

# Japan (1750–1918)

By 1750, Japan was in the middle of a long period of peace. From 1603 to 1868, the Tokugawa family ruled Japan as shoguns, or military leaders, from their capital in Edo (modern-day Tokyo). During the Tokugawa period (or Edo period) the samurai class dominated Japanese society. Japan was cut off from the rest of the world, with the shogun forbidding foreigners from entering Japan's ports.

The Tokugawa period ended in 1868 with the Meiji Restoration. From 1868 onwards, the Japanese authorities, led by the emperor, experimented with new models of government and methods of education. They modernised the army and navy. They built steel and chemical factories, and established shipping companies and postal systems.

By the turn of the 20th century, Japan had become a powerful modern nation. In 1894–95 Japan defeated China in the first Sino-Japanese War. Then, in 1904–05, Japan surprised the world by defeating Russia – the first defeat of a European power by an Asian country in 500 years.



Source 1 *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, a woodblock print by the artist Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849)

## chapter 12

### 12A

What were the key features of Japanese society around 1750?

- 1 In the 18th century, Japan was a feudal society ruled by shoguns, who were military leaders and the heads of powerful Japanese clans. How do you think they became more powerful than Japanese emperors, even during times when there were no wars?

### 12B

How did Japanese society change as a result of contact with Western powers?

- 1 For 200 years, Japan shut itself off from all contact with other countries. This changed in 1854 when Japan agreed to open its ports to American trade. Can you think of possible reasons why Japan decided to change its policy of isolation?

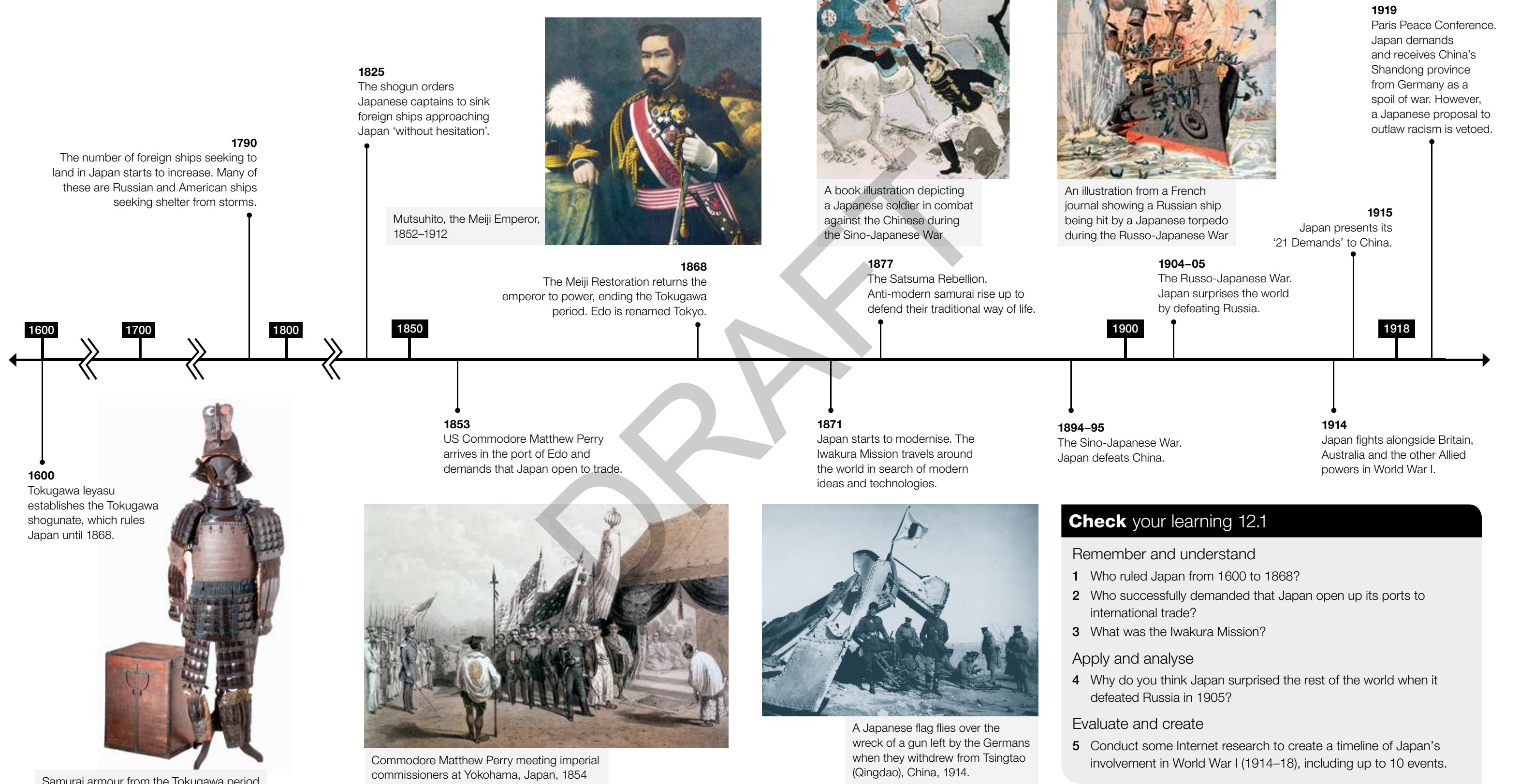
### 12C

How was Japanese society influenced by world events and how did Japan interact with the world at the start of the 20th century?

- 1 By the start of the 20th century, Japan had transformed into a powerful, modern nation. Compared to China and Russia, however, Japan was still a much smaller country, yet managed to defeat both these countries in significant wars at that time. How do you think Japan achieved this?



# 12.1 Japan 1750–1918: a timeline



**Source 1** A timeline of key events in Japan during the period 1750–1918



# 12.2 The size and power of Japan in 1750

In 1750, Japan had slightly different borders from those it has today. Almost all of the population lived on the three main islands of Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu. The northern island of Hokkaido was also technically under Japanese rule, but in fact most Japanese lived on the southern tip of the island. They traded and occasionally fought with Hokkaido's indigenous Ainu people. Japan also received some tribute (money paid by one country to another in return for peace and trade), from the Ryukyu Islands to the south, which were officially under Chinese control.

To the west lay the vast Chinese empire, ruled by the Qing Dynasty in Beijing. Between China and Japan sat Korea, while Russia held territories to the north and north-west.

## The Tokugawa shogunate

Since 1600, Japan had been ruled by the Tokugawa family. Japan had an emperor, who lived in Kyoto, but the real power lay with his military leader, the shogun, who was based in Edo. The Tokugawa shogun made laws, took command of military matters and dealt with foreigners.

During this period, Japan was mostly at peace. Unlike Europe at this time, Tokugawa Japan fought no major wars. There was also stability within Japan. The other Japanese lords were not nearly as powerful as the shogun and dared not challenge his rule. Droughts and famines sometimes brought protests from farmers, but the military stopped these easily.

Japan was cut off from the rest of the world. From 1635, the shogun forbade Japanese people from leaving the country and ordered any Japanese returning home after living overseas to be executed. Foreigners were not

welcome. The only exception was about 2000 Chinese traders living in the southern city of Nagasaki. They were not allowed to travel anywhere else in the country. Dutch traders were not even allowed to set foot in the city. Instead, they could only land on a bleak, artificial island called Dejima in Nagasaki harbour. Other foreigners, such as the Spanish and Portuguese, were banned completely. As a result, the Japanese lived in a kind of time warp. Most Japanese people, including the rulers, remained unaware of advances in science and technology taking place elsewhere in the world.

JAPAN AND SURROUNDING COUNTRIES IN 1750



Source 1

Source: Oxford University Press



Source 2 A portrait of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), the founder and first shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate



Source 3 Himeji castle, rebuilt in 1600 by the feudal lord Ikeda Terumasa under the Tokugawa shogunate

### Check your learning 12.2

Remember and understand

- 1 Who were the Tokugawa?
- 2 How were the borders of Tokugawa Japan different from those of Japan today?
- 3 In which cities did the emperor and shogun reside?

Apply and analyse

- 4 Why do you think the shogun forbade any contact with foreigners?

Evaluate and create

- 5 Conduct some Internet research to find out more about Dejima, the island in Nagasaki harbour where Dutch traders had to stay when visiting Japan. Present your findings in a paragraph, describing when it was constructed and how it was organised.



## 12.3 Social organisation

During the Tokugawa period, Japan was a feudal society; that is, a society organised by a system of obligations between the ruler, nobles and common people. Society was rigidly structured. Every person had a role to play in society, and everybody was expected to behave in a manner appropriate to their class.

