

LESSON 15:

JAPAN IN TODAY'S WORLD: LET'S GO YOKOHAMA!

Introduction:

This lesson, following on Lessons 2 and 8, continues the emphasis on geography, touching on the themes of location, place, and regions. Most of the lesson, however, features “interdependence.” The glossary in *Geography for Life: National Geography Standards* (1994) defines interdependence as “people relying on each other in different places in the world for ideas, goods, and services.” Students are asked to “visit” Mizushima Yu’s hometown of Yokohama to find evidence of that city’s interdependence with other peoples and nations; by extension, they also learn about Japan’s interdependence with other nations.

Student access to the Internet is necessary for successful completion of the lesson; an essential source for student work is the home page of the city of Yokohama (<http://www.city.yokohama.jp/en/>), which contains a wealth of information about the city, including its history, geography, and relationship to the rest of the world.

Organizing Questions:

What can we learn about global connectedness?
What can we learn about place and the relationship between society and the environment?

Objectives: At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be better able to:

1. Categorize imports as ideas, goods, or services.
2. Reach agreement in small-group settings.
3. Consider the importance of “regions” in relation to interdependence.
4. Discuss the dependence of Japan and the United States upon other countries.
5. Argue the benefits and drawbacks of interdependency.

Time Required: 2 class periods plus homework assigned the day before the lesson begins

Materials:

1. Classroom map or transparency of the world
2. Map of Japan
3. Copies of Handout 15-1, “Yokohama Home Page,” for all students
4. Access to the Internet

5. Selected photo sheets of Mizushima Yu: P01, P03, P05, P08, P10, P11, D02, D09, D11, D12, D15, D16, D19, D20, D21
6. Sheets of posting paper
7. Magic markers

Procedure:

Homework (15 Minutes the Day Before the Lesson Begins)

1. Introduce the concept of interdependence by writing on the board or a transparency: “Interdependence may be defined as people relying on each other in different places in the world for ideas, goods, and services.” In order to ascertain whether students understand these terms, ask them for examples of each. (*Ideas that are exported/imported might include democracy, fast food, religions; goods are material items, such as televisions and cell phones; services may be technology applied from outside a country [outsourcing, or off-shoring], and protection [American military in various parts of the world].*)
2. Ask the class whether they think the United States is interdependent with other parts of the world. Be sure that the students understand that interdependence is a two-way street: countries import as well as export ideas, goods, and services. As a homework assignment, ask students to generate a list of 10 imports from other countries that they come into contact with in their homes or in other places they visit or pass through on their way to and from school. Remind them that they are to include ideas as well as goods and services.

Day 1

1. Write IDEAS, GOODS, and SERVICES on the board or a transparency. Record the examples of U.S. imports that the students report—including the name of the country or region from which the idea, good, or service originated. Spend no more than 10 or 15 minutes on this activity, which should illustrate that students’ lives are directly or indirectly connected to the rest of the world in a variety of ways. (*Examples of goods: clothes from China, shoes from Korea, cars and electronic devices from Japan, oil (gasoline) from the Middle East, food from various places such as Mexico, music from England, books with authors from many countries—all are a part of their interconnected world. Examples of services: international telephone services, international postal services, “off-shoring” of technical support services. Examples of ideas may be more difficult to identify and may be more historic; possible examples include various religions from the Middle East and Asia, ideas about democracy from Greece, publicly administered health care from Great Britain, non-violent protest from India, ideas about holistic health care from China, architecture from Europe and Asia, ideas about music from all over the world, ideas about business management from Japan.*)
2. Ask the students if they know from which countries the United States imports the most goods. (According to the 2003 CIA Factbook: Canada, Mexico, China, and Japan. On a world map, point to Canada and Mexico, emphasizing that these two countries are in the Western Hemisphere with the United States. The other two, along with the United States, border the Pacific Ocean. Both “divisions” can be considered *regions*, an important geographic term meaning an

area on the earth's surface that is defined by certain unifying physical, human, or cultural characteristics.)

3. Optional Activity: If there is time, on an overhead or with an LCD projector, show the other side of the coin: goods, services, and ideas the U.S. exports. Again, according to the CIA Factbook, the top four export partners of the United States are Canada, Mexico, Japan, and the United Kingdom.
4. Tell the students that they're now going to look for evidence of Japan's interdependence with other nations and peoples. Ask them if they know Japan's #1 trading partner. (For centuries it was China; following World War II, the United States replaced China—until recently, when China again crept into the #1 spot.) Remind them of Japan's proximity to China (show them on the world map) and again emphasize the historical importance of regions in terms of exchange of ideas, goods and services.
5. Prepare students for the next activity by telling them that for much of this lesson they will focus on Mizushima Yu and her hometown, Yokohama. Point to Yokohama on a world map and on a map of Japan. Ask students what they know about Yokohama's geography (location and place) from looking at the maps. (They might mention that it's in a bay, with easy access to the Pacific; that it looks as if it is a port city; that it's one of Japan's largest cities [it is the second largest city in Japan]; that it's close to Tokyo, the capital. From the line of latitude [36 degrees] on which Yokohama is located, they should also know something about the climate [similar to that of South Carolina].)

Explain that the reason for choosing Yu as a focus for this lesson is that over the past 150 years, Yokohama has had an international reputation for openness: a history of being open to trade with the outside world and an acceptance of foreign ideas. Except for trade with countries in its region (China, Korea, and Russia) and limited trade with the Portuguese and Dutch, Japan in the early 1600s closed its borders for more than 200 years. Yokohama is the capital city of the prefecture of Kanagawa, where the Treaty of Kanagawa was signed between the United States and Japan in 1854 as a first step in opening Japan to the rest of the world.

6. Students will begin their search for evidence of Japan's interdependency by looking at selected photographs of Yu's surroundings. Divide the class into groups of two or three, giving each a photo sheet or two (there are 15 photo sheets). Ask them to jot down evidence of ideas, goods, and services, and ask them to guess where the items came from originally. Have them make note of what they can't explain and encourage them to follow up by doing some research on the Internet or in the library. (For example, there is a piece of furniture, an altar-like structure, pictured on PO5. Students may recognize it as something religious, but may have to research religions in Japan to find that the shrine is evidence of Buddhism, which is of Indian origin, imported by way of China.)
7. As the students are jotting down their findings, write three columns on the board or on a transparency: IDEAS, GOODS, SERVICES. As students report out, record their findings under these headings, along with the country or region of origin.

Answer Key for Photo Analysis:

Ideas	Goods	Services
<p><i>Western breakfasts (Europe and the United States)</i></p> <p><i>Western lunches (Europe and the United States)</i></p> <p><i>Chinese cooking</i></p> <p><i>World history (people’s ways of life)</i></p> <p><i>Language (English and written Chinese)</i></p> <p><i>Music over the radio and TV (all over the world)</i></p> <p><i>Programs on radio and TV (many from the United States)</i></p> <p><i>Architecture (from Europe and United States, especially during Meiji and early Showa eras)</i></p> <p><i>Information via cell phones (made in Japan)</i></p> <p><i>Buddhism (from India to China, Korea, Japan)</i></p>	<p><i>Various items from throughout the world at the konbini</i></p> <p><i>Piano (originally Europe)</i></p> <p><i>Western furniture (Europe, the United States)</i></p> <p><i>Cars and trucks (Korea, Europe, and United States)</i></p> <p><i>Items in Chinatown</i></p> <p><i>Movies (United States, Europe, India)</i></p>	<p><i>These may not be visible, but there is reason to imagine international telephone service, broadcasting stations, web services, postal services, and ATM services. You can also assure students that Japan, too, “off-shores” or “out-sources” to other countries. For example, Thomas J. Friedman wrote in The New York Times on Thursday, June 24, 2004 [p. A27], “Dalian, China has become the center for outsourcing by Japanese businesses that want to tap China’s low-cost brainpower. Japanese companies can hire three Chinese software engineers for the price of one in Japan...”</i></p>

Remind students that they’re looking at a very small sample of what comes into Yokohama from outside Japan. There may still be more than meets the eye; for example, some of the clothes that Yu and her friends and family are wearing may be from China, and energy sources, such as oil, may be imported from the Middle East.

