

Japan Day

Purpose:

Students will learn that Japanese students and American students share common elements in their school days through this simulation of a Japanese school day. Students will also learn that there are some differences in their school day and the Japanese school day.

Target Grade Level: K-3

Essential Questions:

1. *What are some things an American student's day has in common with a Japanese student's day?*

- The subjects that we study are virtually the same.
- We both have music, physical education, and art.
- We both have recess.

2. *What are some ways that an American student's day differs from a Japanese student's day?*

- Japanese students often have an opening ceremony to begin their day.
- Japanese students greet their teacher in unison before class begins and when it ends, thanking her for teaching them.
- There are more students in a Japanese classroom than an American classroom. There are usually about 40 students in Japanese classrooms.
- Japanese students have extra recesses.
- Japanese students eat lunch in their classrooms and their teacher has her lunch with them.
 - All students in Japanese schools are out at recess at the same time and there is no teacher out with them to supervise.
- Japanese students are responsible for cleaning their school.

3. *What are some things that you learned about a Japanese student's day that you wish were part of your school day?*

- Extra recesses
- Opening ceremony
- Cleaning the school

4. *What are some things that you learned about a Japanese student's day that you are glad are not a part of your school day?*

- Cleaning the school

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Rationale:

To have students gain knowledge and understanding of Japanese education thereby gaining respect and appreciation for both their own culture and the culture of others.

Materials:

- Bulletin board paper for origami helmets
- Red and white construction paper
- Black tempera paint
- A Japanese folktale (See Japanese Folktale Lesson)
- Japanese snacks
- Chopsticks
- Origami paper
- Background info on Kamishibai storytelling: <http://www.kamishibai.com/>
- Additional Resource: A video of a typical day in school covering elementary, middle and high school is available through The Institute for Japanese Studies, 614-292-3345, japan@osu.edu

Activities:

This day was developed to approximate what a typical Japanese school day is like. Generally, the Japanese school day starts at 8:30 a.m. We start at 8:40 a.m. so we did our usual seatwork, attendance, lunch count, and other business for the first 20 minutes of the day. This schedule of activities can be adapted to fit whatever your school's schedule is.

Introduce the lesson either on this day or the previous day by asking the students the following question: "In what way do you think American schools and Japanese schools are the same or different?" Give the students an opportunity to discuss their thoughts on this.

9:00 - 9:20 a.m. Opening Ceremony (Gym or blacktop outside)

Teachers will line students up in rows. Principal will give a speech similar to speeches given by Japanese principals encouraging students to be literate, cooperative, patriotic, and obedient. Students should wear origami helmets that they made the day before, all in the same color, made from 22" x 22"

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bulletin board paper . (You can see a good example of an opening ceremony on the video, *Video Letters from Japan: My Day*. New York: The Asia Society, 1984. Available at local libraries or The Institute for Japanese Studies, japan@osu.edu, 614-292-3345)

9:20 -10:05 a.m. Geography of Japan

Label the four main islands of Japan and the surrounding waters on an outline map of Japan.

10:05 - 10:15 a.m. Recess (Students in Japan generally have a 45 minute lesson and then a short recess before the next lesson begins.)

10:15 - 11:00 a.m. Learn to count to ten in Japanese.

Write the numbers one to ten in Japanese calligraphy on banner-like paper -
- 6 x 18 white paper mounted on 12 x 18 red construction paper using black tempera paint.

11:00 -12:00 a.m. Student Recess and Lunch

12:00 - 12:45 p.m. Kamishibai Performance

In Japan, stories are often told using kamishibai -- paper play. The scenes from a folktale are drawn on the front of large sheets of paper and the words are written on the back. The story is told by holding up the pictures while reading the words from the back.

In the days preceding *Japan Day*, choose a story and divide it into enough parts so that each student or pair of students has one scene to illustrate. Students can then read their kamishibai to another class or other invited guests. (There is a lesson kamishibai in this document under *Japanese Folktales: The Crane That Returned The Favor*.)

If time remains, read a Japanese folktale to the class.

12:45 - 1:00 p.m. Recess

1:00 - 1:40 p.m. Special, i.e. Music, Art, or Physical Education

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1:40 - 2:20 p.m. Japanese Snack

Japanese snacks are available at Japanese grocery stores or in the international food aisle at many large grocery stores. Chopsticks can also be obtained through these sources.

Discuss typical meals for Japanese families:

Breakfast - bean soup, rice, egg, seaweed, tea.

Lunch - noodles, pickled vegetables, soy sauce, tea.

Dinner - stew of meat or seafood, bean curd, vegetables, rice, tea.

Rules of etiquette are that no student should eat until all are served. All students will help clean up after the snack.

2:20 - 2:35 p.m. Recess - Play a Japanese game. (Check the web sites for some ideas.)

2:35 - 3:00 p.m. Origami

Choose a paper-folding activity from this document or any other source.

3:00 - 3:25 p.m. Students clean room and get ready to go home.

Sayonara!

Either at the end of this day or during the next day, have the students discuss the similarities and differences in the Japanese and American school days.

Assessment:

Class discussion; interactive or individual writing in which students compare Japanese students' school day to their own school day.

Grade Adaptation:

This lesson would be appropriate for any elementary grade. Intermediate students could write a letter to their local school boards or the United States Secretary of Education, describing some positive aspects of Japanese schools and making suggestions for improving our education system. Older students can

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also visit the web sites listed below to learn more about the Japanese school day. Some sites take you inside Japanese schools.

Relationships to Social Studies Standards:

Kindergarten, People in Societies, Grade-level Indicator 2

I identify different cultures through the study of holidays, customs and traditions utilizing language, stories, folktales, music and the arts.

Grade 1, People in Societies, Grade-level Indicator 1

Describe similarities and differences in the ways different cultures meet common human needs including: (a) food, (b) clothing, (c) shelter, (d) language, (e) artistic expressions.

Grade 1, People in Societies, Grade-level Indicator 2

Describe family and local community customs and traditions.

Grade 2, People in Societies, Grade-level Indicator 1

Describe the cultural practices and products of people on different continents.

Grade 2, People in Societies, Grade-level Indicator 2

Describe ways in which language, stories, folktales, music and artistic creations serve as expressions of culture and influence the behavior of people living in a particular culture.

Grade 3, People in Societies, Grade-level Indicator 1

Compare some of the cultural practices and products of various groups of people who have lived in the local community including: (a) artistic expression, (b) religion, (c) language, and (d) food.

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Web Sites:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/>

(Lesson plans and teaching resources about Japan)

<http://jin.jcic.or.jp/kidsweb/>

(Kids Web Japan - Visit Japanese schools.)

<http://jin.jcic.or.jp/>

(Japan Information Network)

<http://www.isei.or.jp/index.html>

(International Society for Educational Information - provides information about Japan)

This lesson was developed by Jean Minor, teacher, Hylen Souders Elementary School, Big Walnut Schools.