

# **T**omatoes for Toyotas

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**Region:** East Asia (specifically Japan)

**Purpose:**

To enable students to grow in their awareness of our country's trade relations with East Asia with specific emphasis on Japan.

**Theme Statement**

Technology, Production, Distribution and Consumption (TPDC): Decisions revolving around exchange and economic policies, production, distribution, consumption, and technology (along with being) are global in scope.

**Suggested Time:**

5-forty minute periods

**Key Vocabulary & Concepts:**

Trade-to engage in the exchange of goods for the purpose of sale  
International trading partner-a foreign country with which one buys and sells goods  
Commodity-an economic good to be purchased or sold  
Export-a commodity sent from one country or region to another for purposes of sale  
Import-a commodity brought from one country or region to another for purposes of sale  
Economy-the structure of production, distribution, and consumption of commodities in a country

**Materials Needed:**

- "Using Japanese Numbers"
- "A Yen to Spend"
- "Made in Japan"
- "Tomatoes for "Toyotas Family Survey"
- 18 "Tomatoes for Toyotas Bar Graph Sheet"
- graph paper
- unlined white paper
- calligraphy pens or brushes and watercolors
- scrap wood blocks
- sandpaper
- a current newspaper
- magazine/catalog ads (with prices)
- colored markers

**Background Information:**

Teachers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with simple calligraphy strokes before Day 1. In addition, the teacher may want to become familiar with background information related to the Japanese Yen.

## **Initiation (Inquiry, Preview, Involvement)**

Day 1.

Distribute necessary handouts before activities begin. Refer to student handouts in "Materials Needed" above.

1. On a poster or on the board, write the Japanese numbers from 0 to 10. Have students speculate what these symbols represent.
2. After students have had a chance to guess, count the numbers from 0 to 10 in Japanese. Use the hand method common to Japanese students. (Make a fist with the thumb tucked inside the fingers, palm facing towards class. Begin numbering zero and raise the little finger when you say number 1. Continue through number 10.) Practice this oral exercise until someone thinks that he/she can do it from memory.
3. Allow students to complete the "Using Japanese Numbers" in class and share some of their "special" numbers in a guessing game at the board.
4. Pass out unlined white paper and pens, or brushes and watercolors.
5. Demonstrate the calligraphy strokes for the numbers and allow students to practice on their own.

Day 2.

6. Review the numbering and the calligraphy strokes. Allow students to share their efforts from the previous day. Teacher may want to display some of the practice efforts.
7. Pass out wood blocks (may be scrap pieces from the industrial arts class) and sand paper. Tell the students they are going to paint a significant, personal number on this block. It might be used as a paper weight or decoration, etc. Display in the classroom.

## **Development (Instruction, Data Collection, Organization)**

Day 3.

8. Teacher may bring to class a collection of Japanese items with price tags attached, or he/she may solely use "A Yen to Spend". After some background information on the Yen, ask students where they might find the daily rate of exchange. Choose a student to find the information in the daily paper.
9. Once the rate of exchange has been located, students can pair and begin determining the cost of specific items. If the "A Yen to Spend" is used, have students answer the questions at the bottom individually and then share with the whole class.
10. Distribute ads from catalogs/magazines. Students practice their math skills by converting the cost of the items to Yen. Share some findings.
11. Students itemize how much they believe they spend on a typical weekend. Students list as many activities and expenditures as they would normally experience in a two day period. In the next column the American cost is listed. In the next column is the conversion in Yen. Lastly students should indicate whether or not they would purchase each item if living in Japan. Answer these questions:  
Would a student living in Japan be able to buy as much with \_\_\_\_\_ his/her allowance as an American student in the US?  
What observations can you make about the difference in prices between Japan and the US?

Day 4.

12. Ask students what they know about the Japanese economy. Brainstorm ideas on the board.
13. Distribute "Made in Japan" and "Tomatoes for Toyotas Family Survey". Read and discuss thoroughly. Students could estimate the actual cost of each item on the survey both in dollars and yen. Assign students the task of collecting data, drawing a graph representing their findings, and stating their conclusions in writing.

Day 5.

14. One student tallies the results of the surveys of the entire class on the overhead transparency.
15. Eighteen other students complete one item each on "Tomatoes for Toyotas Bar Graph Sheet" using colored markers and draw a conclusion in the box at the bottom of the graph. When all are completed and posted, the class makes observations about US trade with East Asian nations (China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan).
  - Which country manufactured the largest number of products used by the class?
  - Which country manufactured the smallest number of products used by the class?
  - What contributes to the decision to buy certain products?
  - Which totals were surprising?
  - What do you observe about Americans purchasing choices?

### **Extension/Enrichment (Idea Articulation, Ownership, Experimentation)**

16. Using a world almanac or current World Population Data Sheet, students chart the number of cars in relationship to the population of each of the four East Asian countries.
17. Identify local products which may be exported to these countries.
18. Conduct a community survey of car types. Count the number of East Asian cars and American cars at four busy intersections in your community. Average the findings and make observations about the buying practices of the citizens.
19. Visit a local foreign car dealership and find out how personnel are trained to market and maintain foreign vehicles. Find out what techniques are successful in promoting foreign cars over American cars. Do the same for an American car dealership selling comparable cars. Report your findings.
20. Interview the owner of a car manufactured in one of the four East Asian countries. Report on his attitudes about the purchase and subsequent ownership of the vehicle.
21. Number 5 could be done with any of the items in the family survey.

### **Assessment of Achievement**

Students should have completed four specific tasks: a block using Japanese numbers, an itemized accounting of spending for one weekend with key observations, a personal family survey, and a paragraph which answers key questions concerning the family survey. Each student is given five points upon appropriate completion of each task: neatness in painting Japanese numbers, detailed listing of expenditures and accuracy in conversion, completion of the family survey, completion of written observation on family graph with attention to clarity and mechanics.

### **Key Questions**

1. What is significant about the international trade relations between the US and the four East Asian countries?
2. What observations can you make about the buying habits of the American consumer?
3. How does the American consumer affect the economy of these countries?
4. What is the value in international trade?

### **Alternatives**

Before the lesson on Japanese economics, the teacher could hold up pictures or silhouettes of each of the items on the family survey and elicit impressions from the class as to their significance in a geography or world cultures class.

References & Recommended Resources

**Summary Information**

Adaptable Levels: Grades 6 - 8

Related Themes:

Values: Understanding, appreciation, cooperation,

Skills: Synthesizing, graphing, clarity in writing, mechanics in writing, paragraphing

Integration: math, language arts, art