

LESSON PLAN – THE TEA CULTURE

TITLE: The Tea Culture

TIME: 60-90 minutes

LEARNER POPULATION: grade level 6

CURRICULAR CONTEXT: part of Social Studies; unit: Ancient Civilizations, Asia

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this activity:

- 1) Students will be able to narrate important milestones in the history of tea in China and Japan.
- 2) Students will be able to describe different types of tea and the benefits related to drinking tea.
- 3) Students will be able to identify certain objects and elements which are important in tea ceremonies.
- 4) Students will be able to pronounce the names of these objects and elements in Japanese.

CONCEPTS/INFORMATION:

- The history of drinking tea in China and Japan
- The use of tea as medicine, refreshment, for religious purposes and as an indicator of social status
- Necessary utensils for conducting a tea ceremony.

INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE:

- 1) Introduce students to the topic by asking what their favorite drink is and how many of them drink tea. Explain that over half of the world's population drinks tea. The British drink the most tea: 2,000 cups per person annually. Also in China, Japan and India, people drink lots of tea.

- 2) Introduce students to the Chinese and Japanese tea culture by having them read the introductory text.
- 3) Students work in groups to answer the questions on the work sheet. Encourage students to take up different roles within the group (praiser, checker, recorder, task monitor, gate keeper).
- 4) Groups record back to the whole class and discuss their answers.
- 5) Students do a Word search and/or a Crossword puzzle where they learn important terms of the tea culture and also the Japanese words for them.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS: Background Information Tea Culture; glossary of terms; Word search and Crossword puzzle; work sheet; handout group roles

EXTENSION/CLOSURE/INTEGRATION:

- 1) Students construct the model of a teahouse.
- 2) The tea ceremony can be seen as a key element in traditional Japanese culture.
Does American culture have a similar institution?

The Origin of Tea Culture in Asian countries

One of the earliest legends about the origin of tea in China dates back to the year 2737 B.C. Emperor Shen Nung discovered that water that had been boiled before drinking would prevent illnesses. One day, when his pot of boiling water was set outside to cool off, the wind blew leaves from the wild camellia tree into the water. Supposedly, this was the first brew of tea!

The tea plant (*camellia sinensis*) is a tree with leathery leaves that sprout from short branches off the stem. These trees can grow up to 15 feet, but they are cut down to the size of a bush to encourage the growth of young leaves from which the tea is made.



*Camellia
Sinensis*

Source:
[www.teatalk.com/
general/tprint.htm](http://www.teatalk.com/general/tprint.htm)

There are three classifications of tea, which are determined by the method of processing the leaves: “green,” “oolong” and “black” tea. Green tea is unfermented which means that the leaves have not been left out to dry in the air; its leaves are steamed in a pan for 30 minutes. Oolong tea is semi-fermented, which means that the tea leaves are left to dry in the shade for 5 hours; afterwards, they are roasted over a fire for 10 minutes, rolled and twisted; then the leaves are re-fired in a bamboo basket for 3 to 12 hours before packing. Fully fermented is only black tea; the leaves are allowed to dry for up to 24 hours, then rolled, sifted and spread out again for a couple of hours; afterwards, they are fired.

Drinking tea, hot and cold, brings various health benefits with it. Tea contains many vitamins and even some minerals, such as fluoride. Furthermore, it is a stimulant, because it contains caffeine which stimulates clear thinking and mental alertness. Regular tea drinking promotes digestion, dissolves fats, neutralizes poisons inside your digestive system, and lowers fevers. Some experts say that after cooling off it can also be used to clean sores and wash out the eyes and mouth.

At the beginning, tea in China was only used as medicine. It was not until the 6th century, when emperors, priests and upper class members started drinking tea as refreshment. The world's first book on tea was written in 760 by a Buddhist priest Lu Wu. Within the book, he outlines the correct way of making tea, including the exact water temperature and the right use of utensils. Over the years, it became a habit for people to drink tea. Among intellectuals and the upper class, it was a sign of social status if they had a tea collection. Today's China has many tea houses, where people go to drink tea, meet friends, listen to music and poetry. The first tea houses were built during the Tang Dynasty (618-907); however, these were only open to the wealthy. During the Ming Dynasty, tea houses became public places for everyone. With the beginning of Communist rule in China at the end of the 1940s, tea houses almost completely vanished, but since the late 1970s, there has been an upward trend again, and people are yearning for old times and traditions.



