

THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL SYSTEM

Organizing Questions

- What are some unique characteristics of the Japanese government and political system?
- What factors have shaped Japan’s political landscape?
- What effect has the Constitution of 1947 had on Japan’s government and society?
- What are some various perspectives regarding the remilitarization of Japan?

Introduction

This lesson focuses on Japan’s government and political system and provides a broad overview of their structure and characteristics. How did Japan successfully transition from a feudal society to a democracy? What significant changes occurred after the promulgation of the Constitution of 1947? Should Japan amend its constitution to allow for remilitarization?

The lesson begins with students responding to basic questions about Japan’s government and politics to assess their current knowledge. Students then read two informational handouts on Japan’s government and political system and debrief the readings with a class discussion. Students are then divided into teams, conduct independent research on the issue of remilitarizing, and prepare arguments for and against amending the constitution. The lesson concludes with a structured student debate involving the whole class.

Objectives

In this lesson, students will

- gain a broad understanding of the structure and characteristics of the Japanese government and political system;
- consider various factors that have shaped Japan’s political landscape;
- conduct independent research related to the debate over Japan’s remilitarization; and
- engage in a structured debate weighing the costs and benefits of Japan’s remilitarization.

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

- Grades 9–12: Assess the importance of ideas associated with nationalism, republicanism, liberalism, and constitutionalism on 19th-century political life in such states as Great Britain, France, the United States, Germany, Russia, Mexico, Argentina, the Ottoman Empire, China, and Japan. [Identify issues and problems in the past]

Era 9, Standard 2C: The student understands how liberal democracy, market economies, and human rights movements have reshaped political and social life.

- Grades 9–12: Assess the strengths of democratic institutions and civic culture in countries such as Britain, France, Germany, Canada, the United States, Japan, India, and Mexico and analyze potential challenges to civil society in democratic states. [Interrogate historical data]

National Social Studies Standards (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.
- 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 3, Grades 9–10: Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text: determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
- 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 7, Grades 11–12: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (from the Common Core State Standards Initiative)

- Standard 4, Grades 6–12: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Standard 6, Grades 9–10: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
- Standard 9, Grades 6–12: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Materials

Handout 1, *An Overview of Japanese Government*, 30 copies
Handout 2, *Understanding the Japanese Political System*, 30 copies
Handout 3, *Debate Activity*, 30 copies
Projection 1, *True or False?*
Projection 2, *Debate Roles*, 1 copy
Projection 3, *Debate Structure and Rules*
Projection 4, *Debate Scoring Sheet*, 32 copies
Teacher Information, *Running the Classroom Debate*
Answer Key 1, *True or False?*
Answer Key 2, *An Overview of Japanese Government*

Equipment

Computer, projector, and screen

Teacher Preparation Instructions and materials are based on a class size of 30 students. Adjust accordingly for different class sizes.

1. Make the appropriate number of copies of handouts.
2. Become familiar with the content of handouts, projections, teacher information, and answer keys.
3. Set up and test the computer and projector.

Time Two 50-minute class periods

- Procedures Day One**
1. Begin the lesson by asking students to answer some basic questions about Japan's government and political system to assess their current knowledge. Display Projection 1, *True or False?*, and ask students to record their answers on a scratch piece of paper. Then go over the questions and provide the correct answers, using Answer Key 1, *True or False?*, as a guide.
 2. Explain that students will learn about the basic structure of the Japanese government and an article in Japan's constitution that is the source of much debate recently among Japanese lawmakers and citizens.
 3. Distribute one copy of Handout 1, *An Overview of Japanese Government*, to each student and instruct students to read the handout and complete the assignment on a separate sheet of paper. Collect student responses for assessment. Then, review the answers as a class, using Answer Key 2, *An Overview of Japanese Government*, as a guide.
 4. Explain that students will learn about the Japanese political system and its characteristics. Distribute Handout 2, *Understanding the Japanese Political System*, to each student and instruct them to read the handout. Alternatively, read the handout with the class. Then pose the prompts below and discuss the answers as a class.
 - Briefly summarize Japan's transformation from a feudal society to a democracy.

The Meiji Restoration of 1868 abolished feudalism. Eventually the Meiji oligarchy drafted a constitution granting citizens more freedoms and establishing a parliamentary government, while enforcing absolute rule by the emperor. After World War II, the new constitution granted additional civil rights and freedoms, stripped the emperor of his divine status and ruling power, and established a democratic government in which the people elect their representatives.
 - How did its alliance with the United States help Japan achieve rapid growth and recovery after World War II? How did this relationship benefit the United States as well?

