

**Date Reviewed**

February 2023

**Course**

[Social Studies 8](#)

**Topic**

Feudalism in Europe and Japan

**Big Idea**

Contacts and conflicts between peoples stimulated significant cultural, social, political change.

**Essential Question**

How do Western and Eastern social structures and rights compare?

**Learning Standards****Content**

*Students are expected to know the following:*

- social, political, and economic systems and structures.

**Curricular Competencies**

*Students are expected to be able to do the following:*

- make ethical judgments about past events, decisions, or actions, and assess the limitations of drawing direct lessons from the past. (ethical judgment)

**Core Competencies**

[Communication](#) - I can describe what life was like in medieval Japan and Europe.

[Thinking](#) - I can analyze social structures and rights in feudal Japan and Europe.

[Personal and Social](#) - I can determine whether European feudalism or Japanese feudalism was more fair and provide evidence to support my point of view.

**First People's Principles of Learning**

Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

## Introduction

- Provide students with their school's code of conduct. Ask what these expectations for behaviour show about the values of their school community.
- Explain that in the Middle Ages, both knights and samurai had codes of conduct too.
- Show the 2-minute video [Chivalry in the Middle Ages](#).
- Have students work in pairs to write a definition for chivalry. Ask what chivalry shows about the values of European society in the Middle Ages.
- Show the 2-minute video [Bushido: 7 Virtues](#).
- Have students work in pairs to write a definition for bushido. Ask what bushido shows about the values of Japanese society in the Middle Ages.

## Pre-Assessment

- Create a list of 5 rules based on the chivalric code for a knight.
- Create a haiku (5 syllables, 7 syllables, 5 syllables) based on bushido for a samurai.

## Interactive Learning Activities

- Explain that although Japan and Europe did not have any direct contact with one another during medieval times, they independently developed very similar socio-political systems known as the feudal system.
- Ask "What do you already know about the feudal system? What do you wonder about the feudal system?" Have students share ideas with a partner.
- Show the 2-minute video [Life in Medieval Britain](#). Ask, "What was life like in feudal Britain? Have students share ideas with a partner.
- Show the 3-minute video [Feudal Japan](#). Ask "What was life like in feudal Japan?" Have students share ideas with a partner.
- Provide students with access to the article [Feudalism in Japan and Europe](#) and a copy of the "Feudalism Comparison Chart". Have them work with a partner to read the article and complete the chart.

## Post-Assessment

Journal:

- How did social structures and rights compare in feudal Europe and feudal Japan?
- Which version of feudalism, European or Japanese, do you think is more fair? Provide reasons to support your point of view.

## Extension Activities

- Provide students with a variety of works of art from feudal Europe and feudal Japan.
- Have students compare these two artistic traditions and comment on what each shows about culture, community, time, and place.

## Additional References

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“Western Civilization: Feudalism.” [n.d.] *Lumen Learning*.  
<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory/chapter/feudalism/>

## Materials and Resources

## Feudalism Comparison Chart

Research feudalism in Japan and Europe in order to compare and contrast the two systems in the chart below.

Unique to Feudal Japan	Exists in both	Unique to Feudal Europe

## Answer Key: Feudalism Comparison Chart

*Research feudalism in Japan and Europe in order to compare and contrast the two systems in the chart below.*

Unique to Feudal Japan	Exists in both	Unique to Feudal Europe
<p>Bushido—based on philosophy of Confucius--emphasized morality and respect for elders.</p> <p>Samuri given rice as payment</p> <p>Samuri women expected to be strong</p> <p>Samuri expected to be artistic and educated (could read and write)</p> <p>Samuri would rather die by suicide and defeat by enemy in order to maintain honour</p>	<p>System of hereditary classes</p> <p>Little social mobility</p> <p>Warriors were highest class</p> <p>Code of ethics</p> <p>Used horses, armour, and swords in warfare</p> <p>Built castles</p>	<p>Chivalry—based on Roman law and supported by Catholic Church—contract of payment and loyalty in return for protection</p> <p>Knights given land as payment</p> <p>Noble women expected to be fragile and in need of protection</p> <p>Knights were usually illiterate and spent time hunting and jousting</p> <p>Catholic Church forbade suicide and knights tried to avoid death</p>