

Teacher Masterclass:

The Sword and the Samurai

Students are presented with photos and paintings of the Samurai and their weapons. (See provocation sheet)

Students, using guided research, explore the role of the Samurai within the Japanese Society and select a picture to record their findings upon. (Use printed pictures from the provocation sheet)

Students watch the youtube clips:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckrycABiJDE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2BLg7564M>

The Samurai were known to be disciplined and well-trained warriors who served their master loyally. What do the sword making clips reveal about the process of designing and making a sword for a samurai warrior? Add these thoughts to your photograph.

Why was a Samurai's swords so important to him?

What was a Samurai's status in society? How was he treated?

Were there any Samurai who were women?

What rules did the Samurai follow for their behavior and dress?

We know that when the Edo Period concluded and power was handed back to the Emperor (the Meiji Restoration), many Samurai were stripped of their honour and swords and required to follow more of a Western lifestyle. Many Samurai were publically humiliated, having their hair cut and their swords removed. What impact would this have upon these warriors? Why would a society do this to one of their cultural icons?