

Using Japan's Historical and Current GDP to Predict Trends in the Business Cycle

Time needed: 1-2 class periods

Grade Level: 10-12

Materials needed: 1:1 classroom/digital capabilities, flipgrid free educator account or other recording software (schoology video discussion, etc.) Copy (digital or printed) of the graphic organizers for data.

Learning objective:

I can explain GDP, and make future predictions based on historical and current GDP.

Definitions:

GDP- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total monetary value of all final goods and services produced within a country in a specific year.

Business Cycle- the movement of the economy through expansions and contractions as indicated by GDP over time.

CPI- Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by consumers for a basket of goods.

Inflation- A general increase in the price of goods and services, and the fall in purchasing power of money.

Unemployment- The amount of the labor force that is actively seeking, but unable to find, employment.

Prior Knowledge:

Students should have an understanding for what GDP, CPI, Business Cycle, and Unemployment are prior to this lesson, which will have them looking up historical GDP and making future predictions based off of historical trends.

Lesson Overview:

Students will be researching GDP data for Japan, both historical and current, to determine Japan's placement along the business cycle, and make a future prediction, supported with evidence.

Lesson Plan

1. Introduce the lesson which will have students examining historical GDP for Japan, looking at current GDP for Japan, along with other economic indicators, and making future predictions for Japan along the business cycle.
2. Students will first begin to gather information on historical GDP for Japan, from the time period of 1960 until 2000. Students will write the GDP Per Capita, and Percent Growth Change of GDP for every 10 years. (1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000). Students will use the organizer table to enter in all of their information. Students can use any website that documents historical GDP, though I recommend: <https://knoema.com/mhrzolg/historical-gdp-by-country-statistics-from-the-world-bank-1960-2019?country=Japan> as this site is free and easy to use.
3. When students have finished gathering their historical GDP and filling in the organizer, students will start to look at Japan's most recent data for GDP, as well as other indicators. Students can use a variety of websites to look at current GDP information, but I recommend: <https://tradingeconomics.com/japan/indicators> as this site is free, accurate, and easy to use. There are tabs along the page that will allow students to look at several of the economic indicators and fill in their organizer.
4. After all research is complete and students have their organizers filled in, students will answer a couple questions about the GDP trends and what their predictions will be.
 - a. Students could also research one additional country or two additional countries and create a comparison of the two countries trends in GDP. This is a good option for students who finish the research and data collection early.
5. The final step is for students to participate in discussion. Students can do this in a video discussion in Flipgrid (or other recording and sharing video system) . Students could also have their discussion in person, as long as all students are prepared to discuss at the same time. Teachers can grade the discussion as they see fit.

Graphic Organizer for Research

Year	GDP (constant in US Dollars)	GDP Growth (Annual %)
1960		
1970		
1980		
1990		
2000		

Graphic Organizer for Current Research

Economic Indicator	Most Recent Data (quarter or year)	Second Most Recent Data (quarter or year)	Third Most Recent Data (quarter or year)	Overall trend (moving upward, downward?)
GDP (constant price in US Dollars)				
GDP Growth (in %)				
Unemployment Rate				
Inflation Rate				
CPI				

After gathering data, answer the following questions:

1. Based on the data, where do you think Japan is located along the business cycle, and why? (Expansion, Contraction, Peak, or Trough)
2. What different factors could explain the current position along the business cycle? (natural disaster, lack of trade, war, etc..)
3. Based on the data, and from what you know of historical trends, what do you predict will happen to Japan next in the business cycle? (early expansion, late contraction, early recession?)
4. Extra: Compare Japan to another country of similar economic capacity. Look up some of the same information for the second country. How do the two compare? Is Japan or the other country better or worse off?

Flipgrid Presentation Instructions

Using flipgrid, record your findings. State where you think Japan currently is on the business cycle, and explain why. Also state your prediction for where Japan is headed along the business cycle next, and explain your reasoning. Your video should be no longer than 3 minutes in total length.