

## MEIJI JAPAN

### Organizing Questions

- What were the internal and external causes of the Meiji Restoration?
- How did Japan's foreign relations change in the mid- to late 1800s?
- What impact did Western ideas have on Japan in the Meiji era?
- What factors contributed to Japan's rapid modernization?

### Introduction

In this lesson students gain an understanding of the political, social, and economic changes that took place in Japan after Commodore Matthew Perry arrived in Tokyo Bay in 1853. Students will become familiar with the ways in which Japan adopted Western knowledge and culture in an effort to modernize and gain independence. Students will view and analyze several woodblock prints from the late 1800s, when the art form peaked in popularity and was a means by which Japanese artists conveyed the social and cultural transformations of the time. Woodblock prints portraying Japan's modernization will help deepen student understanding of Japanese society in the Meiji era. Students will engage in a jigsaw activity in which they research an element of Japan's modernization and share what they learned with each other.

### Objectives

In this lesson, students will

- analyze political, social, and economic changes that occurred during the modernization of Japan;
- recognize the motivations and factors behind Japan's rapid modernization; and
- examine woodblock prints to learn what they reveal about important concepts and information about Japanese history and society.

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

- Grades 5–12: Analyze the internal and external causes of the Meiji Restoration. [Formulate historical questions]
- Grades 5–12: Analyze the goals and policies of the Meiji state and their impact on Japan’s modernization. [Obtain historical data]
- Grades 7–12: Assess the impact of Western ideas and the role of Confucianism and Shinto traditional values on Japan in the Meiji period. [Appreciate historical perspectives]
- Grades 9–12: Explain the transformation of Japan from a hereditary social system to a middle-class society. [Examine the influence of ideas]
- Grades 9–12: Explain changes in Japan’s relations with China and the Western powers from the 1850s to the 1890s. [Reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration]

Era 7, Standard 5D: The student understands transformations in South, Southeast, and East Asia in the era of the “new imperialism.”

- Grades 5–12: Analyze Japan’s rapid industrialization, technological advancement, and national integration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. [Formulate historical questions]

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

- Grades 7–12: Compare industrialization and its social impact in Great Britain, France, Germany, the United States, Russia, Japan, or other countries. [Compare and contrast differing values, behaviors, and institutions]
- 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]
- 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 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.
- 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 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	<p>Handout 1, <i>Tokyo and the Meiji Restoration</i>, 30 copies</p> <p>Handout 2, <i>Notes on Woodblock Prints</i>, 30 copies</p> <p>Handout 3A, <i>Meiji Constitution</i>, 5 copies</p> <p>Handout 3B, <i>Education</i>, 5 copies</p> <p>Handout 3C, <i>Industry &amp; Economy</i>, 5 copies</p> <p>Handout 3D, <i>Society &amp; Culture</i>, 5 copies</p> <p>Handout 3E, <i>Military</i>, 5 copies</p> <p>Handout 3F, <i>Foreign Relations</i>, 5 copies</p> <p>Handout 4, <i>Jigsaw Notes</i>, 30 copies</p> <p>Answer Key 1, <i>Tokyo and the Meiji Restoration</i></p> <p>Answer Key 2, <i>Research Assignment Questions</i></p> <p>Presentation Script, <i>Japanese Woodblock Prints</i></p> <p>PowerPoint Presentation, "Japanese Woodblock Prints.pps"</p>
Equipment	<p>Computer with Microsoft PowerPoint</p> <p>Computer projector and screen</p>
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"> <li>1. Make the appropriate number of copies of handouts.</li> <li>2. Become familiar with the content of handouts, answer keys, and presentation script.</li> <li>3. Set up and test the computer and projector, and view the PowerPoint presentation.</li> </ol>
Time	<p>Two 50-minute class periods</p>
Procedures Day One	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Display Image #1: "Nihonbashi, 1854" from the PowerPoint Presentation, "Japanese Woodblock Prints.pps," and ask students to share what they know about the kind of art they are viewing. Then provide the background information below about woodblock prints. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Woodblock prints, <i>ukiyo-e</i> or "pictures of the floating world," were one of the most popular ways to portray the drastic changes taking place in Japan in the 1800s. The art form also peaked in popularity during this period. Because they are inexpensive to produce and were reproduced in large quantities, woodblock prints have traditionally been considered art for the common people. Woodblock prints have had a long history in Japan and in the 1800s and 1900s also became popular in the West, influencing famous painters such as Vincent van Gogh and Claude Monet. Western influence also had an impact on printmaking: a new kind of paper was used and bolder colors were made possible by the use of dyes</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

rather than vegetable colors. By the end of the Meiji era, woodblock prints had been largely replaced by photography and lithography.

