The Industrial Revolution: Japan
1868-1912
LESSONS IN WORLD HISTORY

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THE UCI CALIFORNIA HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE PROJECT
The California History-Social Science Project (CH-SSP) of the University of California, Irvine, is dedicated to working with history teachers in Orange County to develop innovative approaches to engaging students in the study of the past. Founded in 2000, the CH-SSP draws on the resources of the UCI Department of History and works closely with the UCI Department of Education. We believe that the history classroom can be a crucial arena not only for instruction in history but also for the improvement of student literacy and writing skills. Working together with the teachers of Orange County, it is our goal to develop history curricula that will convince students that history matters.

HUMANITIES OUT THERE
Humanities Out There was founded in 1997 as an educational partnership between the School of Humanities at the University of California, Irvine and the Santa Ana Unified School District. HOT runs workshops in humanities classrooms in Santa Ana schools. Advanced graduate students in history and literature design curricular units in collaboration with host teachers, and conduct workshops that engage UCI undergraduates in classroom work. In the area of history, HOT works closely with the UCI History-Social Science Project in order to improve student literacy and writing skills in the history classroom, and to integrate the teaching of history, literature, and writing across the humanities. The K-12 classroom becomes a laboratory for developing innovative units that adapt university materials to the real needs and interests of California schools. By involving scholars, teachers, students, and staff from several institutions in collaborative teaching and research, we aim to transform educational practices, expectations, and horizons for all participants.

THE SANTA ANA PARTNERSHIP
The Santa Ana Partnership was formed in 1983 as part of the Student and Teacher Educational Partnership (STEP) initiative at UC Irvine. Today it has evolved into a multi-faceted collaborative that brings institutions and organizations together in the greater Santa Ana area to advance the educational achievement of all students, and to help them enter and complete college. Co-directed at UC Irvine by the Center for Educational Partnerships, the collaborative is also strongly supported by Santa Ana College, the Santa Ana Unified School District, California State University, Fullerton and a number of community based organizations. Beginning in 2003-2004, HOT has contributed to the academic mission of the Santa Ana Partnership by placing its workshops in GEAR UP schools. This unit on The Industrial Revolution: Japan reflects the innovative collaboration among these institutions and programs.

CONTENT COUNTS: A SPECIAL PROJECT OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES
This is one in a series of publications under the series title Content Counts: Reading and Writing Across the Humanities, supported by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Content Counts units are designed by and for educators committed to promoting a deep, content-rich and knowledge-driven literacy in language arts and social studies classrooms. The units provide examples of “content reading”—primary and secondary sources, as well as charts, data, and visual documents—designed to supplement and integrate the study of history and literature.
UNIT INTRODUCTION FOR TEACHERS

This unit introduces students to the themes of the Industrial Revolution as it unfolded during the Meiji Period (1868-1912) of Imperial Japan. Through a close examination of primary sources, including visual images, poems, songs, and statistics, the unit provides students with a deeper understanding of one occurrence of industrial transformation in the non-western world. The goal of this unit is to help students recognize that while industrialization was certainly an outgrowth of various technological innovations, it also involved ramifications that extended far beyond the production process, in this case reshaping the very fabric of Japanese society. Similarly, although Japan’s encounter with industrialization depended on the assimilation and adaptation of European and American techniques and equipment, Japan’s subsequent cultural transformations did not necessarily bring its populace closer to western political mentalities or societal conventions.

IMAGE A: Japan in the modern industrial period; View of Takanawa Ushimachi under a Shrouded Moon. 1879.
CALIFORNIA HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS UNIT

Skills: Grades Nine through Twelve

■ Chronological and Spatial Thinking Skills
  ■ Students analyze how change happens at different rates at different times; understand that some aspects change while others remain the same; and understand that change is complicated and affects not only technology and politics but also values and beliefs.

■ Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View Skills
  ■ Students identify bias and prejudice in historical interpretations.
  ■ Students construct and test hypotheses; collect, evaluate, and employ information from multiple primary and secondary sources; and apply it in oral and written presentations.

■ Historical Interpretation Skills
  ■ Students show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.
  ■ Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.

Content Standards: Tenth Grade

■ 10.3 Students analyze the effects of the Industrial Revolution in Japan.
  ■ 10.3.2 Examine how scientific and technological changes and new forms of energy brought about massive social, economic, and cultural change.
  ■ 10.3.4 Trace the evolution of work and labor, including the effects of mining and manufacturing, division of labor, and the union movement.
  ■ 10.3.5 Understand the connections among natural resources, entrepreneurship, labor, and capital in an industrial economy.
  ■ 10.3.6 Analyze the emergence of capitalism as a dominant economic pattern and the responses to it, including Social Democracy, Socialism and Communism.

NOTES ON THE PDF:

1) Please note that in this pdf document the page numbers are two off from the printed curriculum. For example, page 2 in the printed curriculum is now page 4 in this pdf document.

2) We apologize if some of the hyperlinks are no longer accurate. They were correct at the time of printing.

3) Full-page versions of the images in this unit—some in color—can be found at the back of this pdf.

4) You can easily navigate through the different parts of this document by using the “Bookmark” tab on the left side of your Acrobat window.
The Industrial Revolution: Japan

Books


Seidensticker, Edward. *Low City, High City: Tokyo from Edo to the Earthquake*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983. This study traces the cultural history of Tokyo and the everyday lives of its diverse inhabitants, from the transfer of the capital in 1868 to the devastating earthquake of 1923 (and the accompanying fires), which left much of the original city in ruins.


Film

Yamamoto, Satsuo, director. *Nomugi Pass (Ah Nomugi Toge)*. 1979. This Japanese film provides a vivid and gut-wrenching recreation of life in a Japanese silk factory at the turn of the nineteenth century. This film is highly recommended as a complement to this unit; the students will sympathize with the plight of the teenage heroines of the story, sold into servitude by their impoverished parents and brutally exploited by factory management. The authentic songs and poems contained in this unit were written by the same girls portrayed in this film.
Electronic Resources

Asian Educational Media Service

www.aems.uiuc.edu/index.las

Produced by the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), this site helps educators locate valuable teaching materials, including documentary films, CD-ROMs, and slides.

The Japan Society’s “Journey through Japan”

www.japansociety.org/journey

On its website, the Japan Society provides useful background information about Japan in the form of photographs, lesson plans (concerning Japanese history, society, and culture), and historical timelines.

Paul Halsall’s Internet Modern History Sourcebook

www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook.html

This site contains an extensive collection of primary-source documents, including materials on the Industrial Revolution, which can be accessed via the “Science” heading at the top of the page.

Teachers’ Asian Studies Summer Institute Web Page

www.csupomona.edu/~tassi/tassi.htm

While not a direct resource on Meiji Japan, this site contains interesting lesson plans related to the field of Asian Studies, as developed by California teachers at the Teachers’ Asian Studies Summer Institute (TASSI), held at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona in 1996 and 1997.
KEY TERMS

The Industrial Revolution: Japan

**Hereditary Rule:** a political system in which power passes down from an ancestor to a legal or biological heir. Students should be instructed to associate hereditary rule with monarchical rule and to recognize that hereditary monarchies remained the dominant system of government in the world until the early-twentieth century.

**Oligarchy:** government by a small group, especially by a faction of persons or a family. In the Japanese case, students should understand that while Meiji Japan existed officially as a monarchy, actual political power remained in the hands of a group of oligarchs who ruled in the emperor's name.

**Industrialization:** an economic transformation in which work is increasingly done by machines and in factories, rather than by hand and at home. Students should be encouraged to identify the increased usage of fossil fuels and assembly-line production as crucial elements in industrialization and the Industrial Revolution. The state-organized program of industrialization of the Meiji period serves as an interesting predecessor to the Soviet experience decades later.

**Export:** to send a product abroad, usually for trade or sale. Students should be taught that the Meiji government actively encouraged increased silk production and exports in order to generate tax revenue that could be used to purchase military technology and military supplies from western powers.

**Factory Work:** the transition of work from the home to factories during the Industrial Revolution, which involved not only an exponential increase in productivity, but also the individual's loss of control over his/her schedule and a more distinct division between work time and leisure time.

**Division of Labor:** the breaking down of tasks into various parts, each assigned to different groups of people or machines. Students should understand how the division of labor and assembly-line production helped increase efficiency. They should also learn that the division of labor typically occurred along gender lines, with men compensated better than women for their work.

