

Social Studies Literacy: K-12 Close Reading Task

Text grade band placement: 7th Grade			
Text	Text Complexity Analysis		
<p>Wilson, Epiphanius. <i>Japanese Literature: Including Selections from Genji Monogatari and Classical Poetry and Drama of Japan</i>. Rev. ed. London: Colonial, 1900. Print. http://www.gutenberg.org</p> <p>Link: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/19264/19264-h/19264-h.htm#CHAPTER_VI</p> <p>Nagase, Mari. <i>The Tale of Genji</i>. Unesco, 2000.</p> <p>Link: http://webworld.unesco.org/genji/en/away.pdf</p>	<p>Quantitative Data for Excerpt #1</p> <p>Lexile Measure: 1180L Mean Sentence Length: 20.00 Mean Log Word Frequency: 3.54 Word Count: 120</p>	<p>Quantitative Data for Excerpt #2</p> <p>Lexile Measure: 960L Mean Sentence Length: 14.00 Mean Log Word Frequency: 3.43 Word Count: 84</p>	<p>Quantitative Data for Excerpt #3</p> <p>Lexile Measure: 950L Mean Sentence Length: 13.17 Mean Log Word Frequency: 3.34 Word Count: 79</p>
<p>Total Quantitative Data: https://lexile.com/analyzer/</p> <p>Lexile Measure: 1090L Mean Sentence Length: 16.59 Mean Log Word Frequency: 3.42 Word Count: 282</p>			
<p>Qualitative: These excerpts are important as they provide concrete examples of cultural diffusion of Chinese culture as it was adopted and practiced during the Heian Period in Japan. In terms of lasting historical importance calligraphy (Japan did not have a written language), Buddhism (in contrast to the traditional Japanese Shinto religion) and implementing Neo-Confucian ideas of competency based placement within administrations were adopted.</p>			
<p>Reader and Task: Potential challenges for students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two sources using different interpretative language might provide difficulty for some students. • Japanese proper names are used. • A few difficult words; e.g. anthology and commencement (not a graduation ceremony) 			
Selected Excerpts from The Tale of Genji to be used			
<p>Excerpt #1: “On the evening prior to his departure he went on horseback to visit the tomb of his father. On his way he called on the Princess Wistaria, and thence proceeded to the mountain where the remains reposed. The tomb was placed among tall</p>			

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growing grass, under thick and gloomy foliage. Genji advanced to the tomb, and, half kneeling down before it, and half sobbing, uttered many words of remembrance and sorrow.... When shall I see these scenes again, and view the flowers of spring in bloom...

“Tis sad that fair blossoms so soon fade away,
In the darkness of winter no flower remains,
But let spring return with its sunshiny ray,
Then once more the flowers we look on again.”ⁱ

Excerpt #2:

“Genji thought that Yugiri should go to the university to become a minister of state. So he put him in the sixth rank of the university, which surprised people who had expected that Yugiri would be promoted rapidly. Genji had a strong intention to promote the solid education of knowledge. Genji conducted mock examinations the day before the exam, inviting tutors to attend. Yugiri studied hard and passed the test for formal commencement of studies within six months. Genji was satisfied with Yugiri’s result.”ⁱⁱ

Excerpt #3:

“It was now decided that Genji’s daughter would go to court. Genji collected books and scrolls for her library. He invited the finest calligraphers to create masterpieces. Selecting poems from these admired anthologies, Genji tried several styles with fine results, formal and cursive Chinese and the more radically cursive Japanese “ladies hand”. He secluded himself as before in the main hall for concentration. He had with him only two or three women whom he could count on for comments.”ⁱⁱⁱ

TN ELA/Literacy Standards addressed by task

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

TN Social Studies Standards addressed by task

7.20 Describe the reunification of China under the Tang Dynasty and reasons for the cultural diffusion of Buddhism. (C, G, H, P)

7.21 Analyze the role of kinship and Confucianism in maintaining order and hierarchy. (C, H, P)

7.25 Engage effectively in a collaborative discussion describing the development of the imperial state and the scholar-official class (Neo-Confucianism). (C, H, P)

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7.27 Compare the major features of Shinto, Japan's indigenous religion, and Japanese Buddhism. (C, H)

7.28 Explain the influence of China and the Korean peninsula upon Japan as Buddhism, Confucianism, and the Chinese writing system were adopted. (C, G, H)

7.29 Trace the emergence of the Japanese nation during the Nara, 710-794, and the Heian periods, 794-1180. (H, P)

7.30 Describe how the Heian (contemporary Kyoto) aristocracy created enduring Japanese cultural perspectives that are epitomized in works of prose such as The Tale of Genji, one of the world's first novels. (C, H)