2. Explain that students will view several woodblock prints created during the mid- to late 1800s in Japan when the country was going through a great deal of change. Ask students if they know what was happening in Japan during this time. Provide the following background information on Meiji Japan.

This period in Japan is known as the Meiji era, when Japan modernized from a feudal society with a largely agrarian economy to a modern global power in less than 50 years. Japan's modernization was very rapid compared to other countries. In Europe, for example, it took 150 years to move from feudalism to modernization. Japan's modernization was set in motion by Commodore Matthew Perry's arrival in Tokyo Bay in 1853 seeking a trade treaty with Japan. After being forced to sign treaties with the United States and other Western countries, Japan was eager to strengthen its economy and military to reestablish its independence and gain respect among other nations. Within five years, Japan was on a path of enormous transformation. Japan's ability to modernize rapidly was largely due to its eagerness to quickly adopt Western ways, or become "Westernized." To this end, the government hired 3,000 Western expatriates to teach technology, mathematics, modern science, and foreign languages in Japan. The government also sent Japanese students to the United States, England, and other European countries to study and learn from Western knowledge. In the beginning, modernization was subsidized by the government. Later, family-owned business conglomerates, called *zaibatsu*, funded many of the modernization efforts and controlled much of the Japanese economy. Early in the Meiji era, Japan was quick to replace its own traditions and culture with those of the West. After a couple of decades, this trend slowed and the focus turned to finding balance between Japanese and Western ideals.

3. Inform students that they will read about Japan's modernization and then view several woodblock prints that represent Japan's transformation and the adoption of Western ideals into Japanese society.
4. Distribute one copy of Handout 1, *Tokyo and the Meiji Restoration*, to each student. Instruct them to read the handout and answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper. When students have finished, collect their responses for assessment. Then discuss their answers as a class.
5. Inform students that they will view several woodblock prints from the Meiji era. Distribute one copy of Handout 2, *Notes on Woodblock Prints*, to each student and instruct them to take notes while they view the images. Explain that the set of images will be displayed twice. During the first viewing, they should look carefully at the images, take notes about their observations and questions in the space provided

on Handout 2. During the second viewing, they will learn about the images and discuss them.

6. Open PowerPoint Presentation, “Japanese Woodblock Prints.pps,” and display each image for one to two minutes, allowing time for students to carefully view each item and take notes on the handout. On the second viewing, read the information about each image from Presentation Script, *Japanese Woodblock Prints*, while students carefully view the prints a second time. Encourage students to discuss the images and ask questions. Collect Handout 2 for informal assessment.
7. Divide students into six groups, A–F, and assign each group a topic from Handouts 3A–3F (Meiji Constitution, Education, Industry & Economy, Society & Culture, Military, and Foreign Relations) for further research. Distribute copies of the corresponding handout to each group. For example, each student in Group A will receive one copy of Handout 3A, *Meiji Constitution*, each student in Group B will receive one copy of Handout 3B, *Education*, and so on.
8. Assign the research activity as homework. Instruct students to research their topic and complete the handout by writing their responses to the guiding questions, taking additional notes, and writing one to two paragraphs about their topic to bring to the next class period.

## Day Two

1. Explain the jigsaw activity that students will engage in to teach each other about their research topics. Students will first reconvene in their “topic” groups to discuss what they learned and prepare to teach students from other groups. Then new “teaching” groups will be formed with one student from each of the original groups, A–F, and students will teach their new group about their research topics.
2. Instruct students to assemble in their “topic” groups to review and share notes on what they learned about their assigned research topic. Allow groups about 10 minutes to review and prepare to teach their classmates.
3. Put students into new “teaching” groups composed of one student from each of the six original groups, A–F. Distribute one copy of Handout 4, *Jigsaw Notes*, to each student. Explain that each student has three to four minutes to teach their group members about their topic and can use information on Handout 3 to do so. While other group members are teaching, everyone else in the group should take notes in the spaces provided on Handout 4.
4. When groups have finished the jigsaw activity, facilitate a whole-class debriefing discussion, using the following questions.
  - A motto of the Meiji era was “Enrich the country, strengthen the army.” Explain why you think this became a motto for the Japanese at this time.
  - In 1868, when authority was restored to the emperor, he gave himself the name “Meiji,” which means “enlightened rule.” Do you

think this is an appropriate name for the emperor and this era in Japanese history? Explain.

