

EDO JAPAN

Organizing Questions

- What factors led to Japan’s political stability in the Edo Period?
- How did Edo evolve into a thriving economic and cultural center in the 1600s?
- How did urbanization in Edo change relations among social classes?
- In what ways did modern and traditional elements in Edo society merge?
- What is kabuki theater? Why was it popular in Edo?

Introduction

This lesson teaches students about the Edo Period (1603–1868) in Japan and focuses on the development of Edo (Tokyo) as an important economic and cultural center. Students are introduced to the Edo Period through the poetry of Matsuo Basho, a famous Japanese poet considered a master of haiku poetry from the period. Then they read about the traditional social and political structure of Japanese society and how it was impacted by major transformations in the city of Edo. Students then learn about the art of kabuki theater and its elements, watch a clip of kabuki theater while making observations about its unique and interesting characteristics, and appreciate its popularity in Edo society.

Objectives

In this lesson, students will

- explain how Edo became a thriving economic and cultural center in the 1600s;
- appreciate the mixture of modern and traditional elements in Edo society;
- become familiar with the elements and characteristics of kabuki theater; and
- respond to a clip of a kabuki performance.

Connections to Curriculum Standards

This lesson has been designed to meet certain national history, social studies, and common core standards as defined by the National Center for History in the Schools, the National Council for the Social Studies, and the Common Core State Standards Initiative. The standards for the lesson are listed here.

National History Standards (from the National Center for History in the Schools)

World History

Era 6, Standard 5B: The student understands the transformations in India, China, and Japan in an era of expanding European commercial power.

- Grades 5–12: Explain the character of centralized feudalism in Japan under the Tokugawa shogunate and the reasons for Japan’s political stability, economic growth, and cultural dynamism. [Analyze cause-and-effect relationships]
- Grades 5–12: Analyze Japan’s relations with Europeans between the 16th and 18th centuries and the consequences of its policy of limiting contacts with foreigners. [Reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration]

Era 6, Standard 5C: The student understands major cultural trends in Asia between the 16th and 18th centuries.

- Grades 9–12: Assess the influence of both new currents in Confucianism and Chinese art, architecture, and literary styles on cultural life in Korea, Vietnam, and Japan. [Draw upon visual and literary sources]

Era 6, Standard 6A: The student understands major global trends from 1450 to 1770.

- Grades 5–12: Describe major shifts in world demography and urbanization in this era and analyze reasons for these changes. [Utilize visual and mathematical data]
- Grades 7–12: Analyze ways in which expanding capitalistic enterprise and commercialization affected relations among states and contributed to changing class and race relations. [Analyze cause-and-effect relationships]
- Grades 7–12: Identify patterns of social and cultural continuity in various societies and analyze ways in which peoples maintained traditions and resisted external challenges in the context of a rapidly changing world. [Explain historical continuity and change]

Era 7, Standard 3E: The student understands how Japan was transformed from feudal shogunate to modern nation-state in the 19th century.

- Grades 9–12: Explain the transformation of Japan from a hereditary social system to a middle-class society. [Examine the influence of ideas]

Era 7, Standard 6A: The student understands major global trends from 1750 to 1914.

- Grades 9–12: Identify patterns of social and cultural continuity in various societies and analyze ways in which peoples maintained traditions and resisted external challenges in this era of expanding Western hegemony. [Reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration]

National Council for the Social Studies (from the National Council for the Social Studies)

- Culture; Thematic Strand I: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.
- Time, Continuity, and Change; Thematic Strand II: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the past and its legacy.
- People, Places, and Environments; Thematic Strand III: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions; Thematic Strand V: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.
- Power, Authority, and Governance; Thematic Strand VI: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.
- Production, Distribution, and Consumption; Thematic Strand VII: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.
- Science, Technology, and Society; Thematic Strand VIII: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society.
- Global Connections; Thematic Strand IX: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies (from the Common Core State Standards Initiative)

- Standard 4, Grades 9–10: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history / social science.
- Standard 9, Grades 11–12: Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Materials Handout 1, *Edo: The Origins of Tokyo*, 30 copies
 Handout 2, *Kabuki Theater*, 30 copies
 Handout 3, *Response to Kabuki Theater*, 30 copies
 Projection, *Poems by Basho*
 Answer Key, *Edo: The Origins of Tokyo*

