

Environmental policies of the Tokugawa shogunate

Lesson Map: <http://esriaustralia.com.au/education/SpatialActivity88>

Engage

Historical context

- ➔ Click on the map URL above to open the StoryMap. The title page will be displayed. Scroll down to the section titled *Historical context* to begin.
- ➔ Read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss if necessary.
- ➔ Scroll down to the sections titled *Land and power* and *Japan's logging history*. Read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss if necessary.
- Refer to **Map 1** and **Map 2** on the StoryMap to answer the following questions.
- ? Which areas of Japan were logged by 800 CE? [*According to Map 1, significant areas of the Kinai Basin were logged by 800 CE. These areas included northern Honshu, approximately half of Shikoku and all of Kyushu.*]
- ? By 1700, approximately how much of Japan appears to have been logged? [*By 1700, approximately 80% of Japan's forests appeared to have been logged. The only major island that appeared largely unscathed by this time was Hokkaido.*]
- ? Observe *Map 2: Elevation and terrain in Japan*. As one can see, Japan's main islands are very mountainous. However, these mountains were also covered in forests prior to Japan's extensive logging efforts. What major problem would the removal of substantial forests have created on this steeply sloping terrain? [*By removing the trees and vegetation of forests in the mountain regions, the Japanese people largely expanded the risks of landslides and avalanches. The root systems of these forests would have been crucially responsible for holding topsoil, land and snow in place. Without these root systems, nothing would keep the land stable in the event of strong weather events, like storms and strong winds.*]
- ➔ Scroll down to the sections titled *History of Japan's forestry practices*. Read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss if necessary.
- Engage with the timeline on the StoryMap to answer the following questions.

Download student worksheet [here](#).

Time
60 minutes

Activity

Investigate how the Tokugawa shogunate regulated forestry and land use in Japan

Learning Outcome

Students will be able to:

- Understand and define key historical terms and concepts
- Understand the measures put in place by the Tokugawa shogunate to regulate forestry practices and land use
- Analyse the reliability of sources (TADPOLE)
- Identify evidence in sources to formulate responses

ACARA Curriculum Link

Year 8 History: Japan under the Shoguns (c.794 – 1867)

[ACDSEH012](#) | [ACDSEH064](#) | [ACHHS148](#) | [ACHHS149](#) | [ACHHS152](#) | [ACHHS154](#) | [ACHHS157](#)

Teacher Feedback:

To share your feedback on this, or any Spatial Activity, please contact education@esriaustralia.com.au

- ? What reasons for logging in Japan may have been considered ‘predation’ practices? *[Ancient predation practices may have included collecting timber for heating during winters or for building small housing and shelters. Early modern predation practices may have included logging to meet housing demands for a rapidly growing population.]*
- ? What periods were defined by exploitation forestry? What reasons may have contributed to the exploitation forestry that defined these periods? *[Student answers may vary. Example response: The Heian, Kamakura and Ashikaga periods all practiced exploitation forestry. A significant reason that may have contributed to this exploitation was that during these periods, wars and conflicts often broke out between daimyo. These wars and conflicts would have required the cutting down of forests to make castles and strongholds, weapons and space for more agricultural land so as to collect more taxes in order to pay for the costs of these wars and conflicts.]*
- ? The Tokugawa period saw the fastest growth in the Japanese population, with an approximate population increase of 19 million people in 150 years. What factors may have led to this period having such a rapid population increase? *[Student answers may vary. Example response: Tokugawa control over Japan brought with it an extended era of peace and unity. As a result of this peace and unity, there was no significant war or conflict in Japan for approximately 250 years. This allowed the Japanese to focus on cultural and social development, which most likely also encouraged the population to grow unimpeded by war, conflict, and the hardships and instability that usually accompanied these troubling times.]*

Explore

Japan faces the environmental issue of deforestation: TADPOLE analysis

- Scroll down to the next heading titled *Japan faces environmental issue of deforestation* and read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss as necessary.
- Engage with the source titled *Japan’s forests: Good days and bad – rhythms of damage and recovery*, to answer the following questions.
- ? Identify three (3) reasons mentioned in the source for why the daimyo had their land cleared. *[The daimyo cleared their lands of forests to (1) gain more agricultural land for taxation purposes, (2) to bolster their political images by constructing palaces, mansions, temples and shrines, and (3) to produce the amount of land needed to*

house hundreds of thousands of residents.]