- Now it’s time to look at the “other half” of interdependence. How—besides through its imports of ideas, goods, and services—is Yokohama connected to the rest of the world? Distribute copies of Handout 15-1, which shows the home page of the city of Yokohama (www.city.yokohama.jp/en/). Ask students what strikes them about the page. (*They might comment on the fact that the page is in English, not Japanese; that one can access the information in Spanish and Portuguese, as well; and that it seems to be designed with outsiders in mind. The page appears to support the lesson’s contention that Yokohama is a city known for its openness.*) Divide the class into five groups, assigning each to one of the five categories: “About Yokohama and City Government,” “Guide for Foreign Residents,” “Visiting Yokohama,” “Business and Economic Development,” and “Other Links.”

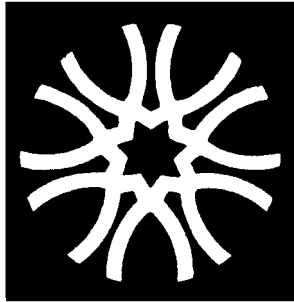
9. Give the groups time for individual members to choose one or two of the subcategories to investigate. For homework, students are to individually or with a classmate access this page on the Internet and “visit” the sub-category they have been assigned. When they come to class tomorrow, they should be prepared to report on what they have learned about ideas, goods, and services that connect Yokohama with the rest of the world.

Day 2

1. Students should again sit with other members of their group. Give each group a sheet of posting paper and time to prepare a list of what they see as the most important or most interesting idea, good, and service provided by Yokohama to the rest of the world. Ask students to write the headings, IDEAS, GOODS, SERVICES at the top of their sheet of posting paper and to record the information under each category. (If there is time, ask them to identify three in each category.) Tell them that it is important that they reach agreement on which one in each category they will report on. (The students in “About Yokohama and City Government,” for example, may choose to report on IDEAS: aiming for a user-friendly port to meet international standards; GOODS: more than 28 million tons of foreign goods were exported in 2001; SERVICES: Yokohama offers a visitor’s center that promotes cultural exchanges.)
2. Once they have listed their points, ask students to post them on the wall around the room. Each group should select a spokesperson to explain the points they have chosen to list.
3. To summarize the lesson thus far, discuss with the class the characteristics that make Mizushima Yu’s hometown of Yokohama interdependent. Remind them of the evidence on the photo sheets that showed how Yokohama relies upon the rest of the world for ideas, goods, and services. Point to the lists on the sheets of posting paper to show what the rest of the world can get in the way of ideas, goods, and services from Yokohama.
4. Ask students to consider the benefits and drawbacks of an interdependent world. Allow for a free exchange of ideas, for this is a controversial topic today. (The students may see that nations with many resources may do better than those without. They may also suggest that no place can be isolated from the rest of the world. They may say that with “too much” interdependency, the world will all be the same—and therefore not very interesting, but possibly more efficient.) If students feel strongly one way or the other, recommend that they choose the second alternative below as their homework assignment.
5. To assess student understanding of the lesson, give the students a choice of the following:
 - Write a letter to Mizushima Yu telling her what sites in Yokohama that represent connections with the outside world they would like to visit if they were to spend two or three days with her in Yokohama.
 - Write a three-paragraph paper arguing for or against an interdependent world.
 - Design a web site for their hometown or city—one that will show that the town or city is interdependent and welcoming to the rest of the world.

Extension and Enrichment:

1. San Diego is a U.S. sister-city of Yokohama. Students may want to research San Diego on the Internet to compare it with Yokohama in terms of its interdependence with other nations and peoples.
2. A search of the Internet will reveal whether the hometowns of the other six students are as obviously interdependent as Yokohama. Students can investigate those cities.
3. Students may want to further explore the interdependency of the United States by visiting the CIA web site:
<http://www.cia.gov/publications/factbook/geos/html/#Econ>.
4. You may want to engage the class in an organized debate over the benefits and drawbacks of global interdependence. This might be an exciting interdisciplinary activity that would require working with teachers of other disciplines, such as English and science.



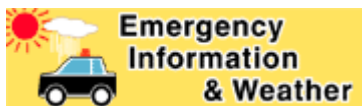
Handout 15-1

Yokohama Home Page

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