

**Here's your
FREE
lesson!**



We hope you enjoy it!

Get full access to all of our lessons, join our membership at

www.onthemarkcurriculum.com

We give you the lessons, so you can do what you love! TEACH!

Join Now!





Japan's Edo Period – Feudal Lords and Samurai Warriors

Japan's Feudal System and the Sengakuji Temple

On December 14 of every year, the Sengakuji Temple holds a festival in memory of Lord Asano Naganori and the 47 Ronin. Sengakuji is a zen buddhist temple and the burial place for Lord Asano and his 47 warriors. Why do you think such warriors would be buried at such a peaceful temple? Why would a religious centre hold a festival every year for warriors and lords?



Sengakuji Temple

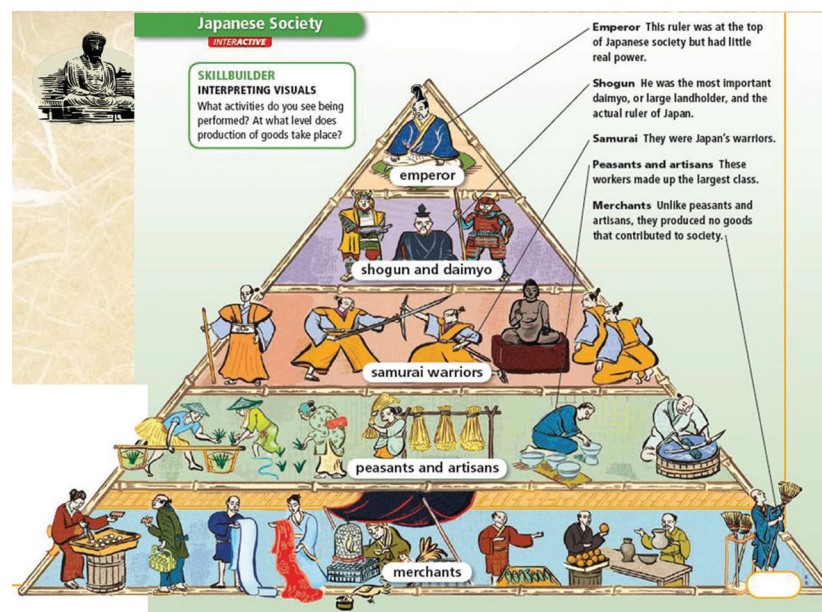
The Story of the 47 Ronin holds the key to unlocking many of the mysteries that make up the Japanese worldview during the Edo Period. The Edo Period started around 1600 and lasted until the late 1800s – about 300 years. The story shows us just how much power a feudal lord could have over others. But it also shows us the role of loyalty and honour in feudal Japan.

In a feudal society, royalty, noble families, and land-owners provide protection and leadership to tenants in exchange for loyalty and service. An emperor ruled Japan, but this rule was very symbolic and spiritual. In service to the emperor, a **shogun** acted as military leader. The shogun also made decisions on how the land was governed and how noble families served the emperor.

Under the shogun were many **daimyos**, or noble families governing territories and towns and farms. Each family would have **samurai**, or warriors that protected the land, policed the communities, and enforced the laws of the family.

Under the ruling class, farmers and labourers worked for the daimyos and provided food, goods, and trades. Artisans produced goods that served a trade or craft. Merchants were considered underneath all these other groups because they did not produce goods themselves. Instead, they sold or traded the work from the farmers and artisans. These groups made up the peasant class.

Another group came under the peasant class. The shunned groups of the community were outcasts, criminals, or the Ainu. Butchers and leather tanners were outcasts because much of their work was considered unclean. The Ainu people lived mostly in the northern islands. The Ainu kept to an indigenous way of life that came from before Japanese feudalism. The Japanese often treated the Ainu as outsiders or foreigners.





Japan's Edo Period – Feudal Lords and Samurai Warriors

The Story of the 47 Ronin

Lord Asano Naganori was a trusted member of the imperial court. He and his noble family served the **Tokugawa shogun** for generations.

In 1701, the shogun appointed Asano to act as host to noble guests in the imperial court. The highest-ranking officer of ceremonial matters, Kira Yoshinaka, was ordered to instruct Asano on these duties. Kira thought very highly of himself. He expected Asano would give him rewards and great gifts for teaching the proper manners and ceremonies of the court. The relationship between these two lords grew tense. Kira talked down to him and insulted him, even in front of other lords. Asano lost his temper. In anger, he confronted and then tried to kill Kira.

It was forbidden to draw a weapon in the imperial court like this. The shogun sentenced Asano to commit **seppuku**, or ritual suicide. Asano accepted the sentence immediately. As part of his suicide ritual, he wrote a short poem about cherry blossoms, the wind, springtime, and death. Then, he ended his life.

In feudal Japan, this disgrace meant the Asano family would no longer be a **daimyo**. Lands, riches, and farms could be given to another noble family. Asano's most trusted counsellor, Oishi Yoshio, moved the Asano family to safety. He informed the samurai under the Asano family they now had no lord. They were now **ronin** – leaderless warriors, which was a disgrace in feudal Japan. 47 of these warriors, including Oishi, swore they would avenge their lord and kill Kira, knowing this meant the end of their own lives as well.

The ronin went into hiding and became tradespeople, farmers, or monks. Two years passed. Kira Yoshinaka started to think highly of himself again in the imperial court. One night, Oishi and the ronin snuck into the royal estates and found Kira. They told Kira they had come because of their loyalty to Asano. They pushed Kira on to his knees and urged him to commit suicide with honour. Kira was very scared and froze in place.

Oishi decided they would kill Kira. They took off his head. As the morning sun came up, these warriors ran across the city to Sengakuji Temple so they could place the head of Kira before Asano's tomb. The warriors then turned themselves in to the monks of the temple and waited for the shogun to judge them.

According to the samurai code, these warriors were right to avenge their lord, Asano. According to the imperial court, they were wrong to defy the orders of a shogun. Were they heroes or criminals? They were sentenced to death, but the court ordered them to commit seppuku. This gave the warriors honour in death, and their actions made it possible to re-establish the Asano noble name in the feudal system with honour.



Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu



Oishi Kuranosuke

beibaok/Shutterstock.com

Japan's Edo Period – Feudal Lords and Samurai Warriors

Complete the following instructions and answer the following questions.

1. Write a sentence for each of these words explaining what is meant by the word.

shogun	_____
daimyo	_____
feudal system	_____
samurai	_____
ronin	_____
seppuku	_____

2. When did the Edo Period take place in Japan?

3. Why did Lord Asano Naganori confront and attack Kira Yoshinaka? Do you think he had any other choice in how to react? Why or why not? Describe one or two other ways Asano could have reacted in that moment.

4. From one point of view, the 47 warriors in the story were heroes. From another point of view, they were criminals. Give one reason people may have seen them as heroes. Give one reason people may have seen them as criminals.

5. The 47 ronin admitted to their actions and gave themselves up willingly. They did not run away or deny what they had done. If you were one of the 47, do you feel you would be able to do this? Why or why not?

Introduction for Historical Worldviews Examined Curriculum Map

These activities have two intentions:

- to teach concepts that relate to the worldviews and cultures studied
- help students understand what it took to make the worldviews and cultures of today

The first unit explores *Japan during the Edo Period and the Meiji Period*. The students will travel back to when the people of Japan lived in a tradition of isolation and faced moments of rapid adaptation.

The next unit introduces students to *Renaissance Europe*. This was a time of trade, discovery, exchange of ideas, growth, competition, and imperialism. Students will consider the role of an expansionist worldview on world history and on the citizens of the world.

The third unit turns to conflict between worldviews. *The Spanish exploration of the North American, Central American and South American geography* introduced many opportunities and choices. Technology, disease, desires of dominance, and acquisition all contribute to the clash between these societies. Just as important, students will examine the consequences of these pursuits and worldviews for both the Aztecs and the Spanish.

Concluding lessons offer chances for the students to consolidate their learning with cumulative activities. Also, students may reflect on how these attitudes, values and worldviews still influence us by applying concepts they learned to today's current events.

The lessons have been designed to work independently or as units of study, with high interest and low vocabulary as leading goals.

