



The Culture of Japan

Teacher Guide

Japanese shrine



Judo



Red-crowned cranes

Japanese flag



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Teacher Guide



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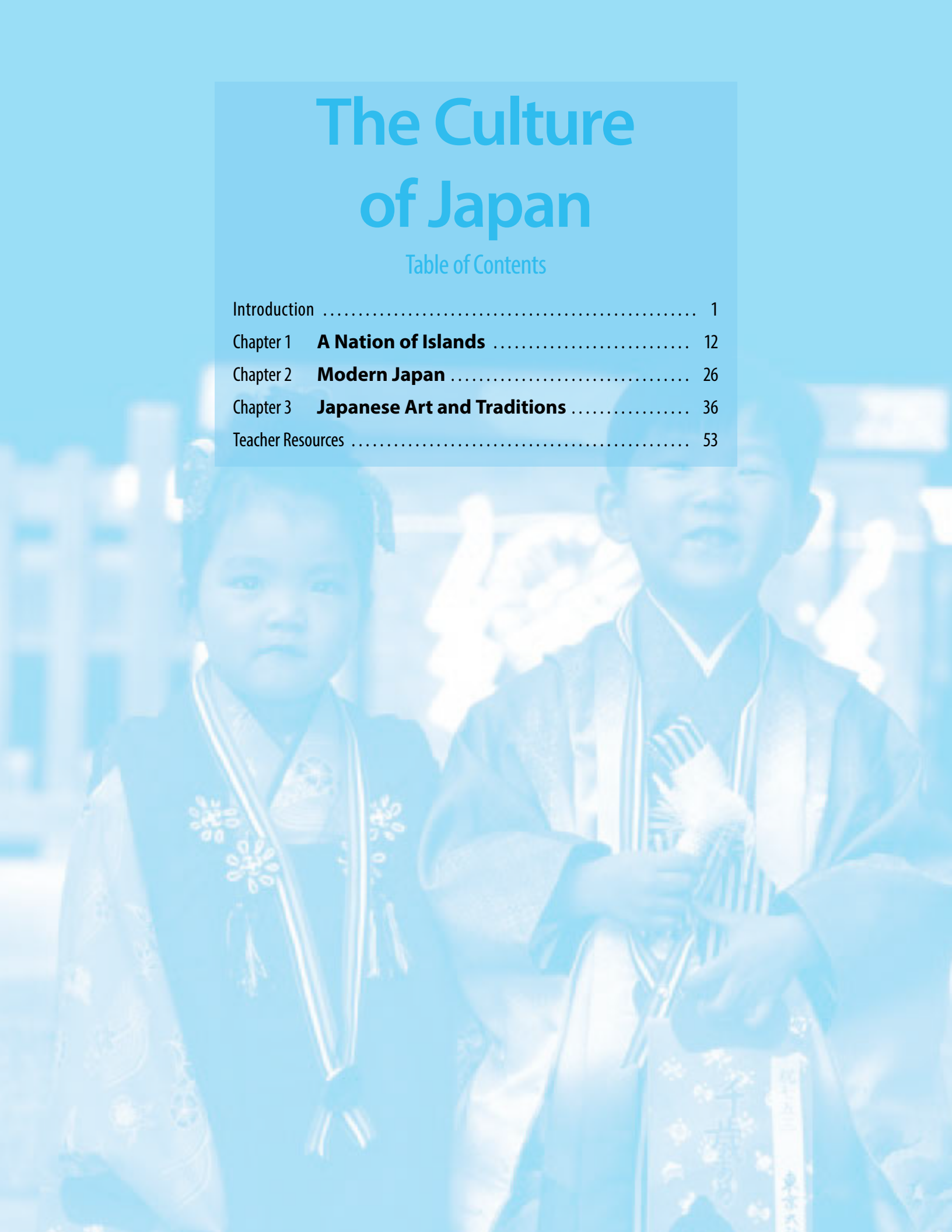
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The Culture of Japan

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The Culture of Japan

Teacher Guide

Core Knowledge History and Geography™ 2

Introduction

ABOUT THIS UNIT

The Big Idea

Modern Japan is a major industrial country that is also firmly rooted in tradition.

Japan is one of the most industrialized, modern nations in the world. Although its businesses and popular culture are modern, Japan is a nation that is also rich in tradition. This unit introduces modern Japan and its geography. It also explores traditional Japanese culture.

What Students Should Already Know

Students in Core Knowledge schools should be familiar with the following:

Geography

- maps and globes: what they represent, how we use them
- rivers, lakes, and mountains: what they are and how they are represented on maps and globes
- how to identify and locate the seven continents on a map and globe: Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, South America, Australia, and Antarctica
- the names of their continent, country, state, and community
- map keys and legends with symbols and their uses
- how to find directions on a map: east, west, north, and south
- how to identify the major oceans: Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, and Arctic
- how to locate Canada, the United States, Mexico, and Central America
- how to locate the equator, Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere, and the North and South Poles
- how to explain and give examples of the following geographical terms: *peninsula*, *harbor*, *bay*, and *island*

History

- characteristics of the early Asian civilizations of India and China, including the impact of Hinduism, Buddhism, and the teachings of Confucius upon the development of these civilizations

What Students Need to Learn

Geography

- the location of Japan relative to continental Asia, including its position in relation to the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan (or East Sea)
- Japan: “land of the rising sun”
- Japan as an island nation that includes four main islands
- the locations of Mount Fuji and Tokyo
- modern cities as sites of industry and business

Culture

- Japanese flag
- example of a traditional craft: origami
- example of traditional clothing: kimono
- Japanese literature (“The Tongue-Cut Sparrow”), art (*The Great Wave off Kanagawa*), and architecture (Himeji Castle) as reflections of Japanese beliefs and practices

AT A GLANCE:

The most important ideas in Unit 3 are:

- Japan is made up of about three thousand islands, many of which are small, rocky, and uninhabited. This unit will focus on the four main islands of Japan.
- Mount Fuji, an active volcano, has long inspired Japanese poets and artists.
- Tokyo is Japan's capital and largest city.
- A number of Japanese cities are centers of industry and commerce.
- Origami, the art of paper folding, is an ancient tradition.
- Kimonos are the traditional clothing of Japanese men and women.
- Japanese literature, art, and architecture reflect the traditions and culture of Japan.

WHAT TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW

Geography

Japan is east of the Asian continent, separated from it by the Sea of Japan (or East Sea), and is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to its east.

Japan is an archipelago, that is, a chain of islands. The archipelago of Japan is made up of about three thousand islands. The islands are the crests of mountaintops that rise above sea level. No island is more than two hundred miles wide. Most of the islands are barren and rocky with no inhabitants.

From northeast to southwest, the four largest islands are Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Honshu is the largest, comprising 60 percent of the land area of Japan. The majority of Japanese people live on Honshu along its southern coastal plain. This is an area of heavy industrial development. Tokyo, the country's capital, is located on Honshu.

Hokkaido is the second-largest island, but it is sparsely inhabited because of its mountainous terrain, great forests, and harsh winter climate.

Kyushu, like Honshu, is heavily populated. The island has coal deposits, which helped it become an early center for industry. People on Shikoku, the smallest of the large islands, live mostly along the northern coast in industrial areas.

Less than 20 percent of Japan is suited to agriculture because it is so mountainous and heavily forested. As a result, the ancient Japanese learned to farm rice, their staple crop, in small paddies on the sides of terraced mountains. Beginning in the late 1800s, wealthy Japanese, with the help of the government, began a program to industrialize the country. Though World War II destroyed much of the country's industry and infrastructure, Japan was rebuilt and is today a leading exporter of electronics, automobiles, and many other manufactured goods.

Mount Fuji

Mount Fuji, also known as Fujiyama, is the highest mountain in Japan. At about 12,500 feet above sea level, it is twice as tall as most other mountains in Japan. Mount Fuji is still considered an active volcano, but, like many of Japan's volcanoes, it has not erupted for centuries. It is also one of the most-climbed mountains in the world.

Mount Fuji is considered sacred by many Japanese. Over the centuries, its snowcapped peak has been the subject of numerous Japanese paintings and poems.

Tokyo

Originally known as Edo, Tokyo was established in the 1100s CE. In 1868, it was renamed Tokyo and became the official capital of Japan. The city has been rebuilt several times after devastation by earthquakes and its bombardment during World War II, making it very modern in appearance. Tokyo is one of the world's largest cities, with more than 38 million people in the greater metropolitan area. Tokyo is also a center of commerce, industry, finance, and education. There are more than one hundred colleges and universities in the city. High-speed bullet trains, which can travel more than 150 miles per hour, link Tokyo with other cities on the island of Honshu.

UNIT RESOURCES

Teacher Components

The Culture of Japan Teacher Guide—This Teacher Guide includes a general unit introduction, followed by specific instructional guidance. Primary focus objectives, geographical and/or historical background information for teachers, Core Vocabulary, a lesson introduction, and the Student Book text to be read aloud—in the form of actual replicated Student Book pages—are included for each chapter. The Read Aloud sections of the Student Book are divided into segments so that the teacher can pause and discuss each part of the Read Aloud with students. It is important to discuss the images that accompany the text with the students too.

The instructional guidance for each chapter also includes a Check for Understanding and, when appropriate, Additional Activities, such as virtual field trips, short film clips, and art activities, that may be used to reinforce students' understanding of the content. These Additional Activities are intended to provide choices for teachers and should be used selectively.

A Culminating Activity, Unit Assessment, Performance Task Assessment, Student Activity Pages, and instructions for My Passport for each student are included at the end of this Teacher Guide in Teacher Resources, beginning on page 53. The Activity Pages are numbered to correspond with the chapter for recommended use and also indicate the recommended order for use. For example, AP 1.1 is a letter to parents designed to be used at the start of the unit.

- » The Culminating Activity is a multistep activity that provides students an opportunity to review unit content knowledge prior to the Unit or Performance Task Assessments. Students will have a chance to play a unit-related game, learn and sing a song about the unit, or create

a collaborative classroom mural and/or museum of craft projects they have made to represent artifacts from the time period and culture studied. At the end of the Culminating Activity, students will also assemble and discuss a mini-book version of the Student Book that they can take home to share with family members.

- » The Unit Assessment tests knowledge of the entire unit, using a standard testing format. The teacher reads aloud multiple-choice questions or fill-in-the-blank statements, and students are then asked to answer these questions by circling a picture representing the correct response on the Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet.
- » The Performance Task Assessment allows students to apply and demonstrate the knowledge learned during the unit by drawing and talking about images representing key content.
- » My Passport is a tangible reminder and souvenir of the various events and places that students using the CKHG units at their grade level will have visited and learned about over the course of the school year. Note that prior to reading Chapter 1 of each unit aloud, you will be prompted to ask your students to pretend that they are boarding an airplane in real time to travel to a particular place in the world; this approach will be used in units that focus on modern-day cultures, including geography. For units that focus on historical events, you will be prompted to ask students to pretend they are boarding a “time machine” to travel “back in time” with you to visit each historical period and culture studied. Guidance will be provided at the end of every unit, directing teachers how to assist students in creating and updating their passport. The passport template can be downloaded from www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources. Teachers will need to make sufficient copies for each student before conducting the passport activity.
- » The Activity Pages are designed to reinforce and extend content taught in specific chapters. The Teacher Guide lessons provide clear direction as to when to use specific Activity Pages. Teachers will need to make sufficient copies of the Activity Pages they choose to use for all students in their class.

Optional: *Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™* Art Resource Packet for Grade 2—art resources that may be used with the cross-curricular art activities described in the Additional Activities of Chapter 3 if classroom internet access is not available. You can purchase the Grade 2 Art Resource Packet, available at:

www.coreknowledge.org/store

Student Component

The Culture of Japan Student Book includes three chapters, intended to be read aloud by the teacher as the students look at images on each page.

As you will note when you examine the Student Book, minimal text is included on each page. Instead, colorful photos and engaging illustrations dominate the Student Book pages. The design of the Student Book in this way is intentional because students in Kindergarten–Grade 2 are just learning to read. At these grade levels, students are learning how to decode written words, so the complexity and amount of text that these young students can actually read is quite limited.

While some advanced students may be able to read words on a given page of the Student Book, as a general rule, students should not be expected or asked to read aloud the text on the Student Book pages. The text in the Student Book is there so that teachers and parents can read it when sharing the Student Book with students.

The intent of the Grades K–2 CKHG lessons is to build students’ understanding and knowledge of specific historical time periods, people, and events, as well as of associated geographical concepts and skills. It is for this very reason that in Grades K–2 CKHG, the historical and geographical knowledge of each lesson is delivered to students using a teacher Read Aloud, accompanied by detailed images. Cognitive science research has clearly documented the fact that students’ listening comprehension far surpasses their reading comprehension well into the late elementary and early middle school grades. Said another way, students are able to understand and grasp far more complex ideas and text that they hear read aloud than they would ever be able to read or comprehend when they read to themselves. For a more thorough discussion of listening and reading comprehension and the underlying cognitive science research, teachers may want to refer to Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, noting in particular the Speaking and Listening section of the appendix.

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to this appendix can be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

USING THE TEACHER GUIDE

Pacing

The Culture of Japan unit is one of eleven world and American history and geography units in the Grade 2 CKHG series that we encourage teachers to use over the course of the school year. We have intentionally left the pacing and timing needed to teach the content presented in the Teacher Guide and Student Book very flexible. Teachers can choose how much they read aloud and discuss in a single instructional period, as well as how often each week they use the CKHG materials.

In many instances, it is likely that the teacher will be able to read aloud and discuss a complete chapter from the Student Book in a single instructional period. At other times, teachers may choose to spread the Read Aloud and discussion of a longer chapter over two instructional periods.

At the end of this unit introduction, you will find a blank Pacing Guide on page 11 that you may use to plan how you might pace reading aloud and discussing each chapter, as well as when to use the various other resources in this unit. We strongly recommend that you preview this entire unit and create your pacing guide before teaching the first lesson. As a general rule of thumb, we recommend that you spend no more than five to ten days teaching *The Culture of Japan* unit so that you have sufficient time to teach the other units in the Grade 2 CKHG series.

Reading Aloud

Within each Read Aloud, the text to be read aloud to students is in roman text in the Teacher Guide (like this); instructions intended only for the teacher are in boldface (**like this**). Core Vocabulary words appear in boldface color (**like this**). You may sometimes wish to preview one or two of these vocabulary words before a segment of the Read Aloud. In most instances, however, it may be more effective to pause and explain the meaning of the words as they are encountered when reading aloud.

It is important to note that students at this grade level are not expected to give definitions of the Core Vocabulary words. Rather, the intent is for the teacher to model the use of Core Vocabulary in the Read Aloud and in discussions about the Read Aloud to expose students to challenging, domain-specific vocabulary. If students hear these words used in context by the teacher over the entire unit, they will gain an increasingly nuanced understanding of these words. With support and encouragement by the teacher, students may even begin to use these same words in their own oral discussions of the unit.

