

## Japan Lesson Plan # 2

### Purpose:

Japanese social rules and interactions are different than those in America. Essential Questions:

1. How are the social rules and interactions different than that of Americans?
2. Why do these differences exist?
3. What are some of these different social rules and interactions?

To expose students to some Japanese social rules that are different than the ones we have in America. This will help bring a better understanding of the Japanese people and their culture.

- Mat** 1. Meridian Resources Associates and Kagawa, Hiroshi, The Inscrutable Japanese.. Tokyo: Bilingual Books, Kodansha International Ltd., 1997.
2. List of questions over 6 topics of Japanese social rules and interactions (Handout 1)
  3. List of answers for questions (Handout 2)

1. Students will be informed that they will be a set of readings that explain different Japanese Social rules and interactions. They will have to answer questions over each reading.
2. Students will be broken up into 6 groups. Groups are as follows: 1. "Why won't Japanese look me in the eye?" 2. Why do Japanese say, "yes" all the time?" 3. "Why do Japanese like the word "maybe"?" 4. "Why do Japanese smile so much?" 5. "Why can't Japanese insist that they are right?" 6. "Why are Japanese so concerned with background and the past?" Each group will be given a set of questions that they will have to share with the rest of the class.
3. Students will be given 10-15 minutes in class to answer the questions and talk about presenting to the class. Jobs must be divided up equally in the groups.
4. The groups will present their answers to the class and in some cases demonstrate the differences between American and Japanese social rules.
5. At the end the teacher will restate the answers to the main questions and review the differences that we have talked about.

Class discussion about what was read and how it applies to our lives today. The world is more global and by understanding social rules and interactions of other cultures, misunderstandings can be prevented. Groups will be responsible for leading the class discussion over their topics. Teacher can ask questions of groups to make sure all the important information is talked about.

This lesson is for grades 9-12

This lesson could be made easier by having the teacher pick some topics and reading them out loud to the class. The teacher could lead the demonstrations and have the students fill out answers to the questions as they go.

The teacher could also have students work on all the topics by themselves and complete the questions independently or in groups.

## **Japan Lesson # 2 , Handout #1 The Inscrutable Japanese Questions**

- "W** 1. Why is it strange or even rude to Americans not to make eye contact?  
2. Why do Japanese not make eye contact with people when they are talking or being talked to?  
3. How could this social rule cause a misunderstanding?

- "Why** 1. What is the difference between "yes" and "hai"?  
2. What is the difference in the listening styles between Americans and Japanese?  
3. What problem could these different listening styles cause?

- "Why** 1. Why won't a Japanese person say "No"? (Give 2 examples)  
2. What word is used instead of "No"? Why?  
3. What problem could this cause?

- "Why** 1. Why will a Japanese person smile even when they are not happy?  
2. What 2 things will Japanese do to show that they are thinking about what is being said to them?  
3. What problem could this cause?

- "Why** 1. If you argue back in Japan, what 2 things do you run a risk of?  
2. What will Japanese do first in a disagreement and then come back and do later?  
3. What problem or issue could this cause in our culture?

- "Why** 1. How does Japanese and Americans view on the past and present differ?  
2. What would make a Japanese person feel more secure about someone?  
3. Why do Japanese value history and the past so much?

## **andout #2 The Inscrutable Japanese.**

### **Question Answers**

- "WI"**
1. In America it is considered rude not to make eye contact when you are being spoken to. You can even get yelled at for not making eye contact. Making eye contact is a sign of self-confidence and trustworthiness. (21)
  2. Japanese are taught that it is rude or an act of challenge if you make eye contact when someone is talking to you. (19) In the Edo period in Japan, there was a strict class system. People of the lower class could face punishment, even death if they made eye contact with a member of the upper class. (19-21)
  3. If an American makes a lot of eye contact with a Japanese person when talking to them, the Japanese person will not be comfortable. They will feel uncomfortable and embarrassed and they will not trust the speaker. (21)

- "Why d"**
1. In Japan, "hai" means yes and also it means that someone is listening to what is being said. So it has a much broader use. The word yes in America just means the understanding of something. The meaning of "yes" cannot really be taken any further. (23)
  2. In Japan, children are taught to wait until the speaker is totally done talking before they ask any questions. It is called "breaking the conversations back" if they interrupt. (23) In America, we will interrupt the speaker if we have questions. We do not wait till the end of the conversation. (25)
  3. The problem that could be caused is that a Japanese listener will continue to say, "yes", to show he is listening, during the whole conversation. An American will assume that since the person has said yes the whole time that everything is clear. The Japanese person may walk away from the conversation without knowing really what is going on. (25)

- "Why d"**
1. The Japanese consider it rude to say "no" directly. Another reason is that the person being said "no" to may feel personally attacked. (29)
  2. The Japanese use the word "maybe" to avoid direct confrontation and to avoid insulting the person. (29) They could also use the phrase, "I think it is difficult".
  3. Americans normally share these types of exchanges openly and most the time are not offended. This could make it difficult for an American to understand when a Japanese person really means "no" or probably. (31)

- "Why d"**
1. Japanese are afraid of disturbing the "wa" by displaying their emotions too strongly. They try to communicate through the mind or unemotional facial features. (73)
  2. Japanese may fold their hands across their chest or close their eyes during a conversation. (73)
  3. Americans will not understand what is going on if the person they are talking to has their eyes closed or arms folded. They may feel that the person is not listening. The American speaker may also feel like they are being made fun of if the person is just smiling the whole time. (75)

### **"Why can't Japanese insist that they are right?"**

1. Japanese run the risk of being seen as attacking someone's character or of being narrow minded. (55)
2. Japanese will first say that they are sorry. They will wait till time has past to bring the topic up again. (55) Sometimes the time could be weeks. (57)
3. Americans feel that it is their right to justify themselves when or defend themselves. In Japan this would be seen as inappropriate and self-promoting. (55)

- "Why a"**
1. Americans value the present and future over the past. America being a young

nation, Americans feel that progress can only be gained by looking to the future not being caught up on the past. (105) Japan looks at the future as an extension of the past and present. (105)

2. A Japanese person would only feel secure if they knew the history or past of an individual or business.
3. Japan's history is very old. They have not had to worry about invasion and outside threats. In Japan, social statuses are based on the ancient past. They judge groups and people based upon their history. (105)