

Journal Writing Assignment: Commodore Perry and the Black Ship Scrolls  
Niskayuna High School, Niskayuna Central School District, Niskayuna, New York  
World Connections: An Interdisciplinary 10<sup>th</sup> grade class  
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*July 2, 1853*

*Today our fleet landed in Japan. In Shimoda where our ships are docked, the terrain is extremely mountainous. I am having the surveyors accurately sketch and take note of it. The surveyors that have traveled with us have been sketching the land for future visits to Japan. The native Japanese have been giving us puzzled looks since we have arrived. They seem to be bewildered by our ships. It is my guess that they have never seen steam ships before. I do believe that this is precisely the reason for their bewilderment. Japan has still been using wind as a form of power to move their ships. As for us, we have used steam for a few years now and, in my opinion, it is a much more reliable source of power than wind. I think this because the wind speed can change speed and direction at any minute. Steam does not.*

*While we are here in Japan by orders of the honorable President Fillmore, I hope that we can impose a treaty that will greatly benefit the Americans. For years now, American and other foreign sailors who have been shipwrecked off of the coasts of Japan have been treated with no respect at all. The Japanese have been tarring and feathering our sailors. It is my intention to fix this and open Japanese ports to the Americans sailors as well as ensure their well-being when and if they become shipwrecked. In addition, Dr. Morrow has come to study Japanese agriculture and plants. These plants are still unknown to us Americans so it is*

*Morrow's job to find out what can be done with such things. In a few days, I will meet with the emperor myself and present the treaty to him that I want him to sign.*

*July 18, 1854*

*I am pleased to say that I have gone to the Japanese emperor and have almost completed the task of which this voyage was made. Today, I traveled many miles to the place where the emperor resides. When I got there, I was greeted by a bunch of not so friendly guards. At this point, I was not very welcome at the emperor's residence.*

*In I marched with a piece of parchment rolled up in hand. On this rather tattered piece of paper, I had a treaty with all of the terms named on it that President Millard Fillmore wanted. The only thing that needed to be done was the signing: the emperor needed to sign and agree to these terms. The terms that were named on this parchment that I was holding were all of our intentions on which my fleet came here in the first place. I am almost certain that I have listed those in my previous journal entry.*

*As I greeted the emperor with S Wells Williams, my translator, the emperor gave me a puzzled look. He gave us a look that was almost the same as one given to my fleet upon our arrival. As an American, I wasn't quite sure what to make of this. After all, the Japanese weren't very pleasant people to deal with. After the emperor had glanced over the parchment that I gave him, he mumbled something to Williams. The emperor wasn't so quick to sign the treaty. "Very well," I said. "I will be back in October when you have had more time to review my contract."*

*So that's how I left it. I will return shortly when the decision has been made.*

July 31, 1854

*After my recent correspondence with President Millard Fillmore, I have been alerted to the fact that other countries such as France, Britain and Holland are in the process of devising a contract with Japan as well! This is preposterous! I will not allow for this! We were here first, and it is our contract that the Japanese shall sign!*

*These other countries are beating down the doors of Japan! They are trying to earn the security of knowing that Japan will aid their shipwrecked sailors and not tar and feather them like they have done to any foreign sailors in the past. I will not just stand by and watch other nations gain this status overnight while I am patiently waiting for the emperor to sign our treaty! I have been generous in giving the emperor time to think about the present contract under consideration with the United States. For my generosity, all I get in return is other countries trying to steal away our contract. This is not fair and I will not watch this happen and do nothing about it.*

*After I have checked with my fleet, I will go back to the emperor's residents and ask if he has reached a decision. I will not leave until he has. President Fillmore sent us here and I will not leave until the job that I have come such a long way to complete is finished.*

*August 10, 1854*

*Today, the Treaty of Kanagawa was signed. This treaty was an important event in the opening of the Japanese ports because it allowed for American sailors to have Japan as a place to stock up on supplies and as a rest area. Before this treaty was signed, the Japanese were cruel to any foreigners who stopped in Japan either because they were shipwrecked or if they were stopping to refuel and restock with supplies. Now that the Japanese have signed this treaty, Americans will not be tarred and feathered like they used to be, they will be treated with respect and as equals. In addition to having Americans being able to have two Japanese ports as a "rest stops", this treaty forced Japan to aid shipwrecked sailors.*

*We have ensured the well being of our sailors around the world and in Japanese territory. Now that our duty has been completed and we have established a truce with Japan, my fleet of "Black Ships" can safely make our way back to the land from which we came.*