

Sumo

An Introduction to Sumo

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Learning Objective:

- To be able to understand and recognise the significance of sumo, its history, and its traditions.
- **Learning Outcomes:**
 - Pupils will increase their understanding of sumo - the rules of sumo, its history, its traditions, and the daily regimes for a professional sumo wrestler.
 - Pupils will be able to recognise and understand the meanings of different sumo terminology in English and Japanese.
 - They will demonstrate these outcomes through the activities at the end of the lesson – see below.

Lesson Duration: 50 minutes – 1 hour

Keywords: sumo, dohyo (ring), rikishi (wrestler), mawashi (loincloth), mage (topknot), Shinto

Resources:

PowerPoint – Sumo Presentation

Worksheet: Fill-in-the-Blanks Activity Sheet

Worksheet: Day in the Life of a Sumo Wrestler – Manga Template

Worksheet: Sumo Wrestler Fact File – Template

Starter

- **Slide 2:** Ask pupils to discuss in pairs or small groups what they know about sumo, using the questions on the slide to prompt them.
- If pupils are having trouble or do not know what sumo is, you could show them some images or a video to help them discuss and answer the questions.
- Call on pairs and groups to feedback their answers, and explain that they will learn more about some of these things within today's lesson!
- You could come back to this activity at the end of the lesson to check pupil understanding.

Estimated Time: 5 minutes

Main Learning

- **Slide 3 and 4:** Introduce the Learning Objective for today's lesson and the key vocabulary – do pupils know any of these words already?
- **Slide 5: What is Sumo?** - This section will provide pupils with a general overview of what sumo is, its rules, and why it is so significant.
- **Slide 6:** Explain what sumo is as a sport, using the image on the slide to guide you. Did this match the ideas that pupils suggested during the starter activity?
- **Slide 7:** Explain to pupils how sumo is considered to be Japan's national sport, thus emphasising the significance of the sport. Ask pupils to think of other countries around the world and what their national sports might be.
- **Slide 8:** Explain to pupils that **professional** sumo tournaments very rarely ever leave Japan, however, amateur tournaments do take place around the world. *The difference between amateur and professional sumo will be further explored on **slide 25**.*
- **Slide 9: History and Traditions** – This section will provide pupils with a brief overview of the origins of sport and some of the traditions and rituals that are important in professional sumo.
- **Slide 10:** Explain that Shinto is a religion indigenous to Japan. It is one of the country's main religions, alongside Buddhism. Kami are sacred spirits/gods that take many different shapes and forms.
- **Slide 11:** Initially, sumo began as a Shinto ritual offering, and matches would be performed to ask kami for things such as a bountiful harvest of crops when it came to harvest time. Many of the rituals and traditions we witness in sumo today are heavily influenced by Shinto.
- **Slide 12:** The Edo period was a relatively peaceful time for Japan, after many years of fighting and war. Sumo grew in popularity as a sport for people to watch and enjoy. Use the challenge questions on the slide to prompt a discussion. What was happening in Britain and elsewhere in the world during Japan's Edo period (1603-1868)? This can help pupils to contextualise this time period.
- **Slide 14 and 15:** These slides will show pupils what the dohyo looks like and how its roof looks similar to a Shinto shrine, On slide 15, click on the slide again to reveal an image of a Shinto shrine – can pupils see the similarities?
- **Slide 16:** You could show pupils a video of a sumo ring entering ceremony (dohyo-iri in Japanese) as an example. Try the challenge question the board and ask pupils to think of other sports that have special traditions – these traditions do not necessarily need to have religious associations.

- **Slide 17: Wrestlers** – This section will provide pupils with more information about the wrestlers (rikishi) including some key characteristics of their iconic appearance, as well as slides covering information about women in sumo and the differences between amateur and professional sumo.
- **Slide 18:** First, ask pupils to look at the image of the sumo wrestler on the slide, and ask them to think about what characteristics, features, and traits they notice about them.
- **Slide 19:** You could explain to pupils here that, previously, it was believed that if sumo wrestlers were to wear clothing in a match, then it could be possible for them to conceal or hide weapons that could help them to win.
- **Slide 21:** Make sure to mention that there are no weight classes specifically in professional sumo. This point will be further developed in **slide 25** (Amateur vs Professional Sumo).
- **Slide 24:** Pupils may ask why women are not able to participate in professional sumo – this is because of a traditional Shinto belief that prohibits them from entering the dohyo. However, there are many passionate women wrestlers out there who are fighting to be recognised as professionals and want to see a change to the rules of sumo.
- **Slide 25:** When discussing amateur vs professional sumo, click on the slide to reveal the points in order. Emphasise that professional sumo is treated seriously and that professional wrestlers train every single day, live in stables, and get paid – it is a career for them. There is a bigger emphasis on following the Shinto traditions and rituals. In contrast, amateur sumo focuses more on the competition and is more accessible to people across the world. Amateur sumo tournaments happen across the world, and both men and women can participate.
- **Slide 26: Day in the Life of a Sumo Wrestler** – This section will cover what a typical day might be like for a professional sumo wrestler living in a stable.
- **Slide 28:** Emphasise that being flexible is important for a sumo wrestler because it can help them adapt to their opponents' moves when in the ring; improve their balance; and prevent injuries.
- You could also show pupils here a video of what a training routine looks like for sumo wrestlers in a stable, as they can see what some of the moves look like in action.

Estimated Time: 15 – 25 minutes

Activity 1: Fill-in-the-Blanks Worksheet

- **Slide 32:** Hand out the worksheet to pupils. Make sure they read the text carefully on the sheet beforehand, and ensure they fill in the blanks on the worksheet using the word box to guide them.
- **Challenge:** Once pupils have finished the activity, ask pupils to label the image below using the correct vocabulary.
- Once complete, go through the answers with pupils to check their knowledge and see if they were able to fill in the blanks correctly.
- You could also return to **slide 4** and test pupils to see if they remember the meanings of each of the key vocabulary from the lesson!

Estimated Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Activity 2: Day in the Life of a Sumo Wrestler – Diary or Manga

- **Slide 33:** In this activity, pupils will write a diary entry from the perspective of a sumo wrestler. Alternatively, print out and use the manga template so that pupils can draw what their daily routine would be like if they were a sumo wrestler.
- Ensure that pupils cover key points within their diary/manga. For example, times of each activity, what they are wearing, where the activities take place, etc.

Estimated Time: 20 - 30 minutes

Activity 3: Research and Create a Sumo Wrestler Fact File

- **Slide 34:** In this activity, pupils will research a sumo wrestler and produce a fact file about them, using the template provided.
- You could select a specific sumo wrestler for pupils to research, or allow pupils to go and choose their own wrestler.
- This activity could be done independently, in pairs/groups, or as homework, and research should be done using computers or tablets.

Estimated Time: 20 - 30 minutes
