

East Asia



Introduction

- ✎ East Asia is an extremely important region of the world for Americans to become familiar with. Economically, countries including Japan and China are among our most significant trading partners. Militarily and politically, tens of thousands of American military service people are stationed in Japan and South Korea, and tensions between Taiwan and China as well as North Korea's nuclear ambitions are of great concern to American policymakers.

Introduction

- ✎ Culturally, film and animation coming out of East Asia is seen as “cutting edge.” Historically, although all of this attention on East Asia might seem to be a recent development, in fact the U.S. has paid close attention to the region since well before World War II. (open door policy) In spite of these strong ties, students often have little opportunity to learn about East Asia in school.

Why East Asia?

∞ In summary, why study East Asia? Certainly because East Asia is the home to a large percentage of the world's population, its countries are economically powerful and have important historical legacies, and because we have military commitments to Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. But also because by studying East Asia we are able to learn about different cultures and new ways of thinking. And, of course, many American families have come to the U.S. from the countries of East Asia.

Quiz

1



2



3



Quiz

1



Kiki's Delivery Service

2



Godzilla

3

Pikachu



Quiz

1



2

3



Quiz

1



Kite



Compass

2

3

Fireworks



Sidenote

☞ In fact, take out one of the books you have in your school bag – any book, it doesn't matter which one. Were it not for the invention of paper by the Chinese and moveable printing type by the Koreans, we might not have books as we know them today, from the textbooks you use here at school to the Harry Potter books or other titles that you or your friends might read for pleasure. The artistic and cultural contributions of East Asian peoples to world civilization are enormous.

Sidenote

- ✎ We see them acknowledged even in the modern names of the countries – it is no coincidence that “china” is both the word for fine porcelain and the name of the country that first produced such porcelain, and the English name for Japan comes from an old word meaning “lacquer,” a highly-prized export from that country centuries ago. As you probably already know, it was the desire of Europeans to reach East and Southeast Asia that led explorers such as Columbus to venture into unknown waters. For in Columbus’ day (the fifteenth century), China was the richest country in the world. The point is that the countries of East Asia have played an important role in world civilization and continue to impact our lives today.

Finding East Asia

East Asia



- Yes, we use the term “East Asia” to refer to the easternmost countries of the Asian continent: China, Japan, the two Koreas, and Taiwan. Other terms that you might have heard applied to this region include “Far East” and “the Orient,” though these are not used much today (although the term “orient” may still be used to describe rugs or spices, some consider it offensive when used to identify people).

Population

☞ These countries are the homes to a large percentage of the world's population. Let's look at this list of countries and the size of their populations:

http://www.mongabay.com/igapo/world_statistics_by_pop.htm

Where does China rank?

How about Japan?

