

**LESSON:**  
**HISTORY OF JUDO: FROM ANCIENT JAPAN TO THE UNITED STATES**  
**Creator: The Asian American Education Project**

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GRADE	6-7
OVERVIEW	<p>According to the California History/Social Studies Standard, students in the sixth grade study “the everyday lives, problems, and accomplishments of people, their role in developing social, economic, and political structures, as well as in establishing and spreading ideas that helped transform the world forever.” Most curricula in grade six focus on the learning of certain ancient civilizations and a more general scope of the spread of western ideas. There is less focus on the development and diffusion of non-western ideas, particularly ancient martial art philosophies from Asia, that continues to impact the modern world. This lesson focuses on the history and diffusion of Judo as an art, philosophy, and sport.</p> <p>This lesson addresses the following standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 6.6 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of China.</li> <li>● 7.5 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the civilizations of Medieval Japan.</li> </ul>
OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describe the origins and practice of Judo in Japan</li> <li>● Describe the spread of Judo to the United States.</li> <li>● Explain the impacts of Judo</li> </ul>
LESSON IMPLEMENTATION	<p>This lesson can be completed in one instructional session or over a period of 1-2 weeks. Here are options for lesson implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One instructional session: Complete reading in Activity 2 plus Discussion Questions.</li> <li>● Two instructional sessions: Complete Activity 2 plus Discussion Questions.</li> <li>● Three instructional sessions: Complete Activity 2 plus Discussion Questions and One option from Activity 4</li> <li>● One week: Complete Activity 1, Activity 2 plus Discussion Questions, One option from Activity 3, One option from Activity 4, and One extension activity</li> <li>● Two weeks: Complete all activities plus several additional options</li> </ul>
ESSAY (SLIDES 1-12)	<p><b>Judo</b> is a martial art. It is a system of unarmed combat used mainly for self-defense. Today, it is primarily considered to be a sport and is</p>

### Judo, A Japanese Martial Art



- ★ Judo: martial art
  - Considered to be a sport
  - Uses holds and **leverage**
  - ★ Originated in Japan in 1882
  - ★ Influenced by various forms of ancient East Asian martial arts

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### Jujutsu, A Japanese Martial Art



- ★ Jujutsu
  - ★ Influenced by Chinese boxing
  - ★ Focused on ground techniques
  - ★ Developed by warriors on the battlefield

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### The Age of the Samurai



- ★ Age of the Samurai (1185 - 1868)
- ★ Samurai: warrior in military **caste** system of **feudal** Japan
- ★ Important form of military training
- ★ Declined at the end of Samurai era

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### Kano Jigoro, The Founder of Judo



- ★ Kano Jigoro (1860 - 1938)
- ★ Japanese educator and athlete
- ★ Founder of Judo, which was created in 1882

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### Judo, "The Way of Gentleness"



- ★ Judo = "the way of gentleness"
- ★ Efficient use of physical and mental energy
- ★ Unharmful to opponents
- ★ Globalized philosophy:
  - Self-defense, self-assurance, and self-esteem

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### Yamashita Yoshisugu, U.S. Judo Pioneer



- ★ Yamashita Yoshisugu (1865-1935)
- ★ Student of Kano Jigoro
- ★ Pioneer of Judo in the United States

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### The Beginning of Judo in the U.S.



- ★ Samuel Hill: American lawyer and businessman
  - Inspired by Judo
  - Sought instructor for his "spoiled" son
  - ★ Private exhibitions for elite guests.

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### The Beginning of Judo in the U.S.



- ★ Judo demonstrations and lessons for political and corporate elite
- ★ President Theodore Roosevelt
  - Created "dojo" in White House
  - Received brown belt

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used to train the body and mind. It involves the use of holds and **leverage** to unbalance opponents. It originated in Japan in 1882. However, it has influences from other forms of East Asian martial arts that date back to ancient times.

Judo developed from **Jujutsu**, which is influenced by Chinese boxing that originated in the Xia Dynasty (c. 2070-1600 BC) more than 4,000 years ago. Jujutsu is heavily focused on ground techniques whereas Judo is heavily focused on standing techniques. Jujutsu was developed on the battlefield by warriors and Judo was created in peacetime for peaceful purposes.