Equipment	Computer with Internet access Computer projector and screen Computer speakers
Teacher Preparation	<p>Instructions and materials are based on a class size of 30 students. Adjust accordingly for different class sizes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make the appropriate number of copies of handouts. 2. Become familiar with the content of the handouts, projection, and answer key. 3. View various clips of kabuki performances online and choose which to share with the class. Two suggested clips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a 4:23-minute clip by UNESCO at https://youtu.be/67-bgSFJiKc • a 7:02-minute clip by Lourdinha Campos at https://youtu.be/hALJT_zRzOg 4. Set up and test computer, projector, speakers, and video clip(s). Confirm that you are able to play the video(s) and project sound audibly to students.
Time	One to two 50-minute class periods
Procedures Part One	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Display Projection, <i>Poems by Basho</i>, on the screen. Ask a student to read the first poem aloud. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">summer grasses all that remains of warrior’s dreams</p> 2. Ask students to share their initial responses to the poem, its imagery and meaning, et cetera. 3. Explain that this poem was written by a Japanese poet named Matsuo Basho who is considered a master of haiku poetry. He was born in 1644 to a samurai family and is one of the most famous poets of the Edo Period. The Edo period, also called the Tokugawa Period, lasted from 1603 until 1867 and was the last feudal era in Japan. During this time, the country was peaceful, stable, and prosperous. Basho’s poems appealed to all classes of people, from samurai to commoners. 4. Engage students in a discussion of the poem using the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this poem, who are the “warriors”? <i>Warriors in Japan were called samurai.</i> • What do you think of when you hear the term “samurai”? <i>Student responses will vary and may reflect more modern uses of the term. Explain that a samurai is defined as a member of the hereditary warrior class in feudal Japan. An elite social class in Japan that existed from</i>

the 12th century until the Westernization of Japan in the 19th century, samurai were trained in the art of warfare and martial arts. Samurai symbolized ideal Japanese traits—honor, loyalty, discipline, and courage.

- What do you think life was like for samurai during the Edo Period?

Student answers will vary, as they may or may not be familiar with the Edo Period. Explain that during the peaceful 250 years of the Edo Period, the samurai's skills of warfare were not needed, and many of them became artisans or farmers or became idle. While they maintained their official status as samurai, they were often looked down upon by merchants and commoners who benefitted from Edo's thriving economy.

5. Ask a different student to read the second poem aloud.

I ate vegetable roots and talked with samurai all day long

samurai's gathering—
their chat has the pungent taste
of daikon radish

6. Inform students that a daikon radish is a winter root vegetable grown in Japan and other parts of Asia that is often pickled. Explain that “pungent” means having a sharply strong taste or smell; having a sharp or caustic quality; sarcastic or bitter.
7. Ask students to share their responses to this poem, as well as any further insights, observations, or questions they may have about either poem.
8. Inform students that they will learn about the Edo Period in Japan (1603–1868). Share the following information about Edo Japan to the class:

The Edo Period was a time of rapid urbanization and economic growth in Japan when the samurai class maintained great status but was surpassed economically by commoners, particularly the rising merchant class, due to newfound wealth and prosperity. It was simultaneously a time of order and of change. While Edo underwent dramatic changes economically and culturally, it maintained a firm hold on the traditional social and political structure, which forbade mobility between social classes. The Edo Period is considered the pre-modern period in Japan, as its transformations set the stage for Japan's modernization in the subsequent Meiji Period (1868–1912).

9. Distribute one copy of Handout 1, *Edo: The Origins of Tokyo*, to each student and instruct them to read the handout and respond to the prompts on a separate sheet of paper.
10. Collect student responses to questions for assessment. Then discuss the answers as a class, using Answer Key, *Edo: The Origins of Tokyo*, as a guide.

