

Analyzing the Story of Perry's Mission to Japan as Presented in Sample Textbooks

For the two history textbook excerpts on Commodore Perry and the "Opening of Japan" your teacher has provided, answer the questions below.

1. Who is telling the story? What might be the writer's goals?

2. Who is the audience for this historical story?

3. What are the restrictions that a history textbook writer faces and how does this affect the story he or she tells?

4. How do the two accounts (world and U.S. texts) differ and why might that be so?

5. Find specific pieces of information included in one account that are not included in the other. How does the inclusion or omission of information change the story of the event?

6. What does the historian's ability to select, include, or omit information say about the nature of history?