**Capitalism:** an economic, political, and social system based on private ownership of property and business, and structured so that the most successful people and organizations acquire the greatest possible profits. Students should be encouraged to explore how the use of new energy sources, technological advances, and assembly-line production during the Industrial Revolution created a more efficient production process and therefore a greater potential for profits for those people who had large amounts of money available for investment.

**Socialism:** a theory of social organization, which maintains that all people should share equally in the wealth of a country, and that the means to produce and distribute goods should be owned collectively.

**Communism:** a theory of social organization and government in which property is collectively owned and labor is organized for the common benefit of all members of society. Students should be able to distinguish between (a) Communism as a nineteenth-century European social theory that was, in many ways, a response to the social ills that accompanied the Industrial Revolution, and (b) Communism as a state doctrine of the former Soviet Union and its satellite states, as well as China, Cuba, and Vietnam, in which the state government planned and controlled the national economy and a single authoritarian party maintained political power while claiming to develop a higher social order for its citizens.
PART ONE: Getting to Know Japan

The brief opening activities in this section are meant to serve as ice-breakers, so as to introduce your students to the country of Japan in a relaxed manner. The answers to the first exercise are (1) karate, (2) samurai, (3) sushi, (4) sumo wrestling, (5) ninja, and (6) karaoke. These are all words native to the Japanese language, so merely by asking your students to talk about their personal familiarity and experiences with these cultural elements, you can demonstrate the extent to which your students are already acquainted with Japan and things Japanese. As for the incorrect answers, Kung Fu and Confucius both hail from China, while curry and Buddhism both originated in India (although it might be worth mentioning that the majority of Japanese are, at least nominally, Buddhists).

The first purpose of the map activity is simply to familiarize the students with Japan’s location. They should recognize, for instance, that Japan is an island nation that is extremely close to the Korean peninsula and relatively close to China. It might be interesting to mention that Japan is a mountainous country situated in an area where several continental plates meet. As such, it is home to significant thermal activity, including hot springs, volcanoes, and earthquakes. Depending on the composition of your class, this might also be a good opportunity to introduce the geographical term archipelago.

The second purpose of this activity is for your students to recognize how inaccurate the older map is. Of course, there wasn’t any satellite technology back then! Indeed, it is not even possible to discern the four major islands that comprise the modern nation of Japan: (1) Hokkaido, to the north (2) Honshu, which contains the majority of Japan’s population (including Tokyo) (3) Shikoku, and (4) Kyushu, to the South. Students should notice that the map from 1808 is written in English, and can therefore be traced to western sources. This older map can thus serve as an interesting example of the lack of European and American knowledge of East Asia at that time.

STUDENT WORKSHEETS

PART ONE: Getting to Know Japan

Look at the list of 10 items below. Circle the things that originally come from Japan, and cross out the things that don’t. (Hint: there are six Japanese items)

- karate
- curry
- samurai
- sushi
- kung fu
- sumo wrestling
- ninja
- Confucius
- karaoke
- Buddhism

Find Japan on the two maps below. Circle it with your pen on each map.

IMAGE 1: Asia, 1808
• Compare the size and shape of Japan on the two maps. Do you notice any differences? Which map do you think is more accurate? Why?
This section is designed to provide students with the background information they will need to complete the interactive exercises contained in the remainder of the unit. The students should learn that large-scale industrialization in Japan was closely tied to a political revolution (usually mistranslated as the Meiji “Restoration”), which brought into power an oligarchy that ruled through the name of the emperor. Japan’s new leadership facilitated the opening of its borders to foreign trade, ending a two-hundred-and-fifty year policy of national isolation enforced by the Tokugawa Shogunate. Although the new Meiji government invited foreign scholars to visit Japan and promoted the acquisition of western scientific knowledge, the ultimate purpose of this strategy was to ensure Japan’s continued independence. In other words, Meiji-era political leaders understood that industrialization and the creation of a modernized military would be essential in preventing the exploitation—or even colonizaton—of Japan by western powers.

**IMAGE C:** Meiji Japan’s military might; *Observance by His Imperial Majesty of the Combined Army and Navy Forces’ Military Maneuvers*. 1890.

STUDENT WORKSHEETS

PART TWO: Japan’s Industrial Transformation

For hundreds of years Japan was ruled by a hereditary military leader known as the Shogun, who kept the island nation closed to foreign visitors and foreign influences. In 1868, however, Japan experienced a revolution. The Shogun was overthrown, and the Meiji Emperor (pictured on the right) was installed as the country’s political ruler. However, the emperor—who was only a teenager at the time—was mainly a symbolic leader, while the real political power remained in the hands of a group of oligarchs who acted in the emperor’s name. The new Japanese government recognized that it lagged behind the western powers (such as England, France, Germany, and the United States) in terms of economic and political strength. In order to solve this problem and make Japan into a world power, the new government launched a program of massive industrialization. Scholars and scientists were brought in from Europe and the United States to help Japan’s leaders transform the economy.

Glossary

hereditary: describes a title or possession passed down through inheritance.
oligarchy: government by a small group, especially by a faction of people or a family.
industrialization: an economic transformation in which work is done more and more by machines and in factories, rather than by hand and at home.
Borrowing technology from the West, such as steam power, the Japanese constructed steel works (pictured above) and began to build a national railroad system. Japan's political leaders asked people to work hard for the glory of the emperor and their country. Silk production had already been an important part of the Japanese economy, but with industrialization, work moved from family farms to factories. Japanese silk was used to make shirts, dresses, scarves, handkerchiefs, and stockings. The new government demanded large amounts of silk from its people in order to export it abroad in exchange for foreign goods, including modern weapons.

Glossary

**export**: to send a product abroad, usually for trade or sale.
The purpose of this section is to introduce the idea of political symbolism and to have students recognize the ways in which the Meiji government benefited from the symbolic power of the Japanese emperor. The first activity asks the students (either individually or in groups) to create a list of political symbols that are commonly used in the United States today. Students should also list a trait (or traits) typically associated with each symbol. Possible answers include:

- American Flag—the United States, patriotism, freedom
- Statue of Liberty—liberty, freedom
- Bald Eagle—courage, freedom, independence
- Olive Branch—peace
- Elephant—the Republican Party
- Donkey—the Democratic Party

It also might be helpful to ask students if they can think of any human figures in American history who also function as political symbols, with possible answers including George Washington, Susan B. Anthony, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

In response to the first question, the students should notice that the emperor is clothed in a European-style military uniform, which is actually based on the style of the Prussian (German) Army. They might also notice that his chest is adorned with medals and that he is brandishing a sword. A few students might comment that his hairstyle and beard are also distinctively western in style. In reference to the second question, it should be clear to students that the emperor’s outfit would not at all have resembled the typical Japanese male style of dress at that time. The reasons students give for this difference will vary, but possible answers include: (1) to appear as a strong leader (2) to appear as a modern leader (3) to encourage his subjects to accept western-style appearances or attitudes. It might be interesting to mention that the Meiji emperor—who was only a teenager at the time of his “restoration”—had made his initial public appearances in traditional Japanese court dress, which included white silk robes, long hair tied in a topknot, and dyed black teeth!

**Vocabulary Activity**

This exercise serves the dual purpose of introducing the students to descriptive vocabulary while encouraging them to think about the various traits that the Meiji emperor might have symbolized. The correct answers are regal, authoritarian, confident, martial, and stern. Possible additions to this list will undoubtedly vary. As mentioned in the passage written for the students, this image of the emperor was the most common image circulated by the Meiji government. You could have your students compare this image (Image 5) of the emperor to the previous one contained in the unit (Image 3), and encourage the class to speculate as to why the government favored the latter image.
Every country relies on political symbols (such as a national flag) to help promote patriotism among its citizens. List three common political symbols used in the United States today, and write down a trait (or traits) commonly associated with each symbol:

1.

2.

3.
We have already mentioned that in Meiji Japan (1868-1912), the emperor functioned as a symbol of political power. The portrait of the Japanese Emperor shown on the previous page was the most common image circulated by the Meiji government.

Study the image and answer the following questions:

• What is the Meiji Emperor wearing in this portrait?

• Do you think this was typical male Japanese dress at the time? If not, why do you think the Meiji Emperor was shown dressed like this?