- Part Two
1. Explain that the arts played a significant role in the culture and life of the Edo Period. The most popular arts that flourished in Edo were poetry (such as Basho's haiku and other poetic forms), *kabuki* theater, *bunraku* puppet theater, and woodblock prints. Tell students that today they will learn about one of these popular art forms that emerged from the Edo Period: kabuki theater. Kabuki originated in Japan in the 1600s as entertainment for the masses; it is known for its unique and unconventional style. Kabuki troupes still perform traditional plays around the world today.
 2. Ask students if they have ever seen kabuki theater. If they have, ask volunteers to share their experiences with the class. Explain that students will watch a video clip of a kabuki performance (or two) after they read some information to help them understand and appreciate its characteristics.
 3. Distribute one copy of Handout 2, *Kabuki Theater*, to each student. Instruct them to read the handout and review the terms listed at the end.
 4. Distribute one copy of Handout 3, *Response to Kabuki Theater*, to each student. Ask students to read the list of items they will take notes on during the clip, and instruct them to write their notes and responses directly on this handout.
 5. Play the video clip(s) of the kabuki performance(s) that you previously selected. If necessary, pause the clip(s) to allow time for students to record their notes and responses on the handout.
 6. Divide the class into groups of three students each to briefly discuss the clip(s) and write their responses to the prompts at the end of the handout together.
 7. Reconvene as a class, and briefly discuss the clip(s). Ask students to share their observations, questions, and whether the clip(s) they watched reminded them of any other types of theater or performance. *Students may notice that kabuki is similar to Western opera, ballet, Elizabethan theater, et cetera.*
 8. Collect Handout 3 for assessment.
 9. Conclude the lesson with a debriefing discussion using the following questions:
 - What did you learn about Edo Japan from this lesson?
 - What did you find most interesting about this period in Japanese history? Why?
 - List some characteristics of kabuki theater.
 - What were your impressions of kabuki theater? How does it compare to modern-day popular dramas?
 - Did you gain a greater understanding of the Edo Period in Japan in this lesson? Why or why not?
 - What questions do you still have?
 - What topics would you like to learn more about?

- Assessment** The following are suggestions for assessing student work in this lesson:
1. Assess student responses to prompts on Handout 1, *Edo: The Origins of Tokyo*, using Answer Key, *Edo: The Origins of Tokyo*, as a guide.
 2. Informally evaluate student responses on Handout 3, *Response to Kabuki Theater*, ensuring that students wrote appropriate and thoughtful responses and notes about the performance clip(s).
 3. Assess student participation in group and class discussions, evaluating students' ability to
 - clearly state their opinions, questions, and/or answers;
 - provide thoughtful answers;
 - exhibit sensitivity toward different cultures and ideas;
 - respect and acknowledge other students' comments; and
 - ask relevant and insightful questions.

EDO: THE ORIGINS OF TOKYO

BY DR. PETER DUUS

daimyo—in feudal Japan, a great feudal lord who was subordinate only to the shogun; the daimyo were the most powerful feudal rulers from the 10th century until mid-19th century in Japan

Tokugawa Ieyasu—one of the most significant figures in Japanese history; warrior, statesman, and founder of the Tokugawa dynasty of shoguns. He worked hard to restore stability to Japan and encourage foreign trade.

Kanto region—geographical area of Honshu (the largest island of Japan) made up of seven prefectures including Tokyo

fortification—a defensive wall or other reinforcement built to strengthen a place against attack

samurai—a member of a powerful military caste in feudal Japan, especially a member of the class of military retainers of the daimyo (feudal lords); Japanese warrior-aristocrats of medieval and early modern times

citadel—a fortress, typically on high ground, protecting or dominating a city

precinct—the area within the walls or perceived boundaries of a particular building

Battle of Sekigahara—a decisive battle in the history of Japan, in which Tokugawa Ieyasu's forces defeated those of Ishida Mitsunari, establishing the hegemony of the Tokugawa family that lasted until 1868. The

When the powerful *daimyo* Tokugawa Ieyasu took control of the eight provinces in the Kanto region in 1590, he chose as his headquarters the village of Edo on the western shore of Edo Bay. It was a rundown jumble of fishermen's huts and small shops with the ruins of small fortification perched on a bluff overlooking it. No one would have guessed that one day it would become not only the largest city in Japan but one of the largest cities in the world. With a population of over 1,000,000 in 1800, it dwarfed European cities like London, Paris, and Rome—and was perhaps as big if not bigger than Beijing in China.

The village sat on the edge of the Musashino region, the widest plain in Japan, known for its rich soil and excellent terrain for breeding horses. It was also known as a breeding ground for samurai. Soon after his arrival, Ieyasu began to build Edo into a citadel, where he hoped to become the most powerful warrior leader in the country. The city was laid out like a military encampment. At its center was a walled castle surrounded by a labyrinth of protective moats, stone outer works, dikes, and levees. Beyond the castle precinct, box gates, checkpoints, cul-de-sacs, right angle turns and wooden gates were placed to slow down an enemy attack.

After defeating his rivals at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, Ieyasu achieved his goal. In 1603 the emperor in Kyoto appointed him shogun, with authority to govern the whole country. The shogun, however, possessed direct control over only about a quarter of the country's productive land. The rest he granted to 250 or so local daimyo, who collected taxes from the peasants on their domains and commanded their own samurai militias. If a daimyo violated the shogun's commands, however, his domain was confiscated. In return for their land, the daimyo were called to provide money and manpower for building roads, bridges, fortifications, palaces, and other projects for the shogun.