Interspersed throughout the Read Aloud, you will note instances in which instructional guidance is included. This guidance may call the teacher's attention to Core Vocabulary and idiomatic or figurative language that may be confusing and therefore require explanation. In other instances, Supports may direct the teacher to call attention to specific aspects of an image—as shown on a page in the Student Book. And, in some instances, a Challenge, usually a more demanding task or question, may be included for teachers' optional use.

You will also notice within the Read Aloud segments that the Teacher Guide directs you to pause occasionally to ask questions about what students have just heard. By using this carefully scaffolded approach to reading aloud and discussing a portion of the content a bit at a time, you will be able to observe and ensure that all students understand what they have heard before you proceed to the next section of the Read Aloud.

Turn and Talk

Specific instances in the Read Aloud portion of the lesson are designated as Turn and Talk opportunities. During these times, teachers should direct students to turn and talk to a partner to discuss specific things. These types of discussion opportunities will allow students to more fully engage with the content and will bring to life the topics and events being discussed.

Big Questions and Core Vocabulary

At the beginning of each Read Aloud segment in the Teacher Guide, you will find a Big Question. The answer to each Big Question is included as part of the text read aloud in each chapter of the Student Book. At the end of each Read Aloud segment, you will be prompted to formally reask the Big Question for students to discuss during the Check for Understanding. Key vocabulary, phrases, and idioms are also identified in each lesson of the Teacher Guide.

Read Aloud Chapters	Big Questions	Core Vocabulary
Chapter 1: A Nation of Islands	How would you describe the geography of the country of Japan?	culture, mainland, capital, population, national flag, peak, active volcano, cranes, symbol, currents, catches, graze, paddy fields
Chapter 2: Modern Japan	What is it like to live in modern Japan?	currency, skyscrapers, subway system, robots, branches of government, prime minister, elected, emperor, earthquakes
Chapter 3: Japanese Art and Traditions	What are some of the Japanese traditions that are still practiced in modern Japan?	ancient culture, scripts, characters, traditional, tradition, temple, origami, religious ceremonies, syllables, woodblocks

Activity Pages

Activity Pages



AP 1.1

AP 1.2

AP 1.3

AP 3.1

The following activity pages can be found in Teacher Resources, pages 82–86. They are to be used with the lesson specified for additional class work or in some instances may be sent home to be made parents aware of what students are studying. Be sure to make sufficient copies for your students before conducting the activities.

- Chapter 1—Letter to Family (AP 1.1)
- Chapter 1—World Map (AP 1.2)
- Chapter 1—Map of Japan (AP 1.3)
- Chapter 3—Land of the Rising Sun (AP 3.1)

Fiction Excerpt

The following fiction excerpt can be found and downloaded at:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

This excerpt may be used with the chapter specified, either for additional class work or at the end of the unit as review and/or a culminating activity.

- Chapter 3—“The Tongue-Cut Sparrow” (FE 1)

Additional Activities and Website Links

An Additional Activities section, related to material the students are studying, may be found at the end of most chapters in this Teacher Guide. Even though there are multiple suggested activities, it is advised that you choose activities based on your students’ interests and needs, as well as on the instructional time available. Many of the activities include website links, and you should check the links before using them in class.

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Language Arts

Fiction

Stories

- “The Tongue-Cut Sparrow” (Japanese folktale)

Visual Arts

Elements of Art

- Katsusika Hokusai, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*

Architecture

- Himeji Castle

Books

Barasch, Lynne. *Hiromi's Hands*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2007.

Friedman, Ina R., and Allen Say. *How My Parents Learned to Eat*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987.

Goodman, Marlene. *Let's Learn Japanese Picture Dictionary*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003.

Haskins, Jim. *Count Your Way Through Japan*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publishing Group, 1987.

Iijima, Geneva Cobb. Illus. by Paige Billin Frye. *The Way We Do It in Japan*. Park Ridge, IL: Albert Whitman and Company, 2002.

Manley, Curtis. Illus. by Lin Wang. *The Crane Girl*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2017.

Mora, Pat. Illus. by Rafael López. *Yum! ¡Mmmm! ¡Qué Rico! Americas' Sproutings: Haiku by Pat Mora*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2007.

Reed, Jennifer B. Illus. by Dick Cole. *The Falling Flowers*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2005.

Takabayashi, Mari. *I Live in Tokyo*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.

Thompson, Holly. Illus. by Kazumi Wilds. *The Wakame Gatherers*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2007.

Weston, Mark. Illus. by Katie Yamasaki. *Honda: The Boy Who Dreamed of Cars*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2008.

THE CULTURE OF JAPAN PACING GUIDE

_____’s Class

Note to Teacher: *The Culture of Japan* is intended to be taught as the third unit of Grade 2 CKHG.

Week 1

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4

Day 5

The Culture of Japan

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Week 2

Day 6

Day 7

Day 8

Day 9

Day 10

The Culture of Japan

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CHAPTER 1

A Nation of Islands

Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Locate Japan on a map. (SL.2.2)
- ✓ Identify Japan as a country made up of four main islands. (RI.2.1, SL.2.3)
- ✓ Recognize the Japanese flag and understand its symbolism. (RI.2.1, SL.2.3)
- ✓ Understand why Japan is called “the land of the rising sun.” (RI.2.1, SL.2.3)
- ✓ Identify the main geographical features and staple foods of Japan. (RI.2.1, SL.2.3)
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *culture, mainland, capital, population, national flag, peak, active volcano, cranes, symbol, currents, catches, graze, and paddy fields.* (L.2.4, L.2.5)

Materials Needed

Activity Pages



AP 1.1

AP 1.2

AP 1.3

- individual student copies of *The Culture of Japan* Student Book
- globe
- internet access
- an American flag or image of an American flag
- video of erupting volcano
Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to the American flag image and volcano video may be found:
www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources
- a Washington quarter
- individual student copies of Letter to Family (AP 1.1)
- teacher and individual student copies of World Map (AP 1.2)
- teacher and individual student copies of Map of Japan (AP 1.3)

What Teachers Need to Know

Japan is made up of about three thousand islands, most of which are barren, rocky, and uninhabited. Its four largest islands are Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Honshu is the largest in land area and population. It is also the site of Japan’s capital, Tokyo. Hokkaido is the second-largest island, but it is sparsely inhabited because of its mountainous terrain, great forests, and harsh winter climate. Kyushu is heavily populated, and Shikoku is the smallest in size of the large islands.

Because of Japan’s mountainous, forested terrain, less than 20 percent of the country is suited to agriculture. As a result, the ancient Japanese learned to farm rice, their staple crop, in small paddies on the sides of terraced mountains.

Japan began industrializing in the late 1800s and then rebuilt again after World War II. Today, the country is a leading exporter of manufactured goods, such as electronics and cars.

Mount Fuji

Mount Fuji, also known as Fujiyama, is the highest mountain in Japan. Like many of Japan's mountains, Mount Fuji is classified as an active volcano. It is considered sacred by many Japanese and has been the subject of many Japanese paintings and poems.

The Japanese Flag

The Japanese flag is a red circle on a white background. The circle represents the sun. Japan is often called the "land of the rising sun" because, for someone standing on the Asian mainland, the sun rises in Japan (the easternmost country in Asia) first.

THE CORE LESSON

Introduce *The Culture of Japan* and Chapter 1: "A Nation of Islands"

Activity Page



On the World Map (AP 1.2) or globe, locate Japan and the United States. Tell students that Japan is so far away, on the other side of the globe, that when it is day here in the United States, it is night in Japan, and vice versa.

AP 1.2

Point out the ocean that separates Japan and the United States, and have students identify it. (*the Pacific Ocean*)

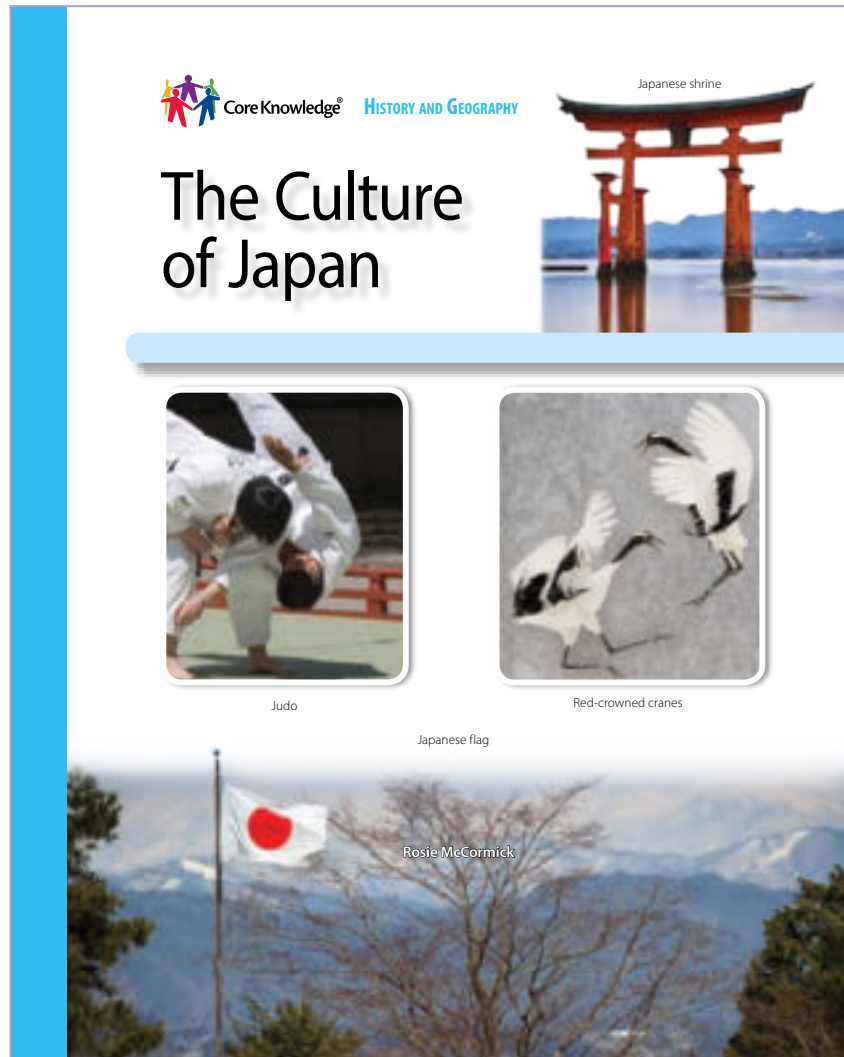
Then point out the mainland west of Japan, identifying the large country of China. Have students identify the continent that China and Japan are part of. (*Asia*)

Tell students that you are going to pretend that you have all boarded an airplane and that you are flying on it so that you can visit Japan.

Ask students to "buckle their seat belts" so that the pilot can land the plane. Tell students to prepare for landing as the pilot approaches the runway. Count backward, saying, "3 . . . 2 . . . 1 . . . We have landed! Welcome to Japan."

Note to Teacher: Prior to this lesson, you may want to research how long a flight to Tokyo, Japan, would be from the airport closest to where you live. Share this information with students to give them a sense of how close to or far away from Japan they live.

Distribute copies of the Student Book to the class. Ask students to look at the cover and describe what they see. Tell students that the title of this unit is *The Culture of Japan*.



CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **culture** refers to the language and way of life, including the beliefs and practices, of a specific group of people. Culture also includes the holidays that a specific group of people celebrate and how they celebrate them, as well as how people may dress and the art they create.

Sum up by stating that in this unit, students will learn about the islands that make up the country of Japan and about the way of life of the people who live there.

Big Question

How would you describe the geography of the country of Japan?

Core Vocabulary

culture mainland capital population national flag peak active volcano
cranes symbol currents catches graze paddy fields

Chapter 1: "A Nation of Islands"

Ask students to turn to page 2 of the Student Book and look at the images as you read aloud. Tell them that the title of this chapter is "A Nation of Islands." Explain to students that *nation* is another word for *country*.

CHAPTER 1

A Nation of Islands

Japan is a country in Asia made up of thousands of islands. On many of the islands there are mountains, thick forests, and fields of rice. Japan's nearest neighbors are Russia, China, and North and South Korea.



Japan has four *main* islands. These main islands are Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Honshu is the largest island and is sometimes called the mainland.





AP 1.2

AP 1.3

SUPPORT—Have students look at the Map of Japan (AP 1.3). Ask students to find the four main islands of Japan. Say the names aloud, from north to south, as students follow along on their maps: Hokkaido (/hoh*kye*doh/), Honshu (/hahn*shoo/), Shikoku (/shih*koh*koo/), and Kyushu (/kyoo*shoo/).

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **mainland** means the main area of a country or continent. For example, China is on Asia's mainland. Mainland does not usually include islands. Emphasize that even though Honshu is an island, it is sometimes referred to as the mainland because it is the largest island and is where the majority of Japanese people live.

SUPPORT—Use the World Map (AP 1.2) or Map of Japan (AP 1.3) to illustrate the concept of mainland, using China and Honshu as examples.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—How many big, or main, islands does Japan have?

- » Japan has four main islands.

LITERAL—What different natural landscapes would you see on the main islands of Japan?

- » There are forests, mountains, and many rice fields.

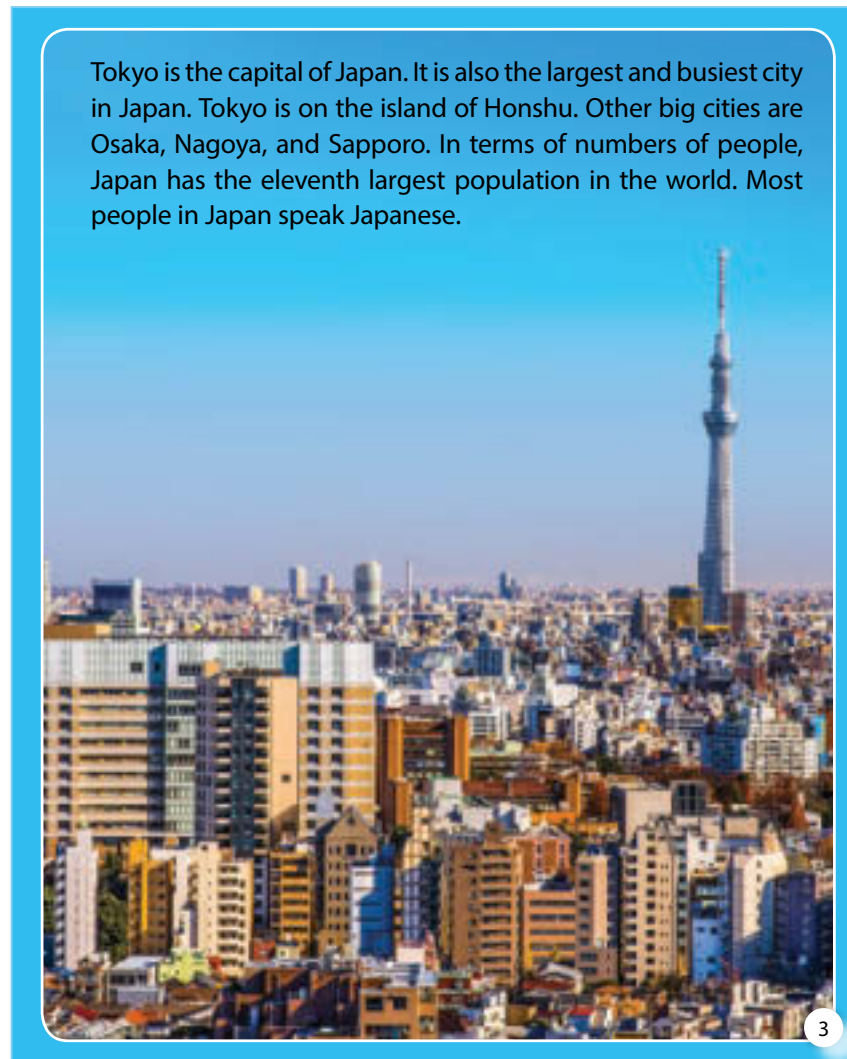
LITERAL—What countries are closest to Japan?

