

Women in Society

Purpose:

Students will learn about similarities and differences in the role of women in Japanese and American culture and how these roles have changed over time.

Target Grade Level: 6-8

Essential Questions:

1. How are the roles of women similar/different in Japan and the United States?
2. What factors have resulted in women having different roles in Japan than in the United States?
3. What forces have influenced the roles that women have played in Japanese culture and how might these forces influence future roles?

Rationale:

To help students understand that culture plays a part in defining the roles of people in that culture.

To help students understand that as a culture changes over time so do the roles that members of that culture play.

To help students predict what roles for women in Japan might have in the future and identify the factors that might influence these changes.

Materials:

- Newspaper print
- Masking tape
- Overhead
- Background information (<http://www.jinjapan.org/today/society>)

Activities:

Day 1 7 minutes Introduce the lesson by asking the students the following question: "In which country would you rather live as a woman: Japan or the United States?" Have the students discuss this question.

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- 8 minutes Using newspaper print or the board, list student responses about what they see are the roles of American women, (family, work, parent, community member).
- 10 minutes List the responses and have a discussion to identify factors (such as education, marital status, and economic needs) that impact women's roles.
- 15 minutes Using the information generated, students will write a two-page summary of the changing role of American women in society.
- Day 2 10 minutes Begin with brainstorming activity similar to the first day but focus on changing roles of Japanese women. Use information from the web site (attached or <http://www.jinjapan.org/today/society>).
- 15 minutes After listing these responses have a discussion on how factors such as education, marital status, economic needs, etc. impact roles.
- 20 minutes In groups have students construct 10 questions that will be used to interview a Japanese woman to gather information on her perception of women's roles. Have students conduct interview.
- Day 3 20 minutes Have students construct a Venn program. Use the diagram to write a summary of similarities and differences in the roles of American and Japanese women in their respective societies.
- 30 minutes Divide students into pairs. Using their Venn diagrams (from Day 2) and other resources collected, determine a pattern to the changing role of the American woman and Japanese

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women, in the context of education, family, culture, economy. Using this information, the group will write a prediction about the future of Japanese women and their roles in society 10 years and 20 years into the future.

10 minutes Using the predictions, have each student write an opinion about their predictions. Include support for the predictions.

Assessment:

Class discussion, student written summary of changing roles of women, student developed questionnaire, written responses predicting future roles and opinions.

Grade Adaptation:

This activity is designed for middle school aged students. By modifying the amount of teacher direction and the sophistication of the responses, it can be adjusted for lower as well as upper grade level students.

Relationship to Social Studies Standards:

Grades 6-8, People in Societies, Benchmark A

Compare cultural practices, products and perspectives of past civilizations in order to understand commonality and diversity of cultures.

This lesson was developed by Melissa Conrath, superintendent, Big Walnut Local Schools.