



Establishing Modern Japan

TERMS & NAMES

Meiji Restoration

Hiroshima

Nagasaki

homogeneous

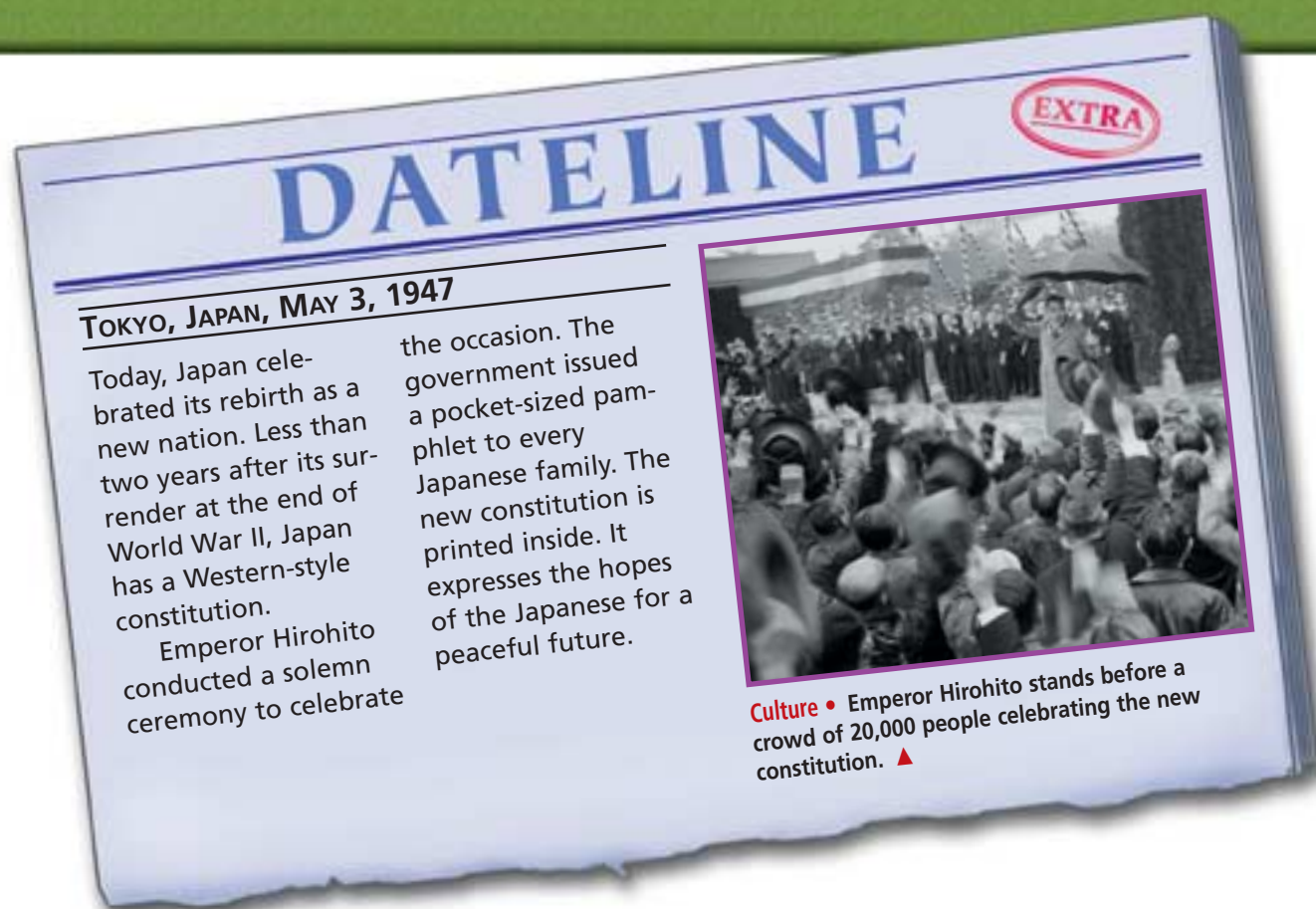
Ainu

MAIN IDEA

After World War II, the Japanese built a modern industrial economy that is one of the largest in the world.

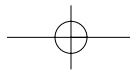
WHY IT MATTERS NOW

One challenge for Japan is to protect its unique identity even as it welcomes influences from the rest of the world.



