

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).

Japan	Both	United States

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.