### The class system

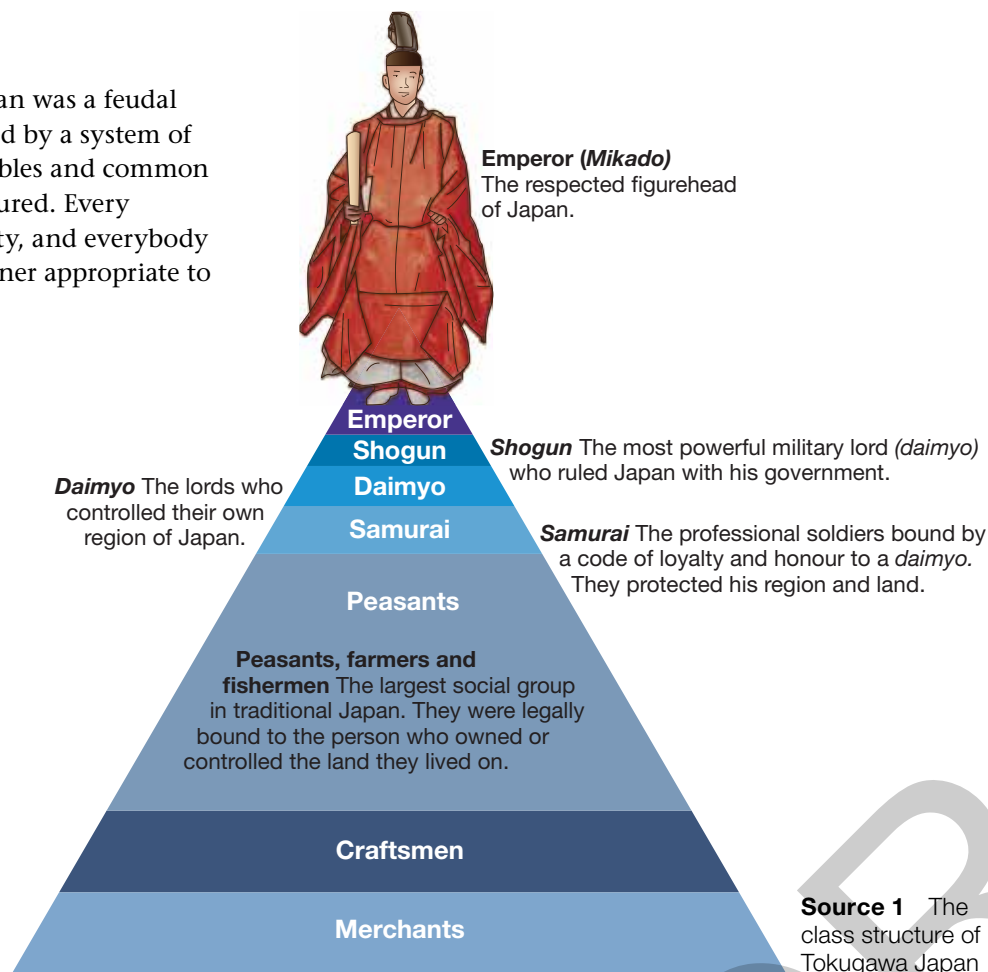
At the very top of the social hierarchy sat the emperor. Although he possessed no real power in Japan, he commanded great respect. Below the emperor came the nobles: the shogun and the other daimyo and their families. The rest of Japanese society was officially divided into four classes: samurai, peasants, craftsmen and merchants. It was very rare for a person to move between classes.

### The emperor

According to legend, the emperor was a direct descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu. The Japanese name for the emperor was Tenno, or 'Heavenly Sovereign'. By 1750, the emperor was little more than a figurehead with no real power. Instead, the emperor's role was ceremonial. He was the head of state and officially granted the Tokugawa family their titles and the right to govern. In reality, he lived isolated in his palace in Kyoto surrounded by his servants. Though he had enormous prestige, he and his imperial court had little to do with the business of government and the shogun in the capital of Edo.

### The shogun

The real ruler of Japan was the emperor's leading general, or shogun. The shogun lived at Edo Castle where he and his advisers governed Japan. The shogun was responsible for the welfare of the country as a whole and, in particular, for relations with foreign powers.



The shogun was expected to protect Japan from foreign interference.

The Tokugawa shoguns were extraordinarily wealthy. The Tokugawa extended family directly controlled about one-third of Japan's agricultural land. They held the important domains closest to the centre of the country and along the major trading routes between the biggest cities. This helped each shogun maintain his position above other, rival noble families.

### Daimyo

Japan was divided into roughly 250 large areas called *han* (domains). A hereditary (passing automatically from parent to child) lord or daimyo ruled each domain. Large domains had their own castles. The daimyo often made their own laws and set their own taxes. In addition to this, they commanded impressive armies.

The shogun regarded some of the daimyo with large domains and armies as a potential threat and sought

ways to limit their power. One method the shogun used to control the daimyo was a system called *sankin kotai* (meaning 'alternate attendance'). Under *sankin kotai*, the daimyo who served the shogun most closely as retainers would spend 6 months of every year in Edo. All other daimyo were required to visit the capital city of Edo every other year and to live there for a year, before returning home to their domains.

The shogun also demanded that all daimyo spend large amounts of money building public works such as roads and seawalls. Alliances between daimyo were outlawed. The shogun also had the right to approve or disallow marriages between noble families, preventing the formation of potential alliances against the Tokugawa family. Finally, the shogun used spies to keep track of what the daimyo were doing.

### Samurai

Around this time, samurai (warriors) made up about 6 per cent of the total population. Each samurai wore a pair of swords – one short, one long – as a mark of their status. They protected and served their daimyo.

Samurai lived according to a strict set of values. These included loyalty to one's lord, self-sacrifice,

courage and honour. They were supposed to be highly disciplined and skilful in the use of their weapons. A samurai was also meant to be frugal – despising money and commerce. A common saying of the time stated that a good samurai 'does not even know the price of rice'.

Samurai expected to be treated with respect by those below them. Members of lower classes had to bow when a samurai passed by; if they were riding a horse, they had to dismount. Anyone who failed to do so risked death – samurai had the right to cut off their head on the spot.

By 1750, the samurai had not been required to take part in any real fighting for around 150 years. There were no wars, so they mostly functioned as officials, accountants and policemen, wearing their swords for show rather than anything else. Many were more like sportsmen than warriors.

Some samurai held important government positions with good salaries. But many lower-ranking samurai were very poor. In theory, all samurai received a wage from their daimyo. In many domains, though, the allowance was not enough to live on. Samurai had to make money elsewhere. Many borrowed from merchants. Others took jobs secretly, teaching swordsmanship or making small goods for sale. In the worst situations, a samurai might sell his swords or try his luck at gambling.



**Source 2** Soldiers force commoners to kneel down as the shogun approaches; to remain standing, or even to look at the shogun, could mean immediate execution.



**Source 3** Three samurai warriors dressed in their armour, photo c. 1900



Peasants

Peasants were the largest group in Japanese society at this time, making up around 80 per cent of the population. Most peasants were farmers, but the class also included woodcutters, fishermen and workers in mines. Though not as highly regarded as samurai, peasants were still accorded official respect because they produced the food that all other classes depended on.

Life for most peasants was very hard. Taxes were high and most farmers had to deal with poor living conditions, hunger and disease. Laws prohibited peasants from enjoying many of the luxuries of other classes such as decorative clothing and rich foods. In some villages, peasants were even banned from brewing sake (rice wine). Peasants were bound in service to their daimyo and needed special permission to travel.

The shogun forbade peasants from carrying weapons such as long swords, short swords, bows, spears and muskets. Nonetheless, the peasants often rebelled during times of famine, using farming tools as weapons. They protested against the burden of taxes and sometimes tried to seize grain stores. The daimyo easily and harshly suppressed these uprisings using their samurai forces, usually executing the leaders.