Vocabulary Activity

Choose five words from the list below that best describe the emperor’s appearance and circle them. Then add a word of your own:

cowardly regal inexperienced passive authoritarian
confident martial stern subservient

• The Meiji Emperor also appears ______________________________ in this portrait.
The purpose of this section is to expose the students to the horrors of factory life in industrial Japan. The fact that the subjects of our story are (female) teenage workers should elicit a great deal of sympathy from your students. They should understand that the father, as the head of household, possessed the ability to enter into contracts on behalf of his daughters, thereby selling them into a form of servitude. On the other hand, since the families of silk workers often came from poor mountain villages, the income potential of teenage daughters often greatly exceeded that of the father, making the family economically dependent on teenage labor. Students should also notice that teenage silk workers usually lived in a company-owned dormitory adjacent to the factory grounds, but far away from their parents’ homes. Finally, the girls’ salaries were typically withheld until the end of the calendar year, at which point the workers’ pay was docked for reasons that often seemed dubious or unwarranted. The Japanese film Nomugi Pass, which is listed in the bibliography at the beginning of this unit, provides some riveting images of everyday life in the silk factories of industrial Japan. It is highly recommended as a supplement to this unit.

Students’ responses to the discussion questions will vary, but it should be clear that the teenage silk workers were often powerless to defend themselves when accused of violating one of the factory rules contained in the list provided. When the girls were accused of lying or feigning illness, for example, determining the truth often amounted to choosing between the girl’s word and that of the older male manager. When the teenage silk workers were deemed to have broken company rules, they were typically simply docked pay, without recourse to union representation or an attorney.

**Stories from Silk Workers**

These are authentic poems and songs, collected in Patricia Tsurumi’s *Factory Girls*, which were written and sung by many of the same silk workers portrayed in the film *Nomugi Pass*. Of course, the students should notice the nationalistic lyrics contained in both songs. It is also useful to point out that one of the songs equates female labor in the silk factories with male labor in the Japanese military. In answer to the third question, students should be encouraged to think of Japanese industrialization as a state-sponsored phenomenon. By increasing silk production and silk exports, the Japanese state could increase its tax revenues and its trade balance. As silk flowed outward to Europe and the United States, the Japanese government was in a better position to purchase modern military equipment and supplies. With its increased military strength, Japan soon invaded and annexed Taiwan (1895) and Korea (1905).

The answers to the questions that follow the poem, “The Prison Lament,” are: (1) the author refers to herself as a “caged bird” because she equates dormitory life with prison life. She has no control over her own movement, as she is unable to leave the factory until the expiration of her labor contract; (2) the worker will not receive her salary until the end of the year, when she has completely fulfilled the terms of her employment contract. The answers to the questions that follow the poem, “My Two Parents,” are: (1) the author was sold into servitude at age twelve because her family was poor; (2) the author longs for the day when her term of employment will have been fulfilled and she can return home to her parents.
This picture captures life in a Japanese silk factory in the early-twentieth century. Notice that all of the workers seated at the looms appear to be young women, although many of the supervisors are men. Families in mountain villages often signed contracts with silk companies, selling their teenage daughters into factory labor for one- to five-year periods. The girls typically lived in company dormitories located on the factory grounds. Their wages were held by the factory management and sent home to the workers’ parents at the end of the year.

**Glossary**

**looms:** machines used to make cloth out of thread or yarn.
Japanese silk factories had strict rules and regulations. When an employee broke one of these rules, money would be deducted from her wages. As a result, some silk workers didn't get to keep any of their salary! Here is a partial list of prohibited behaviors at one factory, taken from *Factory Girls* by Patricia Tsurumi:

1. Tardiness
2. Lying
3. Pretending to be ill and not coming to work
4. Reading while working a shift
5. Lack of attention to detail that sets a bad example for others
6. Damage or loss of attendance sheet

Discuss the following questions with your classmates, and then write down your answers in the space provided.

1. Which of the rules above do you think are fair? Why?
2. Which of the rules do you think are unfair? Why?
3. Which would be the hardest rule for you to follow? Why?
4. What do you think happened to silk workers who broke company rules? How could workers defend themselves?
STORIES FROM THE SILK WORKERS

Some of the teenage silk workers left behind their stories in the form of songs and poems. Let’s take a look!
Japanese girls sang these songs as they walked together (sometimes over 100 miles) from their homes to the silk factories:

First Song:
We don’t cross the Nomugi Pass for nothing;
We do it for ourselves and for our parents.
Boys to the army,
Girls to the factory.
Reeling thread is for the country, too.

