

Japan, the United States, and North Korea: A Media Literacy Approach to Understanding the Current Nuclear Crisis

Grade Level: High School

Timeframe: 45 minute period or an 82 minute block (or longer)

Standards:

NYS Social Studies Framework

10.8 TENSIONS BETWEEN TRADITIONAL CULTURES AND MODERNIZATION: Tensions exist between traditional cultures and agents of modernization. Reactions for and against modernization depend on perspective and context. (Standards: 2, 3, 4, 5; Themes: ID, TCC, SOC, GOV, CIV, TECH)

10.9 GLOBALIZATION AND A CHANGING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT (1990–PRESENT):

Technological changes have resulted in a more interconnected world, affecting economic and political relations and in some cases leading to conflict and in others to efforts to cooperate. Globalization and population pressures have led to strains on the environment.

(Standards: 2, 3, 4, 5; Themes: MOV, TCC, GEO, GOV, ECO, TECH, EXCH)

10.9d Globalization has created new possibilities for international cooperation and for international conflict.

National Association for Media Literacy Education and Project Look Sharp Standards:

1. All media messages are “constructed.”
2. Each medium has different characteristics, strengths, and a unique “language” of construction.
3. Media messages are produced for particular purposes.
4. All media messages contain embedded values and points of view.
5. People use their individual skills, beliefs and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages.
6. Media and media messages can influence beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors and the democratic process.

Objectives:

1. Critically engage with and deconstruct editorial cartoons
2. Contextualize editorial cartoons using timelines
3. Apply their understanding of the current nuclear crisis and relationship between Japan, North Korea, and the United States

Procedures:

This lesson can occur at any point in a school year as current event lesson. However, it may best fit in at the end of a unit on the Korean War or Modern Globalization.

1. Ask students what they know about relations between North Korea, the U.S. and Japan.
2. Show [Powerpoint](#) - including the Map of Japan and Korea and ask students:
 - a. Based on the geography, what kind of relationship might exist between North Korea and Japan? What makes you think that?
3. Show the next 2 slides depicting current formal diplomatic relations.
4. Close read North Korean Nuclearization: [A Brief Timeline of Japanese, U.S., and North Korean Affairs](#). Ask students:
 - a. What trends do you notice?
 - b. What stands out to you?
 - c. How would you summarize North Korea's relationship with Japan? What about North Korea's relationship with America? What makes you say that?
5. Introduce the activity - Students will analyze [editorial cartoons](#) about the current nuclear crisis using the [editorial cartoon analysis worksheet](#) (a [cartoon analysis vocabulary sheet](#) is available as well. Note: the cartoons are available in the powerpoint and can be printed.
6. Debrief Discussion - Media Literacy:
 - a. Do editorial cartoons report the truth? Explain your opinion.
 - b. Who might benefit from these editorial cartoons and who might be harmed?
 - c. Should U.S. media carry editorial cartoons from Japanese cartoonists? Why or why not?
 - d. How might these images look if U.S. cartoonists were creating them for a U.S. audience?
 - e. How can the perspectives of individual cartoonists influence the views and beliefs of their audience?
 - f. How do editors affect what the artists produce? How does audience affect what the cartoonist produce?

Modifications:

1. Depending on cohort and on how well practiced students are at political cartoon analysis, teacher can model analysis with one cartoon with the full group.
2. Consider options for differentiation and choice → students can work individually or with partners, teacher can assign certain cartoons to specific students, or students can even choose which cartoon(s) they analyze.

Extension

Teacher may consider having students present their analysis.

References

"6 Key Concepts of Media Analysis," Project Look Sharp of Ithaca College, accessed August 15, 2018 , <https://www.projectlooksharp.org/Resources%202/6MLConcepts1.pdf>

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North Korean Nuclearization: A Brief Timeline of Japanese, U.S., and North Korean Affairs

Late 1970s – North Korea begins working on its own version of the Scud missile with a range of 300 kilometres (185 miles). It is test-fired for the first time in 1984.