Craftsmen and merchants

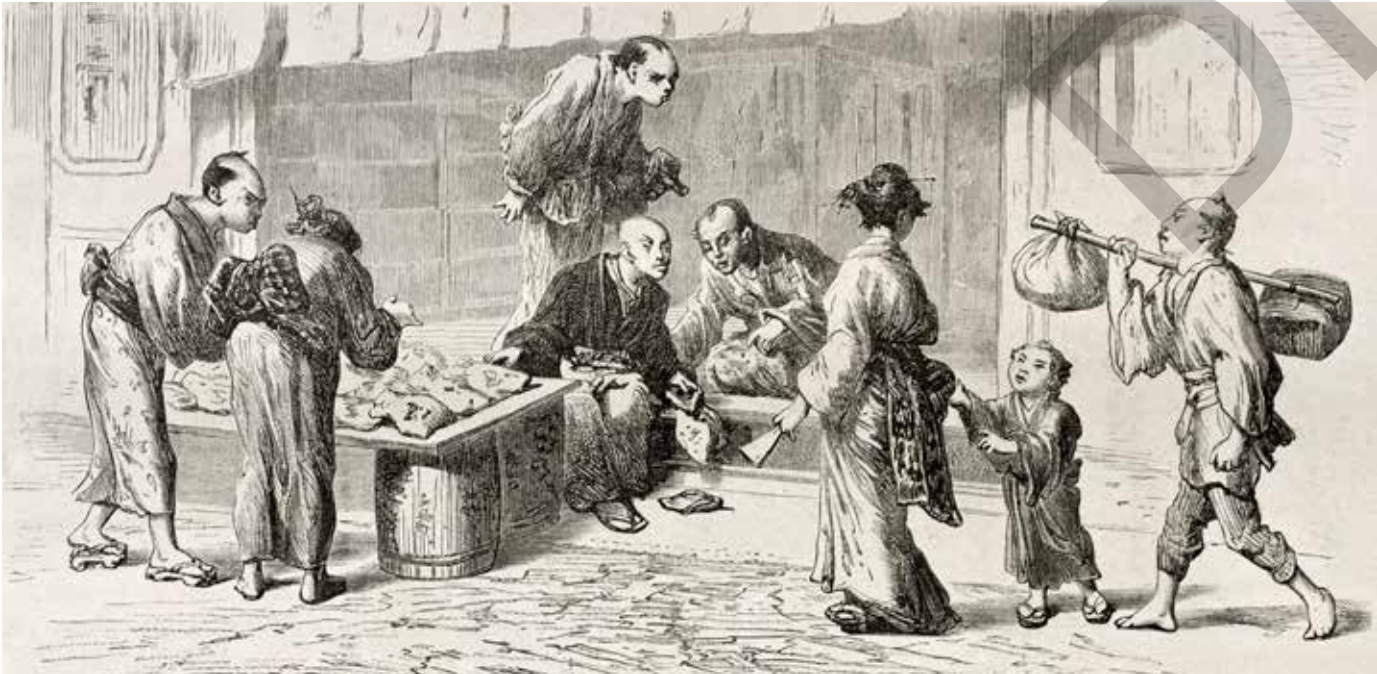
The next class under the peasants were the craftsmen. Craftsmen were those who made goods and tools, including blacksmiths, printers, boatbuilders and carpenters. Craftsmen received less official respect than



Source 4 Japanese peasants in black coats from the Edo period

peasants because, in theory, people could live without the goods they made.

At the bottom of the class structure were the merchants. The merchants made nothing useful and did not govern, or keep order, like the samurai. Instead, they lived by trading and transporting goods, lending money and opening shops. Although Tokugawa society needed their services, other classes commonly regarded merchants as parasites who lived off the real labour of others.



Source 5 An engraving depicting Japanese grain merchants from the Edo period

Outcasts

Tokugawa Japan included many groups of people who fell below the five official classes. Butchers, undertakers, executioners and leatherworkers lived in separate quarters of villages and towns. Prohibitions forbade them from socialising with other classes, dressing like them, or entering their homes. Other Japanese thought of them as unclean. Other outcasts included criminals, prostitutes, actors and travelling musicians.

Outcasts were not always poor. Successful entertainers in the cities could maintain a good standard of living and even have some kind of social recognition. Undertakers and leatherworkers often managed to do fairly well financially since there was constant demand for their services.

Life for women in Tokugawa Japan

Women in Tokugawa Japan occupied a subordinate position to men. They were normally dependent on men both financially and socially. Japanese philosopher Kaibara Ekken argued that women should accept men's guidance and obey them in all circumstances. He suggested that women submit themselves to the 'three obediences' during the span of their lives. First, a woman lived with her father and obeyed his commands. Once she married, she lived with her husband and deferred to him. Then, if her husband died, she obeyed the commands of her son. Whereas men could take several concubines and other lovers in addition to their wives, women were expected to be faithful to their husbands.

Life was particularly hard for peasant women. They often worked in the fields alongside their fathers and



Source 6 An illustration of three women from the Edo period

husbands, as well as carrying out domestic chores such as cooking and cleaning. When times were very harsh, poorer peasant families might sell their daughters rather than starve. Girls were often sent to brothels, where they remained until they paid off any debts owed by the family.

Check your learning 12.3

Remember and understand

- 1 How much power did the emperor have? Explain your answer.
- 2 Identify three methods the shogun used to control the daimyo.
- 3 Explain why some people were considered outcasts even though they were not necessarily poor.
- 4 Who were women expected to obey during their lifetimes according to philosopher Kaibara Ekken?

Apply and analyse

- 5 Summarise what life was like for the following three classes of people in Tokugawa Japan: peasants, craftsmen and merchants.

Evaluate and create

- 6 Imagine you are a samurai in Tokugawa Japan. Write a short account of a typical day in your life, highlighting both the advantages and disadvantages of your status at that time.



# 12.4 Japanese culture: beliefs and arts

Different belief systems played an important role in shaping Japan during the Tokugawa period. Two and a half centuries of peace under the Tokugawa shogunate helped the Japanese arts to flourish.

## Beliefs

Three main influences on Japanese society during this period were the Shinto and Buddhist religions and Confucian philosophy.

Shinto is Japan's native religion. Shinto taught that many features of the natural world, such as people, animals, trees, mountains and rivers, are *kami* (spirits). To maintain one's wellbeing, it was important to conduct rituals at Shinto shrines. There were many different rituals. Some helped a person to acknowledge important *kami*. Others helped a person to cleanse themselves of impure deeds.

Buddhism arrived in Japan in the 7th century. Over time, many Japanese people came to follow both Shinto and Buddhist beliefs. Buddhism was based on the teachings of Gautama Buddha, who was born in India in the 6th century BCE. Buddha taught that life was suffering and that all people were trapped in a cycle of



**Source 1** A monk meditating by a Zen rock garden. The garden is designed to stimulate meditation and the white gravel represents water or space.

birth and rebirth, or reincarnation. To escape this cycle, one had to achieve enlightenment or freedom from desire. Buddhism remained popular under the Tokugawa. One particular type of Buddhism, called Zen, particularly appealed to samurai because it emphasised self-awareness and control. The Tokugawa expected every person in Japan to register with a Buddhist temple.

The other major influence on Japanese society at this time was Confucianism. Confucius was a philosopher and teacher who lived from 551 to 479 BCE in eastern China. He argued that people should lead virtuous lives. They should respect their elders and leaders and do their best to fulfil their given roles in society. The official class structure of Tokugawa Japan derived originally from Confucian teachings. The shogun embraced Confucian philosophy because it emphasised social stability and loyalty to the ruler – in this case the shogun.

## Arts

The arts during the Tokugawa period included 'high' art forms such as *noh* theatre and the tea ceremony, as well as the 'low' art forms such as *kabuki* theatre and puppet shows. Whether high or low, nearly all arts drew on stories from the distant past.

## The high arts

Respectable entertainment for noble families and samurai included the 'high arts'. Among these were *noh* theatre and the tea ceremony. By 1750, both *noh* and the tea ceremony were old practices, stretching back hundreds of years.

*Noh* was a highly ritualised form of theatre in which actors wore symbolic costumes and carved wooden masks to communicate to the audience which characters they were meant to portray. The actors chanted or sang their lines rather than speaking naturally.

The tea ceremony was another highly formal practice. During the ceremony, a host prepared tea for one or several guests. Tradition dictated every action of the tea ceremony, from the precise actions used by the host in pouring the tea to which side of the cup each guest would drink from. Conversation also followed a formal order.

## The low arts

The 'low' arts included the more popular forms of literature and theatre. Each city had its own entertainment district called the *ukiyo* (meaning 'floating world'), full of theatres, public baths and drinking places. Within the *ukiyo*, people could mix and 'float' above the cares of everyday life.

Two of the most popular entertainments of the floating world were the *kabuki* and *bunraku* theatres. *Kabuki* presented more action-filled stories than the *noh* theatre. It had complicated plots and needed more actors than *noh*. *Bunraku* was a kind of theatre that used puppets instead of actors. Puppeteers manipulated the puppets in full view of the audience, while special 'chanters' performed the voices of the puppets from the side of the stage.

## Woodblock printing

Artists captured life in the entertainment districts in colourful woodblock prints known as *ukiyo-e*, meaning 'pictures of the floating world'. Woodblock printing was cheap and popular. To make a woodblock print, the artist carved the outlines of the design onto a master block and applied ink to create the overall shape of the picture. Next, the artist added colour by carving other blocks to exactly match



**Source 2** A *noh* performance in Kyoto



**Source 3** An 1865 woodblock print of a *kabuki* drama

areas of the first. It took great skill to overlay the different colours so that they fitted together perfectly. The designs could be extremely sophisticated. Common subjects for the *ukiyo-e* included famous *kabuki* actors, landscapes and scenes from society.

## Check your learning 12.4

### Remember and understand

- 1 Identify the three main belief systems in Japan during the Tokugawa period.
- 2 Explain why the shogun embraced Confucianism.
- 3 What qualities did Zen Buddhism emphasise?

