Ancient China & Japan

Outcome: Early Japan
4. Describe feudalism in Japan and specifically how the samurai were a part of it:
What will we learn?

1. Japanese geography
2. Early Japanese culture
3. Japanese Feudalism
1. **Setting the Stage:**

   a. Japan lies just **east** of **China**
   
   b. Japan got its name from Chinese word “**ri-ben**” which means “land of the **rising sun**”
   
   c. Japan has **borrowed** ideas, institutions, and culture **from China** for thousands of years
   
   d. Japanese culture is **not as old** as China’s but is still very rich and unique
East Asia
Early Japan

2. Geography of Japan
   a. Japan is made up of 4,000 islands which makes it an archipelago; 1,200 miles long
   b. Historically, the Japanese have lived on the four largest islands:
      i. Hokkaido
      ii. Honshu
      iii. Shikoku
      iv. Kyushu
Early Japan

c. Southern Japan has a **mild climate** with plenty of **rainfall**

d. Japan is very **mountainous**; roughly only **12%** of the land is suitable for farming

e. **Natural resources** are in short supply (coal, oil, iron ore)

f. Tropical storms called **typhoons** can occur during late summer and early fall

g. **Earthquakes** and **tidal** waves are also dangerous threats to the islands
3. Early Japan

a. Japanese culture is very old, however first written records only date back to 1st Century B.C.

b. During 1st century B.C., Japan was not unified as a nation; hundreds of clans controlled their own territories.

c. Yamato clan established itself as the leading clan by 400 A.D.

d. Yamato chiefs called themselves emperors; gradually accepted into Japanese culture.

e. When one clan was defeated, the winning clan claimed control of the emperor.
Early Japan

f. Each clan worshipped its own gods and goddesses
g. Beliefs combined to form Japan’s earliest religion: Shinto
   i. Shinto meant “way of the gods”
   ii. Shinto was based on respect for forces of nature and worship of ancestors
   iii. Worshipers believed in “kami” or divine spirits that dwelled in nature
Early Japan

4. Japanese Culture
   a. Buddhism
      i. Korean travelers brought Buddhism; was officially accepted by Japanese imperial court in mid-700s.
      ii. Buddhism spread but Japanese never abandoned Shinto
      iii. Some Buddhist rituals became Shinto rituals and some Shinto gods and goddesses were worshiped in Buddhist temples.
b. Borrowing from China

i. Interest in Buddhist ideas grew into enthusiasm for all things Chinese

ii. Prince Shotoku (a Buddhist convert) sent first of three missions to China

iii. Goal was to study Chinese civilization
Early Japan

iv. The Japanese adopted the following Chinese ideas:

1. **Style of writing**
2. **Landscape painting**
3. **Cooking**
4. **Gardening**
5. **Drinking Tea**
6. **Hairdressing**
7. **Civil-service system** (failed in Japan)
Early Japan

c. The Heian Period

i. In the late 700s, the imperial court moved from Nara to Heian

ii. Many of Japan’s noble families moved to Heian as well

iii. Became known as the Heian period (794-1185)

iv. Rules dictated every aspect of court life (color of robes, length of sword, etc)

v. Etiquette was extremely important; laughing in public was frowned upon

vi. Everyone at court was expected to write poetry and to paint

vii. The best written accounts of Heian life come from diaries, essays, and novels written by the women of the court

viii. Lady Murasaki’s The Tale of Genji is considered the world’s first novel
5. **Japanese Feudalism**

a. Heian period would be challenged by great land owners and clan chiefs

b. Landowners acted as more independent rulers and set up private armies

c. Small landowners traded parts of their land to strong warlords for protection which began the feudal system in Japan
d. **Feudalism**: period of Japanese history where the country was dominated by powerful regional families (daimyo) and ruled militarily by the shogun.

e. The emperor was the figurehead at the top of Japanese society.

f. Often the shogun, or “supreme general of the emperor’s army” had powers of a military dictator; real power of Japan.

 g. Landowners (daimyo) surrounded themselves with loyal bodyguards called **Samurai**.
Samurai who chose not to commit seppuku upon death of his master
Early Japan

h. Samurai lived by a demanding behavior code called **Bushido**: “the way of the warrior”

i. Samurai were expected to show **reckless courage** and die an honorable death

j. If dishonored, Samurai could earn honor back by **seppuku**; ritualistic **suicide**

k. By the 1200s, the shoguns headquartered in Kamakura ruled through **puppet emperors** which lasted until 1868 in Japan
Early Japan

- Result: Due to lack of written records, Japanese history can only be traced back a little over 2,000 years. Japan’s culture borrowed heavily from the Chinese and soon made their culture their own.
Constructive Response Question

4. Describe feudalism in Japan and specifically how the samurai were a part of it: