

Jennifer Swinehart

**Lesson Plan for Japan
Sexual Stereotypes in Japan**

Purpose- Women in various societies face stereotypes and discrimination based on those stereotypes.

Essential Questions:

1. What gender stereotypes are present in Japanese society?
2. What discrimination has been felt by women in Japan because of these stereotypes?
3. In what ways have women in society confronted or conformed to the stereotypes and discrimination in Japan?

Rationale- Recognizing that stereotypes create restrictions for women in society will help students recognize their own gender biases and find solutions for overcoming stereotypes that prevent them from fully utilizing their capabilities.

Materials- Readings: Women's Roles Chapter 5 of Comparing Cultures by Merry I. White and Sylvan Barnet

Chart for students to complete

Activities- 1. Put the following quote on the board:

“Heaven is an English home, a Chinese chef, an American salary and a Japanese wife; Hell is a Japanese home, an English chef, a Chinese salary, and an American wife.”

2. Have the classes discuss the stereotypes evident in the quote and discuss what these stereotypes represent from each society. Write their answers on the board.

3. Ask students to focus on the differences they recognize or know about Japanese and American women.

4. Have students read the chapter and then get in pairs to fill out the chart on stereotypes of women in Japanese society.

5. After they have completed the chart, have students discuss their answers with the class as a whole. Clarify their understanding of the material.

Assessment- Assessment will be done through student participation in the classroom discussion and completion of the chart filled out in the partner work.

Target Grade- High School

Grade Adaptation- I'm not sure this could be adapted for students too much younger. Maybe by including the following definitions and then having the teacher reading the selections aloud as the teacher and students filled out the chart together it could be used by junior high students.

Extra definitions: Sex roles are how a person is expected to behave because of their gender.

Sexual stereotypes are oversimplified statements that are applied to all men or all women even if they are not true for all men or all women.

Socialization is how we are raised and what type of behavior is expected of us because of how we are raised.

State Standards- Analyze how issues may be viewed differently by various cultural groups.

Identify the causes of political, economic and social oppression and analyze ways individuals, organizations and countries respond to the resulting conflicts.

Education	Stereotype	Discrimination	Conform	Confront
Marriage/Home				
Motherhood				
Work or Career				
Political Participation				

Possible Answers for the charts.

Education

- Women do not need an education to be a wife and mother.
- More options today than in the past but not as much difference as you might expect.
- Many women who get an education do so at Women's Jr. Colleges where traditional domestic roles are reinforced.
- Home economics, nutrition or literature are still the main subjects women major in while in college.
- Only 14% of women go to 4-yr. colleges or universities.
- The government is considering discouraging women from education because many want to work instead of having children or as many children.

Marriage/Home

- Women are old maids if not married by the age of 25.
- A women's place is in the home.
- Japanese women must take care of the whole family including in-laws.
- Society still encourages all women to marry and before the age of 25yrs although this is changing slowly.
- Arranged marriages are fading away but not gone altogether
- Men want traditional roles for women.
- Men and women are not equal in marriage because the mother/son relationship is a part of marriage as well as parenthood.
- Affairs and divorce are common in marriages that have lasted until retirement.
- Women see the home as their own sphere of influence and have almost total control of the home and finances because their husbands are never home
- Even though women may work outside of the home they are still responsible for the bulk of the domestic work. 4 ½ hours per day compared to men at ¼ hour per day.

Motherhood

- Japanese women live for and through their children.
- Women gain self-respect through self-sacrifice, especially for their children.
- Society expects women to give up careers after motherhood.
- Some women are saying no to motherhood.
- Many are having only one child.
- Abortion is legal and not a religious issue in Japan.
- Mothers are responsible for their child's education.

- The government is now paying women with toddlers to encourage more children, along with granting 1 yr. of parental leave for each parent.

Work or Career

- Women do not need to work or only work until they marry or have children.
- Women are discriminated against in the workplace because they are perceived as temporary workers.
- Sexual harassment is common for women.
- Women fight their own private battles against discrimination and harassment at work instead of major lawsuits, etc.
- Many women start their own businesses or work in the family business instead of working in corporate jobs or careers.
- Companies expect women to retire after having children.
- Women are not given real work because they are perceived as temporary workers.
- Many women are truly permanent workers but considered temporary so they receive no benefits.
- Women earn 50% of what men earn.
- Many women are employed in service industries where there is less discrimination, although these often are lower paying jobs.

Political participation

- Women do not belong in politics.
- Women do not need to vote.
- Women were not given the right to vote until 1946.
- Many women do support issues that are political but are often tied to their jobs as wives and mothers. An example would be issues of pollution or the safety of products their children use.
- Not that many women serve in the Diet but more are choosing to serve at local levels.

In the discussion that follows what the students have taken from the text, the teacher needs to mention that many of the ideas in Japanese society that seem stereotypical or discriminatory to Americans are perceived differently in Japan. Some women in Japan see themselves as better off than American women and Japanese men in terms of choices and the freedom to do as they choose to some extent. The teacher also needs to stress that this is true in the United States as well. Not all women feel the same about stereotypes and discrimination in the United States either. The way women are perceived from outside American society can impact whether people believe women have made great strides in equality in the U.S. as well.

