

Source 1

The Edicts of the Tokugawa Shogunate: Excerpts from Laws of Military Households (Buke Shohatto), 1615

1. The study of literature and the practice of the military arts, including archery and horsemanship, must be cultivated diligently.
“On the left hand literature, on the right hand use of arms,” was the rule of the ancients. Both must be pursued concurrently. Archery and horsemanship are essential skills for military men. It is said that war is a curse. However, it is resorted to only when it is inevitable. In time of peace, do not forget the possibility of disturbances. Train yourself and be prepared.
2. Avoid group drinking and wild parties. ...
6. The castles in various domains may be repaired, provided the matter is reported without fail. New construction of any kind is strictly forbidden. ...
8. Marriage must not be contracted in private [without approval from the bakufu]. ... To form a factional alliance through marriage is the root of treason. ...
10. The regulations with regard to dress materials must not be breached. Lords and vassals, superiors and inferiors, must observe what is proper within their positions in life. Without authorization, no retainer may indiscriminately wear fine white damask, white wadded silk garments, purple silk kimono, purple silk linings, and kimono sleeves which bear no family crest.
... ..
12. The samurai of all domains must practice frugality. When the rich proudly display their wealth, the poor are ashamed of not being on par with them. There is nothing which will corrupt public morality more than this, and therefore it must be severely restricted.
13. The lords of the domains must select as their officials men of administrative ability. The way of governing a country is to get the right men. If the lord clearly discerns between the merits and faults of his retainers, he can administer due rewards and punishments. If the domain has good men, it flourishes more than ever. If it has no good men, it is doomed to perish. This is an admonition which the wise men of old bequeathed to us.

Take heed and observe the purport of the foregoing rules. First year of Genna [1615], seventh month.

From Japan: A Documentary History: The Dawn of History to the Late Tokugawa Period, edited by David J. Lu (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 221-222. © 2001 M. E. Sharpe

Source 2



A Samurai wearing typical armour of the period and bearing a sword c. 1860

Encyclopedia Britannica Online accessed 8/9/15

Source 3

Map of Edo (Tokyo) c. 1844-1848



Source 4

The Battles of
Hogen and Heiji
(1615-1868)

Pair of six-panel
folding screens

Ink, colour and gold
on paper.

Metropolitan
Museum of Art,
NYC



Source 5

Koto with Case, early 17th century; fabric *koto* wrap, 18th and 19th century

Goto Teijo, Ninth Generation Goto Master (Japanese, 1603–1673)

Various woods, ivory and tortoiseshell inlay, gold and silver inlays, metalwork.

Metropolitan Museum of Art NYC



OVERVIEW:

1. Explain how students will complete the Characteristics Worksheet – the types of language they might use and how this will help them to establish a clear vision and revise how to evaluate a source.
2. Hand out Characteristics Worksheet.
3. Assign a Source to each group.
4. Begin the activity and give feedback to groups throughout as needed. Prompt with questions such as ‘how would a historian perceive the validity of this source?’, ‘what limitations does this information provide?’
5. Students also record any other observations about what the primary source can reveal about life in Japan during the Edo Period.
6. After 5 minutes, ask the groups to hand their example to the next group for analysis.
7. After groups have seen all examples, gather as a whole group and share ideas and thoughts. Encourage students to record other responses on their Characteristics Worksheet.
8. As a whole group, discuss the sources and general ideas that students were able to glean from this activity.