- » Russia, China, North Korea, and South Korea are closest to Japan.

INFERENTIAL—What oceans and seas surround the islands of Japan?

- » The Pacific Ocean, the East China Sea, and the Sea of Japan—which is also called the East Sea—surround the islands of Japan.

Now ask students to look at the image on page 3 as you read aloud.



CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that a **capital** is the city where a state or country's government meets.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **population** is the number of people who live in a place.

SUPPORT—Help students compare the ranking of Japan's population with the population of the United States. As of 2019, Japan had roughly 125 million people, and the United States had roughly 330 million—but the United States has more space for its people than Japan has for its population.

Activity Page



AP 1.2



Using a globe or the World Map (AP 1.2), compare the size of Japan with the size of the United States. Japan is a much smaller country in terms of landmass, but it has a large population. This means that many Japanese people live differently than we do in the United States. Because there is less land for houses, most people live in apartment buildings in cities. Have students imagine that their town or city had ten times more people living in it, but the amount of land stayed the same.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What is the capital of Japan?

» Tokyo is the capital of Japan.

LITERAL—What language do most people in Japan speak?

» Most people in Japan speak Japanese.

Ask students to look at the image on page 4 as you read aloud.

Japan's national flag is a white rectangle with a red circle in the middle. The circle represents the sun because the name Japan means "the land of the rising sun." The sun rises in the east, and Japan is the easternmost country in Asia. So the rising sun appears there first.



CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that the **national flag** is the official flag of a country. National flags are usually designed with certain colors and images that have particular meaning to the people of the country.

SUPPORT—**Show students an American flag or American flag image.** Explain that the design of the American flag, with its stars and stripes, has special meaning. Explain, for example, that there are fifty stars on the American flag: one star for each state that is part of the United States of America. Also point out that there are a total of thirteen red and white stripes on the American flag, representing the thirteen original colonies of the United States.



SUPPORT—Refer to the World Map (AP 1.2) or globe, and point to Asia. Move your finger east through Asia until you get to Japan. Note that after Japan, there is no other land until North America. That is what it means to be the easternmost country in Asia.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What does Japan’s national flag look like?

» Japan’s national flag is a white rectangle with a red circle in the middle.

LITERAL—What does the red circle represent? Why does it represent that?

» The red circle represents the sun. The people in Japan are the first people in Asia to see the rising sun each day.

Ask students to look at the image on page 5 as you read aloud.

The highest mountain in Japan is Mount Fuji. The peak of Mount Fuji is so high that the snow at the top never melts. But Mount Fuji is not just a mountain. It is also an active volcano. There are many other active volcanoes in Japan.



CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that a **peak** is the pointed top of a mountain.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that a volcano is a mountain that has cracks leading to openings deep inside Earth from which hot, melted rock may sometimes erupt, producing smoke and ash. Then explain that an **active volcano** is one that is currently erupting or could erupt at any time. In addition, there are dormant volcanoes (volcanoes that aren't currently active) and extinct volcanoes (volcanoes that do not erupt anymore).

SUPPORT—Explain what happens when a volcano erupts. Rock inside the earth gets hotter and hotter—so hot that it melts. When the rock gets very hot, it creates steam. When there is too much heat and steam, they burst out of the earth and lava—the melted rock—comes out. Later, the lava cools and becomes solid rock again. **If time permits, show students the video of erupting volcanoes. The video shows five eruptions in places including Japan.**

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What is the highest mountain in Japan?

» Mount Fuji is the highest mountain in Japan.

LITERAL—What is special about Mount Fuji?

» Possible responses: It is an active volcano. The snow at its top never melts.

Ask students to look at the images on page 6 as you read aloud.

Japan is home to wonderful wildlife and nature. It is perhaps most known for its macaque monkeys and red-crowned cranes. The Japanese macaque is also known as the snow monkey. These monkeys have a red face and long fingers with sharp nails. The red-crowned crane is an important symbol in Japan. It can mean long life and good luck.



In Japan, there is a small cat called an Iriomote that is related to the leopard. The cat gets its name because it only lives in the forests on Iriomote Island. Although it is related to the leopard, it is about the size of a house cat.



6

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **cranes** are types of birds that have long necks and long legs. Most cranes live near water.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that a **symbol** is something that represents something else. For example, a heart is a symbol of love.

SUPPORT—To better understand the idea that an animal like the red-crowned crane is an important symbol in Japan, explain that other countries, including the United States, also use animals as important symbols. As an example, show students the front and back of a Washington quarter, noting that in the United States, the eagle on the back of the coin represents long life and strength.

Note to Teacher: *Macaque* is pronounced (/muh*kak/).

SUPPORT—Explain that the snow monkeys got their name because they live in areas in Japan where snow covers the ground for months each year. These areas have hot springs, and the snow monkeys swim in the hot springs. The snow monkeys are native to Japan, meaning they have always been there.

Note to Teacher: *Iriomote* is pronounced (/ear*ee*ah*moat/).

SUPPORT—Ask students who have house cats to indicate with their hands about how big their cats are. Explain that the Iriomote is about that same size.

Ask students the following question:

LITERAL—What animals live in Japan?

- » The Japanese macaque, also known as a snow monkey, lives in Japan; it has a very red face. The red-crowned crane and a cat called an Iriomote also live in Japan. The Iriomote looks like a leopard but is only as large as a normal house cat.

Now ask students to look at the images on page 7 as you read aloud.

Most of the land in Japan is either forest or mountains, so there is less space for farming. Because there is little space for farmland, fish are an important food. In the waters near Japan, there are cold and warm water currents that make it a great place for fishermen. Today, Japanese fishing ships use large nets and special equipment to bring in huge catches of fish. Fishermen do have to be careful not to overfish though!



7

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **currents** are continuous movements, or flows, of water in one direction. Currents can be quite strong. Currents in rivers can carry boats downstream. Currents in the ocean can carry warm water to colder places.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that here, the word **catches** means the amount of fish that are captured by separate fishermen.

SUPPORT—Discuss how Japan has taken advantage of its resources and geography. Japan is made up of mostly forested and mountainous islands, with little open land available for traditional farming to produce enough food for the people who live there. The islands of Japan are, however,

surrounded by the sea, where there are many different kinds of fish. Fishing is an important part of modern-day Japanese industry. Fishermen have to be careful not to overfish, though. To overfish means to catch too many fish. If too many fish are caught, those types of fish become endangered—at risk of dying out completely.

Ask students the following question:

LITERAL—What is a type of food that is important to the Japanese, and where does this food come from?

» Fish are an important food to the Japanese. Fish come from the sea around Japan.

Ask students to look at the image on page 8 as you read aloud.

Although farmers in Japan have little space to grow many different crops, or to graze animals, they do grow a lot of rice and vegetables. Rice is grown in paddy fields. Japanese people have grown rice for more than two thousand years. In fact, Japanese people eat rice almost every day.



8

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that to **graze** means to eat grass or other plants in fields, pastures, and open land.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **paddy fields** are areas of wet land where rice is grown. The land is made wet by human-made flooding. Water is moved through channels and pipelines to flood the land.

SUPPORT—Explain how rice is grown. Specially prepared fields, called paddies, are flooded in the spring. Then shoots of rice are planted in the soil, which is still covered by shallow water. Later, the water is drained off, and the rice grows taller. Finally, it is harvested and dried. Working in paddy fields can be a messy, mucky job!

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What food is grown in paddy fields?

- » Rice is grown in paddy fields.

INFERENTIAL—How can you tell that rice is important to Japanese people?

- » Possible responses: The Japanese have grown rice for more than two thousand years. The Japanese eat rice almost every day.

INFERENTIAL—Why is there little space for Japanese farmers to grow crops?

- » Japanese farmers have little space to grow crops because the islands are smaller than some places that have lots of farmland, there are many forests and mountains, and there are many people and cities.



CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION

TURN AND TALK—How would you describe the geography of the country of Japan?

- » Japan is made up of thousands of islands, with four big, or main, islands, where most of the people live. The Pacific Ocean, the East China Sea, and the Sea of Japan (or East Sea) surround the islands of Japan. There are lots of forests and mountains, with little land available for farming, except for growing rice in rice paddy fields. There are also active volcanoes, such as Mount Fuji.

Activity Page



AP 1.1

Note to Teacher: Distribute copies of **Letter to Family (AP 1.1)** for students to take home.

Additional Activities

Let's Meet the Snow Monkeys (RI.2.1, SL.2.3)

Materials Needed: internet access, capability to display internet in the classroom



Background for Teachers: Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the video may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

Review the animals that students read about in the chapter: the Japanese macaque (snow monkey), the red-crowned crane, and the Iriomote. Ask students to describe each animal and the environment where it lives.


Then introduce the video, *Japan: Snow Monkeys*. This video is about two young boys who travel to Nagano, Japan, to see snow monkeys. Have students watch the video. Stop at 4:02, when the boys leave to go try sushi.

Ask students to answer the following questions:

- Why do snow monkeys like to go into hot springs?
 - » Snow monkeys like to go into hot springs because it is really cold where they live, and the hot springs are warm.
- What else do the boys see the snow monkeys do?
 - » The boys see the snow monkeys clean each other and carry their babies on their backs.
- What do the workers at the park feed the snow monkeys?
 - » The workers feed barley to the snow monkeys.

Japanese Breakfast

Materials Needed: internet access, capability to display internet in the classroom, chopsticks for the teacher and each student, popcorn for the class

 **Background for Teachers:** Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the video and instructions for using chopsticks may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

Note to Teacher: Be sure to follow your school's policy regarding food distribution and allergies.

Review with students what they learned about Japanese food in Chapter 1 of the Student Book.
(*Japanese people eat a lot of fish and rice.*)

Ask volunteers to share what they ate for breakfast. Explain that Japan has its own special breakfast foods and that you are going to show a video of a young Japanese girl sharing what she eats for breakfast.

Show the video *What Japanese Breakfast Is Like*, stopping at time stamp 6:54. Ask students if they would like to eat the Japanese breakfast shown in the video. Have students share any experiences that they have had eating foods shown in the video.

Ask students what utensils they would need to eat an American breakfast, such as cereal (*a spoon*) or pancakes (*a fork and knife*). Explain that the Japanese have their own utensils for eating, called chopsticks. The girl in the video used chopsticks to eat her breakfast.

Distribute chopsticks to each student. If you do not already know how to use chopsticks, refer to the video link provided in the CKHG Online Resources for step-by-step instructions. Model for students how to use the chopsticks, and then guide students through how to do it themselves. Walk around as students try to position the chopsticks in their hands.

Once students seem to have a command of using the chopsticks, give each student a few pieces of popcorn. Let students practice picking up the popcorn with their chopsticks.

Point out that while trying to eat the popcorn with chopsticks may have been a challenge for students, even very young children in Japan master the use of chopsticks, as this is the way they eat almost every type of food; in other words, they have lots of practice using chopsticks to eat different foods.

CHAPTER 2

Modern Japan

Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Recognize modern Japanese cities as sites of industry and business. (RI.2.1, SL.2.3)
- ✓ Describe life in a modern Japanese city. (SL.2.2)
- ✓ Identify popular pastimes in Japan. (SL.2.2)
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *currency, skyscrapers, subway system, robots, branches of government, prime minister, elected, emperor, and earthquakes*. (L.2.4, L.2.5)

Materials Needed

- individual student copies of *The Culture of Japan* Student Book
- internet access
- images of a ginkgo tree and leaf
- Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to the images may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

What Teachers Need to Know

Modern Japanese cities are centers of industry, finance, and education. In addition to Tokyo, which has a population of more than 38 million in the greater metropolitan area, there are several other cities with extremely large populations—Yokohama, Osaka, Nagoya, and Sapporo. Japan's industrial centers manufacture and export electrical and electronic equipment, automobiles, machinery, chemicals, and steel. Children may be familiar with some Japanese companies, for example, Toyota, Honda, Nintendo, and Sony. Because of its industrial development, Japan has one of the highest per capita incomes of any country in the world.

THE CORE LESSON

Introduce “Modern Japan”

Review what students learned about Japan in Chapter 1: Japan is a nation of islands, and Tokyo is its capital city. Rice and fish are important food sources.

Explain that while some people in Japan grow rice or catch fish, most Japanese people live in cities. In this chapter, students will learn what it's like to live in a Japanese city today.

Big Question

What is it like to live in modern Japan?

Core Vocabulary

currency skyscrapers subway system robots
branches of government prime minister elected emperor earthquakes

Chapter 2: “Modern Japan”

Distribute copies of the Student Book. Ask students to turn to page 9 of the Student Book and look at the images as you read aloud. Tell students that the title of this chapter is “Modern Japan.” Explain that the title, “Modern Japan,” tells students that in this chapter they will be learning about what it is like to live in Japan now, not long, long ago. Remind students who used the CKHG Grade 2 *Ancient India and Ancient China* instructional materials that in those units, they learned about what it was like to live in each of those places long, long ago.

CHAPTER 2

Modern Japan

Japan is a very successful, rich country. Japan makes cars, electronics such as televisions and cell phones, and steel. These things are sold all over the world. Japan is also very involved in medical research and the fight against certain diseases.



The currency, or money, that is used in Japan is called the yen. The word *yen* means circle or round object.



9

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **currency** is the money that a country uses. Currency can be bills or coins or both.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What types of things does the country of Japan make?

» Japan makes cars, electronics such as televisions and phones, and steel.

LITERAL—What is Japan's currency, or money, called?

» Japan's currency is called the yen.

Ask students to look at the images on page 10 as you read aloud.

Japan's cities have giant glass and steel skyscrapers. These tall buildings are not just places where people work; some people live in them too. Because there is less land to build houses, most people in Japan live in apartments.