Jujutsu developed in the Age of the Samurai (1185-1868). A samurai is a warrior in the military **caste** system of **feudal** Japan. In addition to fighting with swords, bows, and arrows, hand-to-hand combat became an important form of military training. The practice of Jujutsu declined as the era of Samurai rule came to an end in 1868, during which Western culture began spreading through Japanese society.







At this time, Kano Jigoro (1860-1938), a Japanese educator and athlete, worked to combine fighting practices in Jujutsu with new forms of mental discipline. This led to the creation of Judo in 1882. Jigoro is considered to be the founder of Judo.

*Ju* means "gentleness" and *do* means "the way." Thus, Judo literally means the "way of gentleness." Kano emphasized that the goal of Judo is to make the most efficient use of one's physical and mental energy. Despite the intensity of physical combat, Kano taught his students to apply their techniques without hurting their opponents. This technique embodies the philosophies of self-defense, self-assurance, and self-esteem that Kano wanted to **globalize** through modern society.

In addition to Kano's efforts in spreading Judo beyond Japan's borders, his students also helped spread Judo worldwide. One student in particular was Yamashita Yoshisugu (1865-1935), who is credited as the pioneer of Judo in the United States.

In 1902, globe-trotting American lawyer and businessman, Samuel Hill (1857-1931), was inspired by a Judo demonstration during one of his trips to Japan. He sought a judo instructor to train his "spoiled" son. Hill was referred to Yoshisugu, who was a professor teaching Judo to students in Tokyo at the time. In 1903, Yamashita traveled to Seattle, Washington with Hill's wife and son. He gave a private exhibition for Hill and other **elite** guests.

In addition to training Hill's son, Yamashita provided Judo demonstrations and lessons to the political and corporate elite, including President Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919). President Roosevelt was hooked. He included Judo in his fitness regimen,

<p><u>The Beginning of Judo in the U.S.</u></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yamashita to teach Judo technique and principles at the U.S. Naval Academy.</li> <li>• Short-lived and deemed irrelevant to Navy SEALs or military service</li> </ul> <p>TeachAAP! </p> <p><u>The Beginning of Judo in the U.S.</u></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diffusion of Judo in the U.S. linked to Japanese diaspora in 1920s</li> <li>• <b>Issei</b> – first generation Japanese immigrants</li> <li>• Preservation of cultural identity</li> </ul> <p>TeachAAP! </p> <p><u>Judo as an Olympic Sport</u></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 1909, Jigoro collaborated with the International Olympic Committee</li> <li>• In 1964, Judo was accepted as an olympic sport</li> <li>• One of the most popular olympic sports today</li> </ul> <p>TeachAAP! </p>	<p>along with boxing and wrestling. He also created a “<b>dojo</b>” in the White House in which he trained in Judo and hosted Judo matches. President Roosevelt practiced Judo for two years and received a brown belt, which signifies an advanced level.</p> <p>President Roosevelt encouraged Yamashita to teach Judo at the United States Naval Academy in an effort to spread the principles and techniques of Judo in military combat. However, Yamashita’s teaching at the Naval Academy was short-lived as leaders at the Academy found Judo irrelevant to the preparation of Navy SEALs for military service.</p> <p>Further <b>diffusion</b> of Judo in the United States was closely linked to the Japanese <b>diaspora</b> in the 1920s. The <b>Issei</b>, or first generation Japanese immigrants, organized and established tight-knit ethnic communities in the United States, mainly in Hawaii and the West coast region, as a means to <b>preserve</b> their cultural identity. Issei established organizations and dojos dedicated to spreading and preserving the art of Judo.</p> <p>Jigoro continued with his efforts to globalize Judo by collaborating with the International Olympic Committee in 1909. (In fact, he became the first Asian member of the International Olympic Committee.) However, due to political tensions as a result of World Wars I and II, Judo was not accepted as an olympic sport until 1964. Since then, Judo has become a popular summer olympic sport that many around the world enjoy.</p>
<p><b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brousse, Michel. (2007). “From Martial Art to Olympic Sport.” International Judo Federation. Webpage: <a href="https://www.ijf.org/history/from-martial-art-to-olympic-sport">https://www.ijf.org/history/from-martial-art-to-olympic-sport</a></li> <li>• Kodokan Judo Institute. (n.d.). “History of Kodokan Judo.” Kodokan Judo Institute. Webpage: <a href="http://kodokanjudoinstitut.org/en/doctrine/history/#:~:text=Judo%20was%20created%20in%201882,cancelled%20due%20to%20international%20conflict">http://kodokanjudoinstitut.org/en/doctrine/history/#:~:text=Judo%20was%20created%20in%201882,cancelled%20due%20to%20international%20conflict</a></li> <li>• Svinth, Joseph. (2000). “Professor Yamashita Goes to Washington.” Journal of Combative Sport. Webpage: <a href="https://ejmas.com/jcs/jcsart_svinth1_1000.htm">https://ejmas.com/jcs/jcsart_svinth1_1000.htm</a></li> <li>• Yabu, Kotaro. (2018). “The Acculturation of Judo in the United States during the Russo-Japanese War: Beyond the ‘match-based’ historical point of view.” Martial Arts Studies 6, 41-51. <a href="https://doi.org/10.18573/mas.67">doi.org/10.18573/mas.67</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>VOCABULARY (SLIDES 13-14)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Caste</b>: a division of society based on differences of wealth, inherited rank or privilege, profession, occupation, or race</li> <li>• <b>Diaspora</b>: the movement, migration, or scattering of a people away from an established or ancestral homeland</li> </ul>

