

Lethal Beauty: Samurai Weapons and Armor
&
Antique Kimono from the Alexander Collection
October 12, 2014 – January 4, 2015

Dear Educators,

The Katonah Museum of Art is thrilled to present an exhibition of extraordinary and rarely seen traditional samurai armor and artifacts spanning the 13th- 20th centuries. This samurai exhibition will be paired with an exhibition of traditional 18th to 20th-century Japanese kimono. Together, the time-honored traditions associated with samurai armor and the kimono will illuminate different aspects of Japanese art, costume, and culture.

Samurai have inspired much in our pop culture today. From comics to anime, iconic characters with admirable traits resonate with young audiences around the world. Loyalty, morality, honor, and mastery – these were the basic tenets of life for the Japanese Samurai. The Samurai engaged not only in battle, but also followed literary, artistic, and spiritual pursuits. The 63 fascinating artifacts on view, made by master craftsmen, along with a pair of magnificent 17th-century screen-murals will bring the role of Japanese Samurai to life.

In the Learning Center, original illustrations from the picture books *Three Samurai Cats* and *Suki's Kimono* will serve as friendly introductions to these themes and ideas.

During your tours, students will engage in active discussions that build visual literacy skills and support critical thinking addressed in the Common Core State Standards in literacy. Tours will explore the following:

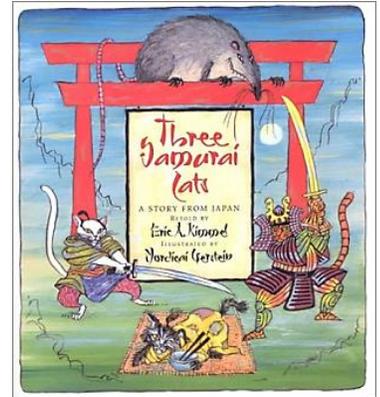
- **Consider design and function** – How do form, construction, and aesthetic design intersect?
- **Learn about a culture through its objects** – What do armor and kimono communicate about the lives of men and women in traditional Japan?
- **Compare and contrast** – Discuss similarities and differences between objects.
- **Imagine more** – How do the art and objects on view connect to our lives today?

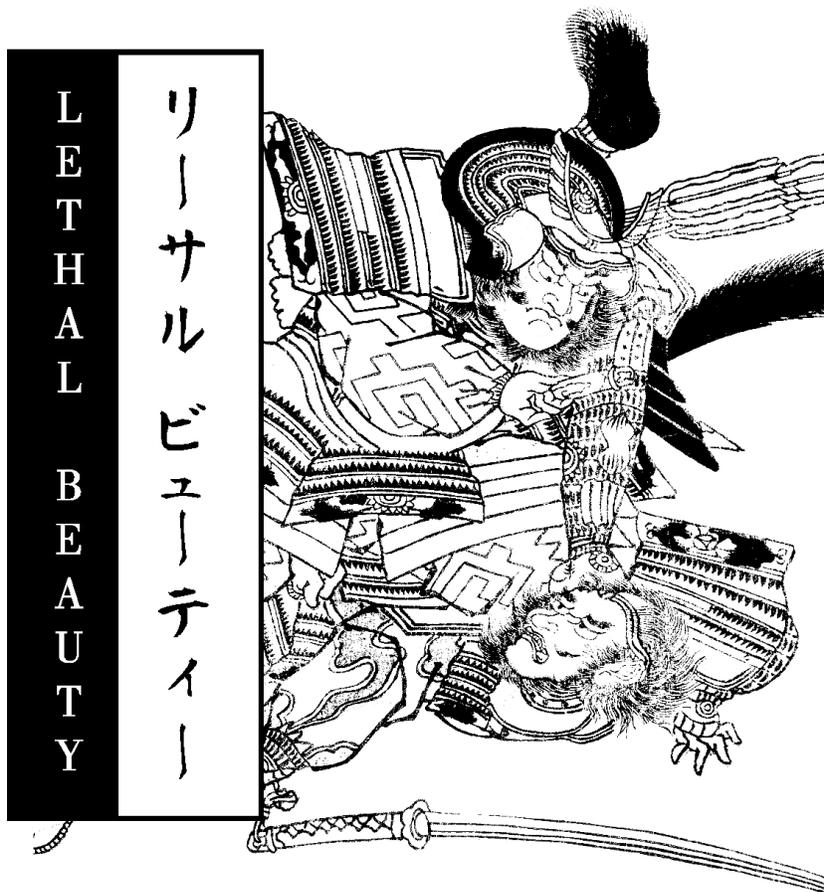
To help prepare your students for their Museum visit we have enclosed the following:

- **Teacher's Guide**
 - **Introduction to the Exhibition**
 - **Glossary**
 - **Map of Japan and Armor Diagram**
- **Three images from the exhibition and questions for discussion with your students**
- **Pre-Visit Activities**
 - **Samurai Values**
 - **Design it!**
 - **Design, Pattern, and Symbol in Kimono**
 - **Name Tag Sheet** – We request that each student arrive wearing a name tag with their first name clearly legible. Use the attached name tag activity sheet or any other name tag format.

Let us know how you will be using your visit so that we may best serve you. Please call 914-232-9555, ext. 2985 to discuss the specifics of your tour. Thank you for choosing the KMA for your class visit.

Karen R. Stein
Director of Education





侍の武器と甲冑 Samurai Weapons and Armor

Lethal Beauty celebrates samurai history and artistry, exploring the evolution of a distinct warrior aesthetic. A comprehensive range of 63 exceptional works by master craftsmen showcases the striking duality of deadly weaponry and artistic ingenuity. The exhibition features full suits of armor, helmets, warrior hats, face masks, long and short swords, daggers, matchlock rifles, and more. The range of blades spans from the 13th to the 20th centuries and highlights technical refinement and exquisite craftsmanship. The concluding section shows how samurai weapons and fittings were recycled and given new purposes after the warriors were disbanded in 1876.

Higher-standing samurai engaged not only in battles, but also in artistic and spiritual pursuits. Over the centuries, these warriors cultivated an appreciation and respect for elegance and aesthetics. From austere battle protection emerged ornate suits of armor—warriors flaunted fierce face masks, dramatic helmets, and elaborate swords to reflect an image of superhuman power and lethal beauty.

The samurai are universally renowned warriors. Tales of their heroics have enchanted listeners since the 12th century, and perhaps more than any other warrior class in history, they continue to fascinate people of all backgrounds, cultures, and ages.

The exhibition is curated by **Dr. Andreas Marks**, Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture, and tour organized by International Arts & Artists, Washington, D.C.

Detail from: Katsukawa Shuntai, *The great battle at Karikura Valley (Karikuradani igawa no ta)*, 1800s-20s. Woodblock print triptych. Library of Congress.

MAP OF JAPAN



SAMURAI AND KIMONO GLOSSARY

SAMURAI:

Armor: (n) Coverings worn by soldiers or warriors to protect the body in battle

Bu and Bun: (n) Terms used to refer to the combination of military (*bu*) skills and cultivation of peaceful arts (*bun*) that were expected of most samurai. Excellence at archery and swordsmanship are examples of *bu*, while composing poetry, watching *Noh* plays, or learning the "Way of Tea" (*Chado*) are all examples of *bun*.

Buddhism: (n) One of the two major religions of pre-modern Japan. The religion focuses on principles of ethical conduct, the cultivation of wisdom, and mental discipline, with the goal of extinguishing desire and gaining enlightenment or salvation from the cycle of rebirth.

Bushido: (n) A Japanese word for the code of principles for the way of the Samurai life. Because the Samurai followed this code of moral principles, they were usually referred to as *bushi*.

Daiymo: (n) A great feudal lord's ruling family

Edo period: (n) The period from 1603 -1867 in Japan under the rule of the Tokugawa *shogunate* and the country's 300 regional *Daimyo*. The period was known for economic growth, strict social order, isolationist foreign policies, environmental protection, and the enjoyment of arts and culture.

Emperor: (n) The hereditary ruler of Japan, traditionally said to be a direct descendant of the Sun Goddess

Folding screens: (n) Called *Byōbu* (屏風, wind wall) Japanese folding screens are made from several joined panels, bearing decorative painting and calligraphy, used to separate interiors and enclose private spaces.

Katana: (n) A curved single-edge blade, worn with the cutting edge up. It was used for open combat.

Manufacture (v): To make something from raw materials by hand or by machinery

Matchlock gun: (n) A type of musket introduced to Japan by the Portuguese in 1543

Mon: (n) Family crests, of circular form, used as identifying marks on battlefield flags and many other goods

Mountings: (n) Various fittings that hold the blade of a sword when it is being worn or stored

Narrative: (n) Telling a story

Samurai: (n) Means "one who serves." Members of the military or warrior class, active in Japan between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries.