Because the United States had pledged to defend Japan in the event of attacks, Japan was able to focus on rebuilding the nation and growing its industries and economy. The United States gained Japan as an ally as well as access to military bases on Japanese soil, giving it a presence in Asia.

- The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has been Japan’s largest and most powerful political party and has largely maintained control of the government since 1955—with the exception of the Democratic Party of Japan’s (DPJ) brief stint from 2009 until 2012. Compare this single-party dominance with the political landscape of your country.

Student responses will vary.

- One of Japan’s biggest economic challenges is its aging population. Japan has the oldest population in the world. One in four Japanese people is a senior citizen, and Japan has a high life expectancy rate. Furthermore, Japan has one of the lowest fertility rates in the world, which cannot sustain the population. Explain why an aging population and a low fertility rate is an economic challenge.

Having an aging population places a burden on the nation’s health care system and social security system, on the younger population, and on the labor market and economy as a whole as most senior citizens are no longer contributing to the nation’s productivity. Because Japan’s fertility rate is so low, its aging population will continue to rise, further impacting the economy.

5. Inform students that they will prepare for a class debate around the issue of whether Japan should amend Article 9 of the constitution and remilitarize. The debate will take place during the next class period, and students will use class time and will also need to work at home to prepare.
6. If there are between eight and 16 students, divide the class evenly between two teams: “remilitarization advocates” and “remilitarization opponents.” If there are more than 16 students, divide the class evenly into four teams: two as “remilitarization advocates” and two as “remilitarization opponents.” Make sure each team has at least four members and no more than eight.
7. Display Projection 2, *Debate Structure and Rules*, and Projection 3, *Debate Roles*, and explain the activity to the class. Distribute one copy of Handout 3, *Debate Activity*, to each student for reference while preparing for the debate.
8. Allow the remainder of the class period for teams to plan and coordinate their strategy, consider possible arguments to put forward, and determine the roles of each team member. Have each team announce each member’s role. Record the assignments on your copy of Projection 3.
9. For homework, students must prepare for their individual roles by conducting independent research. Students must each bring a one-page summary of their research findings to the next class period and discuss it with their team before the debate.
10. Optional: If your class needs more time to prepare, allow an additional class period for student preparation and coordination.

- Day Two
1. Display Projection 4, *Debate Scoring Sheet*, and explain the scoring procedure for the debate activity.
 2. Instruct students to assemble with their teams, discuss their research findings, and finalize preparations for the debate.
 3. Remind students about the debate rules. If there are two teams, conduct the debate as a single session. If there are four teams, conduct two sessions one after the other and instruct the non-participating teams to score the debate. If you will conduct two sessions, distribute one copy of Projection 4, *Debate Scoring Sheet*, to each student to record their scores for the other teams during the debate. Make sure to time the debates so that they are completed within the class period. During each debate, use Projection 4 to evaluate each team's performance. When the debate is over, announce each team's score and explain how points were awarded. Declare a winning team based on the scores.
 4. Debrief the debate activity using the following questions as a guide.
 - For the debate you were assigned to a position. What is your actual position in this debate? Do you think Japan should amend Article 9 and remilitarize or not? (Ask for a show of hands for and against.)
 - During the debate, did your opinions change (e.g., become stronger or weaker) for one side or the other? Why or why not?
 - What was most challenging about the debate? What aspects of it did you enjoy the most? The least? Explain.
 5. Collect student homework of written research for assessment.
 6. Display Projection 1, *True or False?*, a second time and ask students to record their answers again on a piece of scratch paper. Review the correct answers, using Answer Key 1, *True or False?*, as a guide. This time students should be able to answer the questions correctly based on what they have learned in this lesson.
 7. Facilitate a class debriefing discussion using the following questions.
 - What are some key concepts you learned about Japan's government and political systems in this lesson?
 - Do you feel you have gained a general understanding of Japan's government and political systems?
 - What topics did you find most interesting?
 - What questions do you still have?
 - What topics or issues would you like to learn more about?

