ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:
- What effect has population density had on Japan?
- What effect has geography, including the features and location, had on Japan?
- What is a clan and how were clans important in Japanese history?
- What is cultural diffusion and how has cultural diffusion influenced Japan?
- What are some of the many ways technology can be used to better the situation we are in right now?
- How can you maximize a talent you have to help others during the Coronavirus quarantine?

PROCEDURES:
- **Assignment #1** - Read the information below to gain background knowledge about Japan and its geography. Then use the information to answer questions and create an illustration for each of your responses to the questions.
- **Assignment #2** - Read the article about a 17-year-old making a tracking system for the coronavirus. Use the background information and text to respond to the writing prompt on your own paper.

WORK TO BE RETURNED:
- Questions/illustrations for Japan assignment #1
- Journal entry for article about the 17 year old who created a Coronavirus tracking website

RESOURCES:
- Text with background information about Japan
- Article: [A 17-year-old creates coronavirus-tracking website](#)

TIME ALLOCATED:
- 2 (30) minute Assignments

**Assignment #1**
Read the information given below to gain background knowledge about various aspects of Japan. Then use the information you read to answer questions and create an illustration for each of the answers you gave.

**JAPAN**

**Geography**
Japan is an archipelago, or string of islands, on the eastern edge of Asia. There are four main islands: Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. There are also nearly 4,000 smaller islands! Japan's nearest mainland neighbors are the Siberian region of Russia in the north and Korea and China farther south. Almost four-fifths of Japan is covered with mountains. The Japanese Alps run down the center of the largest island, Honshu. The highest peak is Mount Fuji, a cone-shaped volcano considered sacred by many Japanese. Japan can be a dangerous place. Three of the tectonic plates that form Earth's crust meet nearby and often move against each other, causing earthquakes. More than a thousand earthquakes hit Japan every year. Japan also has about 200 volcanoes, 60 of which are active.

**People and Culture**
The Japanese are famous for their willingness to work very hard. Children are taught to show respect for others, especially parents and bosses. They learn to do what's best for their family or company and worry less about their own needs. Japanese food is very different from food in Western countries. There are lots of rice, fish, and vegetables, but little meat. With little fat or dairy, this diet is very healthy, which helps Japanese people live, on average, longer than any other people in the world.

**Nature**
The Japanese people have a deep affection for the beauty of the landscape. The ancient Shinto religion says natural features like mountains, waterfalls, and forests have their own spirits, like souls. Most of Japan is covered by the countryside. But with more than 100 million people living in such a small place, wildlife has suffered. Pollution is now tightly controlled, but road building and other human activities have harmed natural habitats. About 136 species in
Japan are listed as endangered. The warm Tsushima Current flows from the south into the Sea of Japan, where it meets a colder current from the north. The mixing of waters makes the seas around Japan very rich in fish and other sea life.

**Government and Economy**

Japan is the **only country in the world with a reigning emperor. Emperors have no real power**, but they are still revered as a symbol of the country's traditions and unity. World War II devastated Japan's economy. But the **Japanese people's hard work and clever innovation turned it around**, making it the second-largest economy in the world. Japan's high-tech industry makes some of the most popular electronic products in the world.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>What geographical feature is Japan described as?</strong></td>
<td>Japan is described as an island country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Why is Japan described as a dangerous place?</strong></td>
<td>Japan is described as dangerous because of its frequent earthquakes and tsunamis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Explain in a sentence or two how children are taught within Japanese culture.</strong></td>
<td>Completed: Children are taught to show respect to others, parents and bosses. They are concerned with the family needs over their individual needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. <strong>What type of diet does the Japanese culture have and why is it beneficial?</strong></td>
<td>Completed: The Japanese diet is based on vegetables, seafood, and rice. It is beneficial because it is low in fat and high in nutrients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>What religion teaches people in Japan that all of nature has its own spirit?</strong></td>
<td>Shintoism teaches this belief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Explain the negative impact Japan has faced due to having a large population in a small area.</strong></td>
<td>Completed: Due to Japan having 100 million people, the wildlife has suffered and they have about 136 species endangered at this time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ASSIGNMENT #2

Creating a Primary Source Document

Remember over the next few weeks, you will be asked to write a diary/journal entry once a week about “Life during the Great Pandemic of 2020.”

Source Information: This article was created and published by iGeneration Youth and later adapted by the Newsela staff. iGeneration Youth is a talent incubator located in Pittsburgh, PA. They provide training, publishing opportunities, and work experience to talented youth writers, visual artists, and entrepreneurs. Information and interviews are gathered from young individuals who are aspiring to be a publisher or news reporters, but are still in high school or younger. The youth are assisted by adults who have studied publishing and news reporting to provide guidance. Information for the article was gathered through internet research and interviews.

