compromise on.
 - Both sides carefully choose the language they will use; tone can help or hurt the negotiation process.
 Have students write down some elements of negotiation that will be key to this lesson.
2. Outline for students the major activities in this lesson: (A) completing a background reading and creating a timeline of events, (B) analyzing primary source documents, and (C) applying what they have learned by writing their own negotiation document from the perspective of the U.S. and/or Japanese government.

3. Distribute Handout 1, Student Background Reading, and Handout 2, Timeline Worksheet, to all students.
 - A. Have students read Handout 1, highlighting important events in the U.S.-Japan relationship covered in the handout. Next, direct their attention to the top half of Handout 2, which requires them to identify important events for particular years and, for each, add a basic description and list the goals for both the United States and Japan (students will need to infer goals in some instances). It may be helpful to complete the first two dates as models for the students, having them watch and copy the information you record; then do the next two dates as a whole group, prompting students to look carefully at the background reading to locate the information needed. Finally, have students finish the assignment on their own or in small groups.
 - B. When students have completed the timeline, review answers in class to make sure information on their timelines is correct. As you discuss the goals for each, focus on key issues in the process, particularly whether the goals of one side were in conflict with those of the other side. Finally, ask students to comment on cause-and-effect relationships they see across events. Have students add this information to their timelines.
4. Tell students they are now going to look at actual negotiations that took place between the United States and Japan during this period by reading some primary source documents. Put students into groups of four. Give each group two sets of Handout 3, the Primary Source Packet. Provide each student a copy of Handout 4, Primary Source Analysis Chart.

Explain that, working in groups, students should begin by completing Handout 4 for each document. While students can work together, each student should fill out his or her own document analysis worksheet. You may wish to model this process for the whole group with one of the primary sources.

Depending on the class and student skills, you may want to assign working roles within groups. Suggested roles are Reader, Word Wiz (students who look up unfamiliar vocabulary), Speaker (student to ask questions of teacher and report out).
5. Either at this stage or after Step 6 below, spend time discussing student findings from their primary source analyses. Using the teacher answer key, check for understanding of important information. Why was each document an important marker in the relationship of the two countries? A key understanding for students as they move into the role play is why Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations was a critical turning point for Japan's relations with the United States and other Western nations. Ask for student volunteers to describe the situation between Japan and the United States in 1933.
6. Once all documents have been analyzed, have students complete the primary source side of Handout 2, their timelines. This step will reinforce the connection between each event and the building tensions between the two nations.
7. Tell students that as a culminating, synthesis activity, they will apply their learning through the first part of the lesson by role playing representatives of either the United States or Japan in 1933 and creating an official communication to the other country. Randomly assign students to represent the government of either Japan or the United States. Pass out Handout 5, Culminating Activity Writing Directions, and go over the directions.
8. Have country groups meet. Refer to the list that the class created early on of the points in a negotiation. Explain that they will use these points to frame their final activity. Allow time

for each group to consider the situation as it stood in 1933 and to identify, from the perspective of their role:

- What are our country's goals—in relation to the world and the United States now, in 1933?
 - On what points is our country willing to compromise?
 - On what points are we not willing to compromise?
 - In writing our message to the other country, what tone will we adopt to convey our message?
9. Have groups draft the key points for their written communication, based on the questions above. Students can use these key points generated by their country groups to complete their letters individually or in pairs.

Assessment

The writing assignment detailed on Handout 5 provides the assessment for this lesson. Students write letters from the perspective of the U.S. or Japanese governments on how to maintain peace within the context of events from 1905-1933.

Standards Alignment

Common Core (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>):

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

National Standards for World History (<http://www.nchs.ucla.edu/history-standards/world-history-content-standards>):

Era 8, A Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement, 1900-1945, Standard 3: The search for peace and stability in the 1920s and 1930s

Standard 3A: The student understands postwar efforts to achieve lasting peace and social and economic recovery.

Standard 3B: The student understands economic, social, and political transformations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America in the 1920s and 1930s.

References

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