- What are some key concepts you learned about Meiji Japan?
- What topics did you find most interesting?
- What questions do you still have? What topics would you like to learn more about?
- Did you gain a greater understanding of Meiji Japan in this lesson? Why or why not?

**Assessment** The following are suggestions for assessing student work in this lesson:

1. Assess student responses to questions on Handout 1, *Tokyo and the Meiji Restoration*, based on Answer Key 1, *Tokyo and the Meiji Restoration*.
2. Informally evaluate student notes taken during the PowerPoint presentation on Handout 2, *Notes on Woodblock Prints*, based on completion and thought demonstrated.
3. Assess student responses on Handouts 3A–F, based on completion, quality, and thought demonstrated in responses, notes, and paragraph summary. Refer to Answer Key 2, *Research Assignment Questions*, for sample answers to the guiding questions from each handout.
4. Evaluate student responses on Handout 4, *Jigsaw Notes*.
5. 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.

## TOKYO AND THE MEIJI RESTORATION

BY DR. PETER DUUS

**flotilla**—a fleet of ships or boats

**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.

**barbarian**—especially in ancient times, a member of a people whose culture and behavior were considered uncivilized or violent

**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

**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

**imperial**—of or relating to an empire

**abolish**—to formally put an end to (a system, practice, or institution)

**precipitously**—extremely suddenly or abruptly

When a flotilla of four American warships steamed into Edo Bay in July 1853, the city's population was plunged into panic. It was an eerie sight: How could ships move without sails? In commoner districts on the bay, shore inhabitants anticipating an attack packed their valuables to flee to safer high ground. But the Americans did not come to fight. They only wanted to open the country to regular trade and diplomatic relations with the outside world. In 1858 the shogun agreed to a treaty that permitted Americans to reside and trade in five newly established ports. Similar treaties with European countries soon followed.

The intrusion of Western "barbarians," ending more than two centuries of isolation imposed by the Tokugawa regime, shook confidence in the shogun's rule. After all, his full title was "barbarian-quelling great general" (*sei-i-tai-shogun*). Groups of anti-foreign samurai sprang up in many daimyo domains demanding expulsion of the "barbarians," overthrow of the shogun, and restoration of the emperor to power. The result was a decade of political turmoil marked by assassinations of officials, attacks on foreigners, bombardments by foreign gunboats, and local uprisings. In the end, the last shogun, acknowledging the collapse of his regime's legitimacy, agreed to return governing authority to the emperor.

In early 1868 the 16-year-old Meiji emperor declared the establishment of a new imperial government and abolished the Tokugawa dynasty. In a brief civil war, the new imperial army easily beat the resistance from the shogun's forces, and the shogun's castle in Edo was handed over to the government. Some government leaders wanted to move the imperial court to Osaka, a wealthy merchant city, but in the end they chose Edo, the country's de facto capital since 1603, and renamed it Tokyo, which means "eastern capital."

The city had been devastated economically by the upheavals of the 1850s and 1860s. Its population dropped precipitously from over 1,000,000 to 600,000. Much of the samurai district was deserted. Daimyo and their families were no longer required to live in the city. Their abandoned daimyo mansions were taken over by ruffians and masterless samurai (*ronin*). The commoner districts suffered as well. Servants who worked for the daimyo and samurai lost their jobs, and merchants, shopkeepers, laborers, and entertainers who catered to them lost their customers.

But the return of the emperor to power—usually called the Meiji Restoration—began an era of revolutionary change. Despite earlier anti-foreign sentiments, leaders of the new government dreamed of turning Japan into a "civilized country" like America, England, and the European countries. Many had travelled to Western countries where they saw with their own eyes technology more advanced, economies more prosperous, and naval and military forces more powerful than Japan's. The West



was no longer a menace; it had become a model. To survive in a world dominated by the Westerners, the Japanese had to adopt their ways.

**segregated**—set apart from the rest or from each other; isolated or divided

The new government took over all the land occupied by the daimyo estates and shogun's retainers and built government offices, arsenals, and army barracks on it. To open the city up for easier and faster transportation, it also tore old defensive works like neighborhood gates and box bridges. But how was their new capital Tokyo, a segregated city originally built as a military citadel, to become a “civilized” capital like Paris or Berlin with broad boulevards, grand public spaces and gardens, stately public buildings, and magnificent public monuments?