Traditional tea house in Japan
Source: Pardee Home Museum

Tea grew naturally in China, and later came to Japan through intercultural exchange and trade. Similar to the early period in China, tea in Japan was only intended for priests and nobles, and for monks during religious ceremonies. Around 800, when relations between Japan and China became tense, Japan did not follow China's habit of tea drinking for ordinary people. Not until the 12th century was tea reintroduced to Japan. A Japanese priest, Myoan Eisai, left for China to study philosophy and religion. Upon his return in 1191, he brought tea seeds with him. In 1211, he wrote the first Japanese book on tea, which explained the health benefits of drinking tea and thereby added to the beverage's popularity. By the 13th century, tea was grown in different parts of Japan to meet the growing demand.

With tea drinking becoming more popular, certain rules became associated with it. These rules were set up by so-called tea masters. They were masters in performing the tea ceremony, and each one of them had a particular style. One of the people responsible for this trend was Rikyu (1521-1591). He was probably the most important Japanese tea master who ever lived, since his rules of etiquette are still followed today, and many

schools base their teachings on his principles. Rikyu created the art of *Chanoyu* (“boiling water for tea”), the tea ritual of serving thick tea. Within this ritual, the beauty of art and nature is expressed, and it requires a set sequence of serving tea with specific utensils. To become a true master in the tea ceremony, many years of training are necessary.

The following is a simplified version of a Japanese tea ceremony for serving thick tea (Japanese: *koicha*). The outline follows Fukukita’s *Tea Cult of Japan. An Aesthetic Pastime* from 1935. One person is the host of the ceremony. She has to bow before entering the room. Then she brings in the necessary utensils, like the water jar, a tea scoop (Japanese: *chashaku*) (carried in the right hand), and a bowl (Japanese: *chawan*) containing the whisk (Japanese: *chasen*) (carried in the left hand) and a linen cloth for wiping the bowl (Japanese: *chakin*). The host sits in front of the hearth, where a fire is started. The bowl has to be rinsed ceremoniously before water and tea powder can be mixed in it. Boiling water is poured over the powder and stirred until it becomes frothy.

Tea is always served first to the main guest who bows to the other guests – apologizing for being the first to drink. The correct way to hold a tea bowl is to place it on the palm of the left hand and to protect it with the right hand. After drinking, each guest compliments the host on the consistency and flavor of the tea, wipes the edge of the bowl with a piece of paper and then places it in front of him or herself. This is the time for admiring the bowl and other tea utensils, since they are treasured objects in which the owner takes a lot of pride. After *Chanoyu*, there is oftentimes another tea ceremony – a serving of thin tea – which is less formal and allows guests to talk more freely.

The place where the ceremony takes place is inside a teahouse (Japanese: *soan*) or a tearoom attached to a building. It is usually a small room (~ 9.5 square feet), which is

furnished in a simple way. The floor is covered by *tatami* (Japanese) straw mats; there are simple flower arrangements and some art objects hanging on the walls. The decoration is kept in such a sober way so as not to deter from the ceremony and its meditative powers. Participants of the ceremony communicate with the inner nature of things, and it is through plainness and simplicity that this inner nature is revealed and a calm atmosphere is created. This demonstrates the influence of Zen philosophy on the tea ceremony. The entrance (Japanese: *nijiriguchi*) to the teahouse is rather small and forces guests to crawl in, which enforces the idea that they are in a very special place. The lighting is low and calming. There is a separate room or area (Japanese: *mizuya*) within the teahouse which is used for doing preparation work. It contains shelves with utensils, a place for storing charcoal and a source of fresh water. The house itself is made out of inexpensive materials, with clay walls and constructed from wood, such as cedar, bamboo and pine. Harmony with nature is at the heart of the tea ceremony, and it is seen as the best way to sharpen the senses to aesthetic appreciation. This motto can be seen in the architecture of teahouses and gardens, as they are designed to carefully blend in with their surroundings.

Today, the tea ceremony is part of Japan's and China's rich traditions, but not many people are interested in learning how to conduct those ceremonies anymore. It is mostly women who engage in this activity as a pastime, but hardly any young people get involved in it. However, this does not mean that drinking tea is not popular. It is very common to drink tea with your meals or just by itself, albeit not in such a ritualized way anymore. Moreover, tea is not only popular in Asian countries; actually the country with the most tea drinkers is Britain. The British drink about 2,000 cups per person each year.