In the cities, many people travel on the underground subway system. Superfast bullet trains zip across the country. They go at speeds of up to two hundred miles per hour.



10

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **skyscrapers** are very tall buildings—so tall that they look like they scrape, or touch, the sky.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that a **subway system** is a system of underground trains.

SUPPORT—Ask students why they think that these superfast trains are called **bullet trains** (*because they travel fast, like bullets shot from a gun*). Tell students that cars driving fast on a highway/freeway go up to speeds of 80 miles per hour. These trains go more than two times that fast.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—Where do most people in modern-day Japan live?

» Most people in modern-day Japan live in apartments in big cities.

LITERAL—How do people travel in Japan?

» People travel on subways and bullet trains.

Ask students to look at the images on page 11 as you read aloud.

Japan is one of the world leaders in making robots that can be used in factories, offices, restaurants, hotels, stores, and even in people's homes. There are pet robots and even teacher robots!



There are robots in museums too. This robot is teaching about dinosaurs.



11

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **robots** are machines that do work and are controlled by a computer. Robots can be made to look like humans or animals. They can be designed to do some things faster or more easily than humans or animals can.

Ask students the following question:

LITERAL/EVALUATIVE—Where are Japanese robots being used? How do you think they are used in those places?

» Japanese robots are being used in factories, offices, restaurants, hotels, stores, and in people's homes. Answers about how robots are used may vary but may include that they make things in factories, clean, bring things to people, such as food in a restaurant, etc.

Ask students to look at the images on page 12 as you read aloud.

Like the United States, Japan has three branches of government. The political party that wins the most seats gets to be in charge of the government. This means that the leading members of the government, including the prime minister, are elected by the people.



As well as an elected government, Japan has an emperor. The emperor is called the head of state. There have been emperors in Japan for more than two thousand years.



12

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that the **branches of government** are the parts of a government. The United States has three branches of government: legislative (makes the laws), judicial (decides the fairness of the laws), and executive (carries out or enforces the laws). Japan's branches are very similar.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that the **prime minister** is the head, or leader, of the government in some countries. A prime minister is similar to a president.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **elected** means chosen by voting.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that an **emperor** is like a king. A *head of state*, however, does not have much power in the government but does other things for the country, like meet important guests from other countries.

Ask students the following questions:

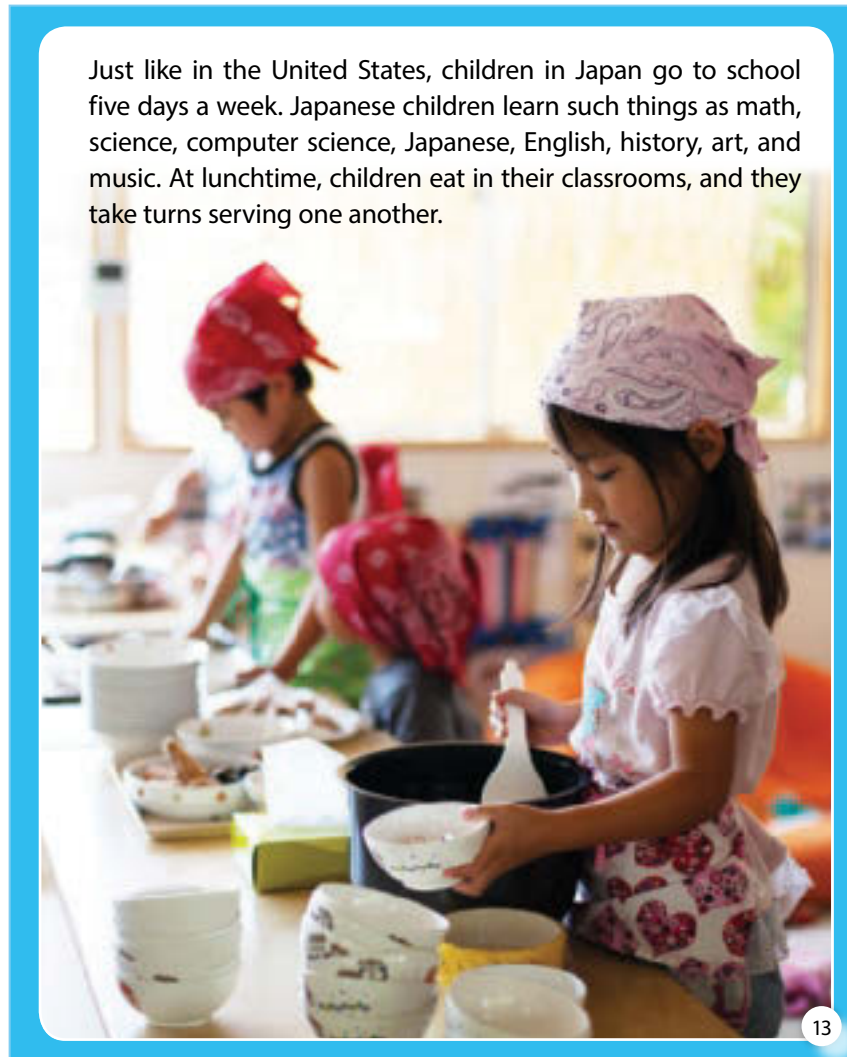
LITERAL—What is the title of the government official in Japan who is elected by the people and plays a role in the government similar to the president in the United States?

- » The prime minister of Japan is elected by the people of Japan and has a job similar to the president of the United States.

LITERAL—In addition to having a prime minister, Japan has another very important person, who is called the head of state. What is the title of this other person?

» Besides having a prime minister, Japan has an emperor.

Ask students to look at the image on page 13 as you read aloud.



SUPPORT—Discuss the school subjects mentioned in the text, and compare and contrast them with students' current subjects. **Ask students how they feel about Japanese students eating lunch inside their classrooms and helping serve food to one another.**

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—How many days a week do Japanese children go to school?

» Japanese children go to school five days a week.

LITERAL—What subjects do Japanese students learn in school?

» Japanese students learn such subjects as math, science, computer science, Japanese, English, history, art, and music.

Ask students to look at the images on page 14 as you read aloud.

Earthquakes happen a lot in Japan. In fact, there are more than fifteen hundred each year. Even though buildings are made extra strong, sometimes they are damaged in a strong earthquake.



Because there are so many earthquakes, children have regular earthquake drills at school, and people practice how to keep safe in their homes.



14

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **earthquakes** are the shaking of Earth’s surface. Earthquakes are caused by plates on Earth’s crust suddenly moving. Some earthquakes are very small; others are very big and cause great damage.

SUPPORT—**Direct students’ attention to the images on the page, and invite volunteers to describe what they see.** Talk about what the students are doing in the earthquake drill. Because earthquakes are so common in Japan, students there practice the drill as often as once a month. They are instructed to get under their desks or a table, head first, and to hold on to the legs of the desk or table until the quake is over. Drills are just one of the many things that Japan does to prepare for earthquakes. They also have high standards for building earthquake-resistant buildings, they have a national emergency alert system using phones, they have systems on their bullet trains that will stop the train if an earthquake is felt, and they encourage every household to have an earthquake survival kit. Because of all this, Japan is one of the most well-prepared countries for a natural disaster.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What can happen in an earthquake?

» In an earthquake, buildings can be damaged.

LITERAL—How do Japanese people prepare for an earthquake?

- » Japanese people prepare for an earthquake by having earthquake drills in school and by practicing how to keep safe in their homes. They also make their buildings extra strong.

Ask students to look at the images on page 15 as you read aloud.

Baseball is a popular sport in Japan. The Yomiuri Giants are one of the top baseball teams.



Sumo wrestling is an important sport that dates back more than one thousand years. Sumo wrestlers oil and comb their hair to look like a ginkgo tree leaf.

Martial arts such as karate and judo date back to when Japanese warriors were specially trained to fight for the local leaders they served. People today still learn these special skills.



Japanese people love to read comic books and watch cartoons.



15

SUPPORT—Show students the images of a ginkgo tree and ginkgo leaf. Ask them to describe the shape of the leaf. Then point out how the shape of the leaf is similar to the shape of the hair knots worn by the sumo wrestlers shown on page 15.

Ask students the following question:

LITERAL—What are some popular activities in Japan?

- » Some popular activities in Japan are playing baseball, sumo wrestling, participating in martial arts, and reading comic books and watching Japanese cartoons.



CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION

TURN AND TALK—What is it like to live in modern Japan?

- » Most people in modern Japan live in large cities. Because there is less land for building, many people in Japan live in apartments instead of living in their own separate homes or houses.
- » Children go to school five out of seven days every week. Because earthquakes still occur frequently in Japan, children at school and people at home practice what to do and how to stay safe if an earthquake occurs.
- » People enjoy participating in different activities, such as baseball, sumo wrestling, the martial arts, and reading comic books, when they are not working or going to school.

Additional Activities

Made in Japan

Ask students to work with a family member after school today to find things in their home that are made in Japan. They should look at electronics, such as televisions and DVD or Blu-ray™ players, but also at clothing tags, games, and the family car (if there is one). The family member should write a list of the things they find. Tell students to bring their lists to school to compare.

A Day in the Life

Materials Needed: internet access, capability to display internet videos for the class



Background for Teachers: Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to the videos may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

Tell students that they are going to “visit” Japan to see what some parts of life are like for children there.

Have students first discuss what they think a day in the life of a Japanese child is like, based on what they have learned in the chapter. Have students go in chronological order of the child’s day, starting in the morning and ending at night. Record students’ answers on the board or chart paper.

Explain that students are going to begin their trip by visiting a girl in her home and seeing what her bedroom looks like. Play the video *Inside a Japanese Kid’s Bedroom*. Students will recognize this girl from the video they watched in Chapter 1.

After the video, ask students the following questions:

- What is on the bedroom floor? What is it made out of?
 - » A mat is on the floor. It is made of grass.

- How does the Japanese bedroom you saw in the video compare to your own bedroom? What similarities and differences did you notice?
 - » Answers may vary but may include that there is very little furniture in the Japanese bedroom. For example, instead of a bed, there are blankets and mattresses that the little girl sleeps on at night; these are folded up during the day so that there is more space in the room. Students may also note that the little girl has many toys/stuffed animals in her bedroom.
- What does she use the remote control for?
 - » She uses the remote control to turn the lights on and off and to dim them.
- Whom does she share her bedroom with?
 - » She shares her bedroom with her brother.

Tell students that they are now going to visit a Japanese school. Review what students already know about Japanese schools from the Student Book. Then play the video *A Look at a Japanese Classroom*.

After the video, ask students the following questions:

- What does the school director want every child to do?
 - » The school director wants children to do everything on their own.
- When did Ken start Preschool?
 - » He started Preschool at age 1.
- What are the children reading on the board?
 - » They are reading the school song.
- What do the children do when they say their morning greeting?
 - » They bow.
- How do the Japanese school and classroom compare to your own school and classroom? What similarities and differences did you notice?
 - » Answers may vary.
- Does the Japanese school seem the same, easier, or harder than your school? Why?
 - » Answers may vary but may include that Japanese school seems harder or more demanding. Students may note that Japanese students start school as young as one year old, they are expected to do everything on their own, and they are able to read in first grade.

After watching the videos, have students return to their discussion about a day in the life of a Japanese child. Ask them what they would add or change about the answers posted on the board or chart paper, after watching the videos.

Japanese Art and Traditions

Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Identify the kimono as traditional Japanese clothing. (RI.2.1, SL.2.3)
- ✓ Identify origami as a traditional Japanese craft. (RI.2.1, SL.2.3)
- ✓ Understand the importance of nature in Japanese art and culture. (RI.2.1, SL.2.3)
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *ancient culture, scripts, characters, traditional, tradition, temple, origami, religious ceremonies, syllables, and woodblocks.* (L.2.4, L.2.5)

Materials Needed

- individual student copies of *The Culture of Japan* Student Book

What Teachers Need to Know

Origami

Origami originated in Japan in the 900s CE. It is the traditional art of folding paper to make figures, such as birds and animals. Scissors and other tools are used only occasionally during the process.

Often, the first figure that is taught is the crane, which is the symbol of peace.

Kimono

For centuries, the Japanese wore kimonos. These are long narrow robes with wide sleeves. Kimonos for girls and young women are made from brightly colored fabric enhanced with embroidery. Kimonos for men are fairly plain and are made in dark colors. The obi, the sash that is worn with a kimono, is wide and often made of rich material for women. When tied, it forms a flat bow in the back of the kimono.

Today, kimonos are worn mainly for special occasions, such as weddings. Ordinarily, contemporary Japanese wear Western-style dress.

Bonsai

Bonsai is an art form that started more than a thousand years ago in East Asia. It involves growing and cultivating trees in small planters, cutting them in particular ways to form miniature trees that imitate the shape and size of larger, full-size trees. Bonsai are, in effect, miniature versions of larger trees. The art is purely aesthetic, meaning it is intended to be viewed and admired.

Cherry Blossom Festival

The Japanese cherry tree can be found all over the country of Japan. The cherry tree blooms in the spring, producing cherry blossoms (*sakura*), sometimes in a striking pink color. The blossoms are short-lived, lasting about two weeks. The Japanese have been celebrating the cherry blossom for more than one thousand years. Their celebration is called *hanami*, which literally means “viewing flowers.” Aristocrats, from Japan’s early history, viewed the cherry blossoms; today, everyone in Japan is welcome to view the flowers during the annual Cherry Blossom Festival, or *sakura matsuri*, which happens throughout Japan. Some cities in the south, where the climate is warmer and the blossoms bloom early, celebrate it as early as January. The northern cities, such as Tokyo, usually celebrate in April. Thousands of people head to the parks, where the trees are, and have picnics under their boughs. The cherry blossom is, and will always be, a symbol of Japan because of its beauty.

THE CORE LESSON

Introduce “Japanese Art and Traditions”

Remind students that they learned about modern Japan in the last chapter. Explain that all of these modern things have come about only in the last one hundred years or so but that the country of Japan itself is more than a thousand years old. In this chapter, students will learn about ancient Japan through some traditions that are still practiced today.

Big Question

What are some of the Japanese traditions that are still practiced in modern Japan?

Core Vocabulary

ancient culture scripts characters traditional tradition temple
origami religious ceremonies syllables woodblocks

Chapter 3: “Japanese Art and Traditions”

Distribute copies of the Student Book. Ask students to turn to page 16 of the Student Book and look at the image as you read aloud. Tell students that the title of this chapter is “Japanese Art and Traditions.”

CHAPTER 3

Japanese Art and Traditions

Japan has an ancient culture that stretches back for thousands of years. Long ago, rulers lived in castles, and soldiers fought to defend them and their land. Himeji Castle, also known as White Heron Castle, was built in the 1300s. The castle has eighty-three rooms and is the most visited castle in Japan.



16

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that *ancient* means long, long ago. Remind students that *culture* refers to the language and way of life, including the beliefs and practices, of a specific group of people. Culture also includes the holidays that a specific group of people celebrate and how they celebrate them, as well as how people may dress and the art they create. Then explain that an **ancient culture** is a way of life that began long, long ago.