**Vocabulary**

- **Caste:** a division of society based on differences of wealth, inherited rank or privilege, profession, occupation, or race
- **Disperse:** the movement, migration, or scattering of a people away from an established ancestral homeland
- **Diffusion:** the spread of cultural elements from one area or group of people to other by contact
- **Dojo:** a room or hall in which Judo and other martial arts are practiced
- **Elite:** the highest class of society often characterized by wealth, education, noble ranks, etc.
- **Feudal:** a system in which people were given land and protection by people of higher rank and worked and fought for them in return

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**Vocabulary**

- **Globalize:** to make worldwide in scope or application
- **Issei:** first generation Japanese immigrants
- **Judo:** a martial art that emphasizes the use of quick movement and leverage to throw an opponent
- **Jujitsu:** an art of weapons fighting that uses holds, throws, and paralyzing blows to subdue or disable an opponent
- **Leverage:** the using of opponents' strengths against them
- **Preserve:** to keep alive

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\*Adapted from Merriam Webster

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**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (SLIDES 15-22 )**

Discussion Question:

What is Judo?

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Discussion Question:

What are the roots of Judo? Why is it important to recognize the origins of Judo?

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Discussion Question:

What is the connection between Jujitsu and Judo? What are the differences between the two?

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Discussion Question:

Who is Kano Jigoro and what were his contributions to Judo?


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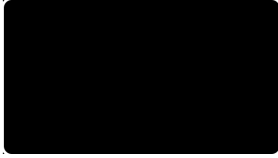
Discussion Question:

Who was Yamashita Yoshitsugu and what were his contributions to Judo?

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- What is Judo?
- What are the roots of Judo? Why is it important to recognize the origins of Judo?
- What is the connection between Jujitsu and Judo? What are the differences between the two?
- Who is Kano Jigoro and what were his contributions to Judo?
- Who was Yamashita Yoshitsugu and what were his contributions to Judo?
- How did Judo spread to the United States?
- How did Judo spread to the world?
- Why is it important to preserve Judo as a cultural tradition?