**rickshaw**—a small two-wheeled passenger cart typically pulled by one or two men, used in parts of Asia

In the 1870s the government began to transform Tokyo from a walking city, where pedestrians mingled with occasional horsemen, into a riding city where the streets were filled with carriages, rickshaws, and horse-drawn trolleys as well. It also changed the cityscape by putting up new Western-style government buildings to carry on its business. When fire destroyed much of the downtown Ginza district in 1872, the government also launched a project to rebuild it as a “red brick” district modelled on a London shopping street with broad tree-lined avenues, sidewalks, gaslights, and sturdy brick two-story buildings with board floors, balconies, and glass windows. The rebuilt district was very expensive to build, and at first it failed to attract tenants. Nor did city inhabitants, except for wealthy businessmen and high-ranking officials, decide to build new Western-style houses. They were comfortable with traditional straw mat (*tatami*) floors, paper windows, and sliding room partitions.

The Ginza red brick district remained a showcase for how a “civilized” city ought to look, but it was the last sustained effort of the government to change the cityscape. Instead it slowly began to improve the city's infrastructure during the 1880s and 1890s by broadening and paving its streets, stringing telegraph and eventually electric lines, installing a new water system, and laying tracks for a railroad line around the inner city. Curiously, however, it did not build a modern sewage system.

**impetus**—something that provides motivation to accomplish something

Since the government had to deal with a host of other problems—from creating a modern army to building a modern school system—plans to turn the city into a capital on the European model never materialized. The main impetus for introducing Western-style urban architecture was left to private business interests that built Western-style business districts like the Nihonbashi financial section or the Marunouchi business center. And in response to changing urban consumption habits, shops selling foreign goods like watches, clocks, top hats, ladies' frocks, and canned goods sprang up in the Ginza district and the old downtown section, along with a few restaurants offering Japanese-style stewed beef (*sukiyaki*) on their menus.

By the turn of the 20th century, Tokyo remained a hybrid city with one foot in the past and one foot in the future. The old samurai neighborhoods, now called the Yamanote (“uptown”) section had changed the most, and the commoner section, now called Shitamachi

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

**calamity**—an event causing great and often sudden damage or distress; a disaster

(“downtown”) section had changed the least. Pockets of poverty left over from Edo, where manual laborers, peddlers, rickshaw pullers, and street peddlers lived in cramped tenements, also survived. When the city’s population began to grow in the 1880s and 1890s, newcomers seeking work as industrialization of the city accelerated, settled in tenements on the east side of the Sumida River in areas plagued by floods and poor sanitation. These neighborhoods were also vulnerable to the calamities that eventually wiped away all traces of not only Edo but also of Meiji Tokyo in the new century.

### Questions

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Why did the Americans arrive in Edo (Tokyo) Bay in 1853?
2. What was the result of the 1853 visit?
3. How did the Japanese respond to the intrusion of Westerners?
4. What were the goals of the new Japanese government? Why was it important for Japan to achieve these goals?
5. What changes took place to the city of Tokyo during the Meiji era?

## NOTES ON WOODBLOCK PRINTS

Carefully look at each image in the slideshow and record your observations and questions in the space provided. Consider who, what, where, why, and the significance behind each print.

### **Prints of Tokyo:**

Image 1: "Nihonbashi, 1854"

Image 2: "Nihonbashi, Clearing after the Snow, 1856"

### **Prints of foreigners in Japan:**

Image 3: "American Captain, Daughter, and Dog, 1861"

Image 4: "Foreign Girls and Boys at Play, 1860"

Image 5: "Russian Trade Officials, c. 1861"

**Prints representing a modernized Japan:**

Image 6: "Comparison of Beautiful Women in Western Coiffures, 1887"

Image 7: "Onoe Baikō as the English Balloonist Spencer, 1894"

Image 8: "Horseracing at Shinobazu, 1885"

Image 9: "Planning an Overseas Trip, 1890"

Image 10: "Our Naval Fleet Sinks a Chinese Ship in the Yellow Sea, 1894"

## MEIJI CONSTITUTION

### Assignment

- Research your topic using at least three reputable sources.
- Answer the questions to guide your research.
- Take additional notes on what you learned.
- Write one to two paragraphs summarizing the main points of what you learned.
- Bring your completed handout to the next class period. You will use what you wrote to teach your classmates about your topic.