Direct students to look at the image of Himeji Castle on page 16. Explain that the Japanese built their castles in strategic, or easily protected, locations, such as on the tops of hills and mountains, near important transportation routes, or near major waterways. Japanese castles were typically made of wood and stone. Himeji Castle was built in the 1300s. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, meaning that it is a landmark with cultural and historical significance acknowledged by the United Nations and that it is legally protected.

Ask students the following question:

LITERAL—What is the most visited castle in Japan?

» Himeji Castle, also known as the White Heron Castle, is the most visited castle in Japan.

Ask students to look at the image on page 17 as you read aloud.

Japanese is a spoken and written language. It is probably difficult to learn to write Japanese because it is written using three types of scripts, each with different characters. And the Japanese do not use spaces between words!



17

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **scripts** are ways of writing—they are the sets of letters or symbols used when we write. For example, cursive is a type of script.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **characters** are groups of lines that look like little pictures. Each character represents a word or part of a word. Just as our English language uses letters to make words, the Japanese language uses characters.

SUPPORT—Students in Core Knowledge schools may recall learning about characters in their study of ancient China. Explain that Japanese writing is very much like Chinese writing. In fact, the Japanese adopted Chinese-style writing long, long ago.

SUPPORT—Use the image on the page to illustrate how the Japanese use characters. Point out the English words “Welcome to Yonago” on the sign. Note that the English words are formed using letters. Then choose any other line of text on the sign. Explain that the words in that line of text are formed using characters, or groups of lines, that form the symbols of the written language.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What language do Japanese people speak and write in Japan?

» People speak and write Japanese.

LITERAL—How is Japanese written?

» Japanese is written in three types of scripts, each with different characters. Japanese also does not use spaces between words.

Ask students to look at the images on page 18 as you read aloud.

Kimonos are traditional, silk robes. Long ago, women and girls had special kimonos for certain occasions. The color or pattern of a kimono would show what the occasion was. For example, kimonos with flowers would be worn in spring. Today, kimonos are mostly worn at weddings, funerals, and special holidays.



The Japanese tea ceremony is an important Japanese tradition. Green tea is prepared, served, and drunk in a certain way. Traditionally, a tea ceremony happens in or near a garden.

18

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **traditional** means tied to the past. In this instance, it refers to clothing that Japanese people have been wearing since long, long ago.

SUPPORT—Students in Core Knowledge schools may recall learning about silk in the unit about ancient China.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that a **tradition** is an action or way of behaving that people repeat over and over and pass on to their children and grandchildren. Many holidays, as well as many different religions, involve traditions.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What are kimonos?

» Kimonos are traditional silk robes.

LITERAL—What happens in a Japanese tea ceremony?

» In a Japanese tea ceremony, green tea is prepared, served, and drunk in a certain way.

Ask students to look at the image on page 19 as you read aloud.

November 15 is a special day for children in Japan. It is called *Shichi-go-san*, which means “seven, five, three.” If you are seven, five, or three years old, then this is your holiday! Parents take their children who have reached these ages to the temple to pray for health and happiness.



19

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that a **temple** is a building used for honoring or praying to a god or gods.

Direct students to look at the image on the page. Ask students what the children are wearing. (*kimonos*) Discuss how this is traditional dress, worn for a special occasion, and not something the children would wear every day.

Ask students the following questions:

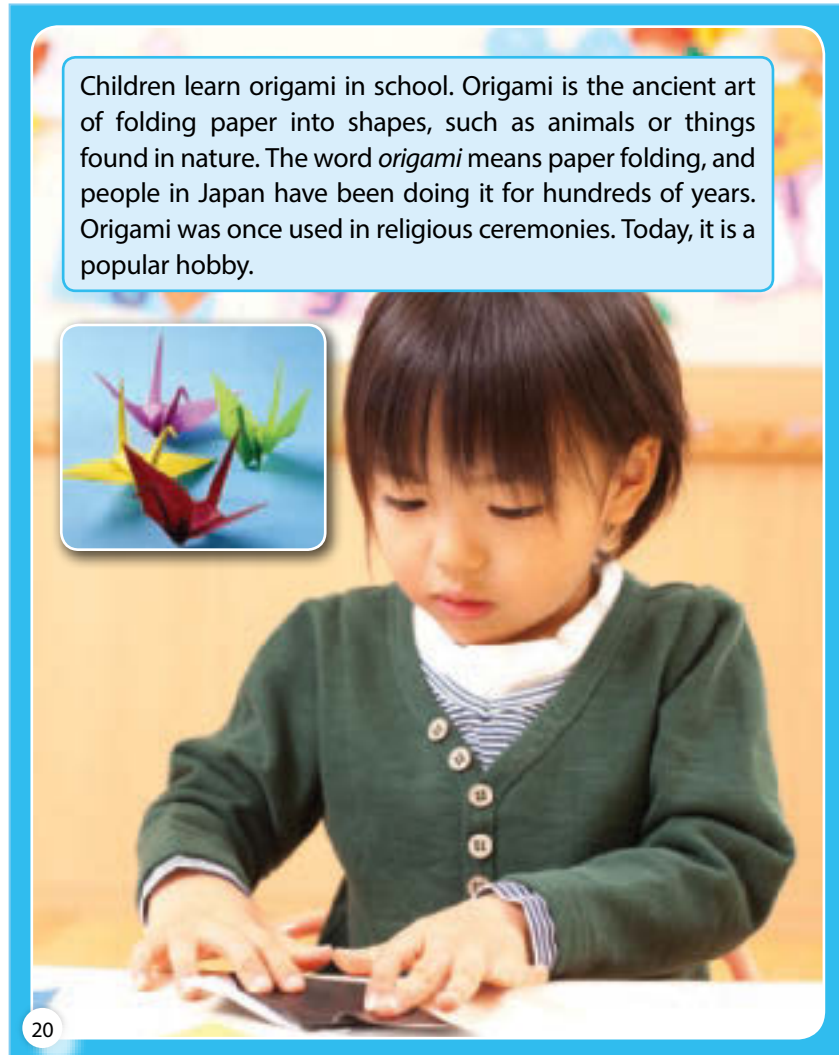
LITERAL—Why is November 15 a special day in Japan?

- » November 15 is a holiday for seven-, five-, and three-year-olds.

LITERAL—How do the Japanese celebrate November 15th, Shichi-go-san?

- » The Japanese celebrate by taking children who are seven, five, or three years old to the temple to pray for health and happiness.

Ask students to look at the images on page 20 as you read aloud.



CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **origami** is a type of art that involves folding squares of thin paper into the shapes such as animals and other things found in nature. Traditional origami does not use glue, scissors, or markings on the paper.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **religious ceremonies** are formal or official events that honor a god or goddess.

SUPPORT—Explain that a hobby is anything that a person does for pleasure when he or she is not working. Invite students to share their favorite hobbies. Some students may name sports, while others may name music or arts and crafts.

Ask students the following question:

LITERAL—What is origami?

» Origami is the art of paper folding.

Ask students to look at the images on page 21 as you read aloud.

Flower arranging, or ikebana, is very popular in Japan. To do it correctly, there are many rules to follow. For example, there are set numbers of branches and flowers for certain kinds of arrangements. Stems arranged a certain way might represent mountains. The petals of an open flower might be a pond.



Another popular art in Japan is bonsai. Bonsai is the art of growing miniature trees. There are lots of rules to follow here too. Bonsai trees can live for hundreds of years.

21

Note to Teacher: *Ikebana* is pronounced (/ih*kay*bah*nah/).

Note to Teacher: *Bonsai* is pronounced (/bahn*sigh/).

SUPPORT—Explain that both flower arranging and bonsai have a long history in Japan, and both are a means to create harmony between people and nature, which is an important part of Japanese and other Asian cultures.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What is ikebana?

» Ikebana is the Japanese art of flower arranging.

LITERAL—What is bonsai?

» Bonsai is the art of growing miniature trees.

Ask students to look at the image on page 22 as you read aloud.



Direct students' attention to the image on the page. Invite volunteers to share one thing they see the people doing. Explain that many different cultures celebrate things that happen in nature, especially things that happen in springtime, because spring symbolizes a new beginning. Knowing when spring will arrive is very important to cultures that rely on planting crops. The weather has to be right, and the planting season has to be calculated accurately to get the most out of it. Celebrating the cherry blossom is also one more way that Japanese culture is connected to nature.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What do the people of Japan celebrate in the spring?

- » The people of Japan celebrate the blooming of cherry blossoms in the spring.

EVALUATIVE—Why is the cherry blossom so special to the Japanese?

- » Possible responses: It's beautiful; it signals the beginning of rice-planting season; it signals spring.

Ask students to look at the image on page 23 as you read aloud.

Haiku is a traditional form of Japanese poetry. In a haiku poem, there can only be three lines with a set number of syllables. Line one has five syllables, line two has seven syllables, and line three has five syllables. This haiku was written hundreds of years ago by the Japanese poet Matsuo Basho.



23

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **syllables** are natural divisions within a word. Each syllable has one vowel sound when it is spoken. Tell students that a trick to determining the number of syllables in a word is to notice how many times your mouth drops when you say the word. **Ask students to place their hands under their chins to count the movements when they say a word.**

SUPPORT—Tell students that traditional haiku are written about nature and the physical world.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What is a haiku?

» A haiku is a traditional form of Japanese poetry.

LITERAL—What are the requirements of a haiku?

» A haiku can only be three lines long, with a set number of syllables in each line: five syllables in the first line, seven syllables in the second line, and five syllables in the third line.

Ask students to look at the image on page 24 as you read aloud.

Japanese artists have a long tradition of painting nature scenes. Often these scenes have included, birds, plants, water, and landscapes. One of Japan's most famous pieces of art was actually created on painted woodblocks by the artist Hokusai. It is called *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*.



CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **woodblocks** are pieces of wood that have designs cut into them. They are used for printing text, images, or patterns. They are another type of traditional Japanese art.

Direct students' attention to the image of *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*. Ask them to describe what they see. (*A large wave is causing boats to rock in the surf, with Mount Fuji in the background.*) Have students discuss what they think the people in the boat are doing in the ocean. Ask students how the painting makes them feel.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What do nature scenes in traditional Japanese paintings include?

- » Traditional Japanese paintings usually have nature scenes that include such things as water, birds, plants, and landscapes.

LITERAL—What is the painting *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* about?

- » The painting shows boats being tossed about in a big wave off the coast of Japan.



CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION

TURN AND TALK—What are some of the Japanese traditions that are still practiced in modern Japan?

- » Japanese traditions that still exist today include the wearing of kimonos; the tea ceremony; the holiday Shichi-go-san; the arts of origami, ikebana, and bonsai; the writing of haiku; and the celebration of cherry blossoms in the spring.

Additional Activities



Himeji Castle (SL.2.2)

Materials Needed: photograph of Himeji Castle from the internet or Core Knowledge Art Resources, sufficient copies of Himeji Castle coloring page



Background for Teachers: Prior to the activity, download and print or make arrangements to display the photograph of Himeji Castle.

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to the photograph and coloring page may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

Alternate Art Activity for Himeji Castle: If you do not have classroom access to the internet, you can purchase the *Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™* Art Resource Packet for Grade 2, available at:

www.coreknowledge.org/store

Use the art resource to discuss key features of Himeji Castle. You might also use the image of Himeji Castle on page 16 of the Student Book.

Have students share what they remember about Himeji Castle from the Student Book. Then show the image of the castle, and ask the following questions:

- This Japanese castle is sometimes called the White Heron Castle. Why do you think its nickname refers to the white bird?
 - » It is white in color, and its eaves—parts of the building where the roof meets the wall—look like flapping wings.

- What different kinds of lines can you see on the building?
 - » There are horizontal, vertical, diagonal, and curving lines.
- Which two shapes do you see most often?
 - » rectangles and triangles
- Because this is a castle, the architect wanted to give the impression of strength, power, and privacy. How did he do this?
 - » Possible answer: The building is tall and not welcoming. The windows are small, perhaps for archers to shoot arrows from. The horizontal and vertical lines make the castle look as steep and rugged as a canyon wall. The sweep of the roof makes the building look proud.

Conclude the activity by distributing the Himeji Castle coloring page and having students color it. You might also send the coloring page home with students to color.



***The Great Wave off Kanagawa* (SL.2.2)**

Materials Needed: image of Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* from the internet or Core Knowledge Art Resources, sufficient copies of *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* coloring page



Background for Teachers: Katsushika Hokusai was born in 1760. He was a master artist and printmaker (his printing work includes such things as greetings and announcements). He painted landscapes and classical themes of samurai (Japanese warriors) and Chinese subjects. Before he died in 1849, his work was displayed in a series called *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji*. *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* is part of this series.

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to the image and coloring page may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

Alternate Art Activity for *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*: If you do not have classroom access to the internet, you can purchase the *Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™* Art Resource Packet for Grade 2, available at:

www.coreknowledge.org/store

Use the art resource to discuss key features of *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*. You might also use the image on page 24 of the Student Book.

Have students share what they remember about *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* from the Student Book.

Show students the painting, and give them a couple of minutes to study it. Then ask the following questions:

- What do you see in the picture?
 - » Answers will vary, but students should see giant waves, sea foam, one or more boats, a mountain, and Japanese writing.

- Do you see any people?
» Yes, they look very small in the long, narrow boat.
- What do you think is about to happen to the people? Would you like to be one of them? Why or why not?
» A wave is about to crash down on the boat. Students may say that the scene looks exciting or dangerous.
- There is a snowy mountain in the distance. What do you notice about the lines of the mountain and the lines of the wave?
» They are similar, almost vertical, as though the waves are mountains.
- What else about the painting tells you that this is a Japanese picture?
» The printed characters in Japanese in the upper left-hand corner show that this is a Japanese picture.

Conclude the activity by distributing *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* coloring page and having students color it. You might also send the coloring page home with students to color.