<p><u>Discussion Question:</u></p> <p>How did Judo spread to the United States?</p> <p>TeachAAPi</p> <p><u>Discussion Question:</u></p> <p>How did Judo spread to the world?</p> <p>TeachAAPi</p> <p><u>Discussion Question:</u></p> <p>Why is it important to preserve Judo as a cultural tradition?</p> <p>TeachAAPi</p> <p>(Suggested Time: 30 min.)</p>	
<p><b>ACTIVITY 1: ANTICIPATORY SET (SLIDES 23-27)</b></p> <p><u>Introduction Activity</u></p>  <p>Complete a quickwrite describing everything you think you know about martial arts and specifically about Judo. Include where you obtained your perceptions and knowledge of Judo and martial arts.</p> <p>TeachAAPi</p> <p><u>Discussion Question:</u></p> <p>What other cultural traditions started in other places and spread to the United States?</p> <p>TeachAAPi</p> <p><u>Introduction Activity</u></p> <p>How and why do cultural traditions spread across groups, locations, and time?</p> <p>• • • • •</p> <p>TeachAAPi</p> <p>(Suggested Time: 10 min.)</p>	<p>Have students do a quickwrite to describe everything they think they know about martial arts and specifically about Judo. Have students include where they obtained their perceptions and knowledge.</p> <p>Ask students the following: “Martial arts originated in East Asia. What other cultural traditions started in other places and spread to the United States?” Record student responses.</p> <p>Facilitate a discussion by asking students the following: “How and why do cultural traditions spread across groups, locations, and time?” Have students give historical examples. Record student responses.</p> <p>Tell students that they will be learning more about Judo and its spread to the United States.</p>
<p><b>ACTIVITY 2: INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY (SLIDES 27- 31)</b></p>	<p>OPTION: Show students the following videos entitled, “<a href="#">The Art of Judo - Episode 1</a>,” “<a href="#">The Art of Judo - Episode 2</a>,” and “<a href="#">The Art of Judo - Episode 3</a>,”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students take notes as they watch each video.</li> <li>• Ask students what they learned from the videos.</li> <li>• Facilitate a discussion by asking students what they gained from learning about the Japanese perspective of Judo.</li> </ul>



**Instructional Activity**

In your assigned small groups, research and create a presentation on your topic. Make sure to include areas of description, history or milestones, contribution to the development of Judo in the U.S., and any fun facts.

- ✎ Group 1: Kano Jigoro
- ✎ Group 2: Yamashita Yoshitsugu
- ✎ Group 3: Takugoro Ito
- ✎ Group 4: Judo in the Japanese Incarceration Camps
- ✎ Group 5: Judo in the U.S. Military
- ✎ Group 6: Judo in the Olympics
- ✎ Group 7: Professional Judo organizations in the U.S.

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(Suggested Time: 120 min.)

Have students work in small groups and assign each group to conduct research on these topics:

- Group 1: Kano Jigoro
- Group 2: Yamashita Yoshitsugu
- Group 3: Takugoro Ito
- Group 4: Judo in the Japanese Incarceration Camps
- Group 5: Judo in the U.S. Military
- Group 6: Judo in the Olympics
- Group 7: Professional Judo organizations in the United States

Have students create a presentation about their assigned topics addressing these areas:

- Description
- History or Milestones
- Contribution to the Development of Judo in the United States
- Fun Facts

Have students present their projects to the class and facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:

- “What are the origins of Judo?”
- “How did it spread from Japan to the United States?”
- “How did it develop in the United States?”
- “How did Judo change from Japan to the United States? What were the reasons for these changes?”
- “How did Judo change over time? What were the reasons for these changes?”
- “What are the impacts of Judo in the United States?”

**ACTIVITY 3:  
APPLICATION/  
ENGAGEMENT/  
INQUIRY ACTIVITY  
(SLIDES 32-38)**

**Application Activity**



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**Application Activity**



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Teachers can choose one or more of the following options:

OPTION 1: Have students do a primary source analysis of the following photographs:

- <https://www.ijf.org/history/from-martial-art-to-olympic-sport>
- <https://www.ijf.org/history/from-martial-art-to-olympic-sport>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judo#/media/File:Hiki-otoshi.jpg>
- <https://www.teamusa.org/News/2021/July/05/Seven-Athletes-Selected-To-Represent-USA-Judo-At-Tokyo-Olympic-Paralympic-Games>

Have students take notes addressing the following questions:

- What is happening in each image? What do you see?
- Why was this image made? What is the purpose?
- Who made the image? When was the image made or taken?
- Who is the audience of the image?
- What tools were used to create the image? What type of image is it?
- What do you wonder about? What is missing from the image?