### Guiding Questions

1. Why was the creation of the Meiji constitution important?
2. Who created it and when?
3. The Meiji constitution was modeled after the constitutions of Western countries. Generally, how was it similar to the constitutions of Western countries? What was its major difference?
4. According to the Meiji constitution, who was the sovereign ruler of Japan? In practice, who actually made the decisions and controlled Japan's government?

### Additional Notes:

### Paragraph(s):

## EDUCATION

### Assignment

- Research your topic using at least three reputable sources.
- Answer the questions to guide your research.
- Take additional notes on what you learned.
- Write one to two paragraphs summarizing the main points of what you learned.
- Bring your completed handout to the next class period. You will use what you wrote to teach your classmates about your topic.

### Guiding Questions

1. In what ways did education in Japan change during the Meiji era?
2. Which Western education systems was Japan's new system modeled after?
3. What topics were taught? What was the purpose of compulsory education for all?
4. What was the result on the population's literacy rate?

### Additional Notes:

### Paragraph(s):

## INDUSTRY & ECONOMY

### Assignment

- Research your topic using at least three reputable sources.
- Answer the questions to guide your research.
- Take additional notes on what you learned.
- Write one to two paragraphs summarizing the main points of what you learned.
- Bring your completed handout to the next class period. You will use what you wrote to teach your classmates about your topic.

### Guiding Questions

1. List several important changes that took place in Japan's economy during the Meiji era.
2. Which new industries were introduced?
3. What role did zaibatsu play in the modernization of Japan?
4. What was the downside of a rapidly developing industrial revolution in Japan—as is true with other countries during an industrial revolution?

### Additional Notes:

### Paragraph(s):

## SOCIETY & CULTURE

### Assignment

- Research your topic using at least three reputable sources.
- Answer the questions to guide your research.
- Take additional notes on what you learned.
- Write one to two paragraphs summarizing the main points of what you learned.
- Bring your completed handout to the next class period. You will use what you wrote to teach your classmates about your topic.

### Guiding Questions

1. What happened to the strict social class system of the feudal period?
2. How did the changes in social structure affect the samurai and daimyo classes?
3. In what ways did Japanese society become Westernized?
4. What role did religion play in preserving national unity during this period of social change?

### Additional Notes:

### Paragraph(s):



## MILITARY

### Assignment

- Research your topic using at least three reputable sources.
- Answer the questions to guide your research.
- Take additional notes on what you learned.
- Write one to two paragraphs summarizing the main points of what you learned.
- Bring your completed handout to the next class period. You will use what you wrote to teach your classmates about your topic.

### Guiding Questions

1. Which military systems did Japan model its new military after?
2. Who was required to serve in the new military system?
3. What were the two biggest military victories Japan had during the Meiji era? How did these accomplishments affect perceptions of Japan in the West?
4. Why did Japan want to build a strong military? What new strategies and technology were introduced?

### Additional Notes:

### Paragraph(s):

## FOREIGN RELATIONS

### Assignment

- Research your topic using at least three reputable sources.
- Answer the questions to guide your research.
- Take additional notes on what you learned.
- Write one to two paragraphs summarizing the main points of what you learned.
- Bring your completed handout to the next class period. You will use what you wrote to teach your classmates about your topic.

### Guiding Questions

1. Describe Japan's foreign relations policy before Commodore Perry's visit in 1853.
2. What were "learning missions" in the early Meiji era? What was their purpose?
3. How did Japan's relations with the West change during the Meiji era?
4. Describe Japan's relations with other Asian nations during the Meiji era.

### Additional Notes:

### Paragraph(s):

## JIGSAW NOTES

Take notes on each of the topics below (except for your assigned topic) while your classmates present their information.

<b>Meiji Constitution</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>Industry &amp; Economy</b>	<b>Society &amp; Culture</b>
<b>Military</b>	<b>Foreign Relations</b>

## TOKYO AND THE MEIJI RESTORATION

1. Why did the Americans arrive in Edo (Tokyo) Bay in 1853?

*The Americans wanted to open Japan to trade and diplomatic relations.*

2. What was the result of the 1853 visit?

*The shogun eventually signed a trade treaty with the United States that allowed Americans to live and trade in five Japanese ports, ending more than 200 years of Japan's isolation from the outside world. Similar treaties with Europe followed.*

3. How did the Japanese respond to the intrusion of Westerners?

*Some Japanese people lost confidence in the shogun's rule, which led to groups of samurai and daimyo overthrowing the shogun and restoring power to the emperor.*