Scabbard: (n) A protective case for a sword that covers the blade

Shōgun: (n) The title applied to the military commanders from about the 8th century A.D. to the end of the 12th century. Later, the term was applied to the hereditary officials who governed Japan until 1868

when the *shogunate* (government of a *shogun*) was terminated and the ruling power was restored to the emperor.

Sword guard: (n) A piece of metal on a sword that protects the hand

Swordsmith: (n) A maker of swords

Temper line: (n) Line on a sword derived from tempering, a heat treatment technique for metals

Tosei gusoku: (n) A style of Japanese armor that has welded metal pieces as well as rivets and hinges. It was developed so that the armor would not be easily penetrated by gun fire.

Wakizashi: (n) A short sword. Considered a side arm.

KIMONO:

Design: (n) The organization of elements; the composition

Embroidery: (n) Stitching done with silk, cotton, or metallic thread.

Fabric: (n) Cloth, typically produced by weaving or knitting textile fibers

Furisode: (n) Long-sleeved kimono

Gold leaf: (n) Embellishes the kimono. It is gold which has been hammered into very thin sheets by beating.

Kamon: (n) Family crest. Look for family crests on kimono.

Kimono: (n) A traditional Japanese garment worn by both men and women. It means “thing to wear” (ki = “wear,” mono = “thing”). We use kimono to denote both singular and plural.

Obi: (n) A type of sash used to tie kimono.

Silk: (n) A fine, strong, soft, lustrous fiber produced by silkworms in making cocoons and collected to make thread and fabric. Japanese kimono often contain silk.

Symbol: (n) A thing that represents or stands for something else, especially a material object representing something abstract. Many Japanese symbols adorn kimono.

Tomesode (tomisode): (n) A short-sleeved kimono; the Japanese characters for the word *tomesode* actually mean “to fasten” and “sleeve.”

Uchikake: (n) 1. Floor-trailing, elaborate kimono worn as a cloak by upper class women in the Edo period.

2. Overcoat

Yukata: (n) Summer kimono



FORM AND FUNCTION

LOOKING FOR DETAILS

By far, the most important items owned by the samurai warrior were their personal arms and armor, which provided both protection in battle and an opportunity to present their cultural and personal identity. These were treasured items that were symbols of strength, identity, and power and were used both on the battlefield and in ceremonies. During peacetime, many craftsmen were commissioned to make these objects as beautiful as possible.

LOOK CAREFULLY AT THIS SAMURAI SUIT OF ARMOR

- What components can you identify?
 - Describe where one part ends and another begins.
 - What do you think was the purpose for each part?
- What materials can you identify?
 - What was each one good for?
- Which area of the Samurai do you think is most protected or most vulnerable?
- How would you feel if you were wearing this?
 - What would you put on first (or last)? Why ?
 - How would you move around?
 - What parts allow for movement? What parts prevent movement?
- How many craftsmen do you think were needed?
 - What jobs might they have?
- What do you find that is beautiful here?
 - Describe any pattern you see.
 - What other details do you notice?

Imagine More:

If this Samurai surprised you on the battle field, how would you feel?

What makes you feel that way?

Credit: Tōsei Gusoku armor with blue lacing, Edo period, 17th century. Iron, lacquer, silk, gold, and leather. Courtesy of Private Collection. Photography by Forrest Cavale and Zach Niles of ThirdElementStudios.com



FORM AND DESIGN

The kimono is a traditional Japanese garment whose history stretches back many centuries. Kimono are highly-prized , decorative, expensive articles of clothing, which both men and women have worn at home and for formal occasions. The word kimono literally means “thing to wear” (*ki*=“wear”, *mono*=“thing”). Beginning in the 17th century, kimono gradually changed into high fashion, couture clothing. Many hands participate in the process of making a kimono -- the designer, who decides on the pattern and embroidery, the weavers who make the silk, many embroiders and sewers, and finally the obi makers who make the special sash that holds everything together.

TAKE A CAREFUL LOOK AT THIS KIMONO.

What do you notice first?

What colors do you see?

What patterns or repeating shapes do you notice?

Describe the animals you see.

What other shapes do you see?

Does the design move? How does the pattern change?

Does this design remind you of anything?

Imagine More:

What designs, images, or patterns would you like on a kimono of your own?