### Apply and analyse

- 4 Why do you think Japanese society during the Tokugawa period differentiated between 'high' and 'low' arts?
- 5 Examine the woodblock of a *kabuki* performance in Source 3.

- List four things you notice about this picture.
- How many different blocks would have been needed to make this print?
- What are the main differences between this *kabuki* theatre and a modern theatre in Australia?

### Evaluate and create

- 6 There was also a strong literary tradition during the Tokugawa period. Poetry was one of the popular genres. Conduct some research into *haiku*, which are short three-line poems. Compose your own *haiku* in English.



12A rich task

Edo

By 1750, Edo (modern-day Tokyo) was the world’s largest city, with more than one million inhabitants. Only 150 years earlier, Edo had been a much smaller fishing town, surrounded by swamps, but the city grew quickly after the first Tokugawa shogun chose Edo as his capital in 1603. The shogun lived and governed from Edo Castle at the city’s heart.

Edo contained many mansions for the daimyo and their servants. The most important daimyo had their mansions within the outer moats of Edo Castle itself, whereas lesser daimyo built their homes further away. The castle was huge, with a complicated system of courtyards, bridges and guarded gates. Outer stone walls were up to 12 metres high and stretched for approximately 16 kilometres.

Beyond the castle and the residences of the lesser daimyo, lived the townsfolk. These included merchants, fishermen and workers. As the city grew, they built their houses over former swampland, which they filled in with rubble left over from the building of Edo Castle. Eventually, they started to reclaim land from the sea as well. Because of this, Edo was full of canals, waterways and bridges.

The most famous bridge was the Edobashi (Edo Bridge), which crossed the Nihonbashi River. Its western end was the starting point for two main highways between Edo and the imperial city of Kyoto. Markets thrived under and around the bridge, selling many different kinds of goods. The area near Edo Bridge was also a financial district, home to moneylenders and important businesses. With so much activity, Edo was constantly changing.



**Source 1** Edo in 1844–48. East is at the bottom of the map. Note the Tokugawa seal in the centre of the map.

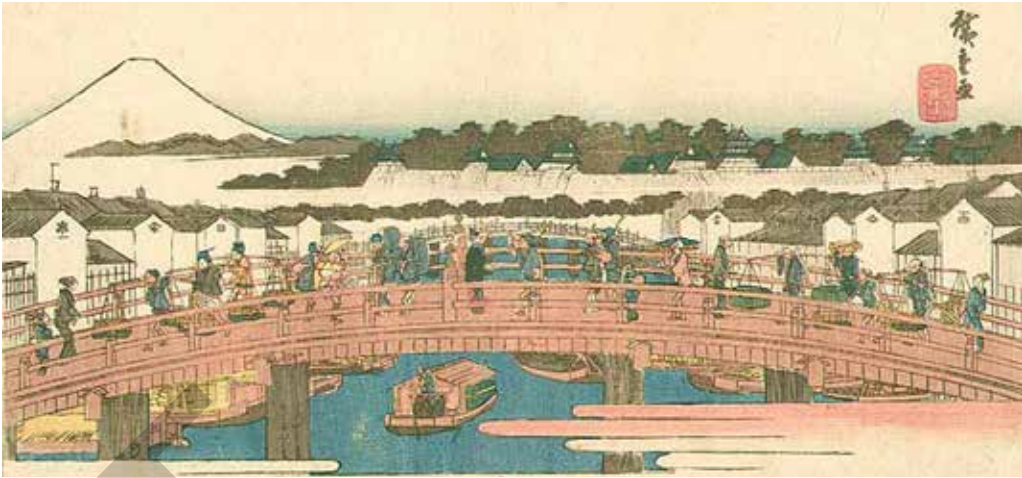
**skilldrill:** Using the Internet to find relevant, credible and reliable sources

Identifying and locating relevant sources using ICT

Being able to locate relevant primary and secondary sources using the Internet is an important historical skill. However, you need to keep in mind that not all information you find on the Internet is necessarily true, accurate, reliable or useful. So, in addition to being able to find source material online, you need to be able to evaluate the reliability, credibility and usefulness of the information you find.

Use the following steps to apply this skill:

- Step 1** Identify key words related to your topic and type these into a search engine such as Google. (Use only these key words; do not type in whole sentences or questions.)
- Step 2** Add further relevant key words to refine your search if you cannot find what you want on your first attempts.
- Step 3** Look beyond the first page of results. The best results do not always appear first.



**Source 2** A woodcut of the Edo Bridge, with a clear view of Mount Fuji, Japan’s highest mountain, in the background, by Utagawa Hiroshige

**Step 4** Assess the reliability of each site by asking yourself:

- Who is the author or creator? If it is an individual, do they have their credentials listed (e.g. a degree or a title)? If it is an organisation, is it a reputable organisation like a government or university department?
- What is the purpose of the website? Is it trying to inform, persuade or sell?
- Is the site objective? Is the author’s point of view biased?
- Is the information accurate? Can the information be verified if you cross-check it with other sources of information?
- Does the site contain spelling mistakes or grammatical errors? (If so, this is usually an indication that the site is not particularly reliable.)

Apply the skill

- 1** Conduct an Internet search to locate and identify relevant and reliable material about everyday life in Edo during the Tokugawa period, using the steps outlined above.
- 2** From the reliable information sources you have found, prepare a table for completion of the positives and negatives of living in Edo during the Tokugawa period. See the table below as an example of the sort of table you will need to set up. Remember to record the URLs of the sites you have found in the fourth column of the table.

Positives	Negatives	Neither positive or negative	Information source

**Extend your understanding**

- 1** Why did Edo grow so quickly during the Tokugawa Period?
- 2** What did the inhabitants of Edo do to give themselves more space for building?
- 3** Examine the map of Edo (Source 1).
  - a** Copy or trace the main outlines of the map into your notebook.
  - b** Look carefully at the layout of the city. Using different colours, shade in the locations of the following features according to your best guesses based on the information above:
    - i** the residence of the shogun
    - ii** the mansions of the daimyo
    - iii** areas of artificial land, reclaimed from swamps or the sea.
  - c** Give reasons for your choosing the locations you have.
  - d** Use the library and/or the Internet to do some more research on the layout of Tokugawa Edo. Explain whether your guesses for Question 3b were accurate.



# 12.5 Contact with the West

The Tokugawa shogunate's policy of isolation from the rest of the world lasted from 1641 to 1853. By the mid-19th century, Western powers such as Britain, Russia and the United States were pushing for Japan to open up to international trade and commerce. These countries wanted to sell their goods in Japan and moor their ships in Japanese ports. They put pressure on the Tokugawa shogunate to change their isolationist position.

## Early encounters with the West

Europeans had been visiting Japan since 1543, when the first Portuguese sailors ran aground on one of its southern islands. For several decades after this, Portuguese, Spanish, English and Dutch traders all came to Japan. But in the 1600s, the shogun banned Spanish and Portuguese ships from entering Japanese waters, suspecting them of plotting to undermine his rule. The English ships went elsewhere. Only the Dutch traders were allowed to stay. They had to live on a small, man-made island called Dejima in Nagasaki harbour. The Dutch could not set foot on the mainland, and could only receive visiting ships a few times a year. All other Westerners were strongly discouraged from entering the country. This was the start of the government's

official policy of isolation, which was to last for the next 200 years.

Throughout the Tokugawa period, a limited number of Japanese scholars learned Dutch so that they could study foreign books. Foreign knowledge was called *rangaku* (meaning 'Dutch studies'). Through *rangaku*, these scholars read about some of the scientific advances made in the West in disciplines such as medicine and astronomy. They also learned about events in the outside world.

## The threat of Christianity

One of the main reasons the Tokugawa shoguns wanted to exclude foreigners was the threat that Christianity would spread throughout the country. The early Portuguese and Spanish ships had brought Catholic Christian missionaries with them who had converted hundreds of thousands of Japanese.

The first Tokugawa shogun, Ieyasu (ruled 1603–05), feared that Christian missionaries would unite his enemies against him. He also distrusted Christianity because it asked believers to give their loyalty to the Pope – a foreigner – before their loyalty to the shogun. Then, in 1637, a massive uprising known as the Shimabara



**Source 1** *Nagasaki harbour*, by Kawahara Keiga, c. 1800–50. Dutch and Chinese ships lie at anchor near the small, fan-shaped island of Dejima, north of the city. Dejima was a Dutch trading post from 1641 until 1853.



**Source 2** Japanese in Nagasaki prove their loyalty to the shogun and their contempt for Christianity by treading on a crucifix, 1760.



**Source 3** A 19th-century Japanese woodblock print showing foreign steamships in Nagasaki harbour

Rebellion took place in southern Japan. Tens of thousands of Christians protesting against tax increases and famine were killed by a samurai army. After this event, Christianity was made illegal.

Throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries, Christianity was virtually invisible in Japan. Dutch traders living on the island of Dejima were not allowed to have bibles or crucifixes. Authorities searched foreign books and censored references to Christianity. Despite this, small numbers of believers carried on worshipping in secret.

## Fumi-e

Perhaps the most remarkable illustration of the Tokugawa shogunate's determination to keep Christianity out of Japan was the annual ritual of *fumi-e*. Each year, every person in Japan had to visit their local Buddhist temple to complete the ritual. On arrival, each person had to show their contempt for Christianity by treading on a crucifix or a picture of Jesus or the Virgin Mary. Anyone who refused to walk on the Christian images could be questioned. If they refused to deny their Christian faith, they were tortured or killed.

## Growing concerns over foreign contact

From the 1790s onwards, increasing numbers of foreign ships started to visit Japan. Many were American and

Russian ships seeking shelter from storms. Others were ships making clear attempts to overcome Japan's strict restrictions against foreigners. In response to attempts by foreign ships to defy these restrictions, in 1825, the shogun commanded Japanese ships to fire on foreign vessels 'without hesitation'. Despite this, international pressure was growing for Japan to lift its restrictions on foreign trade and to allow foreign ships in its harbours.

## Check your learning 12.5

Remember and understand

- 1 Why was Christianity illegal in Tokugawa Japan?
- 2 What did the Japanese have to do to prove that they were not Christians?
- 3 What was the Japanese word for 'foreign studies'? What did it actually mean?

Apply and analyse

- 4 Write a short paragraph explaining why the Tokugawa shogunate banned nearly all trade and interaction with foreigners.

Evaluate and create

- 5 Imagine you are a Dutch trader on Dejima (see Source 1). Write a letter home to your family describing your hopes and fears, events on the island, and your impressions of the Japanese.



# 12.6 The arrival of US Commodore Perry

In 1853, 60-year-old US Commodore Matthew C. Perry arrived in Japan with four warships of the United States navy. Perry was there to deliver a letter from the US president, asking for trade to be established between the United States and Japan. It also requested the right for American ships to be able to refuel and take in food and water at Japanese ports, and for better treatment of American sailors.

Having sailed around Edo Bay, Perry demanded to be allowed to land and deliver his letter 'to the emperor' (by which he meant Japan's true ruler – the shogun). Realising that their ships and weapons were no match for Perry's, the government agreed. Perry landed and handed the message to a senior official.

The shogun and his advisers knew that their military would be powerless against the Americans if they refused. In March 1854, the Japanese reluctantly agreed to sign a treaty (known as the Treaty of Kanagawa) granting limited trading rights to the Americans. They opened up the ports of Shimoda (on the Izu peninsula to the south-west of Edo) and Hakodate (on the northernmost island Hokkaido) to American ships and allowed an American consul to live in Shimoda. More deals soon followed.

To celebrate the signing of this treaty in 1854, the Americans and the Japanese exchanged gifts and provided entertainment. The Japanese put on a display of sumo wrestling. The Americans brought with them champagne and whiskey, an electric telegraph system and a working model steam train, complete with tracks, for the Japanese officials to ride on.



Source 1 US Commodore Matthew C. Perry



Source 2 An 1853 Japanese watercolour of Commodore Perry



Source 3 Commodore Perry's gift of a railway to the Japanese in 1853

## keyconcept: Significance

### The unequal treaties

Two years after the signing of the Treaty of Kanagawa, the US government started to demand a new agreement. The new American ambassador to Japan, Townsend Harris, urged the Japanese to grant more rights to American traders. Ambassador Harris argued that Britain had used its military power to seize control of large parts of China in the Opium Wars of 1839–42, and was again at war with China in 1856. He also implied that by signing an agreement with the United States first, the Japanese would be able to prevent the same thing from happening to them.

Harris was successful and, in 1858, Japan and the United States signed the Treaty of Shimoda. This was the first of the so-called 'unequal treaties' between Japan and various Western powers. Over the next 10 years, Japan signed such treaties with the United States, Britain, Russia, France, Prussia and the Netherlands. The unequal treaties gained the name because almost all historians agree that they were unfair. They benefited the Western powers at the expense of weaker Japan.

### Treaty ports

The unequal treaties granted Western powers (such as the United States, Britain and Russia) the right to live and trade in specific Japanese ports. These ports came to be known as 'treaty ports'. Foreigners could also practise their religion in the treaty ports. Though these ports were still Japanese, foreigners controlled many aspects of life within them.

### Extraterritoriality

Extraterritoriality was an agreement that Westerners who broke Japanese laws were not tried and sentenced by Japanese courts or officials. Instead, they were arrested and then handed over to Western diplomats, who would judge them themselves. To many Japanese, this part of the treaties was doubly humiliating. First, it implied that Japanese laws did not matter; second, it showed that the foreigners did not trust Japanese legal officials to be fair.

### Low tariffs

Tariffs are taxes that governments around the world place on imported goods. The idea behind tariffs is to make foreign goods more expensive, so that people within a country buy locally made items instead. The unequal treaties limited Japanese tariffs on foreign goods to about 5 per cent of an item's cost. But Western countries generally imposed tariffs of around 15 or 20 per cent. This uneven arrangement gave Western countries an unfair advantage in trade.

### 'Most-favoured nation' status

Each country who signed an unequal treaty with Japan demanded 'most-favoured nation' status. The countries that became 'most-favoured nations' received all the benefits of any new agreements that Japan signed with anyone else. Over time, this meant that Japan inevitably gave away more and more privileges, since each time one country wanted something new, the other countries claimed it as well.

## Check your learning 12.6

### Remember and understand

- 1 Give two reasons why the United States wanted Japan to open its harbours to foreign ships.
- 2 Describe the main features of the unequal treaties.

### Apply and analyse

- 3 Examine the Japanese watercolour of US Commodore Matthew C. Perry (Source 2).
  - a What attitude towards Commodore Perry does the artist convey? Explain which features of the picture give you that impression.

- b What does this picture reveal about Japanese attitudes to foreigners at this time?

- 4 Some historians have suggested that the gifts given by Commodore Perry to the Japanese at the signing of the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854 were meant to make a point to the Japanese officials. What point do you think he might have been making with these gifts?

### Evaluate and create

- 5 In your opinion, which was the worst feature of the unequal treaties for Japan? Why?



# 12.7 The Meiji Restoration

By the 1860s, Tokugawa Japan was in crisis. The shogun appeared helpless to stop the increasing power of foreigners within Japan. Critics blamed the shogun for signing the unequal treaties and demanded that he expel the Westerners from the country. In 1863, the emperor decreed that 'the subjugation of the hated foreigner is the greatest of national tasks facing us'. Several domains, including the powerful south-western territories of Satsuma and Choshu, called for the shogun to resign.

Satsuma and Choshu were traditional enemies of the Tokugawa family. Both domains called for a return to 'true' Japanese values. They started to agitate for the removal of the shogun and restoration of the emperor's power. Choshu embarrassed the shogun by firing on foreign ships from its forts, in breach of the treaties. Meanwhile, the Choshu and Satsuma daimyo were arming their soldiers with modern weapons secretly bought from the foreigners.

In 1867, Emperor Komei died. His son, Mutsuhito, was proclaimed as the Meiji emperor the same year at 17 years of age. Meiji means 'enlightened rule'. In January 1868, the Satsuma and Choshu daimyo

