

Land, Culture and Communication: How does the environment impact the lives of peoples in Japan and North America?

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Introduction:

This activity should take 5-6 periods depending how in depth teachers want to go into the inquiry portion of the lesson. I was fascinated to discover the ways in which the Japanese people are connected to their environment and how there were similarities involving indigenous perspectives about the environment for peoples in Japan and in Canada. That was an inspiration to as a way to explore the connections of land, culture and the environment to the people of Japan and Canada.

Big Ideas:

My lesson will meet the following “big ideas” of the Social Studies curriculum:

Human and environmental factors shape changes in population and living standards.

Curricular Competencies:

My lesson will have students meet the following curricular competencies:

- Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions
- Assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments at particular times and places
- Identify what the creators of accounts, narratives, maps, or texts have determined is significant
- Explain different perspectives on past or present people, places, issues, or events, and compare the values, worldviews, and beliefs of human cultures and societies in different times and places
- Make ethical judgments about past events, decisions, or actions, and assess the limitations of drawing direct lessons from the past

First Peoples Principles of Learning:

My lesson will include the following First Peoples Principles of Learning:

- Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
- Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge.
- Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
- Learning requires exploration of one’s identity.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

Steps 1-2: Handouts (pp. 1-3)

Photocopy and distribute pages 1-3, the introductory activity. This should take about two classes to complete. The handouts are to serve as an inspiration to begin the lesson. The classroom teacher may choose to assess the handout for completion.

Step 3: Inquiry Mini Project

After completing the introductory activities, this portion will take a number of classes and can be adapted in a number of ways. Teachers may guide the class to focus on one big idea or students can be set loose to explore any topic that they choose.

Essential Question:

To what extent does land and environment impact the people of Japan?

Using this question as a guide, students can develop their own inquiry question about the connections between Japan's people, the land, and the environment.

The following video can be used to create good inquiry questions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7j6BM002ksk>

A good inquiry question should be “ungoogleable” and be fairly open ended.

Students should start brainstorming questions on their inquiry plan worksheet. They can complete this digitally or on a paper copy. The teacher can then help students select their “best” inquiry question to move forward with.

Students can choose the format to present their work in: ie. Digitally, poster, etc. They are advised that they will be sharing their discoveries in a “gallery walk” or community style presentation style format.

Gallery walk ideas:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPLk_aVhYwg

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSt5echeRrM>

Assessment:

During presentations, teachers will be assessing during the gallery walk presentations using the Inquiry Project Rubric. Students will also provide a self-reflection using the Inquiry Self-Assessment sheet.