- ? Perform a **TADPOLE** analysis on this source to determine the reliability of the source. To complete this TADPOLE in a detailed manner, you will need to access information about the author and website of the source. You can find both in the bibliographic details that appear above the source excerpt on the StoryMap. *[Answers will vary but model response provided below.]*

Type of source (Primary / Secondary) [textbook / diary entry]	<i>This source is a secondary source that appears to be an educational / informative article on Japan's forestry practices throughout different historical periods. The source appears on an educational website, aimed at providing educators information and resources that assist them in teaching about Japan.</i>
Author (and qualifications / background)	<i>The author of this source is Conrad Totman, which is listed at the beginning of the webpage article. Upon further research, Conrad Totman is a professor who specialises in Japanese history and is considered an authority on multiple Japanese topics, having authored several books including 'A History of Japan' (2004).</i>
Date of publication	<i>There is no date of publication provided for when this source went live on the website. The website does have a copyright date of 2021.</i>
Purpose	<i>The purpose of the article appears to provide an informative overview of Japan's logging forestry practices and how these practices were related to the social, economic and political development of the country. The purpose of the specific source excerpt is to provide a succinct list of reasons as to why Japan's landowners encouraged the clearance of forests.</i>
Opinion or fact	<i>This excerpt is entirely factual as it simply outlines a list of reasons as to why Japan's landowners encouraged land clearance in the Kinai Basin.</i>
Language	<i>The language in this excerpt is informative, rather than emotive. It succinctly lists its facts, whilst omitting emotive or overly descriptive language.</i>
Evidence	<i>Student chooses suitable piece of evidence that aptly reflects their analysis on 'purpose', 'opinion or fact' and 'language'. For example: "The rulers encouraged land clearance and the planting of rice as a source of regular tribute (taxation) to support the daimyo...in the Kinai Basin."</i>

Explain

Japan faces the environmental issue of deforestation: contributing factors

- Scroll down on the StoryMap. The StoryMap will explore 4 contributing factors to the exploitation forestry practices of Japan. Begin by reading the section titled *Agriculture and the rice economy*. Take notes if required and stop to discuss as

necessary.

- Scroll down to the next heading titled *Building and architecture* and read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss as necessary.
- Scroll down to the next heading titled *Population increase and urbanisation* and read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss as necessary.
- Scroll down to the next heading titled *Catastrophic fires* and read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss as necessary.
- ? Rate the four contributing factors to Japanese forestry practices from most severe to least severe. After you have completed your ratings, justify the choice you rated as 'most severe'. [*Student ratings and justifications will vary. Example response: (1) Agriculture and rice economy, (2) Population increase and urbanisation, (3) Building and architecture, (4) Catastrophic fires. Forest clearance, to make way for agriculture, is the most severe of the four factors ranked above. This is because landowners would have been cutting large amounts of forests down to expand their wealth and power.*]

Extend

Environmental policies implemented by the Tokugawa shogunate

- Scroll down to the major heading titled *Environmental policies implemented by the Tokugawa shogunate*. This section contains three actions that took place during the Tokugawa shogunate to protect and restore Japan's forests. Read through each action and take notes if required. Stop to discuss if necessary.
- ? What actions improved the lives of farmers and peasants? Explain your response. [*New agricultural practices and technologies greatly improved the lives of farmers and peasants. Guidebooks allowed farmers to become better educated and make informed decisions when it came to their trade, whilst new technologies allowed them to perform their duties more quickly and more effectively.*]
- ? What policies restricted the power and influence of the daimyo? How? [*The decision to introduce and enforce strict logging policies and regulations would have significantly restricted the daimyo from being able to amass more power, influence, and wealth. This is because the daimyo were previously able to control the forests that resided on their own land, meaning that they could easily clear forested land, allowing them to sell the timber for profits and establish more land for agriculture. By regulating what the daimyo were able to do with their forests, the shoguns could directly limit any daimyo from becoming too wealthy or powerful.*]

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