

Teaching Korea - The Divine Bell of King Seongdeok

Teaching Suggestions

RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

Why not create some short multi-choice quizzes to test what students can recall about the content they have just learned about? Create a quick test of 8, 10, 12 or 20 questions. Here are three examples:

1. In what year was the Bell of King Seongdeok completed?
 - a) 671
 - b) 771
 - c) 761
2. Where were the crowns found?
 - a) Bronze
 - b) Silver
 - c) Gold
3. How high is the bell?
 - a) 1.75 metres high
 - b) 2.75 metres high
 - c) 3.75 metres high

WHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD?

The process of making the bell started in 742, but the bell was finished in December 771.

Ask pupils to research important who people lived at this time, or what other important events or developments took place?

This could have a Korean focus, or, it could be expanded to give a global perspective. You might want to widen the period of study to the whole of the 8th Century. For example, in Britain, the first recorded Viking raid took place in the late 8th Century. This was the start of a fierce struggle between the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings in Britain.

Also, around this time, Baghdad was chosen as the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate. It soon became the largest city in the world, with a population of about one million.

WRITING A PLAQUE

Ask your pupils to write a plaque for the bell. They will need to research this famous bell. They could work individually, in pairs or in groups. You could support them by giving them the following headings to find out about:

- Who commissioned the bell? Why?
- How was the bell made?
- What is its significance in Korean history?

After they have completed their research explain to them that they need to write a plaque for the bell.

Give them a word limit of 40 to 50 words.

This makes the task much more challenging as they will have to choose their words carefully.

ACT AS A TV RESEARCHER

The bell was commissioned to honour the life of King Seongdeok. This is a great opportunity to get your pupils working with the concept of historical significance. You could put them in the role of a TV researcher working on a documentary about King Seongdeok.

You might explain to your class that the producer thinks the programme should give equal time to the following:

- Relations between Silla and the Tang dynasty (15 mins)
- The construction of the Gyeongju aqueducts (15 mins)
- Reforming the Land system (15 mins)
- The creation of the first water clock (15 mins)

Your pupils need to find out about each of the above topics and consider how significant the topic is in helping us to remember King Seongdeok.

They should then suggest new amounts of time for each event.

BELLS

Begin with a simple explanation of what bells are and the functions they serve. You might want to allow students to 'brainstorm' their ideas.

Ask pupils to research well-known bells. Perhaps set a target of 3, or 5, or 10. This could be an individual or group project.

Create fact files for each bell:

- When was it created?
- What materials were used?
- Why was the bell created?

- Is the bell still used? If so, where is it? If not, what happened to it?
- Add pictures.

There are many, many examples, from all over the world.

Get pupils to identify similarities and differences.

Examples that are easier to find information on include: Big Ben – the nickname for the Great Bell of the Great Clock of Westminster, at the north end of the Palace of Westminster in London, England; The Liberty Bell, previously called the State House Bell or Old State House Bell, located in Philadelphia; The Tsar Bell, or Royal Bell, on display on the grounds of the Moscow Kremlin.

HOW WAS THE BELL MADE?

Ask your pupils to find out how the bell was made and then get them to compare this to objects made in other parts of the world at the same time ie 771.

They could watch this short film clip to establish how the bell was created – [Donjong, Bronze bells of Korea](#).

Once they have established how the bell was created get them to research other notable European objects from this period, including the horse drawn plough, a horse collar and the first harp.



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