- Assessment
- The following are suggestions for assessing student work in this lesson:
1. Evaluate student responses to Projection 1, *True or False?*, at the end of the lesson, based on Answer Key 1, *True or False?*.
 2. Assess student responses to questions on Handout 1, *An Overview of Japanese Government*, based on Answer Key 2, *An Overview of Japanese Government*.

3. Assess student preparation for and performance in the class debate, evaluating each student's
 - one-paragraph research summary for thoroughness and relevance of independent research;
 - ability to persuasively articulate the team's position and/or the reasons for its position;
 - ability to use specific information in making a point; and
 - clarity and effectiveness of argument.
4. 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.

AN OVERVIEW OF JAPANESE GOVERNMENT

BY DR. MARIKO YOSHIHARA YANG

A Constitutional Monarchy

Japan's government system is similar in structure to that of the United Kingdom, with a constitutional monarchy. In Japan the emperor is the ceremonial head of state, the prime minister is the head of government and the cabinet, and the parliament is elected by the people, according to the constitution. Japan's current system of government is a more recent construct than those in much of the West. And while Japan is a democracy, it differs from others due to the dominance of one political party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has mostly maintained power, with a few short exceptions, since 1955.

constitutional monarchy—Japan's current system of government in which the emperor is the ceremonial head of state, the prime minister is the head of government and the Cabinet, and the parliament is elected by the people, according to the constitution

cabinet—the group of senior officials appointed by the president or prime minister to advise on policy

parliament—the legislature, or lawmaking group, in a government

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)—a conservative political party and Japan's largest political party, which has held power almost continuously since its formation in 1955. The party has generally worked closely with business interests and followed a pro-U.S. foreign policy.

The Three Branches of Government

The Executive Branch of government consists of the emperor, the prime minister, and the cabinet. The emperor serves as the ceremonial head of state. The prime minister is designated by the parliament from within its membership. The prime minister is head of the cabinet and selects the remaining 14 regular members, all of whom must also be members of Parliament. Although a prime minister can serve a term of four years, the position is rarely held for a full term, resulting in high turnover, instability, and a challenging environment for policymaking. There is a dynastic quality to the office of prime minister, as many are descendants of former prime ministers, e.g., the four consecutive PMs who ruled from 2006 until 2009. The current prime minister (as of 2016), Shinzo Abe—the grandson of a former prime minister—is the first to hold the position twice; he previously served from 2006 until 2007.

The Legislative branch of government is the National Diet, or Parliament, which consists of two chambers: the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors. Members of both houses are elected by the people. The House of Representatives (called the lower house) is the more important chamber and has the power to override a vote by the House of Councillors with a two-thirds majority vote. The prime minister's cabinet is responsible to the House of Representatives and can be dissolved by this chamber if it passes a vote of no-confidence. In turn, the prime minister has the authority to dissolve the House of Representatives. The House of Councillors is the upper house and is responsible for approving legislation. This chamber cannot be dissolved by the prime minister.

The Judicial Branch is made up of the Supreme Court, High Court, and several lower courts. The Supreme Court consists of a chief justice and 14 associate judges, all of whom can be removed only by impeachment from the public. Members of the Supreme Court are designated by the cabinet, while the emperor appoints the chief justice. The job of the Supreme Court

impeachment—a formal accusation of wrongdoing against a public official

is to determine whether laws are constitutional, and their decisions are final.

The Constitution of 1947

Allied Occupation—the period after World War II during which Japan was occupied and controlled by the Allied Powers (mostly American), under the leadership of General Douglas MacArthur. The occupation ended with the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty on September 8, 1951, and Japan regained its independence in 1952.

Meiji Constitution—Japan’s constitution from 1889 to 1947, which was modeled after the constitutions of the West; established an elected parliament; granted basic human rights such as freedom to worship, trade, and own land; was based on the concept of the “divine emperor and absolute ruler,” meaning that the emperor, who was believed to have descended from the gods, was given absolute power.

Emperor Hirohito—(1901–89); emperor of Japan from 1926 until his death in 1989

sovereign—possessing supreme or ultimate power

belligerent—hostile; warring

Japan’s Constitution of 1947 was created during the Allied Occupation of Japan, under the leadership of General Douglas MacArthur. It replaced the Meiji Constitution of 1889 and brought about major changes in Japan’s government. The 1947 constitution was mainly drafted by General MacArthur’s staffers in a short period of time and differed from the Meiji Constitution in many ways: it stripped the emperor of his power, ensured more rights for women (including the right to vote), and transformed Japan into a pacifist nation.