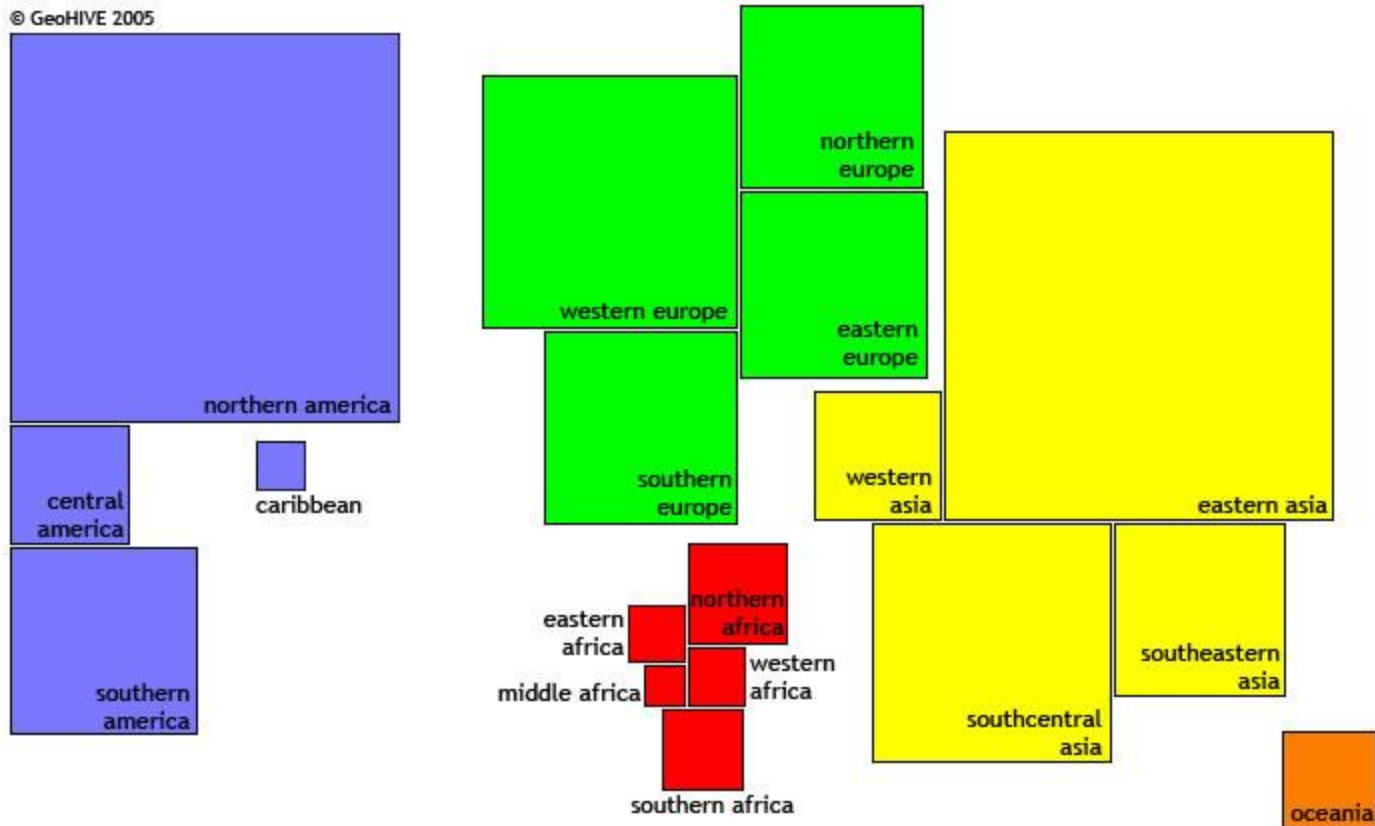
Area

- ☞ China also occupies a significant amount of the earth's surface. As we can see in the following table, it is the fourth largest country in terms of area, only a bit smaller than the U.S.

http://www.mongabay.com/igapo/world_statistics_by_area.htm

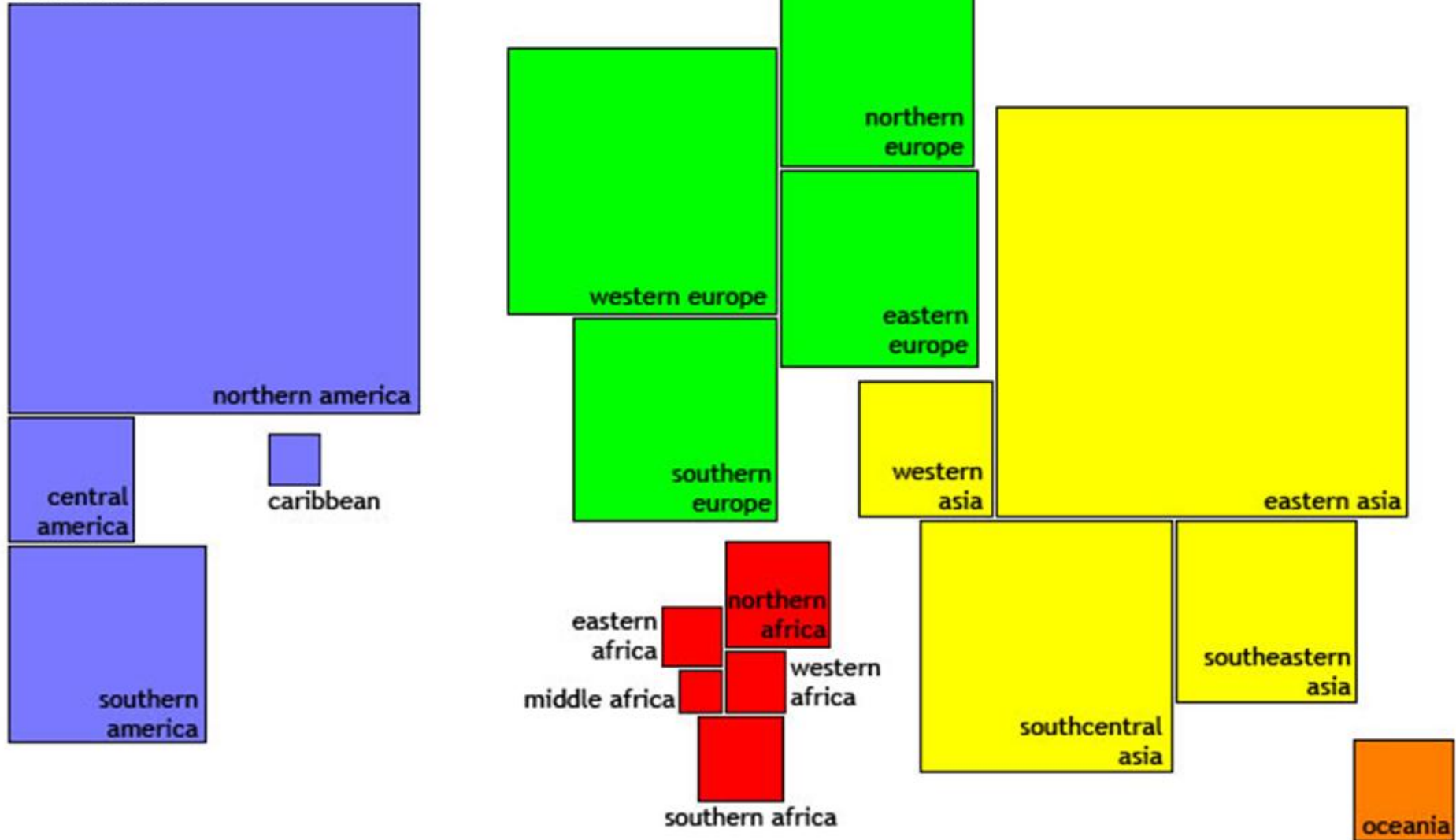
Interpreting Maps

Now let's talk for a minute about the place of East Asia in the world. We'll begin by looking at this rather funny map:



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© GeoHIVE 2005



Interpreting Maps

- ∞ The makers of this map wanted to represent economic power, as measured by GDP (gross domestic product). The size of each region is based on its relative economic power in the world economy, so in this map, south-central Asia appears much larger than South America, even though South America is larger in terms of land area on the globe. Looking at the map, two regions stand out as far bigger than the rest – North America and East Asia. What does that suggest about the economic strength of those region's countries in the world?

Trade

∞ As you might guess, if North America and East Asia have the largest economies in the world, then they probably buy and sell a lot of goods from each other. Let's take a look at the table, a list of America's top trading partners:

<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/highlights/toppartners.html>

Trade

- As you can see, the top four consist of Canada and Mexico, our immediate neighbors to the north and south, and China and Japan. We see China and Japan among the top countries both for U.S. imports and exports - that means that we are all buying each other's goods, and the economies of our countries are closely linked.

Things from Asia

- ☞ Take a minute to go around the room, through your book bag, or from your head and make a list of things that were made in Asia. Note the item and where it was made or what its connection to Asia is.

2011 : U.S. trade in goods with China

NOTE: All figures are in millions of U.S. dollars on a nominal basis, not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified. Details may not equal totals due to rounding.

Month	Exports	Imports	Balance
January 2011	8,078.1	31,349.6	-23,271.5
February 2011	8,437.2	27,278.7	-18,841.5
March 2011	9,518.8	27,601.4	-18,082.6
April 2011	7,971.0	29,567.1	-21,596.0
May 2011	7,817.8	32,781.3	-24,963.5
June 2011	7,729.9	34,387.4	-26,657.5
July 2011	8,170.9	35,125.5	-26,954.7
August 2011	8,408.1	37,363.8	-28,955.7
September 2011	8,367.1	36,423.7	-28,056.6
October 2011	9,736.5	37,806.6	-28,070.1
November 2011	9,936.6	36,808.2	-26,871.6
December 2011	9,706.6	32,841.7	-23,135.2
TOTAL 2011	103,878.6	399,335.1	-295,456.5

