Power and Independence

Trace how Japan's reforms changed East Asia.

SS24.WH.5c "Analyze the rise of Japan's power in East Asia beginning with the Meiji Restoration."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three changes made after the Meiji Restoration and circle three later effects on Japan's power or its neighbors. Draw a line connecting one change to an effect it helped cause.

From Reform to Empire

1. In 1868, leaders who supported Japan's emperor replaced the shogun's government. This turning point, called the Meiji Restoration, came after Western powers had forced Japan to open its ports and accept unequal treaties. Japan's new leaders feared that a divided, weak country could be controlled by outsiders. They built a stronger central government, collected national taxes, and required many young men to serve in a modern army. They also expanded schools, railways, and factories. These changes did not happen overnight, but together they gave Japan more trained people, weapons, and ways to move troops and supplies.

2. A stronger Japan began to challenge China's influence over Korea, a kingdom between the two countries. In 1894, conflict over Korea helped ignite war between Japan and China. Japan's modern forces defeated China's. The 1895 peace treaty required China to recognize Korea's independence and give Taiwan to Japan. Yet independence from China did not mean freedom from outside pressure. Japan gained greater influence over Korea, while Taiwan became a Japanese colony. Victory showed that reforms begun after 1868 could support expansion abroad, not just protect Japan from Western control. It shifted the regional balance of power away from China.

3. Russia, too, sought influence in Korea and nearby Manchuria. Japan fought Russia in 1904 and 1905 and won major battles on land and at sea. In the peace settlement, Russia recognized Japan's leading position in Korea. Japan made Korea a protectorate in 1905, taking control of its foreign affairs, then annexed it in 1910. A government built partly to resist foreign domination had become an imperial power itself. For many Koreans, this rise meant the loss of self-rule. Japan's military victories mattered, but the earlier changes in government, industry, and transport helped make those victories possible.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did pressure from Western powers help cause the changes Japan's leaders made after 1868?

2. Why would railways and factories make Japan better able to fight a war beyond its borders?

3. How did Japan's victory over China change the balance of power around Korea?

4. How did Japan's victory over Russia help lead to Korea's loss of self-rule?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 95 word museum label in the voice of a Korean newspaper editor in 1910. Explain the gap between Korea's recognized independence in 1895 and its annexation by linking one Meiji-era reform to both wars and describing a consequence for Koreans.

ANSWER KEY

Power and Independence

GRADE 9 · SS24.WH.5c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three changes made after the Meiji Restoration and circle three later effects on Japan's power or its neighbors. Draw a line connecting one change to an effect it helped cause. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did pressure from Western powers help cause the changes Japan's leaders made after 1868?	**Western powers had forced Japan to open its ports and accept unequal treaties. Japan's leaders feared outside control, so they strengthened the government, military, and economy.**
2	Why would railways and factories make Japan better able to fight a war beyond its borders?	**Factories could produce weapons and supplies, while railways could move troops and supplies.**
3	How did Japan's victory over China change the balance of power around Korea?	**China recognized Korea's independence, but Japan gained greater influence over Korea. The victory shifted regional power away from China.**
4	How did Japan's victory over Russia help lead to Korea's loss of self-rule?	**Russia recognized Japan's leading position in Korea. Japan then controlled Korea's foreign affairs as a protectorate and annexed it in 1910.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As a Korean newspaper editor in 1910, I would ask what our independence really meant. Japan built a modern army after the Meiji Restoration. That army helped Japan defeat China, whose leaders then recognized Korea's independence in 1895. It also helped Japan defeat Russia, which accepted Japan's leading position in Korea. Japan then took control of our foreign affairs and annexed our country. From a Korean perspective, Japan's rise did not secure self-rule. It replaced one country's influence with another country's direct control.

Accept other supported links between a Meiji-era reform and Japan's later power. The museum label should connect the same reform to both wars and distinguish recognition of independence from actual Korean self-rule.