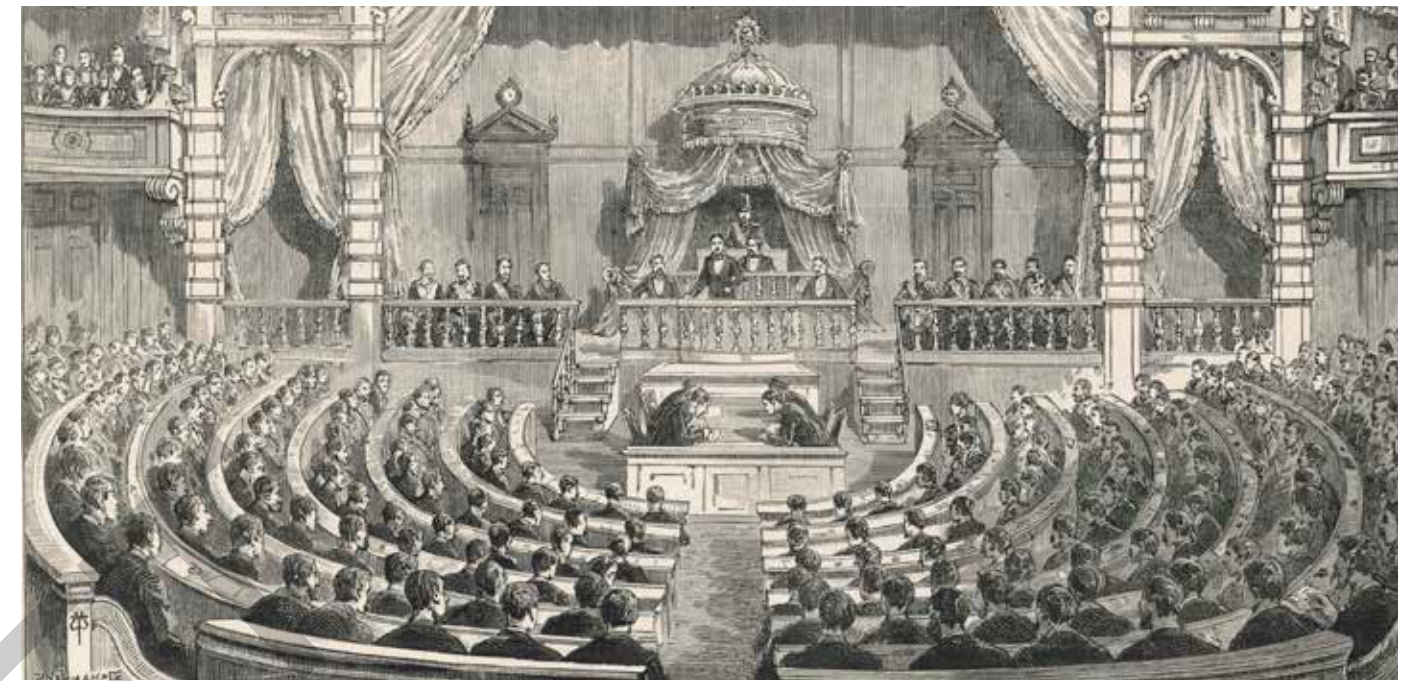
together rebelled against the shogun. Although the shogun's soldiers greatly outnumbered them, the Satsuma and Choshu forces had better weapons and equipment and were able to win. They captured Edo and renamed it Tokyo, meaning 'Eastern capital'. The last Tokugawa shogun resigned. This signalled the start of the Meiji period.

## New ideas

The emperor did not rule alone. His chief advisers and officials were all men from Satsuma and Choshu. They did not want Japan to end up carved up like India or China – both of which had proved too weak to protect themselves against European aggression. Britain, France, Germany and Russia had forcibly taken over much of India's and China's territory and government. The Meiji emperor and his advisers feared that unless they built up Japan's strength quickly, their own country might follow. The Meiji government realised that they needed to create a modern army and navy, and upgrade local industry with the latest technology.



**Source 1** Emperor Mutsuhito returning to his palace in Tokyo after the Meiji Restoration



**Source 3** The Japanese parliament is opened by the emperor in Tokyo, 29 November 1891

## keyconcept: Evidence

### The Charter Oath

The Meiji reformers saw that to win the respect of the Western powers they needed to change many aspects of Japanese society. After taking power in 1868, the Meiji emperor signed a 'Charter Oath', outlining five principles for the new society. The Charter Oath promised that the new era would allow ordinary people more personal freedom as well as a greater say in government.

**Source 2** The five articles of the Charter Oath

ARTICLE 1. Deliberative assemblies shall be widely established and all matters decided by public discussion.

ARTICLE 2. All classes, high and low, shall unite in vigorously carrying out the administration of affairs of state.

ARTICLE 3. The common people, no less than the civil and military officials, shall each be allowed to pursue his own calling so that there may be no discontent.

ARTICLE 4. Evil customs of the past shall be broken off and everything based upon the just laws of nature.

ARTICLE 5. Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to strengthen the foundations of imperial rule.

## A new type of government

After the introduction of the Charter Oath, the traditional class system was abandoned and all men theoretically became eligible to rise to government positions, as long as they possessed the necessary talent. Government no longer belonged to the daimyo and samurai classes. One of the greatest changes was the abolition of the domain system. Traditional domains governed by daimyo were reorganised into prefectures with their own new borders. In many cases, former daimyo continued to wield power as governors of the new prefectures, but the positions were no longer hereditary, and some daimyo were removed from power completely.

Eventually, the Meiji government adopted a constitution setting out the rights of Japanese citizens and the responsibilities of government. The constitution was based on the German model. It reserved great powers for the emperor and his advisers, but nevertheless introduced a limited form of democracy.

## The Iwakura Mission

In 1871, the Meiji government sent a group of ambassadors and scholars abroad on a 2-year journey. Named the Iwakura Mission after its leader Iwakura Tomomi, the group travelled to the United States, Britain and other European countries, Egypt, Ceylon (modern-day Sri Lanka) and China. The aim of the mission was to observe Western methods of education, industry and government. They also hoped to argue for an end to the unequal treaties.



Though the Iwakura Mission failed to convince the Western powers to revise the unequal treaties, it did successfully bring back vital information about Western habits, values, industries and systems of government. On their return to Japan in 1873, members of the mission recommended many reforms. They advised the Meiji government that Japan should borrow ideas from different European countries based on their strengths. As a result, Japan based its new legal system on the French model, organised its navy according to the British model, and based its school system on the Prussian approach.

Adopting Western ways

Over the next 40 years, Western customs and values spread across Japanese society. Christianity was decriminalised in 1871 and the imperial court adopted Western dress for formal occasions in 1869. Over the next 2 years, Western-style dress was introduced for government officials, and railway and post office workers were given Western-style uniforms. Japanese men and women were encouraged to wear Western clothing, including morning suits and dresses with bustles (see Source 5). Adopting Western dress was a way of showing that Japan had become progressive and modern.

These Western ways were not always well received by the Japanese population. In 1877, government officials attended a Western-style fancy-dress ball. The event caused widespread outrage – most Japanese felt that their leaders were not showing the dignity required of their positions.



Source 4 Members of the Iwakura Mission in 1872. Iwakura Tomomi is sitting in the middle, in traditional Japanese dress.

Education and industry

The Meiji government invested significant sums of money to transform Japan’s education systems. It paid Western experts to come to Japan to teach medical science and establish universities. One year after the Meiji Restoration, the government opened Tokyo University.

The Meiji government also set up a new ministry of education to manage the new education system. The ministry was to ensure that all new schools and universities taught Western science alongside more traditional Japanese subjects.

The government also used Western experts to help set up a number of industries in Japan. The government was careful, however, not to repeat the mistakes made by other Asian countries such as China, which they thought had become too reliant on foreign expertise. Instead, they ensured that foreign advisers stayed for a short period of time (usually only a few years) and that they taught their skills to Japanese before they left.

The government also made the important decision to pay for the establishment of new industries such as railways, mines and shipyards themselves, rather than allow foreigners to build them. Although it would have been far less expensive in the short term to allow foreign investment, the government wanted to ensure that the new industries were in Japanese hands. For this reason, they also eventually sold these companies off cheaply to Japanese businessmen, keeping vital infrastructure under Japanese control.

The new Japanese army

The reform that arguably caused the greatest conflict among the Japanese was the creation of the new Japanese army. During the Tokugawa period, each daimyo had maintained his own army of loyal samurai, but the Meiji government was determined to create a single modern conscript army. This new army was to be organised and trained along Western lines. To achieve this, three of the largest prefectures – Satsuma, Choshu and Tosa – first combined their forces to create a new imperial guard.

Having set this example, the Meiji government expanded the force, equipping it with modern guns and



Source 6 Modern Japanese school uniforms are still based on 19th-century Prussian fashions.

training methods. In 1873, the government introduced nationwide military conscription (mandatory military service) for all men on turning 21. They were expected to serve 4 years in the armed forces.



Source 5 Empress Shoken promoting Western dress, 1887

Check your learning 12.7

Remember and understand

- 1 What was ‘restored’ during the Meiji Restoration?
- 2 What was the Iwakura Mission and what did it hope to achieve?
- 3 The samurai were effectively abolished as a class in the 1870s. What happened to them?
- 4 Why were the emperor and empress promoting Western dress?

Apply and analyse

- 5 Look at Source 6. Japanese school uniforms are echoes of the uniforms found in 19th-century Prussia. With your class, brainstorm elements in Australian everyday life that have been adopted from other countries or eras.

Evaluate and create

- 6 Read the five articles of the Charter Oath signed by the Meiji Emperor in 1868. Then copy and complete the table below, describing what you think the Charter Oath implies about the class system, democracy and education.

	Which article?	What does it say?
The class system		
Democracy		
Education		



## 12B rich task

## The Satsuma Rebellion

Not all Japanese were happy with the creation of a modern military armed with firearms that deprived the former samurai of their traditional lifestyle. Military conscription turned every man into a soldier, undermining the status of the samurai as the warrior class. While many samurai joined the new military forces as officers, others clung to their traditions. Samurai from the former Satsuma domain felt especially cheated. After all, they had been behind the restoration of the emperor. They had wanted to rid Japan of foreigners, but had not wanted to see the end of their way of life or the destruction of their livelihoods.

In 1876, the Meiji government prohibited samurai from wearing the pair of long and short swords. This was a final affront. The samurai code emphasised that a samurai's swords were a symbol of his honour and class – giving them up meant accepting a final loss of prestige in the new Japan.