In 1946 the Japanese people elected parliamentary candidates who supported the new constitution. It took effect on May 3, 1947. Under the new constitution, Emperor Hirohito became a figurehead (a “symbol of the state and of the unity of the people”), stripping him of his previously held sovereign power and semi-divine status. It included 39 articles protecting civil liberties, similar to the American bill of rights, and established a three-branch system of government. One of its most notable components is Article 9, a “no war” clause, prohibiting Japan from maintaining a military and waging war.

CHAPTER II RENUNCIATION OF WAR

Article 9. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

The Japanese constitution has governed the country for more than half a century and has never been amended. However, in 2016 Shinzo Abe proposed a bill to remove Japan’s military restraints set forth in Article 9. Remilitarization has been considered many times in the past as well and has always faced widespread opposition. Although the constitution has not officially been changed, over the last two decades the government has taken liberties to reinterpret Article 9 to justify its gradual increase in military capabilities for self-defense purposes. Abe and his supporters argue that Japan needs a stronger military presence to be able to respond

referendum—a general vote by the electorate on a single political question that has been referred to them for a direct decision

to China's rising power in East Asia as well as other global security threats. Revising the constitution is a challenging endeavor, as it must be approved by two-thirds of both chambers of parliament and a majority of voters in a referendum.

Assignment

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

1. Describe Japan's system of government in your own words.
2. Compare and contrast the structure of Japan's government to that of your country.
3. In what ways did the Constitution of 1947 change Japan?
4. In your opinion, should Japan repeal Article 9 of its constitution and remilitarize? Why or why not?

UNDERSTANDING THE JAPANESE POLITICAL SYSTEM

BY DR. MARIKO YOSHIHARA YANG

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 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.

democratization—the process by which a country is made more democratic

Meiji Restoration—a chain of events that restored practical imperial rule to Japan in 1868 under Emperor Meiji

Tokugawa regime—the last feudal Japanese military government which existed between 1603 and 1867; the final period of traditional Japan, a time of internal peace, political stability, and economic growth under the shogunate (military dictatorship) founded by Tokugawa Ieyasu

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

Meiji Constitution—Japan's constitution from 1889 to 1947, which was modeled after the constitutions of the West; established an elected parliament; granted

Japan's regime changes—from feudal society to constitutional monarchy and to democracy—resulted in major social and economic transformations. This political evolution poses fascinating questions. What explains Japan's successful democratization? How have domestic institutions shaped its political and economic landscape? This handout provides an overview of Japan's past footsteps and future trajectory to help you develop a broad understanding of the Japanese political system.

Regime Changes and Rise of Political Institutions

The Meiji Restoration of 1868 brought about political and social transformation in Japan. The 250-year rule of the Tokugawa government was overthrown by the young patriots from the lower-ranking samurai class who reinvented the nation as a constitutional monarchy. The Meiji Constitution (1889) established the first parliamentary system in Asia, modeled after the Western states, with an elected lower house and a prime minister and cabinet appointed by the emperor. The semi-autonomous regional governments, or *han*, were reorganized as prefectures and placed under the imperial jurisdiction. The zealous generation of Meiji oligarchy succeeded in developing key industries such as shipbuilding and railroads through aggressive efforts to adopt foreign technologies. The abolition of feudalism brought about social mobility, and Tokyo became the centerpiece of the liberal reform movements by the early 1900s. Through the first half of the 20th century, Japan experienced a whirlwind of political developments and massive industrialization, which paved the way for its postwar economic growth.

Japan's Defeat and Postwar Restructuring

Japan's unconditional surrender in 1945 put an end to World War II, bringing immense changes to the nation's political, economic, and social landscape. The wartime firebombing raids destroyed Tokyo's entire structure. Under the Allied occupation led by the United States, Japan was disarmed and its form of government was transformed into a democracy. The hostility between the Western capitalist and Eastern communist nations brought a significant shift in U.S. policy priority toward Japan; instead of dismantling Japan's economy, the United States decided to focus on rebuilding it as a steadfast ally against the rising communist threat. The U.S.-Japan alliance became a central pillar of Japanese politics. Under the bilateral security treaty, Japan was allowed to focus on its domestic recovery and achieved the fastest economic growth in the 20th century.