Application Activity



Discussion Question:

What are the similarities between the images?

Discussion Question:

What are the differences between the images?

Discussion Question:

What accounts for the similarities and the differences?

(Suggested Time per Option: 60 minutes)

Facilitate a discussion by asking students, “What are the similarities between the images? What are the differences between the images? What accounts for the similarities and the differences?”

OPTION 2: Have students visit a local Judo dojo and interview owner(s) and some Judo practitioners.

- Have students create interview questions, take notes, and analyze responses.
- Have students write a report summarizing their research.
- Have students use their data to write a report about the impact of Judo in their community.

ACTIVITY 4: ASSESSMENT/ WRITING ACTIVITY (SLIDES 39-42)

Writing Activity

Write an argumentative essay answering this question: “What/who was the most responsible for the growth of Judo in the U.S.?”  
Make sure to support your claims with supporting evidence.

Writing Activity

Create a 10-slide Instagram social media campaign about the history and development of Judo in the U.S.

Writing Activity

Create a mini-documentary about the impact of Judo on American culture. Make sure to include at least three testimonies from Judo practitioners.

(Suggested Time per Option: 60 min.)

Teachers can choose one or more of the following options:

OPTION 1: Have students write an essay answering this question: “What/Who was the most responsible for the growth of Judo in the United States?” (Note that options include: Kano Jigoro, Yamashita Yoshitsugu, Theodore Roosevelt, Issei (first generation Japanese immigrants), Olympics, etc.) Have students write an argument paper with claims and supporting evidence. (OPTION: Facilitate a debate where students argue this point.)

OPTION 2: Have students create a 10-slide Instagram social media campaign about the history and development of Judo in the United States. (If students are posting, then they need to ensure that images are copy-right free or they need to create the images themselves.)

OPTION 3: Have students create a mini-documentary about the impact of Judo on American culture. Have them include at least three testimonies from Judo practitioners.



## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

### Extension Activities:



Research the "Four Guardians of Kodokan."

Create an infographic that explains:

- What the "Four Guardians of Kodokan" are
- Their history and impact

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### Extension Activities:



Research a Judo organization or a Judo dojo teacher in the United States.



Create a pamphlet that includes the history, mission, services, and resources

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### Extension Activities:



Research the spread of Judo in other regions such as South America and Europe.



Compare and contrast the spread of Judo in the United States to that of another country.

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### Extension Activities:



Research the spread of Judo in specific areas of the U.S.



Analyze why Judo flourished in certain areas and not others.

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### Extension Activities:

Research the role of women in Judo. Create a timeline and highlight at least three women who played an important role in the growth and development of Judo.



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(Suggested Time per Option: 30-60 min.)

- Have students research the "Four Guardians of Kodokan." Have students create an infographic that explains what the "Four Guardians of Kodokan" are, the history, and the impacts.
- Have students research a Judo organization or a Judo dojo/teacher in the United States. Have students create a pamphlet that includes the history, mission, services, and resources.
- Have students research the spread of Judo in other regions such as South America and Europe. Have students compare and contrast the spread of Judo in the United States to that of another country. Have students identify the similarities and differences and analyze what accounts for those similarities and differences.
- Have students research the spread of Judo in specific areas of the United States. Have students analyze why Judo flourished in certain areas and not others.
- Have students research the role of women in Judo. Have students create a timeline and highlight at least three women who played an important role in the growth and development of Judo.

## FURTHER RESOURCES FROM THE ASIAN AMERICAN EDUCATION PROJECT

- The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, "Who Defines Loyalty?: Japanese Americans During World War II": <https://archive.advancingjustice-la.org/what-we-do/curriculum-lesson-plans/asian-americans-k-12-education-curriculum/episode-2-lesson-3-who>
- The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, "Asian Americans in Military Service in World War II": <https://archive.advancingjustice-la.org/what-we-do/curriculum-lesson-plans/asian-americans-k-12-education-curriculum/episode-2-lesson-2>
- The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, "Japanese American Incarceration and the US Constitution": <https://asianamericanedu.org/2.1.1-japanese-incarceration-camps-elementary-lesson-plan.html>