

Lesson Plan

# East Asia & the Pacific

## Length

Two 45-minute periods

## Grade Level

High School

## Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to describe the political, societal, economic, and geopolitical systems that characterize East Asia and the Pacific.
- Students will understand how global powers wield influence on countries in the region.

## Worksheets



## Homework

- Students will read the section entitled [Modern History](#) from East Asia & the Pacific and complete the worksheet below.

## Class One

1. **(5 minutes) Debrief Homework:** Have students share their homework responses in small groups.
2. **(10 minutes) Warm Up:** Give students the attached blank map of East Asia and the Pacific. Have students work in small groups to fill in as many country names as possible. When students have finished, show this [map](#) labeled with East Asia and the Pacific country names and ask students the following questions to activate prior knowledge.
  - *Referencing the map, what comes to mind when you think of East Asia and the Pacific? What do you associate with the region in terms of language, food, religion, climate, government, etc?*
  - *What major historical events have taken place in the region?*
  - *What major current events are currently taking place in the region?*
  - *What questions do you have about East Asia and the Pacific?*
3. **(20 minutes) Group Work:** Have students use their assigned section from *Regions of the World: East Asia & the Pacific* to complete the corresponding section of the attached worksheet. When finished, students will share and write down other students' takeaways to complete their worksheets. Assign students to the following groups:
  - People and Society
  - Politics
  - Economics
  - Geopolitics
4. **(10 minutes) Discussion:** Lead a discussion that highlights positive trends in the region as well as some of the challenges that the region faces. Use the following questions as guidance.
  - *What are some positive trends seen in countries in East Asia and the Pacific?*
  - *How are the countries of East Asia and the Pacific working to improve the quality of life of their citizens?*

- *What are the greatest challenges faced by East Asia and the Pacific?*
- *How are governments responding to these challenges?*
- Transition the class to tomorrow's topic by asking students to consider how a rising China is influencing the geopolitical balance of the region.

## Homework

- Have students briefly respond to the following: *In what ways does China assert its influence across the region? Do you think this influence is likely to strengthen over the coming years?*

## Class Two

1. **(5 minutes) Debrief Homework:** Have students share their reflections from last night's homework with a partner.
2. **(10 minutes) Group Work:** Have groups complete the attached worksheet using their page of *East Asia & the Pacific: U.S. Foreign Policy*. Assign students to the following groups:
  - Spanish-American War
  - Pearl Harbor
  - Hiroshima and Nagasaki
  - Resisting Communism
  - Domino Theory
  - Nixon's Trip to China
  - China Joins WTO
  - U.S. Troops Defend South Korea
  - Ambiguous Taiwan Policy
3. **(10 minutes) Debrief:** Have each group share their example of U.S. foreign policy with the class. Ask groups to explain how this example of foreign policy set the stage for continued American involvement in the region. As students share, the rest of the class will use their worksheets to write down other groups' examples.
4. **(10 minutes) Discussion:** Have students read the section *What Does China's Rise Mean for the United States* with a partner and address the following questions:
  - *In what ways is China "rising"?*
  - *What challenges does this rise pose for the United States?*
  - *How have previous American leaders reacted to China's growing influence?*
5. **(10 minutes) Simulation:** Summarize some of the concerns the United States has when thinking about China's growing military and economic strength (e.g., increased tensions over Taiwan, effects of economic competition, human right violations, militarization). With these concerns in mind, ask students whether the United States should be more or less confrontational towards China. Have students line up along a spectrum according to their response. Once in position, ask students to explain their point of view. Use the following questions as guidance.
  - *How would your response affect East Asia and the Pacific? How would your response affect geopolitics more broadly?*
  - *Would your response lead to more stability in the region? How?*
  - *Who might benefit as a result of your response? Who might suffer?*
  - *Weighing the pros and cons, why do you feel that your response is the correct one?*

## Homework

- Have students read the CFR Education mini-simulation *Strategic Ambiguity Towards Taiwan* and write a brief response about how the United States should respond to the situation based on the policies presented.