basic human rights such as freedom to worship, trade, and own land; was based on the concept of the “divine emperor and absolute ruler,” meaning that the emperor, who was believed to have descended from the gods, was given absolute power.

parliamentary system—a system of government in which the power to make and execute laws is held by a parliament

semi-autonomous—largely self-governing within a larger political or organizational entity

prefecture—governmental body of Japan that is larger than a city or town

oligarchy—a small group of people having control of a country, organization, or institution

social mobility—movement of individuals, families, or groups through a system of social hierarchy or stratification; ability to move from one social class to another

firebombing raids—massive air raids carried out by the U.S. military towards the end of World War II in which hundreds of firebombs were dropped on Tokyo and other Japanese cities

U.S.–Japan alliance—a military relationship in which Japan gave the United States the right to use military bases in exchange for its defense of Japan in the event of an attack

bureaucrat—a person who belongs to a group of people who run a government or big company and who does everything according to the rules of that government or company;

Political Bargaining, Economic Growth, and Reform of 1994

A dual structure characterized the political economy of postwar Japan: the coexistence of the competitive industries and the inefficient domestic sector. On one hand, the growth-oriented sectors such as automobiles, electronics, and semiconductors were guided by elite bureaucrats to nurture competitiveness in global markets and were generally shielded from political influence. On the other hand, the domestic sectors such as agriculture, construction, and small-scale retail were heavily politicized as the core constituencies of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and, therefore, were protected from foreign competition. The stability of this single-party dominance sustained a bargaining between politicians and bureaucrats and enabled long-term policy planning. The unusual alliance among the politicians, bureaucrats, and industry continued to feed economic growth, and Japan, a small island nation, became the second largest in GDP by the late 1970s. Combined with financial deregulation and high currency valuation, Japan experienced a surge in real-estate speculation during the 1980s. The collapse of Japan’s bubble economy was followed by the passage of electoral, administrative, and economic reforms during the 1990s. With the electoral reform in 1994, politicians and parties have started to shift their traditionally rural focus to policy areas with broader appeal such as education, national security, and healthcare.

Japan’s Resilience and Future Prospect

Despite decades of stagnant growth, there are signs that Japan is re-emerging. The sluggish economy characterized as “the lost decades” has forced the government to recognize that the dual politico-economic structure has protected the inefficient domestic sectors for too long at the cost of the nation’s innovative pursuit. The electoral reform of 1994 has brought changes in the behavior of Japanese politicians in regulating the economy and approaching foreign policy. Under Abe’s political leadership, Japan’s managed economy is being transformed into a more open and transparent system. Japan remains a colossal economic power and an influential player in international politics. While this nation faces new sets of challenges—such as global security threats, rising economic and social inequality, and a rapidly aging population—many argue that the economy is more resilient, the society is more egalitarian, and the political system is healthier than ever before. With the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics fast approaching, Japan is likely to see this international event as an important political launching pad to reinvent itself in the global arena.

a person who is part of a bureaucracy

constituency—a group of people served by an organization

gross domestic product (GDP)—the total market value of the goods and services produced in a country in a given year

financial deregulation—the process of removing government rules controlling the way that banks and other financial organizations operate

currency valuation—the process whereby the value of currency issued by any given country can be compared to that of another country; the process of determining the currency exchange rate

speculation—investment in stocks, property, or other ventures in the hope of gain but with the risk of loss

electoral reform in 1994—two major political reform laws passed by the Japanese diet changing how members of the House of Representatives are elected and changing campaign finance practices

“the lost decades”—refers to the two decades, 1991–2010, after Japan’s economic bubble burst and its economy collapsed

egalitarian—a belief in human equality especially with respect to social, political, and economic affairs

Assignment

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

1. Briefly summarize Japan’s transformation from a feudal society to a democracy.
2. How did its alliance with the United States help Japan achieve rapid growth and recovery after World War II? How did this relationship benefit the United States as well?
3. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has been Japan’s largest and most powerful political party and has largely maintained control of the government since 1955—with the exception of the Democratic Party of Japan’s (DPJ) brief stint from 2009 to 2012. Compare this single-party dominance with the political landscape of your country.
4. One of Japan’s biggest economic challenges is its aging population. Japan has the oldest population in the world, with one in four Japanese people being a senior citizen and with a high life expectancy rate. Furthermore, Japan has one of the lowest fertility rates in the world, which cannot sustain the population. Explain why an aging population and a low fertility rate is an economic challenge.