Work sheet

1) What is the botanical name for the tea plant?

2) Name three different types of tea, and what are their differences.

3) List the health benefits of drinking tea.

4) How did tea come from China to Japan?

5) Name one famous tea master. Why is he so important for the Japanese tea culture?

6) List five different utensils used in a tea ceremony.

7) Describe the architecture and interior design of a teahouse.

8) Do you drink tea? Why or why not?

Word Search

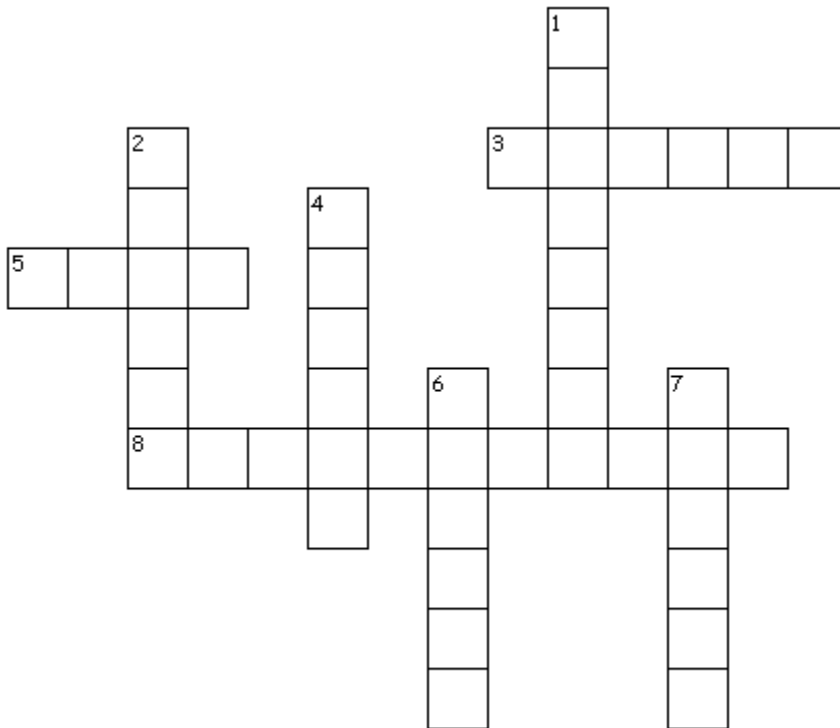
Find the following words:

BOWL
CLOTH
STRAWMAT
TEAHOUSE
TEASCOOP
WHISK

S H C F P X Q B V J A I R G T
I P Q K F N M O H N V C B N A
Z D P E Q V B W K D Z U Y P M
L E C H Y N T L P W G A G K W
M D S Y U H U O Q Y J I D A A
L C I U S X O H O U U N J A R
H Q L J O C N Q K B L X R D T
R A D O S H Q X N L P V V R S
V S Q A T X A W H I S K B E U
F I E E Y H S E H F A X K Z Q
M T S B Q D J X T E O A D Y C
Y B P F S L I L Y N C K O H M
M S X N D Z P A A O R U Z V P
V N I U P N Q D X Y X E R C F
H K Y Q F K Y C V O P X E I Y

Crossword Puzzle

Fill in the Japanese words for each term!



Across

- 3. straw mat
- 5. teahouse
- 8. small entrance

Down

- 1. tea scoop
- 2. bowl
- 4. cloth
- 6. preparation room
- 7. whisk

Japanese Terms: Tea Ceremony

a) Teahouse

teahouse – soan
straw mat – tatami
small entrance – nijiriguchi
preparation room/area – mizuya

b) Tea utensils

tea scoop – chashaku
bowl – chawan
whisk – chasen
cloth for wiping bowl – chakin

Roles for Group work

When doing group work, assign students different roles that let them practice leadership. Please also rotate the roles.

Checker: responsible for the agreement within the group. Does everybody understand what the others are talking about?

Praiser: praises students' ideas, behavior and contributions.

Recorder: records what is said in the group, and later shares it with the whole class.

Task monitor: watches the clock and keeps the group on task.

Gate keeper: encourages all the students' participation and makes sure that no one is too dominant.

