

Title: High School Geography: Was the Bullet Train for Japan the Best Idea?

Introduction/ Summary: Students, using historical primary source material, will compare the original National Road of Japan, the Tōkaidō with the modern bullet train, the Shinkansen.

Subject: High School Geography

Duration of Lesson: 1- 2 class periods

Connection to Standards: High School Geography (Ohio)

Environment and Society - # 3: Human modifications of the physical environment in one place often lead to changes in other places (e.g., construction of a dam provides downstream flood control, construction of a city by-pass reduces commercial activity in the city center, implementation of dry farming techniques in a region leads to new transportation links and hubs).

Environment and Society - #4: Human societies use a variety of strategies to adapt to the opportunities and constraints presented by the physical environment (e.g., farming in flood plains and terraced farming, building hydroelectric plants by waterfalls and constructing hydroelectric dams, using solar panels as a heat source and using extra insulation to retain heat).

Environment and Society - #6: There are costs and benefits of using renewable, nonrenewable and flow resources (e.g., availability, sustainability, environmental impact, expense).

Guiding/ Essential Questions: How are human societies shaped by and how do they help to shape their environments?

Learning Objectives: Students will understand the need for humans to adapt to and modify their environment and shape the landscape through interaction with the land. Students will be able to recognize both positive and negative effects on the environment.

Materials Needed:

1. "Journey along the Tōkaidō" module:
 - a) [Ukiyo-e Woodblock Prints](#) (1830s)
 - b) [Tōkaidō Manga Scroll](#) (1920s)
 - c) [Present Day](#) (2010s)
 - d) [Tōkaidō Station Summary](#)

2. Other Resources:
 - a) [National Road/Route 40 \(Maps and other resources\)](#) and [Route 66 resources](#)
 - b) [Japan's National Road - Tōkaidō Road Maps](#)

Pre-Assessment: The teacher could ask if the students would like a train that goes 180 miles per hour? Why?

Lesson Activities: This activity involves a comparison of the Tōkaidō Road and the Shinkansen.

- A. Students should exam the online module "[Journey along the Tōkaidō](#)".

- B. Students should compare the map of the original road and the modern map of the Shinkansen (bullet train). Students might list changes in location of train vs. location of road. See link for: [Japan's National Road - Tōkaidō Road Maps](#)
- C. Students might note obstacles present in the 1920 scenes as illustrated by the Tōkaidō Manga Scroll. A list of selected frames (see Teacher's notes) is highlighted. Ask students if any of these prints help explain changes in train vs. road location.
- D. Students should work in groups to answer ways in which the Shinkansen altered/ modified the environment of Japan.
Groups should compile a list of positive effects on the environment and negative effects.

Extension Activity: Single out one major effect of the Tōkaidō: Urban Sprawl.

Today the region known as the Tōkaidō is one of the most densely populated areas in the world and as a result suffering from the effects of urban sprawl.

1. Students will form governmental committees to study this problem. They should begin by compiling a list of problems.
2. Ask students to rank problems as to degree of solvability.
3. Conclude by making committees justify their rankings.

Teacher's Notes- Background Information about the Tōkaidō source (Overview):

To show change over time and compare cultures as well as learn more about a very important part of Japanese history and culture, the "[Journey along the Tōkaidō](#)" has been created using various primary source materials. Japan's National Road, the Tōkaidō Road, from Tokyo to Kyoto in Japan is examined at various time periods (1830s, 1920s, and present day).

Students will study two primary source materials: the *Tōkaidō gojūsantsugi manga emaki* (The Fifty Three Stations of the Tōkaidō Manga Scroll, which will be referred to as the "Tōkaidō Manga Scroll") and the *The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō* woodblock prints. This Tōkaidō manga scroll was created by 18 members of the Tokyo Manga Association during a trip approximating the route of the old Tōkaidō in 1921 and depicts scenes of Japanese culture, history, economics, daily life, transportation, architecture, and industry. Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige's *The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō* (1833–1834 in the Hōeidō edition) is a series of woodblock prints (ukiyo-e) of the stations along the Tōkaidō. These *ukiyo-e* prints became enormously popular and have been reprinted countless times down to the present. The scroll is part of an online module, "Journey along the Tōkaidō," which includes a video of the scroll, links to the ukiyo-e (woodblock prints from 1833-34) and links to sections of the Tōkaidō area today, along with other background material.

Though the title is *The Fifty Three Stations of the Tōkaidō Manga Scroll*, the paintings are numbered 1 through 55. This is because the starting location, Nihonbashi, and the final destination, Kyōto, were not numbered in Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige's original *The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō* (1833–1834 in the Hōeidō edition), and the manga scroll follows this precedent. Japanese names are given throughout in Japanese order, family name first and given name last.

Lesson plan is available on: <http://u.osu.edu/journeyalongthetokaido/lesson-plans/>

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