Late 1980s – North Korea starts developing the Rodong-1 (range: 1,300 km), Taepodong-1 (2,500 km), Musudan-1 (3,000 km) and Taepodong-2 (6,700 km) missiles.

1991 – North and South Korea both join the United Nations.

1993 – North Korea fires a medium range Rodong ballistic missile into the Sea of Japan.

August 1998 – The Taepodong-1 rocket is test-fired over Japan in what it calls a satellite launch, but which the US and others maintain is actually a missile test.

September 1999 – North Korea declares it will stop long-range missile tests amid improving ties with United States.

September 2002 – Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi makes historic visit during which North Korea admits to having abducted 13 Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s and that at least four are still alive.

October 2002 – Japan, South Korea and the US halt oil shipments to the communist state after it admits to secretly developing a uranium-based nuclear program.

January 2003 – North Korea withdraws from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, marking the beginning of a series of six-party talks involving China, the Koreas, the US, Japan and Russia to try to resolve the nuclear issue.

2006 – The first North Korean nuclear weapons test is conducted in an underground facility.

April 2009 – North Korea launches a long-range rocket, carrying what it says is a communications satellite; The United States, Japan and South Korea say the launch was actually the test of a Taepodong-2 missile. Condemnation from the UN Security Council prompts North Korea to walk out of six-party talks and restart its nuclear facilities.

November 2010 – North Korea reportedly shows an eminent visiting American nuclear scientist a new secretly-built facility for enriching uranium at its Yongbyon complex. The revelation sparks alarm and anger in US, South and Japan

March 2014 – North Korea test-fires two medium-range Rodong ballistic missiles for the first time since 2009, in violation of UN resolutions and just hours after the US, South Korea and Japan met in the Netherlands for talks

August 3, 2016 – North Korea fires a ballistic missile directly into Japan's maritime economic zone for the first time.

2016 – North Korea fires a KN-11 ballistic missile into the Sea of Japan.

January 2017 – Kim Jong-un says North Korea is in the final stages of developing long-range guided missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

March 6, 2017 – North Korea fires four ballistic missiles in what it says is an exercise aimed at striking US military bases in Japan. The next day the US begins deploying its THAAD missile defence system in South Korea.

May 14, 2017 – North Korea fires a ballistic missile that flies 700 km before landing in the Sea of Japan. Analysts say it has a theoretical range of 4,500 kilometres (2,800 miles) and brings the US territory of Guam within reach.

August 2017 – Tension rises in war of words with US over North Korean threat to fire ballistic missiles near US Pacific territory of Guam.

August 29, 2017 – North Korea fires a ballistic missile over Japan, prompting the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to warn people to take cover in an incident he called an "unprecedented, serious and grave threat".

September 3, 2017 – Pyongyang carries out its sixth and most powerful nuclear test to date, generating a 6.3-magnitude earthquake. Japanese analysts estimated the device's explosive yield at 160 kilotons, making it 10 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima during World War II. Pyongyang also claims it has developed a miniaturised H-bomb that can be loaded onto a missile.

September 15, 2017 – North Korea fires another ballistic missile over Japan and into the Pacific in what appears to be its furthest-ever missile flight. Millions of Japanese were awoken by sirens and emergency text message alerts. The UN Security Council condemns the launch as "highly provocative".

November 2017 - President Trump visits Japan and meets with Prime Minister Abe

April 2018 – Kim Jong-un becomes first North Korean leader to enter the South when he meets South Korean President Moon Jae-in for talks at the Panmunjom border crossing. They agree to end hostile actions and work towards reducing nuclear arms on the peninsula.

April/May 2018 – Discussions begin to for President Trump and Kim Jong-un to meet.

June 2018 - Kim Jong-un and US President Donald Trump's historic meeting in Singapore seeks to end a tense decades-old nuclear stand-off.

Adapted from:

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