Primary Documents and Supporting Texts to Read: excerpts from *The Tale of Genji*

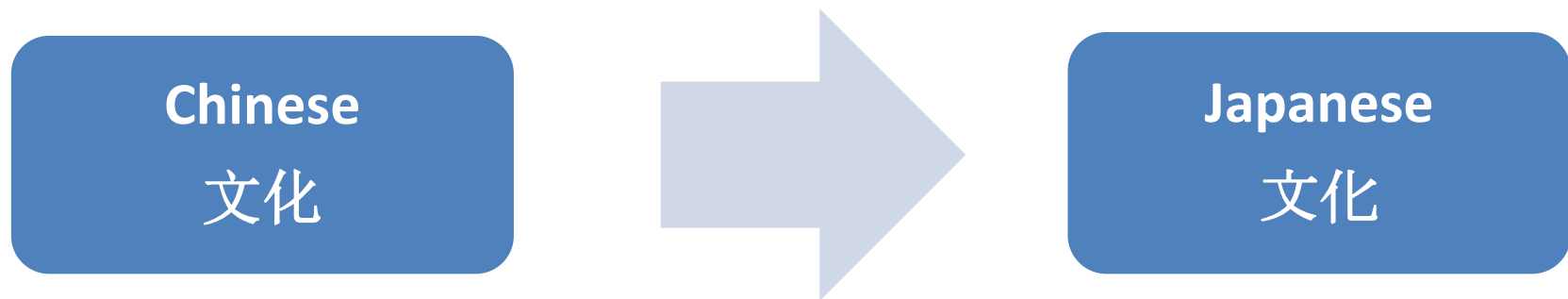
What key insights should students take from this text?

NOTE: These are considered the three most important influences upon Japan. There are others: horses, perfume, foods, clothing styles, etc...

Excerpt #1: Genji is saddened as he visits his father's grave; which is unkempt. The poem exemplifies the Buddhist concept of impermanence in nature in a manner that students can understand. That is, flowers die; however, new ones will bloom in the spring. In this way the Buddhist view of reincarnation, the impermanence of corporal life and the eternal soul is demonstrated when Genji visits his father's tomb.

Excerpt #2: The usage of civil service exams was implemented during the Heian Periods. Preparing Yugiri for an examination demonstrate the influence Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism; moving away from nepotism.

Excerpt #3: Prior to China's influence, Japan was a society without a written language. The following graphic demonstrates the similarity of the word 'Culture' between the two languages. Notice that they are written the same. This validates that Japan took their written language from China. Considering the very high literacy rate that Japan has today, it is difficult to think that at one time they did not have calligraphy.



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1. Using excerpt #1, what element of Buddhism is conveyed? How can you tell?
2. Using excerpt #2, what is Genji preparing Yugiri to do? How is this different than in the past?
3. Using excerpt #3, do you think writing and reading are important to Genji's family? How can you tell?

Writing Mode	Writing Prompt
Informative/explanatory	Describe how China influenced Japanese society during the Heian period as depicted by Murasaki Shikibu's <i>The Tale of Genji</i> . Make sure to use evidence from the excerpts and from prior knowledge to support your answer.

Scaffolding and support for special education students, English language learners, and struggling readers: Provide a [flow map](#) that demonstrates the cultural diffusion of elements of Chinese society to Japan. Provide appropriate synonyms/definitions for difficult words. Consider providing access to [Annenberg Learner's Tale of Genji](#). Note: video on this site is beneficial for teachers to develop background knowledge; however, not appropriate for students. Provide access to [TEL's Student World Book](#) for secondary source materials.

How this task supports the content standards for social studies courses in this grade band:

This close reading task directs students to analyze the geographic, political, economic, social, and religious structures of both sixth and seventh grade Chinese standards and the seventh grade Japanese standards. It uses appropriate primary source translations that deepen the understanding of Chinese influences through the region; specifically Japan, that have lasting impacts.

Background for teachers: Arntzen, Sonja. "[The Heart of History: The Tale of Genji](#)" Education About Asia. Volume 10:3. Winter Edition. 2005.

ⁱ Wilson, Epiphanius. "CHAPTER XII: EXILE AT SUMA (p.175-176) " Japanese Literature: Including Selections from Genji Monogatari and Classical Poetry and Drama of Japan. Rev. ed. London: Colonial, 1900. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/19264/19264-h/19264-h.htm#CHAPTER_VI

ⁱⁱ Nagase, Mari. "THE MAIDEN." (p.18) The Tale of Genji. Unesco, 2000. <http://webworld.unesco.org/genji/en/away.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Nagase, Mari. "A BRANCH OF PLUM." (p. 23) The Tale of Genji. Unesco, 2000. <http://webworld.unesco.org/genji/en/away.pdf>