History

The people of Japan have seen remarkable changes in the past century, not just in their country's government, but also in its economy and its relations with the rest of the world. From the mid-1600s to the 1800s, Japan was a fairly isolated nation. It traded with China but was unaffected by the rest of the world.



The Meiji Restoration Japan's location made it a convenient place for ships sailing from the United States to stop and replenish supplies of food and fuel. In 1853, American naval vessels commanded by Commodore Matthew C. Perry landed in Japan. Perry used a show of force to open Japan to Western contact, ending nearly 200 years of Japanese isolation.

In 1867, a group of samurai overthrew the ruling Tokugawa Shogunate and restored the emperor as head of government. The period that followed, from 1868 through 1911, became known as the **Meiji Restoration**, because the new emperor was called Meiji (MAY-jee). During this time, the Japanese people built modern industries and developed the economy. Japan became wealthy and powerful. Following a series of wars, Japan assumed control of Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria.

In the Early 1900s Japan, allied with the United States, Britain, and France, defeated Germany in World War I and thus was able to expand its holdings of ex-German colonies in the Pacific. The Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923 hurt Japan's economy, and like much of the world, Japan was affected by the Great Depression. During the 1930s, the military took control of Japan's government. In 1937, Japan invaded China and became involved in a long war there. Also at this time, Japan developed closer relations with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. As a result, the United States stopped selling oil to Japan. In 1941, Japan bombed the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, bringing the United States into World War II.

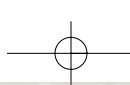
World War II By 1942, the Japanese military had won many victories in East Asia and the South Pacific. But in June 1942, Japan lost the Battle of Midway; and in February 1943, it lost a battle on Guadalcanal Island. These defeats turned the tide of the war.



Culture •
A Japanese artist painted this scene of Commodore Perry in Japan in 1853. ▲

Reading Social Studies

A. Summarizing
What factors contributed to instability in Japan in the early 1900s?



Place • This scene of Nagasaki after the bombing shows only a few buildings still standing. ▲

In 1945, the United States dropped atomic bombs on two Japanese cities—**Hiroshima** (heer•uh•SHEE•muh) and **Nagasaki** (nah•guh•SAH•kee). Emperor Hirohito then agreed to surrender, putting an end to the war.

Economy and Government

After World War II, Japan's economy and government were in shambles. Its cities had been bombed. Many Japanese were homeless and without jobs.

Economy The Japanese values of hard work and saving money helped to rebuild the economy. The United States also gave Japan help through loans and advice. By the mid-1950s, Japanese industrial production matched its prewar levels. Today, Japan has one of the most powerful economies in the world.

Like the United States, Japan encourages free enterprise. This type of system can motivate people to develop new ideas as well as to expand their businesses with little government interference.

Women and the Economy Women's participation in the work force has grown since World War II. However, discrimination exists, and long-held ideas about women's roles as mother and housekeeper are changing very slowly. Approximately two-fifths of Japanese women hold jobs, but many of these jobs are temporary or part-time. Few women hold management positions.

Culture • Many Japanese women, like this one, hold jobs in business and industry. ▼





Government After World War II, the United States occupied Japan until 1952. It helped set up a new government. Under the new constitution, the rights and responsibilities of the Japanese are similar to those of Americans.

Today, Japan has a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary government. The Diet is the highest law-making body in the country. Before 1945, Japan's emperor was the head of the government. He is now a symbolic head of state.