→ Assigning these roles encourages a positive interdependence among students.

Source: Campbell, D. (2004). *Choosing Democracy: A Practical Guide to Multicultural Education (Third Edition)*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

LESSON PLAN – DESIGN YOUR OWN TEA BOWL

TITLE: Design your own tea bowl

TIME: 2 lessons, each 45 minutes

LEARNER POPULATION: grade level 6

CURRICULAR CONTEXT: part of Social Studies; unit: Ancient Civilizations, Asia

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this activity:

- 1) Student will be able to describe the different shapes, materials and designs of tea bowls.
- 2) Student will identify what Asian tea bowls look like.
- 3) Student will have learned how to work with clay, how to shape an object, and how to color it.

CONCEPTS/INFORMATION:

- What is the shape of an Asian tea bowl?
- What material is used?
- What is the design of an Asian tea bowl?

INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE:

- 1) Show photos of tea pots that have been collected by Mrs. Helen Pardee and are now kept in the Pardee Home Museum. Talk about the necessary utensils for brewing tea: tea pot, water pot, strainer, tea bowls.
- 2) Bring in Asian tea bowls (or Western mugs) and let students explore the different shapes, materials and designs.
- 3) Inform students that they will make their own tea bowls today.
- 4) Present the classroom with all necessary materials.
- 5) Explain to students how to work with clay. First, clay needs to be kneaded until it is very soft and there are no more thick pieces inside. Second, students can

either build up the tea bowl, by using the coiling technique, or use a wheel. Note the importance of placing the clay right in the middle of the wheel; otherwise it will not be symmetrical. Third, students can either make a simple bowl or attach one or more handles to it. Note the importance of making the joint strong enough; otherwise the handle might break off after firing. Fourth, students can incise designs into their bowls by using tooth picks.

5) Ask students to store their bowls in a safe place where they can dry.

6) After the bowls have dried, students can paint their bowls and design them in the way they want them to be. Then, the bowls need to dry again. The painting can be omitted to save expenses.

7) Teacher fires all tea bowls, either in a pottery kiln if available at the school, or bowls might be taken to a pottery where they could be fired. If there is no possibility to fire the bowls, they might be used as decoration, or to store pencils, etc. in them.

8) Students admire each other's tea bowls.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS: Photos of tea pots at Pardee Home Museum; information on photos; tea bowls (can be bought in Chinatown inexpensively); clay; aprons or clothes that can get dirty; tooth picks; paint such as slips or glazes

EXTENSION/CLOSURE/INTEGRATION:

1) Students can stage their own tea ceremony and use their self-made tea bowls.



Blue and white teapot



Teapot made from copper



Teapot



Teapot with apple design



Teapot with bats design



Black iron teapot



Teapot with Elephant design



Teapot made from clay



The tallest pot in Mrs. Pardee's collection

Museum Catalogue Information on Objects

Unfortunately, the museum catalogues contain very little information about the teapot collection of Mrs. Pardee. However, just by looking at their design, size and material, students can still get a pretty good sense of the diversity of the collection.

Blue and white teapot

Teapot made from copper

Teapot with swirl design

Includes strainer

Small teapot with apple design

Glazed. Body of pot is an apple, with branches-decoration

Teapot with bats design

Unglazed. Bats-design

Black iron teapot

Teapot made from clay

Rectangular design

Teapot with Elephant Design

Body of pot is an elephant

The tallest pot in Mrs. Pardee's teapot collection

35 cm tall, 30 cm diameter

LESSON PLAN – ADVERTISING FOR TEA

TITLE: Advertising for tea

TIME: 60 minutes

LEARNER POPULATION: grade level 6

CURRICULAR CONTEXT: part of Social Studies; unit: Ancient Civilizations, Asia

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this activity:

- 1) Students will be able to identify various design strategies of successful advertising.
- 2) Students will be able to develop their own advertising poster for tea.

CONCEPTS/INFORMATION:

- Students will develop a poster for an advertising campaign after looking at different ads for coffee, tea and other drinks.

INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE:

- 1) Ask students what their favorite drink is, why they drink it, whether their decisions are influenced by the media.
- 2) Look at ads for coffee, tea and soda, and also at books on advertising design, and talk about ads' effects on the viewer (color, use of space, slogan). What is appealing and why? Ask the students how they would create an advertising poster to convince people to drink more tea.
- 3) Distribute paper and materials and let students design their own poster.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS: Ads for coffee, tea and sodas; books on health benefits of drinking tea; books on advertising design; paper (poster size), crayons, watercolor, tempera paint, tea bags, glitter and all kinds of other materials.

