

**Lesson Plan:**

**Japan Institute for Social and Economic Affairs Lesson Plan: Japanese and American Elections Grade: 9-12 Social Studies**

Objective: Compare and contrast Japanese and American campaign characteristics.

Essential Question: What commonalities and differences are there in Japanese and American electoral politics?

Materials:

- "U.S. and Japanese Election System" presentation

- "U.S./Japan Evaluation Form

Directions:

1. Teacher will introduce the initial question: "What makes elections work well in a democracy?" Students will meet with those closest to them (pairs/small groups-teacher decision) to devise a list of 3-5 characteristics they consider most important to free and productive elections.
2. ~5-7 min. Discussion on group list. Teacher is looking for similarities and differences in student lists, as well as possible answers that could tie into Japanese/American electoral systems.
3. Introduce Essential Question and Lesson Objective.
4. Discuss slides 4-12 with students in response-lecture style. Suggested questions/discussion points for each slide below.
  - a. **Slide 4:** Anything else you would add to either of these nations based on your experiences?
  - b. **Slide 5:** Why would the Japanese government limit their elections in such a way. Would you consider this a positive or negative aspect of Japanese elections. Why?
  - c. **Slide 6:** How is this similar or different to American candidates?
  - d. **Slide 7:** The image of such traditional campaigning methods stands at odds with many Americans' impressions of Japan as a technology-dominated society. Would you consider these campaign methods a positive or a negative for your society?
  - e. **Slide 8:** Discuss advantages and disadvantages.
  - f. **Slide 9:** How does branding reflect American values? Can you think of other political 'brands' or techniques through the years?
  - g. **Slide 10:** How do these symbols serve to crystalize a candidate's message (specifics)
  - h. **Slide 11:** Which ads are more effective in shaping your opinion of candidates. Why?
  - i. **Slide 12:** Is the power of PACs a positive or negative force in American politics? Is it justifiable to say, "I have the ability to spend my money as much as I want to support a candidate?" Or is it more justifiable to say, "A few rich Americans are buying an outsized influence in American elections."
5. Hand-out "U.S./Japan Evaluation Form. Have students complete assignments to demonstrate learning (Questions 5 and 6) can be discussed with a partner or done solo. Teacher discretion.

**Lesson Plan Materials:**

(next page for reproduction purposes)

Name:

U.S./Japan Evaluation Form

**U.S./Japan Evaluation Form**

1. Define:

a. Koenkai

b. PAC

2. Compare and contrast Japanese and American election systems (5 similarities/differences).

<b>Japan</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>United States</b>

3. Identify two advantages and disadvantages of each election system.
  
4. How could these two systems incorporate ideas from the other to solve their own disadvantages?
  
5. If you were a voter in these nations, which system would you prefer? Why?  
**(Discuss with partner)**
  
6. Which system do you consider to be more democratic? Why? **(Discuss with partner)**
  - a. Consider limitations on voting/role of media in each nation's system.