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**Title:** A Meeting of Nations  
**Subject/Course:** World History  
**Topic:** Japanese/US History, Cultures  
**Grade(s):** 11th and 12th Grade  
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### Stage 1 - Desired Results

#### Content Standards

For World History II (1800 to 2000)

**WHII.14** - Identify major developments in Japanese history in the 19th and early 20th centuries.  
(History, Economics)

- A. The Meiji Restoration
- B. The abolition of feudalism
- C. The borrowing and adaptation of western technology and industrial growth
- D. Japan's growing role in international affairs

#### Connections Strand (Connecting the Arts to History)

- Students will apply their knowledge of the arts to the study of... history and social science.
  - **Historical Understanding.** Students will understand the meaning, implications, and import of historical events, while recognizing the contingency and unpredictability of history - how events could have taken other directions - by studying past ideas as they were thought, and past events as they were lived, by people of the time.

*(From Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework, August 2008; and Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework, November 1999.)*

*Note - This workshop prepares the way for students to learn the content standards in WHII.14. Through our activities, we hope that students will become more engaged with the material.*

#### Understanding(s)

Students will understand that:

- The ways in which we communicate with one another are multilayered.
- Our interactions can have implications beyond what we originally anticipate.
- Our culture shapes our interactions with others.

## Essential Questions

- How do we interact with a different culture for the first time?
- How much of an impact does our language and cultural behaviors have on our interactions and understandings of other cultures?
- When is assimilation a good thing? When is it a bad thing? When do we know that it has become either good or bad?

*Students will be able to:*

- Empathize with cultures that are foreign to their own.
- Be cognizant of the differences in gestures between cultures, and the ways these differences can affect our interactions.
- Identify key moments and people in the Perry Expedition and the Convention of Kanagawa (*Note - this will come from the second portion of the unit, not the activity below*)

## Stage 2 - Assessment Evidence

### Performance Tasks

Students role-play as citizens of the nations of Ospos or Sofria. At the end of the activity, Ospos citizens will write a letter to their representative persuading them to either open their borders and begin trading with Sofria, or to keep their borders closed. Sofria citizens will write a letter to their representative with their opinion on what to do if Ospos decides not to trade with Sofria.

### Key Criteria

- Students are engaged in the activity.
- All students are involved in the creation of their country and its gestures.
- In the writing assignment:
  - Clearly state their opinion.
  - Provide 2-3 clear reasons for their opinion.

## Stage 3 - Learning Plan

### Learning Activities:

Performance Task Overview: Using process drama, based on provided information, students will explore the first meeting of two countries, looking at the difficulties in communication that they are faced with during the activity.

1. Warm Up - The class will start in a circle. Facing the outside of the circle, students will be prompted to turn to face the inside of the circle on the count of 3 and make a gesture that signifies: "Come here", "Be quiet", and "I don't know"
  - a. Discuss the differences and similarities in gestures from this activity.

2. Divide class into two groups.
  - a. Ospos
    - i. Ospos is a small island in the middle of a large ocean. For centuries, the people of Ospos have lived quietly, tending to their lives, with little concern for the “outside world.”
    - ii. Three of the things that the people of Ospos value most are:
      1. Collectivism/A sense of community - they look after and protect their community at all costs.
      2. Security
      3. Nature and its protection and cultivation. They preserve their natural resources and utilize them to the fullest extent.
  - b. Sofria
    - i. Sofria is a very large country. Although it recently became an independent country, the citizens of Sofria have long felt like “Sofrians”, and are eager to prove their place in the world.
    - ii. Three of the things that the people of Sofria value most are:
      1. Individuality
      2. Risk-taking
      3. Extroversion - Sofrians think it is important to meet new people and interact with as many people as possible.
3. In their “countries”, each group will:
  - a. Discuss what the geography of their country is like (lots of trees, deserts, etc.)
    - i. (If time, allow groups to draw their country’s flag and a map of their country)
  - b. Discuss what their jobs in their country might be. What are their industries?
  - c. Create a gesture that signifies:
    - i. A greeting
    - ii. A sign of respect
    - iii. A sign of disdain or rejection
    - iv. “Thank you”
  - d. More gestures may be added as well. All members in the group will practice these gestures.
4. The teacher explains that members of Sofria are coming to Ospos. This will be the first time that either country has met the other, and the first time in a very long time that visitors have come to Ospos. We (citizens of both countries) are not sure yet why Sofria has decided to come to Ospos.
  - a. Both countries will decide upon a gift that they would give to a visitor. The gift should represent the best of their country.
  - b. They will also decide upon a representative for their country. Who is going to present the gift? (*Ex* -- Their leader, a respected member of the community, etc.)

5. The teacher explains that an interpreter is needed for both countries and asks for a volunteer from each group.
  - a. Unfortunately, each interpreter only has a brief amount of time to learn about this new country. The teacher gives each group 30 seconds to explain their gestures and gift. The interpreter will then go back to their own country.
  - b. The teacher clarifies that the interpreter will be the only one who is allowed to talk while they are meeting. The representative will be the “voice” for the country, but the representative must tell the interpreter what he or she wants to say.
6. Each country meets each other for the first time. Only the interpreters may speak, but all citizens of both countries are at the meeting. They are allowed to react physically as they see fit.
  - a. Interpreters will explain the citizens’ movements and actions as needed.  
(However, the interpreter can try to soften the representative’s language or “alter” what is being said)
7. The teacher explains that Sofria has asked Ospos if they will open their borders and begin trading with Sofria. This will mean many more ships arriving in Ospos, and potentially trading with not just Sofria, but other foreign countries as well.
  - a. The teacher asks questions to both countries:
    - i. What do you want to know about the other country?
    - ii. What information is required to make a decision about the trade agreement?
    - iii. Does not knowing this affect your opinion on trading? How?
8. The teacher gives the assignment:
  - a. Ospos - write a letter persuading your representative to trade or not trade with Sofria. Explain your reasons. The representative will write a letter to their fellow citizens with the same prompt.
  - b. Sofria - If Ospos says no, what should your country do? Write a letter persuading your representative to agree with your opinion. The representative will write a letter to their fellow citizens with the same prompt.
9. The teacher asks students how it felt to be limited in their language. Interpreters - how did it feel to have to represent a country, having been given only a short amount of time to learn the language? What do you think happens next?
10. The teacher would then move on to introducing the history of the United States coming to Japan and the U.S.-Japan Treaty of Peace and Amity (signed 1854)