In 1877, the Satsuma samurai rose up in revolt. A samurai named Saigo Takamori led 15 000 men against the new Imperial Japanese Army, which numbered well over 30 000 troops. Both sides used rifles but, unlike the Satsuma samurai, the Imperial Japanese Army could replace lost men with new conscripts.

Even so, the vastly outnumbered samurai forces fought so fiercely that the war lasted for 8 months. Eventually, imperial troops surrounded the Satsuma rebels and defeated them. Only about 40 rebels survived. Saigo was wounded in the final battle, but committed suicide before being captured. Overall, the Satsuma Rebellion claimed 30 000 lives. It was the first major test of the new Japanese army.

**skilldrill:** title to come?

Creating and presenting an audiovisual presentation

A popular way to present the findings of a historical inquiry is to create an audiovisual presentation. To prepare and present a successful audiovisual presentation, follow these steps:

- Step 1** Make sure you have collected everything that you have found out in your historical inquiry. This will include any written research or findings, a list of sources you have used, and a range of relevant images.
- Step 2** Decide on the best way to deliver your findings. You may choose to use Microsoft PowerPoint or Prezi. Or you may like to create a website or a short film. How you will present your findings may depend on the criteria set by your teacher.
- Step 3** When delivering your presentation, keep the following in mind:
- Rehearse your presentation, especially if you are working in pairs. Make sure you both know exactly what you have to do.



**Source 2** The defeated samurai rebels of Satsuma surrender to the soldiers of the modern Japanese army, 1877.



**Source 1** The modernisation of the army and the resulting Satsuma revolt inspired the movie *The Last Samurai*.

- Make a back-up copy of your preparation in case anything unexpected occurs, such as loss of data.
- Engage with your audience. Make eye contact, do not read from your notes, and prepare cue cards to help you remember your lines. Speak clearly and make sure your text and layout is as visually appealing as possible.
- Make sure all your material is correct and contains no factual or spelling errors.
- Speak slowly, focus on the purpose of your presentation and do not allow yourself to be distracted.
- Finish your presentation on a high note.

**Apply the skill**

- 1 Many people today regard Saigo Takamori as a hero. Others disagree. With a partner, use the Internet or the library to find out more about Saigo and the Satsuma Rebellion. Prepare a presentation for the class in which you each present one side of the argument. Make sure that you include at least two historical sources (such as an image or quotation) in your presentation.

**Extend your understanding**

- 1 Watch the 2003 US movie *The Last Samurai*. Write a brief review of the movie, including your opinion on the accuracy of the historical context depicted in the movie.



# 12.8 A major world power

The victory of the Imperial Japanese Army over the Satsuma rebels proved that the new, unified military could function effectively. During the 1880s and 1890s, Japan continued to strengthen its army and navy. It equipped its officers with Western-style uniforms, up-to-date weapons, steamships and iron-hulled vessels.

The Meiji government also pressed ahead with industrialisation, building weapons and textile factories, and large-scale mines for coal and metals. Tokyo and other Japanese cities grew rapidly, connected by modern railways and new roads.

As a result, by the start of the 20th century, the United States and European nations acknowledged Japan as a major world power. The Japanese wanted these countries to recognise them as equals. To achieve this, they thought it was important to do two things. First, they had to convince the Western powers to end the unequal treaties that treated Japan as inferior. Second, the Japanese had to prove their new-found military power by capturing new territories.

## Nationalism and imperialism

Two important ideas helped to shape Japanese thinking around the turn of the 20th century. The first was nationalism, the idea that all the people in a country belonged to the same nation and shared a national identity.

In 1750, Japan was made up of a group of separate domains, each with its own laws, taxes and armed forces. Although, in theory, the shogun ruled over all domains, in reality, most people had little sense of connection to other parts of the country. Daimyo even sometimes called their domains ‘countries’ when talking about them.

By 1900, the situation was very different. Ordinary people shared a single government and they could contribute to government through elected representatives. This helped build national pride.

The new education system also emphasised Japanese unity. Teachers encouraged students to feel loyalty to the nation and to work for its betterment. Japanese people around the country took an interest in Japan’s relationships with the rest of the world. They celebrated Japan’s military successes and looked forward to the end of the humiliating unequal treaties.



Source 1 The ‘Rising Sun’ military flag of the Imperial Japanese Army

The second idea was in the importance of imperialism, expanding Japan’s influence, wealth and territory by taking over control of other countries. The Japanese saw that the powerful countries of the West had increased their power by exploiting weaker countries. Britain, France, the United States, Germany and Russia had all used their military might to seize territory from other nations. Alternatively, they forced weaker countries to sign unfair agreements – as they had already done to Japan. The nearest example of Western imperialism was in China, where the European powers had taken over dozens of treaty ports and significant areas of the countryside. The Japanese realised that if they were to be taken seriously by the West, they needed to become imperialists as well. From the 1870s onwards, Japan started to expand into nearby countries. Ultimately, this led to conflict with other Asian nations and eventually with Russia.

## Revision of the unequal treaties

From 1871 to 1893, the Meiji government appealed to the Western powers to end the unequal treaties. In 1894, the British were the first nation to do so. Other countries followed in 1897. The Western powers promised completely equal relations by 1911 – a sign that they recognised Japan as a ‘civilised’, modern nation, perhaps even a ‘great power’.



Source 2 An American cartoon showing Japan and European nations ready to dismember China in their imperialist struggle for territory, 1900

This was a notable victory for the Japanese, who had felt humiliated by the unfair agreements. The treaties had been evidence that the Western powers regarded Japan as inferior. Despite this advance, the Americans

and the Europeans continued to distrust the ‘non-European’ Japanese. Although they agreed to end the unequal treaties, they continued to restrict Japanese immigration and trade.

## Check your learning 12.8

### Remember and understand

- 1 In your own words, explain the meaning of ‘nationalism’.
- 2 Explain why Japan decided to become imperialist.
- 3 Why did the Japanese want to abolish the unequal treaties?

### Apply and analyse

- 4 Historians suggest that Japan at the start of the 20th century was influenced by the idea of nationalism.
  - a Use the table below to compare what you know about nationalism in Meiji Japan to your observations about nationalism in Australia today.

Evidence of nationalism in Meiji Japan	Evidence of nationalism in Australia today

- b Hold a debate with members of your class on the topic: ‘Nationalism is strong in modern Australian society.’

### Evaluate and create

- 5 Examine Source 2. Find out more about the struggle over China among Japan and European powers. Write a brief description of the situation with reference to the imperial powers depicted in the



# 12.9 Japan at war

By the end of the 19th century, Japan had an army and a navy to rival many other modern powers and began attempts to create its own empire. Japan went to war with China in 1894 and with Russia in 1904, and defeated them both.

## The Sino-Japanese war (1894–95)

In 1874, Japan fought China for control of the Ryukyu Islands. Japan won and formally claimed the Ryukyu Islands as part of its territory, turning them into the Okinawa Prefecture.

China and Japan clashed again, this time over Korea. Traditionally, Korea paid tribute only to China even though Korea was geographically very close to Japan as well as China. After the Ryukyu conflict, Japan demanded that China not send troops to Korea without warning.

In 1893, the Korean government asked the Chinese to send troops to help it suppress a local rebellion. Japan wanted to send the same number of soldiers. At first, China refused, but in the end both countries sent occupying forces, and argued about when and where their troops could be stationed. In 1894, this quarrel erupted into what became known as the Sino-Japanese War.

## The war and its outcomes

At the start of the war, most foreign observers expected China to win because it was a much larger country and had many more soldiers and ships than Japan. However, Japan's troops were better organised and trained, and its equipment better maintained. Although Japan had the smaller force, it won nearly every battle. The Japanese destroyed much of the Chinese fleet and captured the Korean city of Pyongyang. They then crossed into China, taking control of the strategically important Liaodong Peninsula and parts of the northern province of Manchuria. Japanese forces also sailed south. They captured the Chinese-held Pescadores Islands near Taiwan.



**Source 1** Japanese soldiers landing in China during the Sino-Japanese War, 1894–95

## The Treaty of Shimonoseki

In 1895, the Chinese accepted defeat. On 17 April, Chinese diplomats signed the Treaty of Shimonoseki with Japan. In it, China handed over Taiwan and the Pescadores Islands and also 'leased' the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan. This last territory was especially significant because the Liaodong Peninsula guarded the sea route to Beijing, the Chinese capital.

## The Triple Intervention

Japan's easy victory alarmed Russia who was also trying to expand its empire in eastern regions of Asia and northern China. Only a few days after the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Russia persuaded her allies Germany and France to order Japan to return Liaodong to China. Realising that its forces were not yet ready to fight these three Western powers all at once, Japan reluctantly accepted.