To ensure their continued allegiance, and to guard against rebellion, the shogun required the daimyo to domicile their families, including their heirs, in Edo as potential hostages, and the daimyo themselves were ordered to reside there every other year. The daimyos' walled estates occupied over half of the city's area. Behind their magnificent gates lay not only the dwellings of the daimyo and his family, but also offices, storehouses, and barracks for their samurai retainers. Most estates boasted beautiful decorative gardens. Some of them are public parks today, including one that now houses a sports stadium and an amusement park.

Naturally when a daimyo made his biennial trip to Edo, he was accompanied by an entourage of several hundred samurai, who joined those serving there permanently as guards, clerks, teachers, and household staff. The samurai class, including the shogun's own direct retainers, accounted for a bit less than half of the city's population, but

battle took place on October 21, 1600, at Sekigahara, a small mountain valley in central Japan.

shogun—a hereditary commander-in-chief in feudal Japan. Because of the military power concentrated in his hands and the consequent weakness of the nominal head of state (the emperor), the shogun was generally the real ruler of the country until feudalism was abolished in 1867.

domicile—to establish (someone) in a place of residence

retainer—a servant or attendant who has served a family for many years

entourage—a group of people attending or surrounding an important person

transient—lasting only for a short time; a person who is staying or working in a place for only a short time

hinterland—an area surrounding a town or port and served by it

jobber—a wholesaler; a person who does casual or occasional work

bucolic—of or relating to the pleasant aspects of the countryside and country life

rag-picker—a person who picks up rags and other waste material from the streets, refuse heaps, etc., for a livelihood

tenement—a room or set of rooms forming a separate residence within a house or block of apartments

bumpkin—an unsophisticated or socially awkward person from the countryside

there was a constant turnover as daimyo processions trudged back and forth from the city every year. Despite the city's size, many of its inhabitants were transient samurai.

The city quickly emerged as one of the country's most important economic centers. The shogun, the daimyo, and their samurai retainers were consumers, not producers. The commoner inhabitants of the city (*chōnin*) had to provide them the goods and services they needed. From the beginning Ieyasu encouraged fishermen, craftsmen, laborers, and shopkeepers to migrate to Edo from other parts of Japan to help build the new city. As the city population grew, so did the demand for rice, fish, fruit, and other food products as well as consumer goods like textiles, pottery, lumber, and building materials. Some goods were brought in from the city's hinterland, but luxury items like silk brocades, elegant kimonos, porcelain, and fine lacquerware, much in demand by the daimyo and their retainers, had to be imported from Kyoto and other distant parts of the country.

By the late 17th century, Edo was home to a growing merchant class. Rice merchants bought the tax rice that the daimyo shipped to the city to get money needed to support their lifestyle in Edo. Often these merchants served as bankers as well, lending money to daimyo when their expenses exceeded their income—as it often did. Wholesale merchants formed monopoly associations to bring every kind of consumer good into the city, and jobbers, small shopkeepers, and peddlers sold them to samurai and well-to-do commoners alike. The incomes of the richest merchants exceeded that of samurai living on fixed incomes, and they often enjoyed far more luxurious lives. As a result samurai looked down on merchants as parasitic money-grubbers, and occasionally the shogun's government cracked down on luxury consumption. But without merchants the city would not have flourished as a lively cultural and economic center.

Although the commoners, including the merchants, accounted for a majority of Edo's population, they were crammed into only about one-fifth of its land space. The city was segregated by status. The samurai quarters with their broad avenues lay in bucolic open green space on high ground overlooking the rest of the city. The commoners lived on occasionally flooded lowlands along the Sumida River in densely crowded neighborhoods, sealed off from one another by wooden gates closed at night as barricades. Well-to-do merchants occupied spacious two-story dwellings, but poorer commoners—manual laborers, porters, rag-pickers, low-skill artisans, and the like—lived in cramped back-alley tenements sharing a common well and a common toilet.

Whatever their economic circumstances, commoners born and raised in Edo were proud of their character as *Edokko*, children of Edo: straightforward, confident, cheerful, and a little spendthrift in character. They looked down on samurai from the rest of Japan as country bumpkins, rough in behavior and crude in manners. Although Edo flourished for more than two and a half centuries, it was struck every 20 to 25 years by a major fire, an earthquake, a tsunami wave, a

volcanic eruption, or some combination of all of them. The loss of life often measured in the thousands, and great swaths of the city went up in flames, but the city always bounced back, buoyed by the resilience of the Edokko. Today, under the name of Tokyo, it remains one of the world's great cities.