Culture

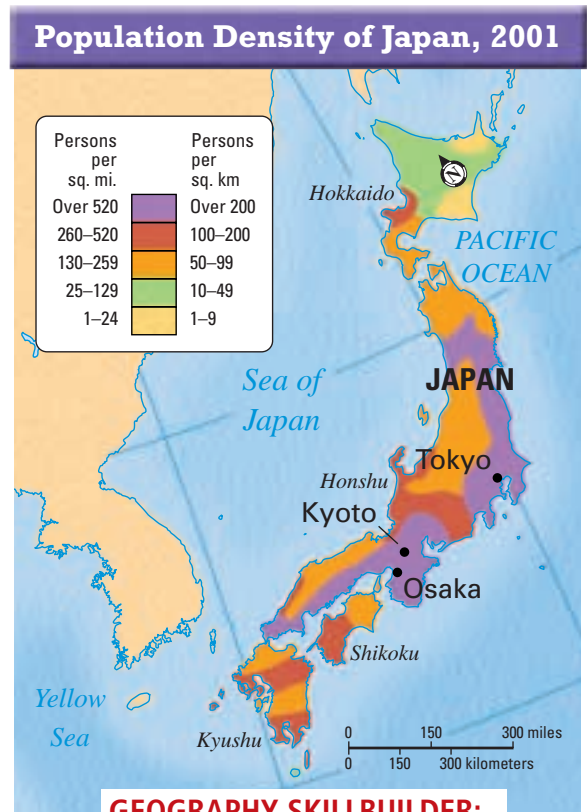
Japan's population is **homogeneous**, or largely the same. Most of its people are descended from the Mongolian people who settled Japan thousands of years ago. The exception is the approximately 15,000 Ainu (EYE·noo) people. Scholars believe that the **Ainu** came to Japan from Europe well before the other settlers arrived.

Social Behavior In Western culture, especially in the United States, people think of themselves first as individuals. In Japan, as in most of Asia, people think of themselves first as part of a group. Social behavior in Japan is governed by an idea the Japanese call *on* (ohn). This value is based on Confucian principles about proper relationships. The Japanese take the relationship between children and their elders particularly seriously. People always display respectful behavior toward their parents and elders. They also put the needs of their parents and elders before their own needs. Japanese people also seriously consider an elder's judgment when making important decisions.

Reading Social Studies

B. Forming and Supporting Opinions What is your opinion of putting the group ahead of the individual? What are the pros and cons of it?

Urban Living More than 90 percent of Japanese families live in urban areas. Many people live in apartment buildings, in part because there is not much space for single-family homes; because of this, owning a home is very expensive.



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting a Map

- Place** • How many people per square mile live on the islands of Kyushu and Shikoku?
- Place** • Which large island has regions with only 1 to 24 people per square mile?



Culture • Excited fans release balloons before a baseball game at the Fukuoka Dome on the island of Kyushu. ▲

Many people commute to their jobs or to school. Most major cities have subway systems. During rush hour, these trains are packed with people traveling to and from work. High-speed commuter trains connect many of the big cities.

The fastest trains reach speeds of 160 miles an hour. Railway tunnels also connect the islands. The world's first undersea railway tunnel was built to connect the islands of Kyushu and Honshu.

Cultural Exchange Some aspects of Japanese culture have gained popularity in the United States in recent years. These include the Japanese tea ceremony, sushi, and Japanese flower arranging. Japanese gardens, which stress simplicity in design, have been built in many parts of the world. Bonsai (bahn•SY)—the art of growing tiny, elegant plants and trees—has also gained popularity.

Two sports are wildly popular in Japan, both having come to Japan from other parts of the world. Baseball and soccer games draw enormous crowds. Today, several of Japan's top baseball players, such as Ichiro Suzuki, play on U.S. teams.

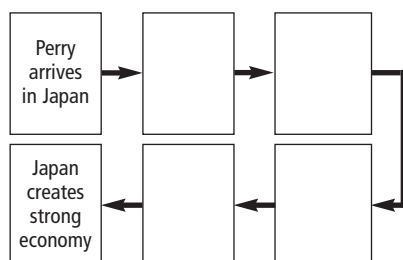
SECTION 5 ASSESSMENT

Terms & Names

1. Identify: (a) Meiji Restoration (b) Hiroshima (c) Nagasaki
(d) homogeneous (e) Ainu

Taking Notes

2. Use a sequence chart like this one to list the events leading to the growth of Japan's modern economy.



Main Ideas

3. (a) How did World War II affect Japan's economy?
(b) What effect has Confucianism had on the daily lives of the Japanese?
(c) How has Japan been influenced by other cultures?

Critical Thinking

4. Analyzing Causes

Why do you think Japan is such a densely populated country?

Think About

- ♦ Japan's land area and geographic features
- ♦ social and cultural beliefs
- ♦ standard of living

ACTIVITY -OPTION-

Plan the **schedule** of a Japanese Culture Day. Think about what activities you might have, what speakers you could invite, and what you would want participants to learn about Japan.