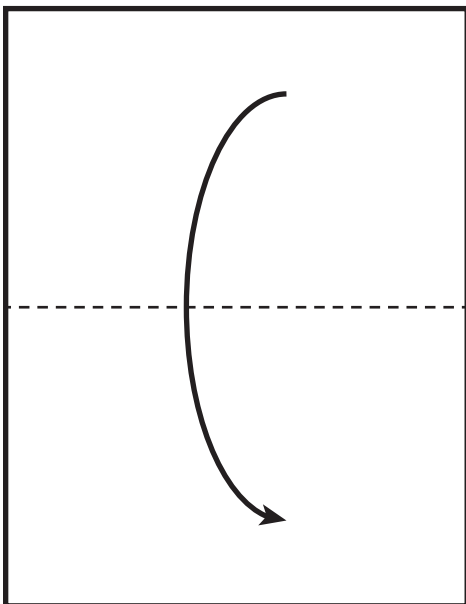
Origami Hat

Materials Needed: one sheet of $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ paper for each student and the teacher

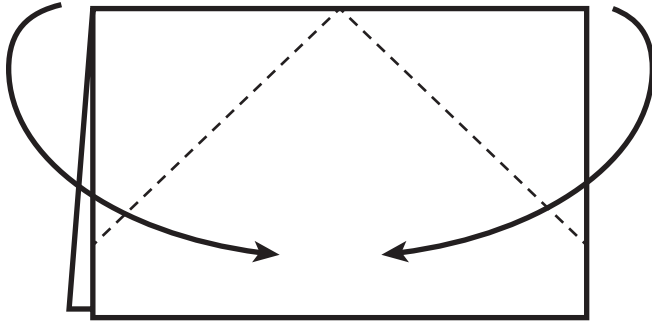
Have students share what they remember about origami from Chapter 3 of the Student Book. Distribute one piece of paper to each student, and tell students that you are going to teach them how to fold the piece of paper into an origami hat.

Walk students through the following steps, modeling each one with your own piece of paper:

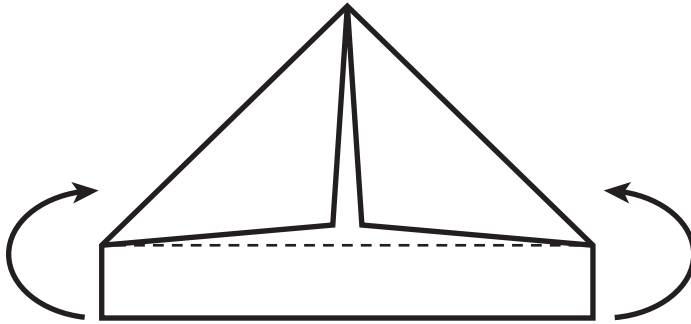
1. Fold your paper in half.



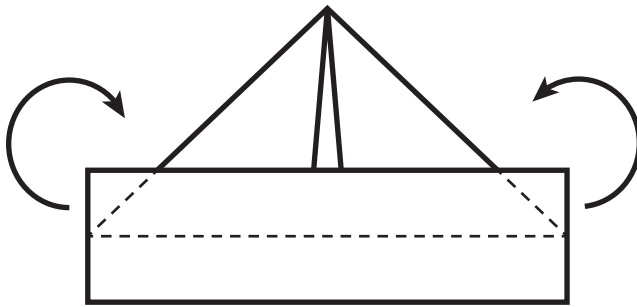
2. Next, fold down along each side to form two triangles.



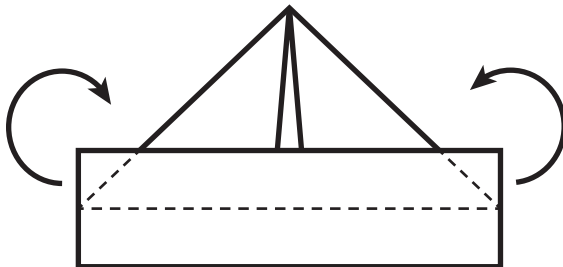
3. Now fold the bottom of one half of the paper up to meet the bottom of the triangles.



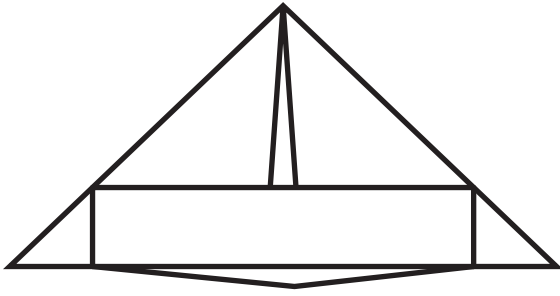
4. Then fold the two small triangles at the edges of the bottom strip back.



5. Last, turn the paper over and fold the other bottom strip and the small triangles back in the same way.



Now you have an origami hat.



Land of the Rising Sun (RI.2.1)

Activity Page



AP 3.1

Materials Needed: sufficient copies of Land of the Rising Sun (AP 3.1), pencils or pens

Distribute copies of Land of the Rising Sun (AP 3.1) to students.

Have students work with a partner to identify each image on the first page. Have students copy the word from the word box that correctly matches the image.

Review student answers as a class. Then read aloud the sentences on the second page, one by one, pausing after each sentence to have students identify which word picture best completes that sentence. Have students copy the word onto the blank line in the sentence.

Japanese Folktales (SL.2.2, RL.2.3)

Materials Needed: sufficient copies of “The Tongue-Cut Sparrow” (FE 1), internet access, capability to display internet videos to the class



Background for Teachers: Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to the Fiction Excerpt and videos of *The Tongueless Sparrow* and *The Stonecutter* may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

Review with students what a folktale is (*a traditional story shared orally from one generation to another; it usually tries to explain something*).

Tell students that you are going to read a Japanese folktale to them. Then read “The Tongue-Cut Sparrow” aloud. Alternatively, you may choose to show students the video of the same folktale.

Ask students the following questions:

- Who are the characters in the story? Describe them.
 - » The characters are an old man, who was a hard worker and kind; his wife, who was mean and always mad; and a sparrow, who sang sweetly and was kind.
- What was in the basket that the man chose?
 - » The man chose the basket with jewels, coins, and other treasures.

- What was in the basket that the woman chose?
 - » The woman chose the basket with toads, snakes, and wasps.

Then show students the video *The Stonecutter*. Ask students the following questions:

- Who is Tasaku at the beginning of the story?
 - » He is a stonecutter who just wants to work and please the mountain spirit.
- How does Tasaku change?
 - » He keeps wanting the mountain spirit to change him into things that he thinks are more powerful.
- Who is Tasaku at the end of the story?
 - » He is a mountain, but deep inside he trembles. He is a powerful mountain, but he can still feel that he is not powerful.

Conclude the activity by discussing what the two stories have in common. Students should be able to see that both stories have themes of envy, greed, and jealousy. The characters who are greedy end up being unhappy, while those who are not greedy are happy. In addition, both stories have a natural setting and characters that are part of nature.

The Japanese Tea Ceremony

Materials Needed: internet access; capability to display an internet video to the class



Background for Teachers: Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the video may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

Review what students learned about the Japanese tea ceremony in the Student Book. Explain that the tea ceremony is a special event that is sometimes called the Way of Tea. Tea is made by steeping, or soaking, ground up leaves of the tea plant in hot water.

Tell students that they are going to watch a tea ceremony. Because the tea ceremony is an important event, students should be quiet and respectful as they watch.

Show the video of the tea ceremony.

Then ask students the following questions:

- Which country introduced the tea ceremony to Japan?
 - » China introduced the tea ceremony to Japan.
- What is wabi-sabi?
 - » Wabi-sabi means turning negative feelings into the positive spirit of finding beauty.
- How is the tea room and tea ceremony meant to be experienced?
 - » The tea room and tea ceremony are meant to be experienced with all five senses.

Note to Teacher: This is a good opportunity to review the five senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch) with students.

Teacher Resources

Culminating Activity: *The Culture of Japan*

- Write a Poem About Japan 55
- My Book About *The Culture of Japan* 55

Unit Assessment: *The Culture of Japan*

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Answer Key: *The Culture of Japan*—Unit Assessment and Activity Pages

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Fiction Excerpt

The following fiction excerpt can be downloaded at:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources


- Chapter 3—"The Tongue-Cut Sparrow" (FE 1)

Looking for more teaching ideas using CKHG or to connect with other teachers? Check out the Core Knowledge Community at <https://www.coreknowledge.org/community/>. You will find a Teacher Workroom with ideas for different activities, chat rooms where you can communicate with other Core Knowledge teachers, and a map of the United States so that you can see who else may be using Core Knowledge near you!

Culminating Activity: *The Culture of Japan*

Write a Poem About Japan

Materials Needed: sufficient copies of *The Culture of Japan* Student Book; paper; pens or pencils; crayons, colored pencils, or markers

 **Background for Teachers:** Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the sample poems may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

Review what students learned about haiku in Chapter 3: it's a type of Japanese poetry; each line has a certain number of syllables.

Review what a syllable is, and have students practice determining the number of syllables in a word by first placing their hand under their chin, as described on page 45 of this Teacher Guide, and then clapping their hands to count syllables in these words: *hello* (hel*lo—2), *Japan* (Ja*pan—2), *syllable* (syl*la*ble—3), and *book* (book—1). Then do the same with the haiku on page 23 of the Student Book.

Organize students into pairs. Assign each pair one topic from the unit. The topic can be a geographical feature, such as Mount Fuji or the city of Tokyo; an event, such as the Cherry Blossom Festival; or some other aspect of Japanese culture, such as origami, bonsai, or school in Japan.

Have each pair write a haiku about their topic.

Note to Teacher: You may wish to demonstrate how to write a haiku poem with the entire class prior to asking students to try this with a partner. You may also wish to have students dictate their poems instead of writing the words themselves.

Then have students illustrate their written poems with drawings related to their poem's topic.

CHALLENGE—Have students explore another type of Japanese poetry, the tanka. Like haiku, tanka is a genre of traditional Japanese poetry with strict syllable rules. However, tanka are longer poems, with each one having five lines. The lines of a tanka have 5/7/5/7/7 syllables respectively.

My Book About *The Culture of Japan*

Materials Needed: sufficient copies of My Book About *The Culture of Japan* (see pages 58–70), crayons for each student, stapler

Note to Teacher: To save instructional time, you may want to preassemble and staple a book for each student prior to class.

Distribute a copy of My Book About *The Culture of Japan* and crayons to each student. Explain that this is a mini-book version of the Student Book that they have been using in class.

Tell students that they will have a chance to personalize the cover of the book by writing their name and drawing a picture on the cover. Ask students to think about the different things that they have learned about Japan that they might draw on the cover. Prompt students (if needed) to consider drawing any of the following images:

- group of islands
- Mount Fuji
- the Japanese flag
- skyscrapers
- robots
- temple
- kimono
- cherry blossom
- bonsai tree

Allow students approximately ten to fifteen minutes to draw their cover.

Then divide students into three groups. Assign one chapter to each group of students, telling students that with the members of their group, they should look at just their chapter images and quietly talk about what is depicted, as well as any information they heard read aloud.

Tell students that they will have about five minutes to talk to one another in a small group and then you will call the entire class back together, asking one member from each group to explain their chapter to the rest of the class. All students should follow along in their own book as the images and pages for each chapter are discussed.

Prompt and elaborate what students say about each chapter to make sure the following points are made:

Chapter 1

- Japan is a country made up of thousands of islands.
- Japan has four main islands.
- The Pacific Ocean, the East China Sea, and the Sea of Japan (or East Sea) surround the islands of Japan.
- Tokyo is the capital of Japan.
- Japan has a lot of people.
- Japan is also known as the “land of the rising sun.”
- Japan has active volcanoes; the highest one is Mount Fuji.
- The Japanese grow rice and catch fish.

Chapter 2

- Japan is a successful, modern country.
- Japan has big cities with skyscrapers, subway systems, apartment buildings, and bullet trains.
- Japan’s government is led by a prime minister and an emperor.
- School is very important to the Japanese.
- Japan experiences a lot of earthquakes, and, as a result, the Japanese spend a lot of time preparing for natural disasters.

Chapter 3

- Japan has a lot of traditions that started thousands of years ago.
- Japanese is a form of writing and speaking that is very different from English.
- Japanese has traditional dress (kimonos), art (origami, woodblocks, haiku, ikebana, bonsai), and celebrations (cherry blossom celebrations)
- There is a famous Japanese castle called Himeji Castle and a famous Japanese painting titled *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*.
- Nature is important in much of Japanese tradition and art.

Tell students that they may take their book home. Encourage students to talk about the book at home with their family in the same way that they have in class.

My Book
About
The Culture of Japan

by _____

A Nation of Islands

Japan is a country in Asia made up of thousands of islands. On many of the islands there are mountains, thick forests, and fields of rice. Japan's nearest neighbors are Russia, China, and North and South Korea.



Japan has four *main* islands. These main islands are Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Honshu is the largest island and is sometimes called the mainland.

Tokyo is the capital of Japan. It is also the largest and busiest city in Japan. Tokyo is on the island of Honshu. Other big cities are Osaka, Nagoya, and Sapporo. In terms of numbers of people, Japan has the eleventh largest population in the world. Most people in Japan speak Japanese.



Japan's national flag is a white rectangle with a red circle in the middle. The circle represents the sun because the name Japan means "the land of the rising sun." The sun rises in the east, and Japan is the easternmost country in Asia. So the rising sun appears there first.



4

The highest mountain in Japan is Mount Fuji. The peak of Mount Fuji is so high that the snow at the top never melts. But Mount Fuji is not just a mountain. It is also an active volcano. There are many other active volcanoes in Japan.

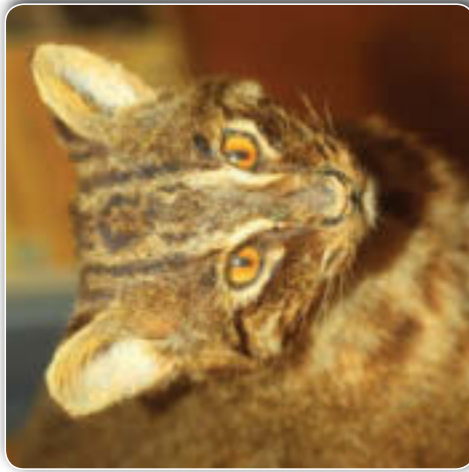


5

Japan is home to wonderful wildlife and nature. It is perhaps most known for its macaque monkeys and red-crowned cranes. The Japanese macaque is also known as the snow monkey. These monkeys have a red face and long fingers with sharp nails. The red-crowned crane is an important symbol in Japan. It can mean long life and good luck.



In Japan, there is a small cat called an Iriomote that is related to the leopard. The cat gets its name because it only lives in the forests on Iriomote Island. Although it is related to the leopard, it is about the size of a house cat.



Most of the land in Japan is either forest or mountains, so there is less space for farming. Because there is little space for farmland, fish are an important food. In the waters near Japan, there are cold and warm water currents that make it a great place for fishermen. Today, Japanese fishing ships use large nets and special equipment to bring in huge catches of fish. Fishermen do have to be careful not to overfish though!



Although farmers in Japan have little space to grow many different crops, or to graze animals, they do grow a lot of rice and vegetables. Rice is grown in paddy fields. Japanese people have grown rice for more than two thousand years. In fact, Japanese people eat rice almost every day.



8

CHAPTER 2

Modern Japan

Japan is a very successful, rich country. Japan makes cars, electronics such as televisions and cell phones, and steel. These things are sold all over the world. Japan is also very involved in medical research and the fight against certain diseases.

