Levels 7 and 8: Chronology – Teacher Notes

Activity: Timeline of Japan under the Shoguns

During your introduction to this activity, it will be helpful to show students a timeline with both BC/BCE dates and AD/CE dates on it to help them understand the way the dates work forward and backward from the era of Christ’s birth during the Roman empire.

Your students may choose to use shapes and text boxes in a Word document or a PowerPoint presentation to make a timeline, or make one using an Excel spreadsheet.

Suggested answers for Activity 1 are given below:

1. Your task is to create a timeline of Japan under the Shoguns. The following dates outline events in feudal Japan, but they are jumbled.
   1. Sequence the dates and events into the correct order.
   2. Place them onto either a vertical or horizontal timeline. You may choose to use shapes and text boxes in a Word document or a slideshow to make a timeline, or make one using an Excel spreadsheet.

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| You may wish to show your students Slide 6 as an example of a timeline  Your students may create their timelines digitally or on paper. |

* 1. Use colour-coding or symbols to show the periods of time when Japan was under:
     1. imperial rule
     2. shogunate rule
     3. political unrest or civil war.

**Colour-coded:**

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| **Imperial rule** | **Shogunate rule** | **Political unrest or civil war** |

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| 660 BC | Legendary Emperor Jimmu becomes the first emperor of Japan, establishing imperial rule. |
| 710 AD | Nara becomes the first official capital city of Japan. |
| 794 AD | Emperor Kammu moves the capital to Heian-Kyo (modern day Kyoto) – it will be the official capital of Japan for the next 1000 years. |
| 1185 AD | Minamoto no Yoritomo seizes power from the emperor and becomes shogun, establishing his own capital in Kamikura. Shoguns rule Japan for about the next 700 years. |
| 1274 AD | The first Mongol fleet under Kublai Khan attack Japan and are defeated by the Japanese thanks to a typhoon called the Divine Wind. |
| 1281 AD | A second attack by a Mongol fleet is also destroyed by the Divine Wind. |
| 1333 AD | Emperor Go-Daigo overthrows the Kamakura shogunate and briefly the imperial family is in power again. |
| 1337 AD | Emperor Go-Daigo is challenged by Shogun Ashikaya Takauji who sets up a rival emperor and founds the Muromachi shogunate. For the next 60 years Japan experiences civil war as the two factions vie for power. |
| 1392 AD | Ashikaya Yoshimitsu unifies Japan again, restoring peace. A golden age of Japanese culture begins. |
| 1467 AD | The Warring States period begins as civil war breaks out between rival *daimyo* or warlords, destabilising the rule of the Muromachi shoguns. |
| 1560s to 1590s AD | *Daimyo* or Warlord, Odu Nobunaga overthrows the Muromachi shogunate and takes control of much of Japan; his successor Toyotomi Hideyoshi continues the process, leading the way for the reunification of Japan. |
| 1603 AD | Tokugawa Ieyasu establishes the Tokugawa shogunate and establishes his capital at Edo (modern day Tokyo). |
| 1633 AD | Tokugawa Iemitsu introduces the ‘locked country’ policy, *Sakoku.* This means that no Japanese people can leave Japan and no foreigners are allowed on Japanese soil; this policy is largely upheld for over 200 years. |
| 1853 AD | US naval officer Commodore Perry arrives in Edo with four warships to persuade the Shogun open Japan’s borders for trade. |
| 1854 AD | Perry returns with an even larger fleet, resulting in the abolishment of *Sakoku* by the Treaty of Kanagawa; Japan begins to trade with the US. |
| 1867 AD | Tokugawa Yoshinobu gives power back to the imperial family under Emperor Meiji and thus is the last shogun. |

**Symbols:**

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| **Imperial rule = $** | **Shogunate rule = \*** | **Political unrest or civil war = %** |

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| $ | 660 BC | Legendary Emperor Jimmu becomes the first emperor of Japan, establishing imperial rule. |
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**Note:** The Japanese imperial dynasty is stated to be the oldest continuous monarchy in the world, beginning in 660 BC with Emperor Jimmu and continuing in an unbroken line to the current emperor, Naruhito. Even when the Shoguns took power, the emperors remained the sovereigns of the state, though they had no political or military power.

1. Use your completed timeline to help you answer the following questions about the chronology of Japan under the Shoguns:
   1. For how long, and how many times, was Japan:
      1. ruled solely by an emperor?

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| 660 BC to 1185 AD = 1845 years  1333 AD to 1337 AD = 2 years  1867 AD to present day = 153 years ongoing  Total = 2000 years |

* + 1. ruled by a shogun?

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| 1185 AD to 1333 AD = 148 years  1392 AD to 1467 AD = 75 years  1603 AD to 1867 AD = 264 years  Total = 487 years |

* + 1. experiencing civil war?

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| 1337 AD to 1392 AD = 55 years  1467 AD to 1603 AD = 136 years  Total = 191 years |

* 1. What patterns of continuity can you identify (i.e. what remained the same or similar over time)?

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| Student answers will vary but could include the following:   * Japan has been ruled by an emperor for a significantly longer period of time than it was ever ruled by a shogun – this shows continuity and stability for long periods. * There were times where power changed hands and/or civil war occurred – this shows change. * Japan has been ruled by an emperor since 1867. In Japan’s history, an imperial rule has been more significant than shogunate rule, which may suggest that, in this respect at least, Japanese society has remained constant. |

* 1. What change can you identify (i.e. what changed over time)?

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| Student answers will vary but could include the following:   * There were times where power changed hands and/or civil war occurred – this shows change. |

1. Follow these steps to write a short narrative, of about 300 words, to describe and explain an aspect of Shogunate Japan.
   1. Create three to five questions you would like the answers to about Japan under the Shoguns.

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| Student questions will vary but could include the following:   * How much power does the emperor have today? * Did Shoguns have more power than an emperor ever did? * What part did the samurai play in the struggles between the emperor and the Shoguns? * Why was the ‘locked country’ policy introduced? * Were women involved in Japanese politics and power during this time? * Who was the most powerful emperor? * Who was the most powerful Shogun? |

* 1. Think about:
     1. what you already know from your answers to Questions 1 and 2
     2. what else you need to know.
  2. Undertake some research on the internet to answer your questions, and then turn this into a narrative that could help others learn about Shogunate Japan.

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| Student research and narratives will vary. |