

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Imperialism: Japan

Period \_\_\_\_\_

## **\*A Brief History of Japan\***

In 1853, a US Navy squadron sailed into a Japanese harbor in an attempt to open Japan to American trade. The Americans fired off the many cannons that they had on their ships and gave presents of modern machines, such as clocks and steam engines to the Japanese shogun, a military ruler. The old Shogun did not want these western items to interrupt feudal Japan, which in many ways was similar to Europe during the Middle Ages (1300s). However, many young samurai officers thought that these western inventions could make Japan strong. Led by a young Emperor name Meiji, they overthrew the Shogun and began a modernization program of great size and speed. In 45 years, Japan had made the same progress from feudal times to modern, that the west had taken 400 years to do gradually. The Japanese did this by copying western ideas and then adapting them to Japanese culture.



Here are some basic facts:

In Japan in 1853, only 3% of the population was receiving a formal education. The farmers, tradesmen, and soldiers received their own specific training but no formal education. By 1878, however, 25% were; by 1885 42%; and by 1897, 95% were receiving some formal education, at least at the primary level, which would be equal to our elementary schools. This had a great effect on Japan because, with these educated people, it was then possible for Japan to rapidly make factories for steel, iron and rubber production, and train people to grow more food with the aid of new farm tractors. Because of this last innovation, people of Japan ate better and became healthier. Eventually their population skyrocketed and Japan became a very crowded chain of islands. To reduce this crowding, and to search for supplies and raw materials, Japan began to look for new lands to expand into; with their new modern weapons and methods, they began to build an Empire in Asia.

The Emperor Meiji knew that for Japan to become successful in her modernization, she would have to copy many western ways. Some examples include:

- \*European production methods and factories were introduced into Japan
- \*Emperor Meiji traveled throughout the islands and inspected shipyards and developing areas
- \*All restrictions were lifted upon Japanese going abroad
- \*Christianity was permitted
- \*Vaccinations, postal service, telegraphs and steamships were introduced
- \*European dress was prescribed for officials

In forty-five short years, less than a span of a life, Japan had changed drastically. Although Japan had changed, every change had a Japanese flavor to it, and large elements of traditional Japan still remained as we will see in the future.





## \*Modernizing Japan\*

### Element that Changed

- 1) Education expanded
- 2) Vaccinations allowed and health improves
- 3) Farm machinery is reproduced
- 4) Large factories, steel, iron, glass and textiles built
- 5) Telegraphs steamships and postal service introduced

### Result of Change

- 1) Gave Japan a well educated population that was capable of modernizing
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

---

1) What would be the overall result of the changes that occurred in Japan? Why?

2) What activities might Japan engage in to keep her modernization going?

3) What might be the future results of this?