4. What were the goals of the new Japanese government? Why was it important for Japan to achieve these goals?

*The new government wanted to modernize Japan and turn it into a civilized country like those of the West. They also wanted to adopt Western ways in order to survive in a Western-dominated world.*

5. What changes took place to the city of Tokyo during the Meiji era?

- *Tokyo was transformed from a walking city to a riding city.*
- *Some western-style buildings were constructed, streets were broadened and paved, telegraph and eventually electricity lines were introduced, a new water system was installed, and railroad tracks were built.*
- *Shops in the Ginza district and the old downtown area began offering foreign products.*
- *Tokyo became a mixture of modern and traditional, with the uptown section changing the most and the downtown section changing the least.*

## RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS

Below are sample answers to the guiding questions on Handouts 3A–F.

**Meiji Constitution**

1. Why was the creation of the Meiji constitution important?

*The Meiji constitution was Japan's attempt to create democratic institutions, with an elected parliament, a judicial system, a tax system, equality and human rights for its citizens, etc.*

2. Who created it and when?

*Ito Hirobumi (1841–1909), an elder statesman, is the father of Japan's constitution. He began working on the document in 1881 and completed it, with the help of other government leaders, in 1889.*

3. The Meiji constitution was modeled after the constitutions of Western countries. Generally how was it similar to the constitutions of Western countries? What was its major difference?

*The Meiji constitution was similar in that it established an elected parliament, the Diet (i.e., the House of Representatives and the House of Peers), and it created human rights such as religious freedom, the freedom to trade, the freedom to own land, etc. It was different in that it 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.*

4. According to the Meiji constitution, who was the sovereign ruler of Japan? In practice, who actually made the decisions and controlled Japan's government?

*The emperor was officially the sovereign ruler. However, the country was basically ruled by a small group of elites, called the genro, who were former daimyo (feudal lords) in the Edo Period.*

**Education**

1. In what ways did education in Japan change during the Meiji era?

*Education became compulsory for all children during the Meiji era. Western textbooks were adopted in the beginning. Education was controlled by the government.*

2. Which other education systems was Japan's new system modeled after?

*Japan's new education system was modeled after those of France and Germany.*

3. What topics were taught? What was the purpose of compulsory education for all?

*Students were taught subjects such as math, science, and reading as well as Shinto, the state sponsored religion. They were also taught to honor their duty to the emperor, country, and family. Compulsory education created obedient and productive citizens who could help further modernization efforts and maintain the stability of Japan.*

4. What was the result on the population's literacy rate?

*Japan's literacy rate became one of the highest in the world by 1905. Japan became the first Asian country to have a mostly literate population.*

**Industry & Economy**

1. List several important changes that took place in Japan's economy during the Meiji era.
  - *The yen, Japan's first monetary currency, was created.*
  - *The economy became based on the yen rather than on rice currency.*
  - *A tax system was developed.*
  - *The Bank of Japan was opened.*
2. Which new industries were introduced?  
*New industries introduced were silk and cotton mills, shipbuilding, mining, railroads, and electricity.*
3. What role did zaibatsu play in the modernization of Japan?  
*Zaibatsu, or financial cliques, were wealthy families, such as Mitsui and Mitsubishi, who formed business conglomerates that controlled much of Japan's economic activity during the country's modernization. The zaibatsu provided capital for the establishment of new companies and economic ventures, freeing up the government to invest in other areas of modernization, such as education and transportation.*
4. What was the downside of a rapidly developing industrial revolution in Japan—as is true with other countries during an industrial revolution?  
*The cost of rapid development and industrial revolution was the exploitation of workers, especially women and children, and poor working conditions. This was particularly true for factory workers and coal miners.*

**Society & Culture**

1. What happened to the strict social class system of the feudal period?  
*The strict social class system was abolished, creating more equality and allowing people to choose their own careers.*
2. How did the changes in social structure affect the samurai and daimyo classes?  
*The samurai class were still paid stipends by the government but lost their status and privileges. They were no longer allowed to carry swords, but they were allowed to enter other careers. The daimyo had to give the government their lands, which were divided into prefectures. An elite group became part of the leadership under the new government.*
3. In what ways did Japanese society become Westernized?  
*Japanese adopted many aspects of Western society, such as technology, medicine, architecture, entertainment, fashion, etc. Japanese people were encouraged to learn foreign languages and travel abroad. Japan developed a strong military and economy and established some democratic institutions. The government looked to colonize other lands.*
4. What role did religion play in preserving national unity during this period of social change?  
*The government adopted Shinto as the state-sponsored religion. Shinto emphasized loyalty to the emperor and country, which promoted a spirit of nationalism.*

## Military

1. Which military systems did Japan model its new military after?

*The Japanese navy was based on the British naval system, and the German army served as a model for the new Japanese army.*

2. Who was required to serve in the new military system?

*The new system required universal conscription, meaning that every man regardless of class had to serve in the military for a certain period of time.*

3. What were the two biggest military victories Japan had during the Meiji era? How did these accomplishments affect perceptions of Japan in the West?