DEBATE ACTIVITY

You and your team will prepare to debate the following policy issue question: Should Japan amend Article 9 of the constitution and remilitarize?

As a team, determine which role each team member will play in the debate (see roles below) and which main arguments your team will make. Your team’s performance will be evaluated based on the following criteria: (1) organization and clarity; (2) use of arguments; (3) use of examples and facts; (4) use of rebuttal; and (5) presentation style.

Debate Roles	Students	
	Remilitarization Advocates	Remilitarization Opponents
The Opening Statement Presenter gathers the team’s main arguments into a forceful introductory statement. He/she provides an overview of the main arguments but does not present specific information; he/she simply asserts “our position is correct because of reasons A, B, and C.”		
Topic Presenters explain and advance one main argument each, providing specific data and detailed information supporting the argument.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
Rebuttal Presenters respond to the arguments of the opposing team, using specific information to refute, discredit, or weaken them. They must take notes as the other team is presenting its main arguments.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
The Closing Statement Presenter presents the closing arguments for the team. He/she restates and summarizes the team’s main arguments, providing a convincing rationale for the team’s position.		

Debate Structure

- Opening statement for each side (3 minutes each)
- 1–3 arguments for each side (3 minutes each)
- Planning and preparing for rebuttal (2 minutes)
- 1–3 rebuttals for each side (2 minutes)
- Closing statement for each side (3 minutes each)

True or False?

Identify the following statements as **True** or **False**. If false, correct the statement to make it true.

1. Japan's government is a parliamentary system with a constitutional monarchy.
2. As in the United States, Japan has three branches of government: the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial.
3. As in the United States, Japanese citizens elect their government leader in a general election.
4. The term of service for a Japanese prime minister is four years, and prime ministers typically serve for a full four-year term.
5. The prime minister is a member of the House of Representatives.
6. The main role of the emperor is to make laws.
7. Japan's constitution forbids Japan from threatening or using force against other nations to settle disputes.
8. Japan's constitution has been amended several times since it took effect in 1947.
9. Japan's strongest political party has mostly maintained control of the government since 1955.
10. "The lost decades" refers to a 20-year period of economic stagnation in Japan.
11. Massive industrialization during the Meiji era set the stage for Japan's post-World War II growth.

Debate Roles

Debate Roles	Students	
	Remilitarization Advocates	Remilitarization Opponents
<p>The Opening Statement Presenter gathers the team’s main arguments into a forceful introductory statement. He/she provides an overview of the main arguments but does not present specific information; he/she simply asserts “our position is correct because of reasons A, B, and C.” (1 student per team)</p>		
<p>Topic Presenters explain and advance one main argument each, providing specific data and detailed information supporting the argument. (1–3 students per team)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.
<p>Rebuttal Presenters respond to the arguments of the opposing team, using specific information to refute, discredit, or weaken them. They must take notes as the other team is presenting its main arguments. (1–3 students per team)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.
<p>The Closing Statement Presenter presents the closing arguments for the team. He/she restates and summarizes the team’s main arguments, providing a convincing rationale for the team’s position. (1 student per team)</p>		

Debate Structure and Rules

Debate Structure

- Opening statement for each side (3 minutes each)
- 1–3 arguments for each side (3 minutes each)
- Planning and preparing for rebuttal (2 minutes)
- 1–3 rebuttals for each side (2 minutes each)
- Closing statement for each side (3 minutes each)

Debate Rules

- No put-downs.
- Raise your hand if it is not your turn to speak.
- Teams lose 1 point for each interruption.
- Teams lose 1 point for whispering while another speaker is talking.

