

Japanese Imperialism Worksheet

Day 1 – introductions and resources

1. What natural resources did Japan need?
2. What physical feature makes it difficult for Japan to get resources? (don't overthink this)
3. How does the increase of militarism in Japan contribute to their desire to imperialize in Asia?

Day 2 – political cartoons

	Cartoon 1	Cartoon 2	Cartoon 3	Your cartoon
What is generally going on?				URL Link:
Exaggeration				
Labeling				
Symbolism				
Analogy				
Irony				

Day 3 – documents

For each document, write a brief summary and then look over the discussion questions.

Document 1:

Document 2:

Document 3:

Summary questions

- What were the economic and cultural conditions that led to Japanese imperialism in Asia?
- How was Japanese imperialism in Asia similar to European imperialism in Africa?

Documents and Cartoons

Day 1: Both readings are from the OER project and have adjustable reading levels

Optional reading on Japanese industrialization <https://www.oerproject.com/OER-Materials/OER-Media/PDFs/1750/Unit3/Japans-Industrial-Revolution>

Japanese Imperialism <https://www.oerproject.com/OER-Materials/OER-Media/PDFs/1750/Unit7/Authoritarianism-in-Japan>

Day 2: Cartoons



English: Caption: "En Chine - Le gâteau des Rois et... des Empereurs", (eng.: "China - the cake of kings and... of emperors".)

French political cartoon from *Le Petit Journal* published in *Le Petit Journal* Jan. 16th, 1898.

The cartoon is meant to illustrate the imperialist tendencies of these nations towards China: A cake representing China is being divided between caricatures of various foreign rulers. [Queen Victoria](#) of the United Kingdom and [William II](#) are squabbling over a piece, with the latter thrusting a knife into the pie to illustrate aggressive German behaviour. [Czar Nicholas II](#) of Russia is eyeing a piece, while the French [Marianne](#) is diplomatically shown as not participating in the carving, while being shown to stand close to Nicholas II, as a reminder of the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1894. The Japanese [Meiji emperor](#) contemplates which piece to take. A stereotypical [Qing](#) official throws up his hands but is powerless to stop the proceedings.



1898 Japan going through Korea on the way to China

A cartoon produced by E.F. Hiscocks in 1904 depicting the perceived 'brown' threat of Japanese imperialism to Australia and New Zealand.



Links for finding your own cartoon

- Association of American Editorial Cartoonists <https://editorialcartoonists.com/>
- US News <https://www.usnews.com/cartoons>
- David Horsey from the Seattle Times <https://www.seattletimes.com/author/david-horsey/>

Day 3 – readings -all from Facing History & Ourselves

Transcript of short video Japanese imperialism was about increasing its territory on the Asian mainland and elsewhere in the region, but it wasn't simply fueled by territorial ambition. There was also a strong ideological sense of mission. And this was encompassed in a word, which we don't hear much nowadays but which was very much used at the time, the idea of Pan-Asianism. In other words, in the Japanese mind, the idea that they were expanding their empire in Asia, not simply to increase their own territory but to liberate those territories from Western imperialism—from the British, the French, the Dutch, the Americans—all of whom had colonies in the region.

Now, this idea, of course, was highly misleading because, of course, essentially the Japanese were just replacing one empire with another. But they argued that because they were Asians too, because they had an idea of wanting to bring their Asian brothers to the same level that the Japanese themselves were at, that somehow their mission was different. And even today in Japan in some quarters, you will hear a justification of Japan's military aggression and expansion on exactly those grounds. Pan-Asianism started as an idea that had more to do with shared Asian culture, but by the 1930s, it was really a fig leaf for militarist expansion.

One Japanese soldier who served in World War II recounted the impact of his schooling during this period in an interview for the book *Evil Men*: You know, public education, they drove loyalty and patriotism, that sort of ideology home. In other words, what does that mean? It means that the country of Japan is, well, the country of God. It is the absolute best country in the world—that idea was thoroughly planted into us. . . . If you turn it over, it means to despise other races. That is the sort of ideology it is. And from the time we were small, we called Chinese people dirty chinks—made fun of them. We called Russians Russkie pigs. We called Westerners hairy barbarians, you know? And so this meant that when the people of Japan joined the army and went to the front, no matter how many Chinese they killed, they didn't think of it as being much different than killing a dog or a cat.¹

Proposed clause for the Treaty of Versailles The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Parties agree to accord as soon as possible to all alien nationals of States, members of the League, equal and just treatment in every respect making no distinction, either in law or in fact, on account of their race or nationality.¹