*Japan's two biggest victories were defeating China in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–95 and defeating Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05. These accomplishments helped Japan prove itself as an equal among the powerful Western countries.*

4. Why did Japan want to build a strong military? What new strategies and technology were introduced?

*Japan wanted to build a strong military to avoid being colonized by Western powers as other parts of Asia had been. Japan wanted to prove itself as an independent nation, equal to those in the Western world, to gain the status and respect needed to renegotiate the early trade treaties forced on the country. New strategies and technology included steam ships, cannons, Western-style guns, military schools, and soldier training.*

## Foreign Relations

1. Describe Japan's foreign relations policy before Commodore Perry's visit in 1853.

*Japan was isolated from most of the outside world except for limited trade relations with China and the Netherlands.*

2. What were "learning missions" in the early Meiji era? What was their purpose?

*Groups of Japanese went on "learning missions" overseas to study technology, governments, schools, medicine, science, factories, judicial systems, etc. of the West. The purpose of the missions was to learn from Western knowledge and bring back ideas about what would and would not work in Japan in its efforts to modernize.*

3. How did Japan's relations with the West change during the Meiji era?

- *Japan began trading with the West.*
- *Small groups of expatriates from the United States, Great Britain, and Europe moved into Japanese port cities, beginning interaction among Japanese and Westerners.*
- *Western countries hosted Japanese visitors.*
- *Westerners began to see Japan as a world power by the end of the Meiji era.*

4. Describe Japan's relations with other Asian nations during the Meiji era.

*Japan used its newfound military strength to gain territory and power in the region. Japan fought a war against China over land disputes and control over Korea.*

## JAPANESE WOODBLOCK PRINTS

During the second viewing of the PowerPoint Presentation, “Japanese Woodblock Prints.pps,” read the information below about each image.

### Prints of Tokyo:

#### Image 1: “Nihonbashi, 1854”

Nihonbashi is a business district in Tokyo. During the Edo period Nihonbashi was the center of commerce and culture, and many of the stores there today date back to Edo. The Nihonbashi bridge (seen in the background) was a wooden bridge originally built in 1603 with the beginning of the Edo period shogunate and is a famous Tokyo landmark. In 1911 the original bridge was replaced with a stone bridge on a steel frame, following modern Western architecture. The bridge withstood the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 and the firebombing of Tokyo in 1945. In preparation for the 1964 Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo, the Metropolitan expressway was constructed directly over the bridge.

#### Image 2: “Nihonbashi, Clearing after the Snow, 1856”

This print is one in a series called *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, considered a masterpiece of artist Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858), in which the artist portrays famous landmarks and the beauty of Tokyo across the seasons.

In this print of Nihonbashi, the grounds of the Edo Castle can be seen in the upper right and the iconic Mount Fuji to the left. (When the Metropolitan expressway was built, it blocked the view of Mount Fuji from the bridge.) The boats on Tokyo Bay are bringing in produce to the markets. On the bottom right, the fish market is shown with vendors and peddlers on the street. In the Edo period, the area under the bridge was where the famous Tsukiji fish market originated with vendors selling fish that was not purchased for the castle. The fish market that exists in Tokyo today is a popular tourist attraction.

### Prints of foreigners in Japan:

#### Image 3: “American Captain, Daughter, and Dog, 1861”

Once Japan was opened to diplomatic and trade relations, Americans and Europeans started arriving in the port cities of Japan, such as Yokohama. A large expat community of “people of the five nations” developed in Yokohama. The term “people of the five nations” referred to Americans, British, French, Russians, and Dutch. The influx of foreigners inspired many Japanese artists to create prints depicting these newcomers and their way of life, often in an idealized or even cartoonish fashion. In the early 1860s, foreigners were a popular subject of woodblock prints. Between 1860 and 1862, about 500 different woodblock prints of foreigners were published in mass quantities. Their popularity decreased significantly after 1862.