Debate Scoring Sheet

Scoring Criteria	Scores		Score Descriptions
	Remilitarization Advocates	Remilitarization Opponents	
<p>Organization and Clarity: Viewpoints and responses are outlined both clearly and orderly.</p>			<p>1—Unclear in most parts 2—Clear in some parts but not overall 3—Mostly clear and orderly in all parts 4—Completely clear and orderly presentation</p>
<p>Use of Arguments: Reasons are given to support viewpoint.</p>			<p>1—Few or no relevant reasons given 2—Some relevant reasons given 3—Many reasons given, most relevant 4—Many relevant reasons given in support</p>
<p>Use of Examples and Facts: Examples and facts are given to support reasons.</p>			<p>1—Few or no relevant supporting examples/facts 2—Some relevant examples/facts given 3—Many examples/facts given, most relevant 4—Many relevant supporting examples and facts given</p>
<p>Use of Rebuttal: Arguments made by other team are responded to and dealt with effectively.</p>			<p>1—No effective counter-arguments made 2—Few effective counter-arguments made 3—Some effective counter-arguments made 4—Many effective counter-arguments made</p>
<p>Presentation Style: Tone of voice, use of gestures, and level of enthusiasm are convincing to audience.</p>			<p>1—Few style features were used, but not convincingly 2—Few style features were used convincingly 3—All style features were used, most convincingly 4—All style features were used convincingly</p>

RUNNING THE CLASSROOM DEBATE

This lesson involves a classroom debate regarding whether or not Japan should amend Article 9 of the constitution and remilitarize. Students are divided into two teams—remilitarization advocates and remilitarization opponents—and defend their positions in a short, structured debate.

Debate Roles

Use Projection 2, *Debate Roles*, to help explain these roles to the students. All students must help with research and planning for the debate. Each team member will also present verbal arguments during the debate. The debate roles are as follows.

Opening Statement Presenter (1 student per team)

- Gathers team's main arguments into a forceful introductory statement.
- Provides an overview of the main arguments but does not present specific information; he/she simply asserts "our position is correct because of reasons A, B, and C."

Topic Presenters (1–3 students per team)

- Explain and advance one main argument each, providing specific data and detailed information supporting the argument.

Rebuttal Presenters (1–3 students per team)

- Respond to the arguments of the opposing team, using specific information to refute, discredit, or weaken them.
- Must take notes as the other team is presenting its main arguments.

Closing Statement Presenter (1 student per team)

- Presents the closing arguments for the team.
- Restates and summarizes the team's main arguments, providing a convincing rationale for the team's position.

Debate Structure

Use Projection 3, *Debate Structure and Rules*, to explain the following structure and rules to the students.

- Opening statement for each side (3 minutes each)
- 1–3 arguments for each side (3 minutes each)
- Planning and preparing for rebuttal (2 minutes)
- 1–3 rebuttals for each side (2 minutes each)
- Closing statement for each side (3 minutes each)

Debate Rules

- No put-downs.
- Raise your hand if it is not your turn to speak.
- Teams lose 1 point for each interruption.
- Teams lose 1 point for whispering while another speaker is talking.

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. Japan's government is a parliamentary system with a constitutional monarchy.
True.
2. As in the United States, Japan has three branches of government: the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial.
True.
3. As in the United States, Japanese citizens elect their government leader in a general election.
False. In Japan the prime minister is elected by the House of Representatives.
4. The term of service for a Japanese prime minister is four years, and prime ministers typically serve for a full four-year term.
False. The term of service is four years, but prime ministers rarely hold the office for a full term.
5. The prime minister is a member of the House of Representatives.
True.
6. The main role of the emperor is to make laws.
False. The main role of the emperor is to be a symbol of unity for Japan and to perform ceremonial acts.
7. Japan's constitution forbids Japan from threatening or using force against other nations to settle disputes.
True.
8. Japan's constitution has been amended several times since it took effect in 1947.
False. Japan's constitution has never been amended since its promulgation in 1947, roughly 70 years ago (as of September 2016).
9. Japan's strongest political party has mostly maintained control of the government since 1955.
True.
10. "The lost decades" refers to a 20-year period of economic stagnation in Japan.
True.
11. Massive industrialization during the Meiji era set the stage for Japan's post-World War II growth.
True.

AN OVERVIEW OF JAPANESE GOVERNMENT

1. Describe Japan's system of government in your own words.

Student responses will vary, but they should mention at least two of the following: what it means to be a constitutional monarchy, the roles of the three branches of government, the dominance of the Liberal Democratic Party, and the significance of the 1947 constitution.

2. Compare and contrast the structure of Japan's government to that of your country.

Student responses will vary.

3. In what ways did the Constitution of 1947 transform Japan?

The new constitution stripped the emperor of his power and god-like status; granted additional civil liberties such as voting rights for women; established the three-branch system; and prohibited Japan from waging war in the future.

4. In your opinion, should Japan amend Article 9 of its constitution and remilitarize? Why or why not?

Student responses will vary.

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