Second Song:
Put all your strength into your work.
It’s for yourself,
It’s for your family,
It’s for the country of Japan.

1. According to these songs, why do the girls want to work for the factory?

2. Do you think these are good reasons to work hard? Why? Why not?

3. Both songs mention working for the benefit of “the country.” How do you think reeling silk helped Japan?

Glossary

reeling: winding yarn or thread upon a reel.
On this page and the following one are poems written by girls who worked in the silk factories.

Read the poems and answer the questions below.

**The Prison Lament**

*Factory work is prison work,*  
*All it lacks are iron chains.*

*More than a caged bird, more than a prison,*  
*Dormitory life is hateful.*

*Like a horse or cow,*  
*The **reeler** is fenced in.*

*Like the money in my employment contract,*  
*I remain sealed away.*

1. Why does the author feel like a “caged bird”?

2. Does she receive the wages for her work? Why/Why not?

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**Glossary**

- **lament**: to express great sorrow or grief.
- **reeler**: someone who makes silk.
My Two Parents

I want to go and cross the mountain,
If I go my little sister will be there,
And my parents too.

Let the year end come quickly,
I want to tell my parents
About this cruel factory…

Because I am poor, at age twelve
I was sold to this factory.
When my parents told me “Now it is time to go”
My very heart wept tears of blood.

Let the year end,
I want to fly to my parents.

1. Why does the author work at a silk factory?

2. What is the author’s dream? Why?
WRITING ACTIVITY

Choose ONE of the following roles and write a short rap describing your feelings:

a) a teenage silk worker
   (If you choose this option, you might address the worker’s feelings about the factory rules, her family, living away from home, or the silk reeling itself.)

b) a male owner of a silk factory
   (If you choose this option, you might capture the owner’s difficulties in dealing with his teenage employees.)

c) the mother or father of a teenage silk worker
   (If you choose this option, you might address the moral issues raised by the fact that the parent has sold his or her daughter into factory labor.)

d) the brother or sister of a silk worker
   (If you choose this option, you could either address the moral issues mentioned above, but from the sibling’s perspective, or you could explore how life at home has changed due to the increased wages provided by the silk worker.)
The tables provided in this section are meant to demonstrate to students the gendered disparity in wages in industrial Japan. Students’ answers to the first question will vary, but some may speculate that male jobs were either harder or more dangerous. However, this was not necessarily the case; you can stress that “women’s work” in the factories was extremely arduous. Silk workers, for example, had to dip their hands into boiling hot water throughout the day in order to pick out the silkworm cocoons that they would reel into thread. For the second question, students should notice that the male steel workers are dressed in western-style clothing while the female silk workers are shown wearing the traditional Japanese kimono. Anne McClintock is one of many scholars who have argued that, historically, women have been constructed as the guardians of national culture and the inner sanctum of the home, whereas their male counterparts typically have been associated with the political realm and the coming of modernity. The gender-based changes in clothing seen in the Japanese case, for example, closely resemble this pattern of cultural transformation, which also took place in India and China.

In response to the third set of questions, students should notice that men and women were expected to pursue different types of employment and that the highest wage available for working women (13.4 sen per day for silk reelers) was still lower than all of the men’s salaries listed. Students should also notice that male cotton spinners received almost twice the daily wages as their female counterparts. The lowest-paying male occupation listed in this table is agriculture, for which men earned 15.5 sen per day. The highest-paying occupation for women was silk reeling, which paid 13.4 sen per day. Your students’ explanations for these wage differences (question #5) will naturally vary, but it would be good to point out that men’s work was not necessarily more difficult than women’s.

Possible answers for question #6 include pay scales based on age, experience, and seniority within a company. Some students might argue that pay scales based on race or ethnicity also exist in American society.