Assignment

Respond to the following prompts on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Describe the social changes that occurred during the Edo Period.
2. Explain how the policies Tokugawa Ieyasu instated ensured allegiance from the daimyo. Why were these policies effective? What other impacts did these policies have on the city?
3. In your own words, explain how the city of Edo became an important economic and cultural center.

KABUKI THEATER

Noh theater—a classic drama of Japan, developed chiefly in the 14th century, employing verse, prose, choral song, and dance in highly conventionalized formal and thematic patterns derived from religious sources and folk myths

bunraku puppetry—a traditional form of Japanese puppet theater in which puppeteers, dressed in black and visible to the audience, manipulate large puppets to the accompaniment of a chanted narration and musical instruments; originated in Osaka, Japan in 1684

bugaku—a classical Japanese dance of Chinese origin, originally designed as entertainment for the imperial palace; performed exclusively by men, who serve as both dancers and musicians

impermanence—one of the essential doctrines in Buddhism. The term expresses the Buddhist notion that all of conditioned existence, without exception, is transient, or in a constant state of flux.

filial piety—in Confucian philosophy, a virtue of respect for one's parents, elders, and ancestors

feudal system—in Japan, the political, military, and social system that was in place from the 12th through 19th centuries. During that period local rulers, either powerful families or military warlords, dominated the land, while the emperor was merely a figurehead and not a significant political presence. There

Kabuki is one of the three classical theatrical forms in Japan, along with *Noh theater* and *bunraku puppetry*. Kabuki is a traditional performance of singing, dancing, and acting. The modern form of the word “kabuki” is written with three Japanese characters: *ka* (song), *bu* (dance) and *ki* (skill). It is a highly stylized art form that began during the Edo Period as a form of entertainment for the masses. Other traditional forms of entertainment, such as *bugaku*—the dance ceremony of the imperial court—and *Noh theater*, were only performed for the nobility and samurai classes. During the Edo Period, kabuki plays appealed to the rising merchant class and commoners as they provided commentary on the complex social structure of the time and on interesting historical events in a highly entertaining fashion. Also kabuki plays often involve conflicts with spiritual or philosophical ideals, such as the impermanence of life espoused by Buddhism or the Confucian beliefs of filial piety and upholding one's duties. These issues were very relevant to peoples' lives, as both Buddhism and Confucianism had great influence on society during the Edo Period. Themes involving tension between humanity and the feudal system were also favorites among the merchant class, who, while advancing economically, remained socially inferior due to the strict social structure of the time.

Kabuki originated in the early 1600s in the dances performed by Okuni, a female attendant at the Izumo Shrine. Ironically, kabuki has been performed by an all-male cast since 1629 (as was the policy in Elizabethan theater in England until 1660). Male performers, called *onnagata*, have become very famous for their roles impersonating women on stage and exemplifying female beauty in exaggerated ways. Kabuki is known for its *aragoto*, or rough style of acting, which is demonstrated by the actor's exaggerated movements and use of elaborate costumes and makeup, both of which help to emphasize characters' roles. The flamboyant makeup style, called *kumadori*, used in kabuki historical plays makes use of colors and mask-like designs to indicate important aspects of the characters. For example, the color red is used to symbolize positive traits and virtues, while blue indicates negative or evil aspects of a character. The typical male characters in a kabuki play include a handsome young man, a hero, and an evil samurai; typical female roles are a young maiden, a wicked woman, and a samurai lady.

Kabuki plays fall into one of two categories: *jidaimono* (historical) or *sewamono* (domestic). *Jidaimono* plays portray political and historical events or facts about the nobility and warrior classes prior to the Edo Period. They are customarily tragedies with a bit of comic relief. *Sewamono* performances depict the struggles of everyday life and the stories of commoners. The makeup, costumes, and music utilized in a play are all dependent on the type of kabuki performance. For example, the costumes worn in a *sewamono* play are designed in the traditional style of the Edo Period.

handout 2

was a strict hereditary four-class system. Social mobility was prohibited, so people had no choice but to remain in the class they were born into.