?’s

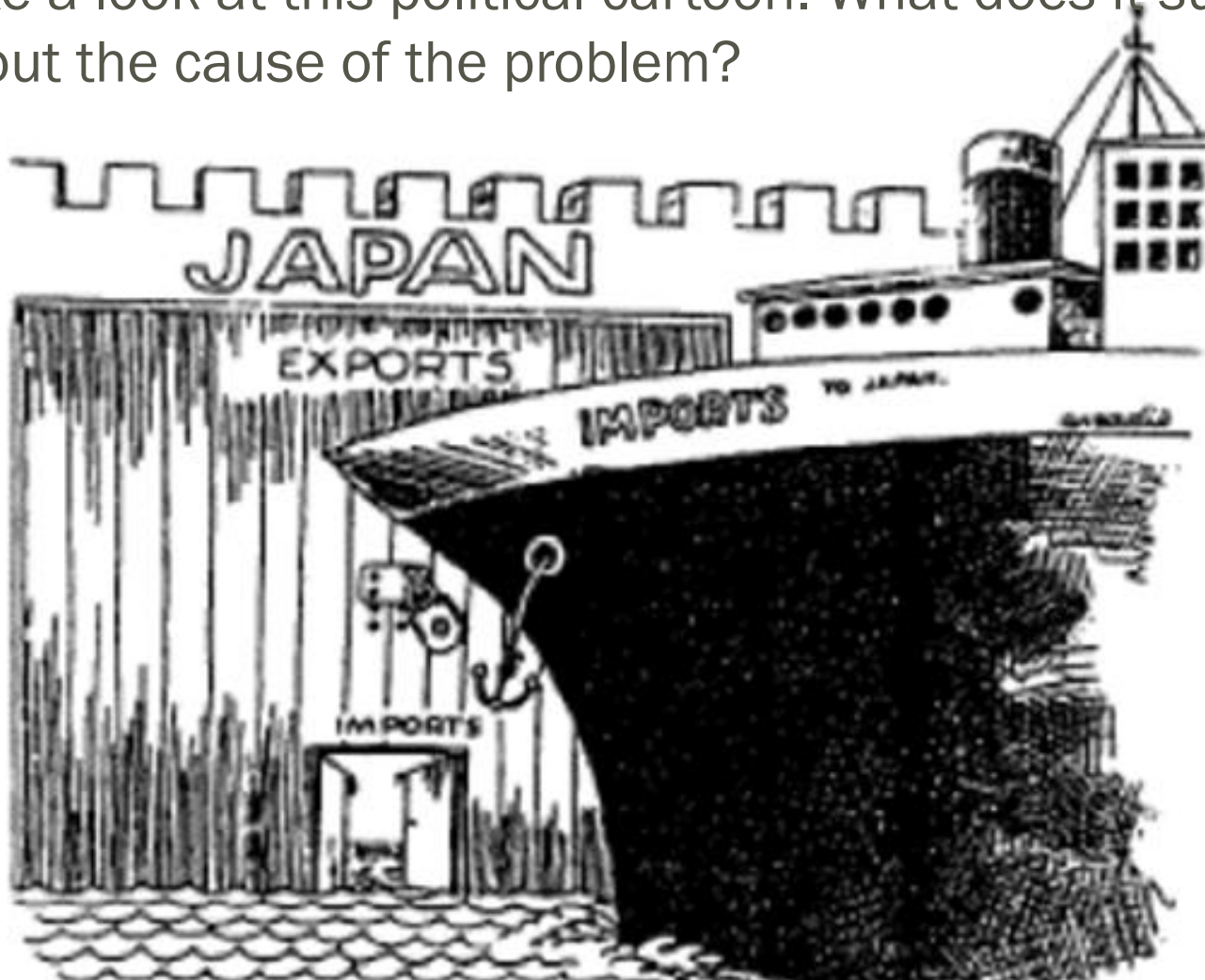
- ⌘ How many millions of U.S. dollars worth of goods did Americans import from those countries in 2011?
- ⌘ How many millions did American export to China and Japan?
- ⌘ What does that suggest about the nature of America’s trade relationship with those countries?

Understanding “Trade Imbalances”

- Other terms you might hear used to describe such imbalances are “trade deficit” and “trade surplus” – in the case of the U.S. and China, which country has the deficit, and which has the surplus? The very large trade imbalances that the U.S. has with China and Japan have been a source of tension in international relations.

Trade

- Take a look at this political cartoon. What does it suggest about the cause of the problem?



Trade

- ✎ In this cartoon, Japan is shown to have a tiny door for accepting imports, but a gigantic one for exports. The implication is that the Japanese are unwilling to buy American goods and that they are responsible for the trade imbalance. But there are problems on the American side as well. Let's consider automobiles for a second. The Japanese, like the British, drive on the left-hand side of the road, so cars produced in Japan for the domestic market have the steering wheels on the right. When the Japanese made cars to sell in the U.S., they moved the steering wheel over the left. But for many years, when American car companies tried to sell their cars in Japan, they did not bother to put the steering wheel on the right like Japanese drivers are used to. So it should come as no surprise that American cars did not sell as well in Japan as Japanese cars did in the U.S.

Graphs

- Even so, Japanese companies have made efforts to limit the trade imbalance because they value good relations with the U.S. Let's look at some long-term trends in trade. Here is historical data, which shows the state of U.S.-China and U.S.-Japan trade over a number of years. Looking at this data, create a graph that shows the trend of U.S. trade with these countries over time. Along the X axis, list the years "1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2011." Along the Y axis, list the volume of trade.
- What are the trends?
- Do you notice a difference between U.S.-China and U.S.-Japan trade?