LESSON TOPICS

Unit 1 From Isolation to Adaptation: JAPAN

- Introduction for Historical Worldviews Examined - Alberta Grade 8 Social Studies
- Teacher Notes: Cultural Isolation During the Edo Period
- Answer Key - From Isolation to Adaptation Japan - Alberta Grade 8 Social Studies
- Vocabulary and Pronunciation Sheet - From Isolation to Adaptation Japan

Lesson 1 - Cultural Isolation During the Edo Period

Lesson 2 - Japan's Edo Period – Feudal Lords and Samurai Warriors

Lesson 3 - Japan's Edo Period – Military Dictators and Strict, Stable Peace

Lesson 4 - Japan's Edo Period – Timeline of Leaders and Events

Lesson 5 - Japan's Edo Period – How Can Culture and Art Flourish in Isolation

Lesson 6 - Edo Period – The Fall of Edo

Teacher Notes: The Edo Period – Government, Worldview, Citizenship and Identity

Lesson 8 - 2A Japan's Edo Period – Features of the Feudal Government

Lesson 9 - 2B Japan's Edo Period – How a Worldview Affects Decision-Making

Lesson 10 - 2C Japan's Edo Period – Citizenship and Identity

Lesson 11 - 2D Japan's Edo Period – From Isolation to Crisis to Adaptation

Teacher Notes: The Meiji Period – Rapid Adaptation in a Changing World

Lesson 12 - 3A Japan's Meiji Period – Radical Change in Government

Lesson 13 - 3B Japan's Meiji Period – Changes at Work and At Home

Lesson 14 - 3C Japan's Meiji Period – Looking Back and Comparing to the Past

Teacher Notes: The Meiji Period – Consequences of Rapid Change to Citizenship and Identity

Lesson 15 - 4A Japan's Meiji Period – How Do Citizens Adapt to Radical Change?

Lesson 16 - 4B Japan's Meiji Period – Maintaining Traditions While Facing Progress

Lesson 17 - 4C Japan's Meiji Period – Review – Isolation, Adaptation and More

Unit 2 Origins of a Western Worldview: Renaissance Europe

- Teacher Notes - Origins of a Western Worldview: Renaissance Europe
- Answer Key - Origins of a Western Worldview: Renaissance Europe
- Vocabulary and Pronunciation Sheet - Origins of a Western Worldview: Renaissance Europe

Lesson 1 - 1A What was Europe Before the Renaissance?

Lesson 2 - 1B Small Fires in Europe – Before the Renaissance

Lesson 3 - 1C Spreading the Fire – Events and Ideas from Renaissance Europe

Lesson 4 - 1D The Role of Towns, Guilds, Money, Religion, and Education in the Renaissance

Teacher Notes: Renaissance Europe – The Emergence of Powerful City-States and Influential Thinkers

Lesson 5 - 2A Renaissance Europe – Geography, Trade, and the City-State

Lesson 6 - 2B Renaissance Europe – Rebirth of Classical Writings and Exchange with the East

Lesson 7 - 2C Renaissance Europe – Influential Thinkers and Ideas about Humanism

Teacher Notes: Spreading the Fire of Renaissance Europe – Discovery, Exploration, Expansion and Imperialism

Lesson 8 - 3A Renaissance Europe – Discovery

Lesson 9 - 3B Renaissance Europe – Exploration

Lesson 10 - 3C Renaissance Europe – Expansion

Lesson 11 - 3D Renaissance Europe – Imperialism and Citizenship

Unit 3 The Spanish and the Aztecs

- Answer Key - Worldviews in Conflict: The Spanish and the Aztecs
- Teacher Notes - The Spanish and the Aztecs – Before Intercultural Contact
- Vocabulary and Pronunciation Sheet - Worldviews in Conflict: The Spanish and the Aztecs

Lesson 1 - 1A The Aztecs Before the Spanish

Lesson 2 - 1B The Aztecs – Mythology, Customs, and Worldview

Lesson 3 - 1C The Aztecs – Exchange, Expansion and Empire

Lesson 4 - 1D The Spanish – Before the Aztecs

Lesson 5 - 1E The Spanish and the Aztecs – Comparing Worldviews

Teacher Notes: Meeting, Miscommunication, Conflict, Conquest – The Spanish and the Aztecs

Lesson 6 - 2A The Spanish and the Aztecs –Discovering Each Other

Lesson 7 - 2B The Spanish and the Aztecs – Meeting

Lesson 8 - 2C The Spanish and the Aztecs – Miscommunication, Conflict, Disease, and Religion

Lesson 9 - 2D The Spanish and the Aztecs – Changes in Society

Lesson 10 - 2E The Spanish and the Aztecs –Conquest and Consequences

**Teacher Notes: The Spanish and the Aztecs – Have We Learned to Control
Expansionism, Imperialism, and Domination?**

Lesson 11 - 3A The Spanish and the Aztecs – A Mix of Worldviews

Lesson 12 - 3B The Spanish and the Aztecs – Technology and Expansion

Lesson 13 - 3C The Spanish and the Aztecs – Challenge: Is There a Way to Control
Domination and Imperialism