

Korea
Imperialism/General Sherman Incident
Grade 11

Lesson Plan

Course: Advanced Placement U.S. History
Teacher: Don R. Haven
Unit: Imperialism

Period: 1/3/4
Week/Day: TBD
Lesson: TBD

Topic: General Sherman Incident

Purpose or Rationale: To show that the early attempts to open trade with East Asia were dangerous and badly handled. The General Sherman Incident is a clear example.

Instructional Objectives:

- Provide an explanation of the details of the incident
- Place the incident within the umbrella of American imperialism
- Provide the students an opportunity to find a better way to meet the country's goals for establishing trade routes

Standards/Benchmarks: History/Grade 11 & 12 Imperialism

Materials and Resources:

East Asia; A Cultural, Social, and Political History. Patricia Ebrey, Anne Walthall, James Palais

A History of the Modern World. R.R. Palmer and Joel Colton

American Military History. Edited by John Whiteclay Chambers II

Korea's Place in the Sun. Bruce Cumings

Essential Question: How do we justify American involvement in imperialism in East Asia?

Instructional Procedures:

Focusing Event: Review of handout on the William Sherman Incident (5 min)
(www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Gerneral_Sherman_incident)

Connection Event: Put the incident in the context of imperialism for the students (3 min)

Content Presentation: Mini lecture on the incident (15 min)

Assessment Event: Students will make a list of cultural misunderstandings on both sides of the incident. (15 min)

Preview Event: Introduction of the Boxer Rebellion (5 min)

Homework: Read handout on the Boxer Rebellion

TIP 2: Mini-lecture on General Sherman Incident

I. What happened?

- a. Hostilities between a U.S. ship (SS General Sherman) and the Koreans in Pyongyang in 1866
- b. The ship was American owned, had an American Captain and mate, but the crew was foreign and the mission was to open trade for a British company based in China

II. Background

- a. Korea as isolated from the West (The Hermit Kingdom). Even shipwrecked sailors were not allowed to go home
- b. Early 1800's had seen the wholesale slaughter of Christians (as many as 10,000)
- c. In 1866, SS General Sherman sailed from China with a load of cotton, tin and glass and British businessmen. They sailed up the river to Pyongyang.
- d. Koreans told ship it wasn't welcome; trade was not allowed and it had to leave. At that point the ship went aground on a sandbar making leaving not an option.

III. Hostilities began

- a. Ship fired on soldiers and civilians ashore killing several
- b. Battle raged for four days
- c. Fire ships sent to catch fire to the General Sherman; it works.
- d. Some of the crew burned to death, some swam to shore and were beaten to death.

IV. Aftermath

- a. Koreans recovered the ship and rebuilt it into Korea's first modern warship
- b. After threats were made by Admiral Sherfeltdt, the ship was returned to the U.S.
- c. Admiral Sherfeltdt successful in getting a treaty signed in 1882

TIP 2 Activity General Sherman Incident

Nearly everything that could go wrong did in the General Sherman's mission. How could this mission have succeeded without the loss of life? Make a list of all the things that you can think of that caused the cultural misunderstandings leading to the disaster. Then come up with a plan that could have allowed trade to begin with Korea that would have been successful. You may work on this outside of class and turn it in tomorrow for a homework grade.