

**TIP 2: Japan Unit – Kimono Project**  
**6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts**  
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**Purpose:** The purpose of this unit is to introduce students to Japanese history and culture with a specific focus on the art and literature of Japan. As a participating school of the Kimono Project, students will examine the works of Itchiku Kubota in preparation for field trips and the Closing Ceremony, which will be held at our school. Students will get an overview of Japanese history and culture in Language Arts class with opportunities for further examination in Social Studies, Art and Drama/Movement.

**Timeframe:** The time needed for this unit will vary according to grade level, but approximately 12 weeks will be utilized.

**Ohio Standards:** 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 3.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, 5.4, 6.4

**Materials:** *Aleutian Sparrow* by Karen Hesse  
*Hiroshima* by John Hersey  
*America Street: A Multicultural Anthology of Stories*  
*The Narrow Road to the Deep North and other Travel Sketches* by Matsuo Basho  
*The Oxford Book of Japanese Short Stories*  
*Itchiku Kubota: Kimono in the Tsujigahana Tradition* by Jane Barton  
Blank map of Japan  
Notebooks for journaling  
Construction paper, colored pencils/markers

**Procedure I (6<sup>th</sup> grade unit):**

1. open with a word association game using “Japan” as the word; allow this to generate discussion about what students do and do not know about Japan regardless of accuracy; once this has run its course, create a class KWL graphic organizer on Japan
2. provide students with background information on key points in Japanese history, particularly during the time of Basho; use *The Narrow Road* and *Grass Sandals* (read aloud) as entryways
3. provide background information on the importance of poetry to culture using Basho, Fleischman, and *Poetry U.S.A.*; use selected poems from each to analyze, discuss purpose, and cultural context
4. explore history of the haiku form; assign students to find and research a haiku poem written by someone other than Basho and write a short report on it discussing the following points: 1) historical/cultural context, 2) author background info, 3) analysis

5. share Basho poems and discuss; connect with geography and other contexts
6. take students on a short hike or walk with their notebooks; have them observe what they see and take notes; have them write a haiku poem based on their observations
7. utilize Kubota text and have students select a favorite kimono to reflect upon in journal form; using construction paper and colored pencils, students should draw a replica of the kimono
8. complete the “L” portion of the KWL graphic organizer

**Procedure II (7<sup>th</sup> grade):**

1. open with a word association game using “Japan” as the word; allow this to generate discussion about what students do and do not know about Japan regardless of accuracy; once this has run its course, create a class KWL graphic organizer on Japan
2. provide historical background information for Japanese society – and the east in particular – during the 1930s leading up to WWII; utilize Social Studies texts and web resources
3. assign selected stories to be read from *America Street*; discuss the stories for thematic content as well as cultural and historical context
4. provide some background information for Japanese-American internment camps; assign students to locate and research one survivor and write a 1-2 page synopsis of his or her story; have the students present these to the class
5. distribute copies of *Aleutian Sparrow* and read as directed; use class time to discuss reading, create questions, and journal writing for reflection
6. utilize Kubota text and have students select a favorite kimono to reflect upon in journal form; using construction paper and colored pencils, students should draw a replica of the kimono
7. complete the “L” portion of the KWL graphic organizer

**Procedure III (8<sup>th</sup> grade):**

1. open with a word association game using “Japan” as the word; allow this to generate discussion about what students do and do not know about Japan regardless of accuracy; once this has run its course, create a class KWL graphic organizer on Japan
2. provide historical background information for Japanese society – and the east in particular – during the 1930s leading up to WWII; utilize Social Studies texts and web resources
3. assign selected stories to be read from *Oxford Book*; discuss the stories for thematic content as well as cultural and historical context
4. provide some background information on Japanese society during the war and leading up to the dropping of the bombs

5. distribute copies of *Hiroshima* and have students read as directed; use class time to discuss reading, create questions, and journal writing for reflection
6. utilize Kubota text and have students select a favorite kimono to reflect upon in journal form; using construction paper and colored pencils, students should draw a replica of the kimono, then complete the art criticism essay (see appendix) on the kimono
7. complete the “L” portion of the KWL graphic organizer

### **Resources:**

Barton, Jane. *Itchiku Kubota: Kimono in the Tsuigahana Tradition*. Fullerton, CA: California State University, 1980.

Basho, Matsuo. *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and other Travel Sketches*. London: Penguin, 1966.

Fleischman, Paul. *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices*. New York: Harper Collins, 1988.

Goosen, Theodore W. *The Oxford Book of Japanese Short Stories*. Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2002.

Hersey, John. *Hiroshima*. New York: Random House, 1989.

Hesse, Karen. *Aleutian Sparrow*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 2003.

Mazer, Anne, Ed. *America Street: A Multicultural Anthology of Stories*. New York: Persea Books, 1993.

Molloy, Paul, Ed. *Poetry U.S.A.* New York: Scholastic, 1968.

### **Appendix:**

#### **Art Criticism Essay**

Based upon your newfound knowledge and understanding Kubota’s kimonos, write an essay analyzing and interpreting the artwork. Using your information sheet, follow the guidelines listed below.

1. Introductory paragraph that introduces the artwork in question and provides historical and biographical information about the work and the artist.
2. One paragraph that includes a detailed description of the work. You should include at least 3-5 important details.
3. One paragraph that analyzes the work, including a discussion of at least two of the principles of design and how they apply to the work. Also include the analysis statement you wrote.

4. One-two paragraphs that offer your interpretation of the work and conclude the essay.