Note: It is not essential knowledge for the purposes of this exercise, but the numbers contained in the tables are listed in units of “sen.” Sen are no longer used in Japanese society, but 100 sen previously amounted to 1 yen, which is currently equivalent to 1 cent. In other words, the average wages of Japanese workers in 1892 hovered around 100 sen, or 1 cent, per week, unadjusted for inflation. This number is so low as to render it meaningless, but your students might expect you to translate the income into more familiar terms.
PART FIVE: Men’s Work, Women’s Work

Look at these two pictures, which show examples of “men’s work” and “women’s work” in late-nineteenth century Japan.

IMAGE 7: Men at work in Meiji Japan

IMAGE 8: Women working at a silk factory in Meiji Japan
Compare the pictures on the previous page, and answer the questions below.

1. Why do you think all of the metal workers are men? Why do you think all of the silk workers are women?

2. Which of the two groups of workers is wearing traditional Japanese clothing to work in? What might be a reason for this?

Now look at these charts that show wages for men and women and answer the questions below.

### Average Daily Wages for Men and Women in 1892, in sen*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALE OCCUPATIONS</th>
<th>FEMALE OCCUPATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carpentry: 26.7</td>
<td>Silk Reeling: 13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Working: 25.1</td>
<td>Agriculture: 9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day laboring: 18.3</td>
<td>Cotton spinning: 8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton spinning: 17.4</td>
<td>Weaving: 8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture: 15.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistics taken from *Factory Girls* by Patricia Tsurumi.

3. What is the lowest-paying occupation for men? How much money do they earn per day?

4. What is the highest-paying occupation for women? How much money do they earn per day?

5. What might be the reason for this difference in salaries? Do you think this pay scale is fair? Why? Why not?

6. Are there any pay scales in your country today? If so, what factors determine a worker’s salary? How do you feel about this? Would you want to make any changes to the system?
PART SIX: Social Protest

Students should understand that industrialization and the accompanying proliferation of factory-based production helped forge a new working-class identity. Factory workers often resented the comparably lavish lifestyle enjoyed by their managers and the factory owners, providing the impetus for the formation of new political associations in Japan (and elsewhere), such as trade unions. The Japanese political cartoon from the Taisho Era* (1912-26) included in this section displays frustration over an unjust division of wealth. The well-fed, western-dressed capitalist (pictured on the right side of the cartoon) is responsible for driving the price of rice beyond the reach of the Japanese housewife (pictured on the left), who is clad in more traditional garb. Responses to the writing activity will vary.

*Following the death of the Meiji Emperor in 1912, his son ascended the throne as the Taisho Emperor.

WORKERS’ PROTESTS IN JAPAN

The miners shown in this section are taking food and liquor from their company store. This specific action was part of a national wave of coal mine riots that broke out in 1918. Although relatively uninfluenced by liberal political ideals, Japanese miners began to use work slowdowns and strikes in order to force concessions from management with regard to wages and working conditions. Due to the buildup of methane gas in the mines and periodic explosions, mining was an enormously dangerous profession, resulting in several hundred deaths per year. Riots and looting of the company stores were tactics that Japanese miners occasionally employed to increase their bargaining power vis-à-vis their employers. It is also quite possible that the miners’ theft of food from their company stores was meant as a statement that their wages were not sufficient to meet the cost of living. In the picture of miners attacking their company store, the three uniformed men in the top-right corner appear to be policemen who were brought in to quash the riot. Students’ responses to the set of questions accompanying the picture to its right (depicting a rioting miner atop a flagpole) will vary, but they should understand the extent to which the rioting miners were seen as a threat to national stability. The Japanese government actively encouraged the mass production and export of coal (mainly to China) in order to offset the balance of trade. Thus, the government typically sided with large industrialists in their struggle with unruly employees, resulting in this case in the death of a rioting miner.

SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM

The material contained in this section provides background knowledge for students in compliance with California State Content Standard 10.3.6. The students should understand, however, that socialist and communist ideals made little inroads among laborers in Meiji- (1868-1912) and Taisho-era (1912-1926) Japan. Students should be encouraged to recognize that labor unrest in Japan existed independently of these European-based political theories. Although students’ responses to the discussion questions will vary, it should be clear that factory laborers would have been more likely to latch onto socialist and communist political programs than managers and owners would have been. Indeed, students should recognize that it was often in the owners’ vested interest to prevent such incendiary political ideals from spreading amongst their employees.
PART SIX: Social Protest

SOCIAL PROTEST: POLITICAL CARTOONS

1. How would you describe each of the two figures in the picture?
   
   Figure on the left?
   