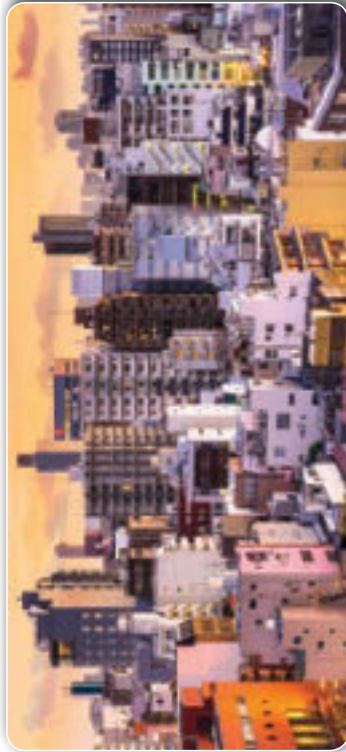


The currency, or money, that is used in Japan is called the yen. The word *yen* means circle or round object.



9

Japan's cities have giant glass and steel skyscrapers. These tall buildings are not just places where people work; some people live in them too. Because there is less land to build houses, most people in Japan live in apartments.



In the cities, many people travel on the underground subway system. Superfast bullet trains zip across the country. They go at speeds of up to two hundred miles per hour.



10

Japan is one of the world leaders in making robots that can be used in factories, offices, restaurants, hotels, stores, and even in people's homes. There are pet robots and even teacher robots!



There are robots in museums too. This robot is teaching about dinosaurs.



11

Like the United States, Japan has three branches of government. The political party that wins the most seats gets to be in charge of the government. This means that the leading members of the government, including the prime minister, are elected by the people.



As well as an elected government, Japan has an emperor. The emperor is called the head of state. There have been emperors in Japan for more than two thousand years.



12

Just like in the United States, children in Japan go to school five days a week. Japanese children learn such things as math, science, computer science, Japanese, English, history, art, and music. At lunchtime, children eat in their classrooms, and they take turns serving one another.



13

Earthquakes happen a lot in Japan. In fact, there are more than fifteen hundred each year. Even though buildings are made extra strong, sometimes they are damaged in a strong earthquake.



Because there are so many earthquakes, children have regular earthquake drills at school, and people practice how to keep safe in their homes.



14

Baseball is a popular sport in Japan. The Yomiuri Giants are one of the top baseball teams.



Sumo wrestling is an important sport that dates back more than one thousand years. Sumo wrestlers oil and comb their hair to look like a ginkgo tree leaf.

Martial arts such as karate and judo date back to when Japanese warriors were specially trained to fight for the local leaders they served. People today still learn these special skills.



Japanese people love to read comic books and watch cartoons.



15

Japanese Art and Traditions

Japan has an ancient culture that stretches back for thousands of years. Long ago, rulers lived in castles, and soldiers fought to defend them and their land. Himeji Castle, also known as White Heron Castle, was built in the 1300s. The castle has eighty-three rooms and is the most visited castle in Japan.



16

Japanese is a spoken and written language. It is probably difficult to learn to write Japanese because it is written using three types of scripts, each with different characters. And the Japanese do not use spaces between words!



17

Kimonos are traditional, silk robes. Long ago, women and girls had special kimonos for certain occasions. The color or pattern of a kimono would show what the occasion was. For example, kimonos with flowers would be worn in spring. Today, kimonos are mostly worn at weddings, funerals, and special holidays.



The Japanese tea ceremony is an important Japanese tradition. Green tea is prepared, served, and drunk in a certain way. Traditionally, a tea ceremony happens in or near a garden.

18

November 15 is a special day for children in Japan. It is called *Shichi-go-san*, which means “seven, five, three.” If you are seven, five, or three years old, then this is your holiday! Parents take their children who have reached these ages to the temple to pray for health and happiness.



19

Children learn origami in school. Origami is the ancient art of folding paper into shapes, such as animals or things found in nature. The word *origami* means paper folding, and people in Japan have been doing it for hundreds of years. Origami was once used in religious ceremonies. Today, it is a popular hobby.



20

Flower arranging, or ikebana, is very popular in Japan. To do it correctly, there are many rules to follow. For example, there are set numbers of branches and flowers for certain kinds of arrangements. Stems are arranged a certain way might represent mountains. The petals of an open flower might be a pond.



Another popular art in Japan is bonsai. Bonsai is the art of growing miniature trees. There are lots of rules to follow here too. Bonsai trees can live for hundreds of years.

21

Every spring in Japan, people spend time admiring the beautiful cherry blossoms that bloom for a short time. There are flower-watching parties, picnics, and celebrations. Long ago, the arrival of the cherry blossom was a sign that it was the beginning of the rice-planting season.



22

Haiku is a traditional form of Japanese poetry. In a haiku poem, there can only be three lines with a set number of syllables. Line one has five syllables, line two has seven syllables, and line three has five syllables. This haiku was written hundreds of years ago by the Japanese poet Matsuo Basho.



An old, quiet pond...
A frog jumps into the pond,
plop! Silence again.

23

Japanese artists have a long tradition of painting nature scenes. Often these scenes have included, birds, plants, water, and landscapes. One of Japan's most famous pieces of art was actually created on painted woodblocks by the artist Hokusai. It is called *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*.



Unit Assessment Questions: *The Culture of Japan*

Make sufficient copies of the Student Answer Sheet for each student; see pages 73–76 of this Teacher Guide. Read each sentence or question aloud with the answer choices. Instruct students to point to each picture on the answer sheet as you read the choice aloud. Reread the question or sentence and answer choices aloud a second time, and tell students to circle the picture that shows the correct answer.

1. Japan has four main _____.
 - a) waves
 - b) islands
 - c) mountains
2. The red circle on the Japanese flag stands for _____.
 - a) the sun
 - b) a soccer ball
 - c) an apple
3. Japan has many _____.
 - a) deserts
 - b) rivers
 - c) mountains
4. The most important crop grown in Japan is _____.
 - a) apples
 - b) corn
 - c) rice
5. The islands of Japan are near _____.
 - a) the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea
 - b) the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal
 - c) the Pacific Ocean, East China Sea, and Sea of Japan (or East Sea)
6. What started when Japanese warriors were specially trained to fight for the people they served?
 - a) martial arts, such as judo and karate
 - b) baseball
 - c) reading comic books and watching cartoons
7. Japanese cities like Tokyo have _____.
 - a) many large farms
 - b) a big mountain in the middle of the city
 - c) many skyscrapers

8. A kimono is a _____.
- a) traditional robe that people wear
 - b) place where rice is grown
 - c) way of arranging flowers
9. Origami is the Japanese art of _____.
- a) arranging flowers
 - b) paper folding
 - c) growing miniature trees
10. _____ is the capital of Japan.
- a) Osaka
 - b) Tokyo
 - c) Sapporo

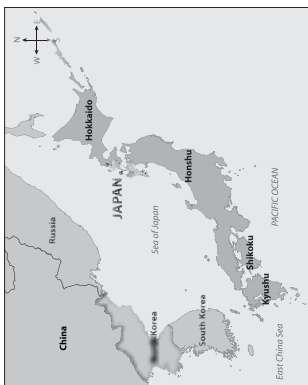
Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: *The Culture of Japan*

1.

a.



b.

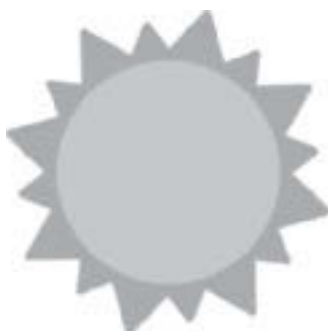


c.



2.

a.



b.



c.



3.

a.



b.



c.



Name _____

Date _____

Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: *The Culture of Japan*

4.

a.



b.

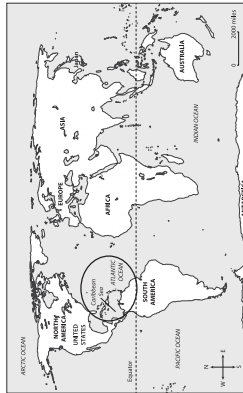


c.

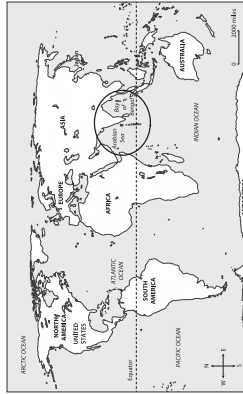


5.

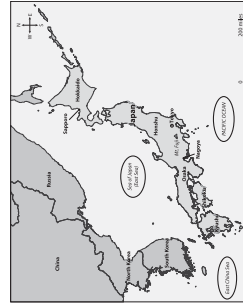
a.



b.



c.



6.

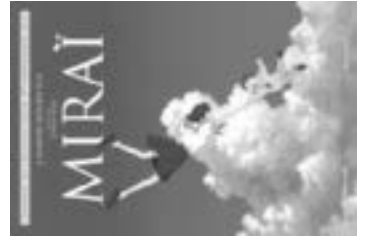
a.



b.



c.



Name _____ Date _____

Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: *The Culture of Japan*

7.

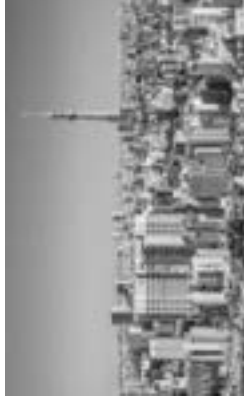
a.



b.



c.



8.

a.



b.



c.



9.

c.



b.



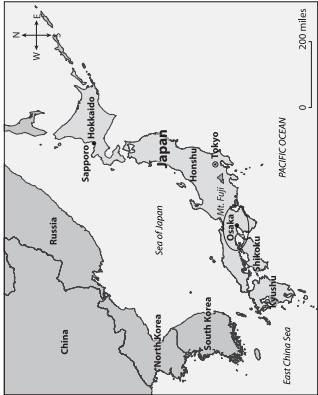
c.



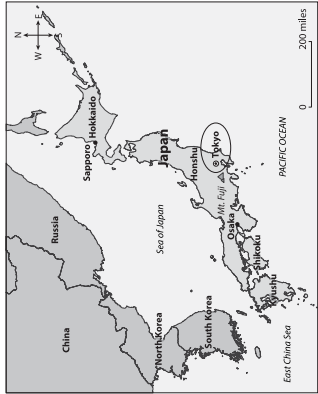
Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: *The Culture of Japan*

10.

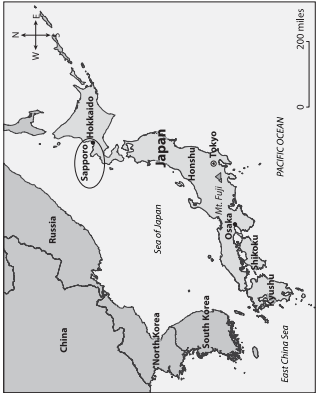
a.



b.



c.



Performance Task: *The Culture of Japan*

Materials Needed: four blank 5" × 8" index cards per student, pencils, assorted thin-tipped colored markers, individual student copies of the *The Culture of Japan* Student Book

Teacher Directions: In this unit, students learned about Japan—its location in eastern Asia, its traditions and arts from ancient times to the present, and its current status as a strong and successful country. They learned that Japan is the eleventh most populated country in the world. The people of Japan have maximized their land, growing rice where they can, fishing in the waters offshore, and building cities with innovations, such as skyscrapers, subways, robots, and bullet trains, to keep their culture progressing. Yet, at the same time, the Japanese value and celebrate their ancient traditions, showcasing art and hobbies unique to the land that they call home. Students discovered different Japanese art forms.

Have students reflect back on what they learned during this unit by flipping through the pages of the Student Book. Tell students to imagine they are traveling to Japan. They will share the sights, sounds, and smells of this captivating country with their friends and family back home by creating four different postcards on 5" × 8" index cards. Remind students that postcards are like condensed versions of large travel posters. The postcards should show the most important or most interesting details about Japan. Students should identify in their postcards the most important aspects of Japanese culture and geography that they have learned about that make Japan an exciting place to visit and think about.

Have students draw images of Japan on one side of each card and dictate a brief message about Japan for the other side.

Note to Teacher: We suggest that you allocate two instructional periods for the completion of this performance-based assessment. Students will work at different paces. The teacher should circulate throughout the room and be available to discuss each card and take dictation as individual students finish each postcard.

Prompt each student to talk about his or her drawing by saying, "Tell me about what you drew and what it tells about life in Japan." It is not necessary for the teacher to write verbatim what the student says but rather to capture bullet points that can later be used with the Performance Assessment Rubric that follows.

Performance Task Scoring Rubric

Note to Teacher: Students should be evaluated on the basis of their postcard drawings, along with what they say they have drawn and why, using the rubric.

Above Average	<p>Response is accurate and detailed. Student demonstrates strong understanding of Japan, identifying four of the following details in drawing and/or dictation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Japan is a country made up of thousands of islands, surrounded by the Pacific Ocean, the East China Sea, and the Sea of Japan (or East Sea).• Japan has many active volcanoes, and earthquakes are very common there.• Japanese cities are very modern with skyscrapers, subways, and bullet trains.• Japanese grow rice in paddy fields.• Fishing is a very important industry to Japan.• Japan has interesting animals, including macaque monkeys, red-crowned cranes, and the Iriomote.• The Japanese have many celebrations, including Shichi-go-san and cherry blossom celebrations.• Traditional Japanese robes are called kimonos.• Japanese art includes painting, writing, flower arranging, origami, haiku, and bonsai.
Average	<p>Response is mostly accurate and somewhat detailed. Student demonstrates solid understanding of Japan, noting three of the details listed above.</p>
Adequate	<p>Response is mostly accurate but lacks detail. Student demonstrates a very basic understanding of Japan, noting two of the details listed above.</p>
Inadequate	<p>Response is incomplete and demonstrates a minimal understanding of the content in the unit, noting only one of the details listed above.</p>

Directions for Making My Passport

If this is the first Grade 2 CKHG unit you have completed with your students, please download and print the Grade 2 My Passport. Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the passport PDF may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

To save instructional time, prepare a passport for each student in advance. Download and print the Passport PDF pages. Photocopy the pages back to back, according to the specifications on your printer. Staple pages together.



Introducing My Passport to Students

Materials Needed: sufficient folded copies of Grade 2 My Passport, pencils, glue sticks, thin-tipped markers*, an actual passport if available

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the My Passport may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

*If you prefer, you may take a photograph of each student and print a small copy to distribute to each student instead of having them use the markers to draw a picture of themselves.

Tell students that when people travel to countries outside of the United States, they bring a little booklet with them that is called a passport.

Show students an actual passport, if available, as you continue to explain that a passport has many pages inside. On the first page, there is usually a photograph of the person to whom the passport belongs, as well as personal identification information, such as when the person was born and where the person lives. Explain that as people visit each new place/country, they show the page with their identification information to an official as they visit each place and then receive a stamp in their passport to show that they have visited that place.

Explain to students that today they are going to make a pretend passport that they will use as they “travel” to different places and times in history this year using CKHG. Distribute materials to each student. Examine and discuss the cover of the passport.