Izumo Shrine—considered the oldest Japanese shrine; built in the early 700s or earlier; designated as a National Treasure; architecturally similar to the homes of the nobility in ancient times

Regardless of the type, a kabuki performance combines dramatic dialogue with dance, musical accompaniment, and sound effects. The play begins with the clapping of wooden clappers and the opening of the curtain. The most important instrument is the *shamisen*, a three-stringed plucked instrument similar to a guitar or banjo. Singers and musicians playing drums, flutes, and percussion instruments are also located both on and off stage.

Unlike most Western theater, kabuki performances often involve the audience. A main character will occasionally come out of character to speak directly to the audience, and sometimes audience members call out actors' stage names during the performance as encouragement. Traditionally, a kabuki play would run all day and into the evening. Viewers would come and go as they pleased, and food was served at mealtimes. The kabuki theater has evolved over time, and today makes use of a revolving stage, trapdoors, left stage (for important characters), right stage (for less important characters), and *hanamichi*—a footbridge leading from the stage to the back of the theater—used for dramatic entrances and exits. Actors continue to perform traditional *kata* (styles or techniques) used in original kabuki plays. One such technique frequently used, called *mie*, occurs when a main character strikes a dramatic pose with an exaggerated facial expression and then pauses for effect. This style is used as a means to intensify an emotional scene.

Although the language used in kabuki plays is difficult for modern-day viewers to understand, the characters and plots are well known, much like those of Shakespeare's work. Many of the kabuki plays performed nowadays were originally written for the bunraku puppet theater, which in the early 1700s was more popular than kabuki. One of the greatest kabuki and bunraku writers, Monzaemon Chikamatsu, is often referred to as the "Shakespeare of Japan." While kabuki is not as popular with younger audiences nowadays, the most famous kabuki actors are some of the biggest celebrities in Japan and also star in movies and other performances.

In 2005, kabuki was added to the UNESCO list of "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity."

Kabuki-related Terms

onnagata—male actors playing female roles

aragoto—rough style of acting

kumadori—flamboyant makeup style using color and mask-like designs to indicate character traits

jidaimono—historical play

sewamono—domestic play

shamisen—a three-stringed plucked instrument similar to a guitar or banjo; most important instrument in a kabuki performance

hanamichi—footbridge leading from the stage to the back of the theater; used for dramatic entrances and exits

kata—styles or techniques

mie—a traditional technique of striking a dramatic pose and pausing for effect

RESPONSE TO KABUKI THEATER

While viewing the kabuki performance clip(s), take notes on its characteristics.

Kabuki Characteristics	Personal Response/Notes
The costumes and makeup (colors, designs, etc.)	
The use of mie (the dramatic pause)	
The use of body language; exaggerated movements of the female characters, in particular	
The musical accompaniment and sound effects	

Respond to the following prompts in the space below.

1. List three elements or characteristics of kabuki that make it unique or interesting.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

2. Explain in your own words why kabuki was popular in Edo Japan.

Poems by Basho

Poem One:

summer grasses
all that remains
of warrior's dreams

Poem Two:

I ate vegetable roots and talked with samurai all day long

samurai's gathering—
their chat has the pungent taste
of daikon radish

EDO: THE ORIGINS OF TOKYO

1. Describe the social changes that occurred during the Edo Period.

The samurai officially maintained their high status above commoners; however, they lived on a fixed income (usually paid in rice) while many merchants lived luxurious lifestyles, benefitting from the thriving economic activity in Edo. Daimyo and samurai often became financially indebted to merchants. Commoners from Edo looked down on samurai from other parts of Japan for lacking in refinement. Samurai looked down on merchants for being greedy.

2. Explain how the policies Tokugawa Ieyasu instated ensured allegiance from the daimyo. Why were these policies effective? What other impacts did these policies have on the city?

The daimyo's family and heirs were required to live in Edo, and daimyo and their samurai retainers were also required to live in Edo for one year every other year. Daimyo were also asked to help build roads, bridges, palaces, etc. The policies were effective in ensuring the loyalty of the daimyo and peace in Edo as the daimyo were less likely to rebel or attack the city when their home and their families were there and they had invested their own time and money into developing its infrastructure. The policies also helped Edo prosper as a thriving urban center.

3. In your own words, explain how the city of Edo became an important economic and cultural center.

The expanding population of consumers required more goods and services. Tokugawa Ieyasu encouraged commoners and laborers to move from other parts of Japan to fulfill the needs of the city. The growing merchant class lived a luxurious lifestyle and supported the arts, bringing about more cultural and economic activity. Political stability and a long period of peace allowed for time and resources to be used toward development in other aspects of life.

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