   Figure on the right?

2. According to the artist, what is the problem with capitalism?

3. Do you agree or disagree with this view? Why? Why not?

WRITING ACTIVITY

This cartoon is missing a caption. Write your own caption to go with this picture:
**SOCIAL PROTEST: WORKERS’ PROTESTS IN JAPAN**

The following pictures show miners rioting in Taisho Japan (1912-1926). Study the pictures and answer the questions below.

![Image 10: Miners attack their company store](image)

The miners in the drawing above are looting the company store, which belongs to the company that employs them.

1. What do you think they are taking? Why are they doing this?

2. Who are the three men pictured in the top right corner supposed to be? How do you think they reacted to the rioting miners?

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**Glossary**

*miner:* someone whose job involves extracting ore and minerals (such as coal) from the earth.
In the picture above, a Japanese miner who has climbed up a telephone pole is about to throw dynamite at the (Japanese) soldiers. As you can see, the miner—dressed only in his underpants—is smoking a cigarette and his left arm is covered in tattoos. According to the picture’s original caption, the soldiers eventually shot him.

1. Why do you think the rioter climbed up the telephone pole?

2. Why do you think the rioter and the soldiers are trying to injure each other?

3. Why are soldiers present at the riot? What do you think they are protecting?
WRITING ACTIVITY

Imagine that you are an American newspaper reporter in Japan. You have just witnessed the worker’s riot shown in the pictures on the previous pages. Write a newspaper article for your readers back in the United States.

Some issues you may want to address are:

1) The conditions of industrialization that may have led these workers to riot;
2) Specific complaints that these particular workers may have had;
3) Descriptions of the riots themselves;
4) Whether or not you think these protesters might have been successful, and why you think so.
SOCIAL PROTEST: SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM

The growth of industrial capitalism strengthened national economies and brought material benefits to society. However, many critics condemned factory labor as a social evil and argued that capitalism increased the gap between the rich and the poor. Some intellectuals tried to develop solutions that would eliminate all of the problems they saw in their societies. Socialist was one of these solutions. Socialists believed in the power of human progress and reason. Under Socialism, property (including farms, factories, and railroads) would be owned by the people as a whole, instead of by wealthy individuals.

Building on the ideas of Socialism, Karl Marx and others developed a political idea known as Communism. Marx argued that all human history was a history of class struggle. Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, he felt that the working masses of Europe were engaged in a class struggle against a wealthy minority of factory owners and capitalists. Marx felt that the governments of that era fought for the interests of the wealthiest members of society rather than the population as a whole. In The Communist Manifesto (1848), he encouraged workers across the world to unite and overthrow their governments.

1. If you had been a factory worker in the nineteenth century, do you think you would have been attracted to these ideas? Why? Why not?

2. How would you have felt about Marx’s ideas if you had been a factory owner? What could you have done to stop socialist and communist ideas from spreading amongst your workers?

3. What do you think are some of the problems of Socialism (or Communism) as political systems? Do you think socialist or communist governments can be effective? Why? Why not?
LIST OF IMAGES

The Industrial Revolution: Japan

**Cover Image:** John Thomson, “Flower Market Women and ‘Corduroy,’ Covent Garden.” Reproduced with permission from London’s Transport Museum/Transport for London.
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/asia.gif
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“The curriculum in World History shows students that history matters. Demonstrating the connections among regions that shaped a global economy and society, these innovative curricular units also show students how to build bridges between the past and the present. Correlated with the California State Content Standards for tenth grade world history, these units in world history take young historians from the industrial revolution of the late eighteenth century to the Cold War.”

—Robert G. Moeller, Professor of History and Faculty Director of the California History-Social Science Project, University of California, Irvine

**CALIFORNIA HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS ADDRESSED**

**10.3**
Students analyze the effects of the Industrial Revolution in Japan.

**10.3.2**
Examine how scientific and technological changes and new forms of energy brought about massive social, economic, and cultural change.

**10.3.4**
Trace the evolution of work and labor, including the effects of mining and manufacturing, division of labor, and the union movement.

**10.3.5**
Understand the connections among natural resources, entrepreneurship, labor, and capital in an industrial economy.