Russia then bought a 25-year lease on Liaodong and built a valuable railway that connected the peninsula to the Trans-Siberian Railway and Europe. It also established a powerful naval base at Port Arthur on the Liaodong Peninsula. Japan was outraged by Russia's actions. Over the next 10 years, the hostility with Russia continued to simmer, turning into war in 1904.



**Source 2** A cartoon in the British magazine *Punch* shows the British view of the Sino-Japanese War.

## The Russo-Japanese war (1904–05)

As Russian presence in Asia grew stronger, Japan became increasingly concerned. Russia had forced them to give up Liaodong after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95. To the north, Russian lands were expanding dangerously close to the Japanese island of Hokkaido. Japan needed to protect its interests in the region.

In 1904, Japanese Admiral Togo Heihachiro made a surprise attack on Port Arthur, badly damaging the Russian fleet and trapping the survivors in a long siege. Russia sent its army via the Trans-Siberian Railway and despatched its Baltic Fleet to rescue the Pacific Fleet trapped at Port Arthur.

The Trans-Siberian Railway was not equipped to move massive numbers of troops, horses and weapons, and the response was slow. When the Russian soldiers reached Manchuria, they became bogged down in weeks of combat against Japanese soldiers with newer equipment. Even so, the Russians believed the Japanese would be easily defeated.

## Outcome of the war

In 1905, Admiral Togo sank the Baltic Fleet at the Battle of Tsushima. With Port Arthur doomed, the Russians surrendered. The United States arranged the Treaty of Portsmouth, in which Japan took over Russia's lease on Liaodong, Russia's railway in Manchuria and the lower half of Sakhalin Island, north of Hokkaido. However, the treaty was not welcomed in either country. A Russian revolt seriously weakened the authority of the tsar (Russian emperor); while there were protests in Japan from a public who thought their victory merited more territory.



**Source 3** The Russian Bear in a tug-of-war with Japanese troops while the world watches. From the lid of a box of Christmas crackers, 1907

Japan's victory surprised and shocked the West. The plucky underdog had defeated the much larger Russia, leading some to call the Japanese the 'British of Asia'. Others began to see Japan as a dangerous threat to international peace.

## Check your learning 12.9

### Remember and understand

- 1 Why was the Liaodong Peninsula so important?
- 2 What reasons did Japan have for going to war with Russia in 1904?
- 3 How was the Treaty of Portsmouth received in Russia and Japan?

### Apply and analyse

- 4 Look at Source 2.
  - a Who are the two figures in the picture supposed to represent? How do you know?
  - b What explanation can you give for the contrasting size of the two figures?
  - c What do you think this cartoon suggests about British attitudes at the time to the Sino-Japanese War? Explain your answer fully.

### Evaluate and create

- 5 Design the front page of a newspaper from 5 September 1905, the day Russia formally surrendered to Japan. Decide whether your newspaper will be from Japan, Russia, the United States or another country. Whichever country you choose, make sure that the image, headlines and text convey the attitude of your paper to the news.



## 12C rich task

# Japan in World War I

Japan fought in World War I on the side of the Allies (primarily alongside the armies of Britain, France and Russia), seizing German colonies in the Pacific and escorting convoys through far-eastern waters.

Japanese marines helped the British suppress a mutiny by Indian troops in Singapore in 1915 and, throughout the war, Japanese industry sold arms and other equipment to the Allies. A few Japanese ships performed escort duties in the Mediterranean, sailing on 348 missions and rescuing over 7000 Allied personnel from damaged or sinking ships.

Many among the Allies felt that Japan was not doing its fair share, however. Instead, they believed that Japan was pursuing a private agenda. Japan was happy to seize German possessions but ignored, for example, German raiders such as the *Wolf*, preying on Allied ships in the Pacific.



**Source 1** A Japanese siege gun in action against the German port of Tsingtao, China, 1914. The Siege of Tsingtao was fought by Japan and Britain against imperial Germany. Photo taken by an unknown Japanese photographer.

### Source 2

Australian George Morrison, a former journalist turned adviser to the Chinese government, summed up contemporary suspicions in his diary:

Japan, while the Australian fleet was busy, nipped in and seized the Marshall Islands, enormously rich with phosphate. What policing was it which permitted the preying of the German raider *Wolf* on British shipping for 15 months ...? Did the Japanese in the common cause do anything to facilitate the movement of Australian foodstuffs to the Allies? The Marshall Islands surrendered to the British, not to the Japanese. It was the action of the Australian fleet in seizing Guam, etc. which enabled the capture of the island ... Japan slipping in behind our backs.

George Morrison, quoted in C. Pearl, *Morrison of Peking*, Penguin Books Australia, 1970

Bolstered by its status as an Allied power, Japan also presented China with the '21 Demands', which were designed to increase Japanese control of Manchuria and of the Chinese economy. The demands were divided into five groups: confirmation of Japan's railway and mining claims in Shandong province; granting of special concessions in Manchuria; shared control of the Han-Ye-Ping mining base in central China; access to harbours, bays and islands along China's coast; and Japanese control, through advisers, of Chinese financial, political and police affairs. Britain and the United States opposed these demands. The last group of demands would reduce China to little more than a puppet state, and was vigorously opposed and eventually dropped. Japan gained little in the final settlement of its demands, and lost prestige and trust in its allies, Britain and the United States.

## The Paris Peace Conference

At the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, the international community set up a League of Nations devoted to maintaining world peace. Japan proposed a racial equality clause in which all members would be treated equally, 'regardless of race or nationality'. The idea was vetoed by several of the other nations, largely because of the threat it presented to their immigration policies and restrictions back home.

Billy Hughes, the Australian delegate at the conference, threatened to walk out if it were even discussed, noting that '95 out of 100 Australians rejected the very idea of equality'.

### Source 3

Kyle Mizokami, an expert on defence and security issues in Asia, especially Japan, comments:

A deep-seated racism pervaded amongst the Allies and their treatment of Japan. While much Allied mistrust was well-founded in Japan's obvious imperial ambitions, the scope of the country's ambitions was, to some, more evidence of 'yellow peril' challenging the Western order. Unequal trade conditions between Australia and New Zealand and Japan created friction, while Australia's 'Whites Only' policy rankled.

K. Mizokami, 'Japan's baptism of fire: World War I put country on a collision course with West', *Japan Times*, 26 July 2014

With the racial equality clause defeated, the conference placated the Japanese by allowing them to keep hold of the former German colony of Shandong, a vast area on the Chinese coast. The decision caused riots back in China and led Wellington Koo, the Chinese delegate, to refuse to sign the Treaty of Versailles that officially ended World War I.

### Source 4

Paul Reinsch, the US Minister to China, resigned in 1919, saying:

If [Japan], with all the methods it is accustomed to apply, remains unopposed, there will be created in the Far East the greatest engine of military oppression and dominance that the world has yet seen.

Source line to come??? XXXXXXXXXXXX

## skilldrill: title to come

Identifying and analysing the perspectives of people from the past

Primary and secondary sources reflect and represent many different perspectives, points of view, attitudes and values. People who create sources are influenced by their gender, age, family and cultural background, education, religion, values and political beliefs; by their life experiences and the time in which they live. It is the historian's job to make sure that they consider a range of perspectives in their investigations, allowing more voices to be heard and a more complete picture to be formed. Identifying and analysing the perspectives of different people is a very important historical skill. To do this, you need to understand the social, cultural and emotional contexts and factors that shaped people's lives and actions in the past.

Follow these steps when applying this skill:

**Step 1** Identify the historical issue around which there may be different opinions or interpretations.

**Step 2** List the various groups and people who may have been involved in or affected by this issue.

**Step 3** Identify their role or position in society.

**Step 4** Locate some primary sources that provide evidence about their point of view or opinion on the issue.

**Step 5** Analyse each source, using the following questions as a guide:

- Why was the source written or produced?
- Who was the intended audience of the source? How does that affect the source?
- What was the author's message or argument? Is the message explicit or implicit? What can the author's choice of words tell you? What does the author choose not to talk about?
- How does the author try to get the message across? Do they give a detached, balanced account, or is it biased for or against the issue?
- Compared to what we face today, what relevant circumstances and experiences were different for the author of the source in the past? Some examples might include religion, economy, family life, technology. How do you think these factors and experiences influenced their thoughts and actions?

Apply the skill

**1** Consider Sources 1, 2, 3 and 4. Who wrote or created them? Identify and analyse the perspectives portrayed in each source, using the steps above.

## Extend your understanding

- Consider Billy Hughes' comments at the Paris Peace Conference that '95 out of 100 Australians rejected the very idea of equality'.
  - What is your own reaction to this comment?
  - Based on your own observations, do you think that Australian values about race and equality have changed? Explain your answer.
- Paul Reinsch warned that Japan would become the 'greatest engine of military oppression and dominance that the world has yet seen'.
  - Based on what you have read, do you think his fears were justified?
  - What evidence did he actually have in 1919?