A 17-year-old creates coronavirus-tracking website; has over 40 million views

By iGeneration Youth, adapted by Newsela staff on April 16, 2020

He coded a website with stick figures in the third grade. In middle school, he coded video games. Now, at age 17, Avi Schiffmann has coded a highly-trafficked website that tracks cases of COVID-19, also known as the coronavirus.

COVID-19 is a flu-like illness that first emerged in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. Avi, who lives in Seattle, Washington, coded the coronavirus tracking website ncov2019.live when there were fewer than 1,000 cases in China. Since then, it has spread to more than 165 countries, with more than a million cases. On March 11, the World Health Organization officially called coronavirus a pandemic. A pandemic is when a disease has spread all over a country or the world. "I think this is the first big world event for our generation," Avi said. "It's kind of crazy how this is such a big world event that's completely changed everything from the economy to football games." However, despite the increase in COVID-19 cases, finding reliable, current numbers for the disease was difficult. "I noticed it was just really hard to find anything that was happening," Avi said. "I thought I could make something better than what the governments were doing, so I made a website." His website provides the latest data on the number of confirmed cases, serious cases, deaths, and people who have recovered. It reports numbers worldwide and by country. The site also includes travel advisories and information on the disease and its prevention. He uses reliable sources like the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the site's data. However, Avi said that these sources don't always present information in an easy-to-understand way.
Avi, who also competes in ski races, is a self-taught coder. "Everything I know is from watching YouTube videos and reading things online," he said. Avi uses web scraping to get the data for his website. By scraping, he can download data from government websites and automatically update his site every couple of minutes. "You have to sort through all the complicated scientific things and look over a whole report," Avi said. "I just want to see the numbers easily on my phone." Being able to view coronavirus numbers easily is especially helpful for young students. Jody Wong, a student at the University of Buffalo in New York, said that she refers to the website sometimes. "It's particularly useful for researchers like myself who study risk and science communication," Wong said.

The site has gotten more attention than Avi expected. As of March 2020, over 40 million people have visited his website. On March 16, he posted on his Twitter account that he relocated the site to a larger computer server to handle all the traffic. "It has been visited by every single country on the planet by now," he said. Avi said that before his school was shut down because of the pandemic, he saw students and teachers using it. He also said a lot of news organizations use it to get their numbers. "I'm only a teenager, but I'm able to provide a data source that millions of adults and massive places use," he said. To help the site improve, Avi welcomes emails from people who have suggestions. Sometimes he receives over 1,000 emails a day. Lila Shroff, 18 years old, met Avi in early March during an interview for their school's radio station. She was impressed by his hard work but could tell he was busy because of the popularity of the site. So she offered to help him with media-related tasks. "Avi has done everything to make the site happen, and it's so impressive to see it unfold from behind the scenes," Shroff said. "He is hardworking, passionate, and genuinely cares about making the world a better place." Technology professionals have offered help, Avi said, but he prefers to work solo. "To be honest, a lot of the things I can do myself," he said. "But it's great that I have the opportunity to connect with them." Although he has been offered job opportunities, Avi said he codes simply because he likes it. "If you like art, you would use a paintbrush. I like making things. Instead of painting, I can type a bunch of random words and bam, there's a coronavirus website," he said. For other teens who are interested in learning to code, he suggests starting small. He recommends simple projects to start. "If you just put your mind to it, you can make something like what I did," Avi said. "You just have to have the motivation to want to change the world."

Read the writing prompt and complete your journal entry in the space below.

**PROMPT:** More and more, technology is allowing us to do things we were never able to do before. In the article, a 17-year-old used his knowledge of technology and computer programming to create a coding system that tracks the coronavirus through a website. Think about all the ways technology is being used now during this pandemic. Everyone from doctors to nurses to teachers to students are using technology in various ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discuss as many ways as you can think of for how technology is being used during the Coronavirus pandemic.</th>
<th>Who is using the technology and how are they using it? (Teachers, nurses, news anchors &amp; students)</th>
<th>Explain at least two ways technology can be used to better the situation we are in right now. You can discuss everything from the finding the cure, keeping up with your distance learning, to keeping yourself entertained while the stay-at-home order is still in effect. (Social distancing video calls to prevent the spread of the virus, Shopping Online, playing video games, watching Netflix, and playing board games etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

You have read the article about a 17-year-old who created an online tracking system for the coronavirus. Use the information gathered from the article to write your journal entry.
Be thoughtful and reflective. It should take you at least 2-3 paragraphs to address this prompt completely.

**Prompt to get started:** The Coronavirus is worldwide, & people have to stay at home to stop spreading it. School has been closed. I'm using my computer to complete school assignments and turn them in to get credit. I use a video to call my family that lives far away during the Coronavirus pandemic.