EXTENSION/CLOSURE/INTEGRATION:

- 1) Exhibit all student's posters and talk about which they find the most appealing and convincing.
- 2) Write a letter to an advertising company and ask them whether they would use the students' work.

LESSON PLAN – STAGE YOUR OWN TEA CEREMONY

TITLE: Stage your own tea ceremony

TIME: 45 minutes

LEARNER POPULATION: grade level 6

CURRICULAR CONTEXT: part of Social Studies; unit: Ancient Civilizations, Asia

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this activity:

- 1) Students will be able to identify elements of a simplified version of a Japanese tea ceremony.
- 2) Students will be able to stage a simplified version of a tea ceremony.

CONCEPTS/INFORMATION:

- What are major elements in a tea ceremony?
- Who is present at a tea ceremony, and what are people's roles?
- How does one behave at a tea ceremony?

INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE:

- 1) Read the poem "A Winter Night" to students, and ask them about the mood that is portrayed in the poem.
- 2) Teacher divides class up into groups of five students. Each group will stage the ceremony for themselves.
- 3) Each group gets the sheet with information on the ceremony; students assign each other roles.
- 4) Teacher distributes the needed materials to each group.
- 5) Students practice staging the ceremony. They should take turns in being host and guests of the ceremony.
- 6) Teacher walks from group to group helping students with questions.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS: Tea ceremony sheet; poem “A Winter Night”; materials such as cushions/chairs, hot water, tea (powder or bags), tea bowls, cloth, whisk, tea spoon

EXTENSION/CLOSURE/INTEGRATION:

- 1) Students study the Chinese tea ceremony by doing Internet and book research, and compare it to a Japanese one.
- 2) Each group performs in front of the whole class.
- 3) Instead of dividing the group up, the whole class performs a big tea ceremony together.

A simplified version of a Japanese tea ceremony:

People needed and etiquette:

- One host or hostess
- 4 guests; one of them is the main guest
- Guests are dressed in kimonos or in formal Western clothes
- It is considered rude to show up late! Be at your host's house at least 20 minutes in advance.
- Be silent during the ceremony! Communication only happens through body language.
- The guests observe what the host is doing → it creates a peaceful, calm, almost meditative atmosphere!
- Try to follow the rules as closely as possible! However, don't worry if you make a mistake; even the greatest tea masters make mistakes sometimes, and it takes a lot of practice to know everything about a Japanese tea ceremony.

Utensils needed:

Cushions/chairs
Hot water
Tea
Tea bowls
Cloth
Whisk
Tea spoon

Sequence of Events:

- Guests walk through the tea garden and clean their hands in a water basin
- Guests approach the teahouse; before crawling through a small entrance, they take off their shoes; inside they sit down on cushions/chairs
- Host bows before entering the tea-room
- Host brings in utensils: water jar, kettle, cloth, tea spoon, tea caddy (jar with tea powder, held in the left hand), tea bowl with whisk inside (held in left hand) and places them around the hearth
- Host sits in front of the hearth, where water is heated. Maybe tea can be heated in the school kitchen or with the use of an electrical water heater
- Host rinses the bowl ceremoniously before powder and water can be mixed
- Host puts 3 spoons of powdered tea in bowl. If regular tea bags are used, the next step can be omitted
- Host pours hot water over powder, and the mixture has to be stirred until it becomes frothy (similar to beating eggs or whipping cream)
- Tea is first served to the main guest
- Main guest bows to fellow guests to apologize for being the first to drink
- Main guest takes the bowl → proper way to hold tea bowl: put it on the palm of left hand and protect it with right hand
- Main guest drinks, thereby complimenting the host on flavor, consistency and taste of tea; empty bowl is returned to the host
- Host wipes the bowl with the linen cloth; then prepares tea for second guest, and so forth

A Winter Night
By Tu Hsiao-Shan

One winter night
A friend dropped in.
We drank not wine but tea.
The kettle hissed,
The charcoal glowed,
A bright moon shone outside.
The moon itself
Was nothing special –
But, ah, the plum-tree blossom!

Resources for Teachers

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