Investigating History

Grade 7, Unit 2
East Asia

Why are certain beliefs and practices shared by cultures across East Asia?
How does the art created by a society reveal its values?

UNIT THROUGHLINES

Enduring Understandings

EU 1. The early societies of East Asia included some of the best historically documented cultures in the world, thanks to the early development and preservation of writing, as well as troves of art and artifacts discovered through archaeology. These offer a window into the perspectives and values of elites and commoners alike.

EU 2. A common foundation of culture developed across the region that included ancestor worship; orderly and detailed notions about the cosmos and afterlife; written languages initially based on characters; a non-exclusive mix of Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist and indigenous beliefs; and centralized imperial bureaucracies with legal codes modeled on those of China.

EU 3. The art forms of East Asia — such as bronzework and goldwork, ceramics, calligraphy, poetry, painting, temple and imperial architecture, and garden design — were shaped by indigenous ideas and external influences. Individual artworks offer insight into the concerns and values of people in ancient times. Some works also provide evidence of cultural diffusion and syncretism.

LEARNING PROGRESSION

East Asian Geography | 4 Lessons

How do maps and images reveal information about human geography and development? What are some possible limits of these sources?

- L 1. Explain what "East Asia" means, and identify its key geographic and cultural features.
- L 2. After analyzing two maps, argue a conclusion about human geography and the development of societies in early China.
- L 3. Make inferences about particular ways that humans and the environment interacted in East Asia based on information from maps and images.
- L 4. Evaluate particular ways that humans and the environment interacted in East Asia based on information from images, maps and short texts.

Early China in Context | 18 Lessons

What do artifacts and texts tell us about people's lives in early China?

- L 5. Organize information from multiple primary and secondary sources to gain a picture of Shang religious beliefs, practices, and concerns.
- L 6. Interpret the contents of Bronze Age tombs to discern their occupants' beliefs and practices and consider how their art reveals their values.
- L 7. Interpret the contents of Bronze Age tombs to discern their occupants' beliefs and practices and consider how their art reveals their values.
- L 8. Analyze ancient poetry to discover the perspectives and lifeways of common people during the late Bronze Age.
- L 9. Explain the evolution and methods of Chinese writing, and analyze its importance to Chinese civilization.

What kind of government did the Chinese feel would best keep order and harmony?

- L 10. Classify and compare the approaches of ancient China's three major political philosophies to creating ordered governance.
- L 11. Evaluate the merits and costs of Qin Shi Huangdi's projects to centralize power in a unified Chinese state.
- L 12. Evaluate the merits and costs of Qin Shi Huangdi's projects to centralize power in a unified Chinese state.
- L 13. Select a particular government policy and construct a persuasive argument for its benefits to Qin Shi Huangdi.

EU 4. East Asian societies became adept at cultural borrowing and adaptation, with China as the admired standard-bearer of the region in ancient times. However, all East Asian societies exerted cultural and intellectual influence on the others. This occurred through trade and tribute systems, diplomatic or religious missions, warfare, and other forms of contact with neighboring regions (including nomads of the northern steppes) and more distant regions, such as India.

Practice Standards

PS 3. Organize information and data from multiple primary and secondary sources by sequencing, prioritizing based on a given criterion, categorizing, and synthesizing to construct meaning.

PS 5. Evaluate the credibility and relevance of each source.

Literacy Standards

R1. Cite specific textual evidence.

R2. Determine the central ideas or information of a source; provide an accurate summary.

W1. Write an argument focused on discipline-specific content.

W9. Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, interpretation, reflection, & research.

L 14. Select a particular government policy and construct a persuasive argument for its benefits to Qin Shi Huangdi.

What were the foundational belief systems and innovations of China, and why did they spread across the region?

L 15. Describe and illustrate the core beliefs and practices of Confucianism and its influence on Chinese society.
L 16. Analyze the purpose of two primary sources and their point of view on the role of women, and contrast their portrayal with those of modern film interpretations.
L 17. Define religious syncretism and analyze how works of art illustrate this concept.
L 18. Explain the role of indigenous, nature-related religious beliefs in Chinese culture and beyond.
L 19. Identify causes of the spread of Buddhism in East Asia by organizing information from multiple sources.
L 20. Select and organize relevant information about the Tang Dynasty's model of governance and culture to create a summarizing poster.
L 21. Present a poster summarizing key findings about the Tang Dynasty's model of governance and culture.

Early Korea | 6 Lessons

How was Korean identity shaped by developments within Korea and encounters with neighbors?

L 22. Identify and classify influences on the formation of a distinctive Korean identity as either internal or external by analyzing geography, myth, and history.
L 23. Draw evidence from informational texts and research a fitting image for an organized, sequenced set of slides interpreting the key features of one of Korea's Three Kingdoms.
L 24. In a class presentation, describe and analyze key features of Korea's Three Kingdoms.

Supplemental Lessons based on the book A Single Shard:

L 25. Through reading and discussion of a narrative text, identify historical and cultural features of 12th century Korea and assess how narrative elements of the text support understanding and engagement.
L 26. Through reading and discussion of a narrative text, identify historical and cultural features of 12th century Korea and assess how narrative elements of the text support understanding and engagement.
L 27. Through reading and discussion of a narrative text, identify historical and cultural features of 12th century Korea and assess how narrative elements of the text support understanding and engagement.

Classical and Early Medieval Japan | 6 Lessons

How did different groups compete for power in early Japan?

L 28. Explain the role of Shinto in Japanese culture, and how Japanese people conceived of their relationship to the natural and divine world.
L 29. Identify the tools that Japanese groups used to centralize power and rate the degree of centralization at different turning points in the balance of power.
L 30. Synthesize multiple sources that illuminate power struggles in classical and early medieval Japan in order to construct meaning about how and why centralized power gave way to decentralized power.

L 31. Analyze multiple texts to recognize and discuss the changing power relations of the early medieval period in Japan.

How did Japanese art reflect Japanese values?

L 32. Identify the aesthetic principles guiding the design of Japanese gardens and apply this understanding in creating a garden plan.

L 33. Construct responses to the East Asia unit's Essential Questions and review core concepts over the shared regional practice of tea-drinking.

Summative Assessment | 2 Days (Lessons 34-35)

Part I (Lesson 34): Complete an assessment of knowledge of East Asian history and geography, as well as source credibility.

Part II (Lesson 35): Complete a one-lesson exercise that assesses historical knowledge and skill with regard to PS3 (organizing information) and PS 5 (identifying and grouping sources of relevance). In the guise of a museum curator, curate a small collection of sources from East Asia and explain their organization.