Have students turn to the first page inside, and tell them that this page has space for their own personal identification information. Explain each portion of this page, guiding students in personalizing their passport by either drawing a picture of themselves or gluing a photograph in the designated space. Guide students in completing the remaining information, such as their name, date of birth, and remaining information.

SUPPORT—Provide prompts for students as needed by writing examples of their correct date of birth and how to spell the name of their town, state, country, and continent.

Next, have students examine the remaining passport pages as you read the titles at the top of each page. Explain that each page lists the name of one of the places they will “visit” as they use the Grade 2 CKHG materials this year. Tell students that once they finish each unit, they will have a chance to place small pictures of the place they visited in their passport as a reminder or souvenir of each place they have visited.

Collect all passports, and keep them in a safe place until you are ready to have students complete the passport page for *The Culture of Japan*.

My Passport Activity for *The Culture of Japan*

Materials Needed: personalized copies of Grade 2 My Passport for each student, sufficient copies of *The Culture of Japan* Passport Images, pencils, and glue sticks for each student

Note to Teacher: Please download and print *The Culture of Japan* Passport Images. Use this link to download and print the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to *The Culture of Japan* Passport Images may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

You will need to print sufficient copies of each page and then cut the images apart on the dotted lines prior to class.

Tell students that today they will each complete the page in their passport that is about Japan. Ask students to turn to page 4 of their passport.

Show students the individual *The Culture of Japan* Passport Images, and ask students to name or describe each image. Explain that you will give each student a copy of every image. Direct students to use their glue sticks to carefully glue each image onto *The Culture of Japan* page of the passport in whatever order they would like.

As students finish, encourage them to share their passport with a partner, showing and describing the images on *The Culture of Japan* page and what they represent. Suggest students talk to one another about what they saw and what they liked best about their travel to Japan.

If time permits, encourage partners to look back at the images on the passport pages for previous units to discuss similarities and differences between those places and Japan.

Name _____

Date _____

Activity Page 1.1

Use with Chapter 1

Letter to Family

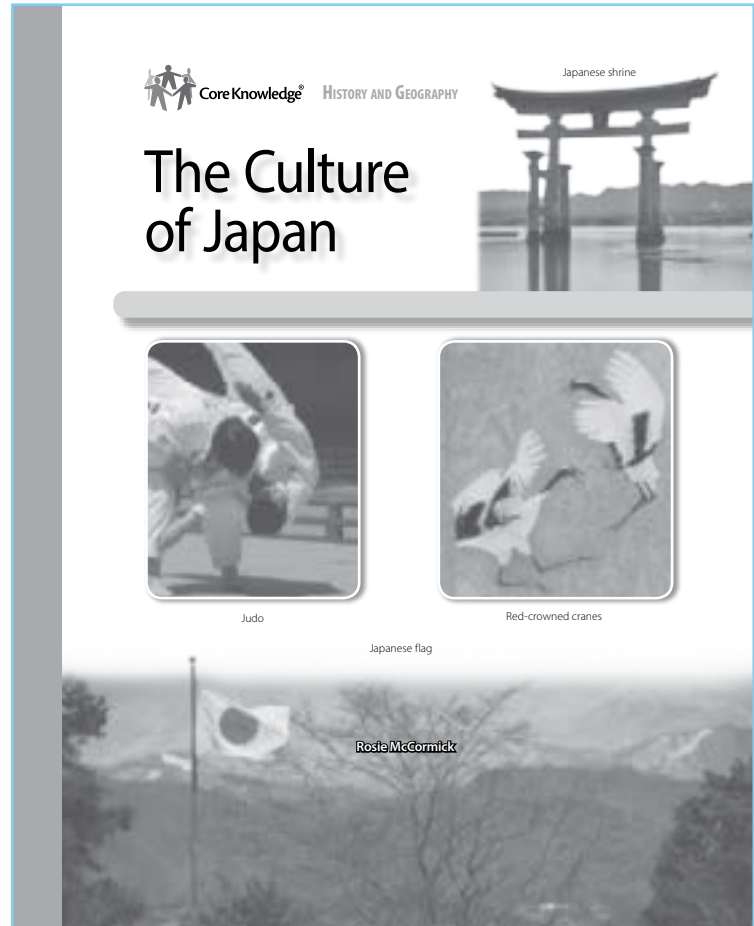
Family Member,

During the next few weeks, your child will be learning about the geography and culture of Japan. Students will hear about the features of Japan's islands, the culture of modern Japan, and Japanese art forms. In order to fully understand Japanese culture, students will also learn about Japanese traditions and holidays.

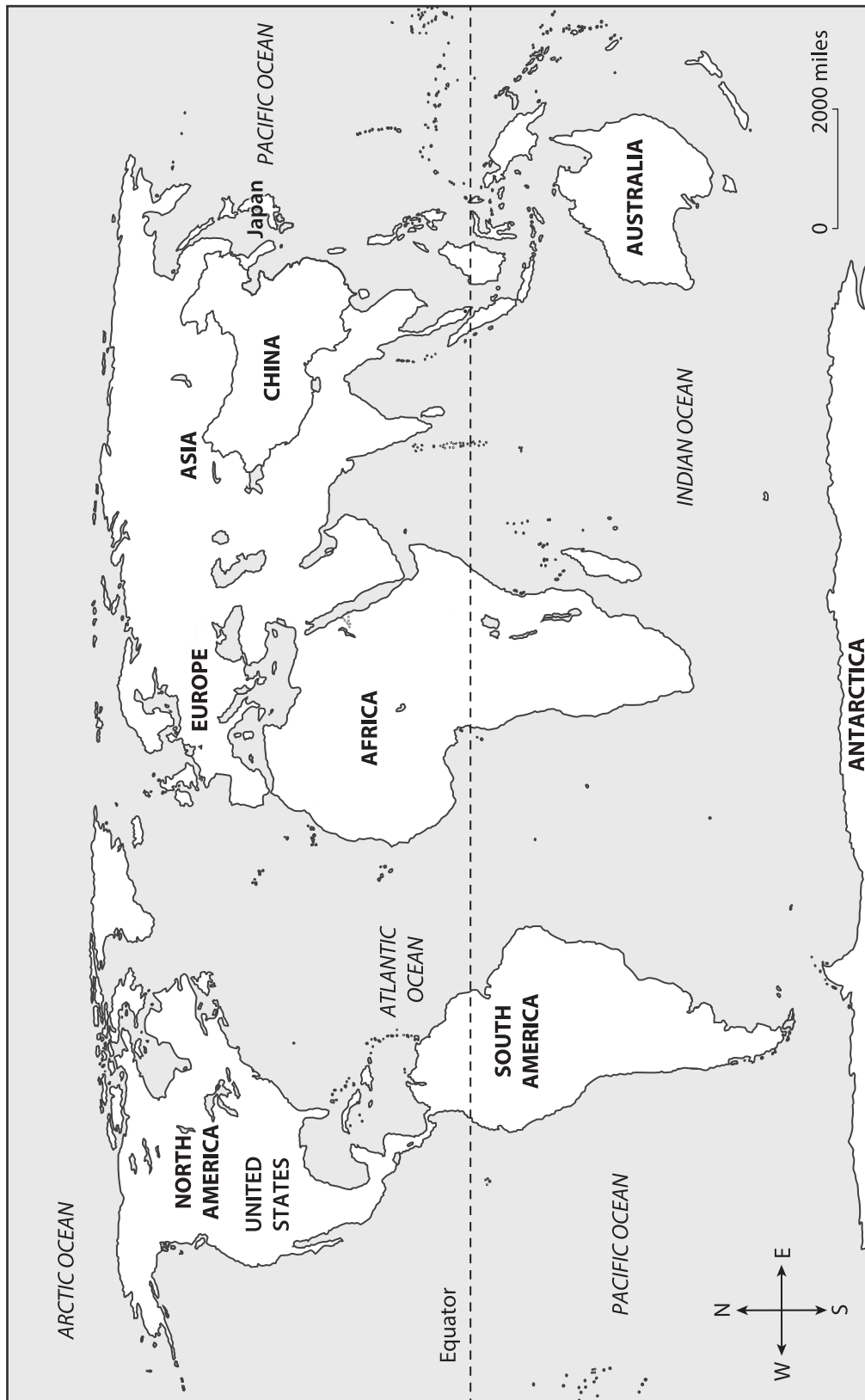
These traditions are presented as historical and cultural information in an age-appropriate way rather than in a manner that suggests the value or correctness of any particular set of beliefs or practices. The goal is to build knowledge about life in other places and to foster understanding and respect for practices and beliefs that may be different from those with which students are familiar.

Sometimes students have questions about how the beliefs or practices they are learning about relate to themselves and their own experiences. In such instances, we will encourage each student to discuss such topics with you. We recognize that the best place to find answers to those types of questions is with your family and the adults at home.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

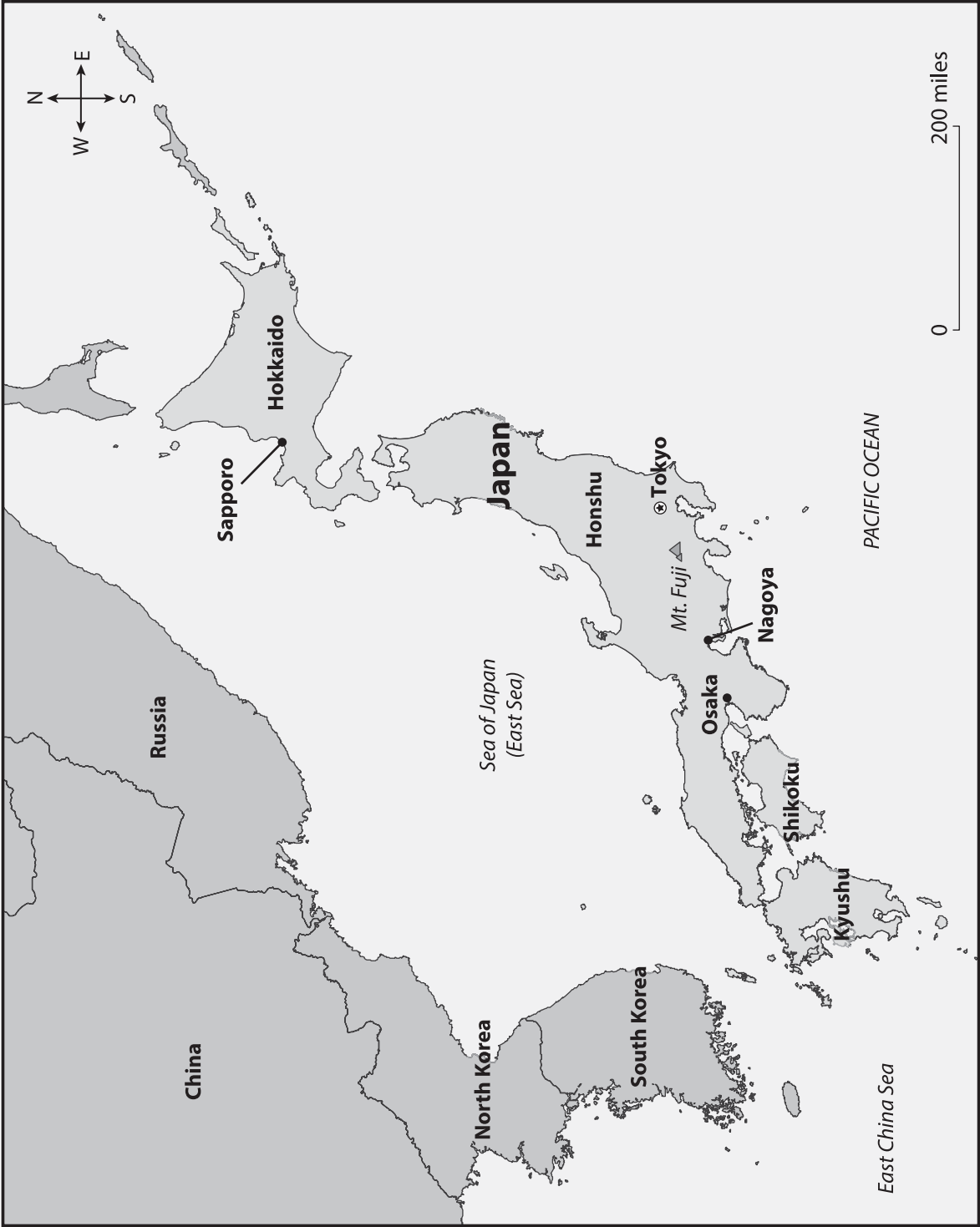


Name _____ Date _____

World Map

Name _____ Date _____

Map of Japan



Name _____

Date _____

Activity Page 3.1

Use with Chapter 3

Land of the Rising Sun

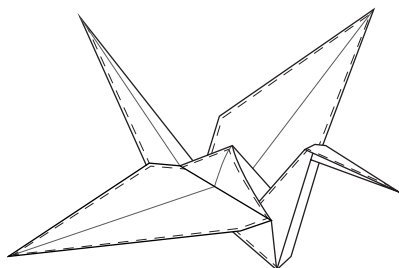
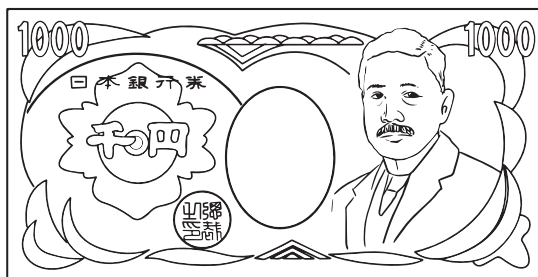
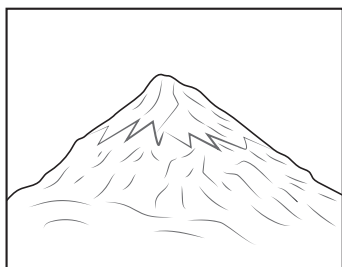
islands

kimono

Mount Fuji

origami

yen



1. Japan's most famous natural landmark is _____.
2. There are four main _____ that make up Japan.
3. The type of money that the Japanese use is called the _____.
4. A _____ is a traditional Japanese costume.
5. _____ is Japan's paper-folding art.

Answer Key: *The Culture of Japan*

Unit Assessment

(pages 71–72)

1. b 2. a 3. c 4. c 5. c 6. a 7. c 8. a 9. b 10. b

Activity Pages

Land of the Rising Sun (AP 3.1) (pp. 85–86)

1. Mount Fuji
2. islands
3. yen
4. kimono
5. origami



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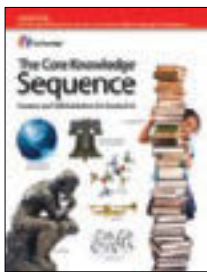
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Core Knowledge **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY™**

The Culture of Japan

Core Knowledge Sequence History and Geography 2



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