#### Image 4: “Foreign Girls and Boys at Play, 1860”

This print is a Japanese depiction of Western children, created in 1860, the same year some port cities were opened to foreigners. It is interesting to note that although women and children did eventually move into the port towns of Japan, in 1860 most of the foreigners were men. Artists



often used their imaginations in depicting what they considered representative portrayals of foreigners. They also copied images from European magazines onto woodblock prints and then added Japanese landscapes and features to the background.

Also in 1860 a Japanese delegation of 77 officials traveled to several cities in the United States including San Francisco, Philadelphia, and New York.

#### **Image 5: “Russian Trade Officials, c. 1861”**

In 1855 the first Russian-Japanese treaty was signed, establishing the boundaries of their neighboring territories. Relations between Russia and Japan were decent from 1855 until 1894 when Japan engaged in war with China over Korea and other land disputes. Russia was unhappy with Japan’s attempts to gain territory in East Asia. As a result, Japan’s war with China set the stage for the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05.

#### **Prints representing a modernized Japan:**

#### **Image 6: “Comparison of Beautiful Women in Western Coiffures, 1887”**

The artist of this print is Toyohara Chikanobu. He was known as a master of *bijinga* (images of beautiful women) and for illustrating changes in women’s fashion, including both traditional and Western clothing. His work illustrated the changes in hair styles and makeup across time as well. This print is an example of *bijinga*, which were very popular during the Meiji era.

In Meiji Japan, it was typical for Japanese men to dress in Western style garments while Japanese women continued to wear the traditional kimono. Elite Japanese women were the first to don Western-style clothing such as the outfits shown here: dresses with bustles, elaborate hats, shoes, and sometimes umbrellas.

#### **Image 7: “Onoe Baikō as the English Balloonist Spencer, 1894”**

Woodblock prints of the early Meiji era often included depictions of Western technology such as ships, trains, cameras, sewing machines, Western-style architecture, and even hot air balloons. Hot air balloons were first seen by the Japanese delegation that visited the United States in 1860. Onoe Baikō was the name of several generations of kabuki actors. Percival Spencer (1864–1913) was a pioneering hot-air balloonist and parachutist from a British family of professional balloonists. This print is one in a series called *One Hundred Roles of Baikō*, in which the major roles of the actor are featured. This print portrays Baikō playing the role of Percival Spencer in a kabuki play called *Riding the Famous Hot Air Balloon*, based on Spencer’s balloon ascent in Ueno Park in Tokyo in November 1891.

#### **Image 8: “Horseracing at Shinobazu, 1885”**

The horse race track was constructed at Ueno Park in Tokyo in 1884. The emperor and empress attended the inaugural race on November 1, 1884. In this print, the empress is shown accompanied by her attendants, all wearing traditional court kimonos while the emperor (not shown here) would have been dressed in Western-style military attire. Decorated boats can be seen on the pond with Japanese fireworks (paper figures shot from canons) floating down over the pond. Although fireworks were not new to Japan, new technology from the Meiji era made them more elaborate and colorful. Horseracing was a popular pastime from 1884 until 1892. Under feudalism, only the samurai had been allowed to ride horses, and horsemanship was associated with martial skills and national defense.

**Image 9: “Planning an Overseas Trip, 1890”**

This print depicts a Japanese woman planning a trip abroad. During the Edo period, Japanese people were forbidden from traveling overseas. In 1639 an isolationist policy prohibited Japanese from leaving the country. Under this drastic policy, any Japanese caught trying to leave was to be executed. Although Japan had limited trade relations with China and the Netherlands, the country was almost completely isolated from the rest of the world. Conversely, during the Meiji era, Japanese were encouraged to travel and study overseas in an effort to quickly adopt Western knowledge and customs to gain status as an independent nation equal to the West.

**Image 10: “Our Naval Fleet Sinks a Chinese Ship in the Yellow Sea, 1894”**

This print from 1894 shows a Japanese naval ship sinking a Chinese warship in the Yellow Sea. The Japanese ship is shown off to the right with the white flag on its bow.

Conflicts over Korea led to a war with China, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95. To the surprise of the world, Japan defeated China with its new military might. This was a significant accomplishment, as it signified to the world that Japan was becoming a major global power. Much of the Sino-Japanese War was fought at sea, giving Japan the advantage with its newly modernized navy and weapons. Due to its modern military technology, Japan was able to win the war, gain control over Korea, and colonize Taiwan.

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