Credit:

Furisode; Meiji period, 1910; Chirimen silk, Yuzen-dyed with embroidery, Courtesy of the Alexander Collection



THE BATTLE OF ICHINOTANI



Detail



Detail

TELLING A STORY IN PICTURES

In ancient Japan, painted folding screens were commonly used as room dividers and decorative backdrops for ceremonial occasions. A samurai patron might have a scene of a famous battle painted for him. Sumptuous gold leaf was often used in the background. The gold served two purposes: it showed off the Samurai's wealth and power, and it provided a reflective surface, helping to illuminate the dark interior spaces of the Samurai's castle.

Imagine this screen in a big room. How do you think it might have looked to a visitor?

Do you think you could see the whole thing at once?

What can you say is happening in this scene?

How about on the left side of the screen – what is happening there?

How about on the right side of the screen – what is happening there?

Who are the characters in this scene?

Describe the setting – where is it taking place?

Can you find the two details in the full screen?

What other details can you describe?

Imagine More: What do you wish you could know more about?

Credit: Anonymous Kano-school artist, Edo period, mid-17th century. Six-fold screens with scenes from the Tales of Heike, c. 1650-1700. Ink, gold, colors on paper. Courtesy of Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Photography by Keiko Tanaka and Monika Jastrzębiec Czepielewska



Pre-Visit Activity: DESIGN IT!

Look carefully at this Samurai suit of armor.

What function does the mask serve? How about the chest piece? How about the leggings?

Observe the materials. Are they hard or soft? How do they help the Samurai?

Did you notice that this Samurai does not have any shoes?!

Design a kind of shoe that this Samurai could really use. Write down what materials it should be made of and how it will help the Samurai.

DESIGN, PATTERN, AND SYMBOL IN KIMONO



The kimono in our exhibition were worn for special occasions and to impress viewers. What clothes do you wear on special occasions?

Kimono designs often include symbols. Can you find a crane in this kimono? The crane symbolizes long life and good fortune. Can you find a turtle? Turtles also symbolize long life.

What symbols do we have here in the USA? (hint: a special bird, a kind of flag, a religious symbol, emoticons)

Design an outfit to wear on a special occasion that expresses something about yourself or your culture. What colors would you use? What images or designs would you put on it? What symbols would you include? Draw a picture here and below, write a description of the special qualities of this outfit.

Credit: Uchikake. Edo period, approximately 1780. Silk damask with embroidery and couching. Courtesy of the Alexander Collection

SAMURAI VALUES: WHICH ONE DO YOU EMBODY?



武士道

1. Rectitude (making the right decisions)
2. Valor (courage in battle)
3. Benevolence (generosity and kindness)
4. Respect
5. Honesty
6. Honor
7. Loyalty

The word samurai translates as “One who serves.” A samurai shared many similarities with the medieval European knight in that they served their *lords* (master, or someone in power). One had to be born into a samurai family, only infrequently was one made a Samurai. A Samurai was part of the ruling elite and had many privileges afforded to him. These warriors held land, given to them by their lords in exchange for service. Tax revenue and the produce from the land enabled the samurai to devote their time to martial arts training. The Samurai had a strict code of conduct on how to live their lives – the Code of Bushido. Achieving these ideals required a great amount of self-control. In peacetime, the Samurai tried to display self-control and Bushido in all of their activities.

Pick one of the codes of Bushido and discuss what you think it means (hint: use a thesaurus to help you understand it).

How does it relate to your life?

Give an example from your life where you showed this ideal.

TEACHER'S RESOURCES FOR LETHAL BEAUTY

Kids Discover Samurai

<http://www.kidsdiscover.com/shop/issues/samurai-for-kids/>

Japan: Memoirs of a Secret Empire

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/japan/entered08.html>

Guide for teacher from PBS

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/japan/resources03.html>

Arts of the Samurai

<http://education.asianart.org/explore-resources/no-keys/6%2C42>

The Samurai's New Shoes

<http://creativity.denverartmuseum.org/?lesson-plan=the-samurais-new-shoes>

Japanese Art from UMFA

http://centralpt.com/upload/417/9985_japaneselessonsm.pdf

Barbier-Mueller Museum: Samurai Kids - Helmets

<http://www.samuraicollection.org/games/helmets.html>

V&A Kimono

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/k/kimono/>

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/h/a-history-of-the-kimono/>

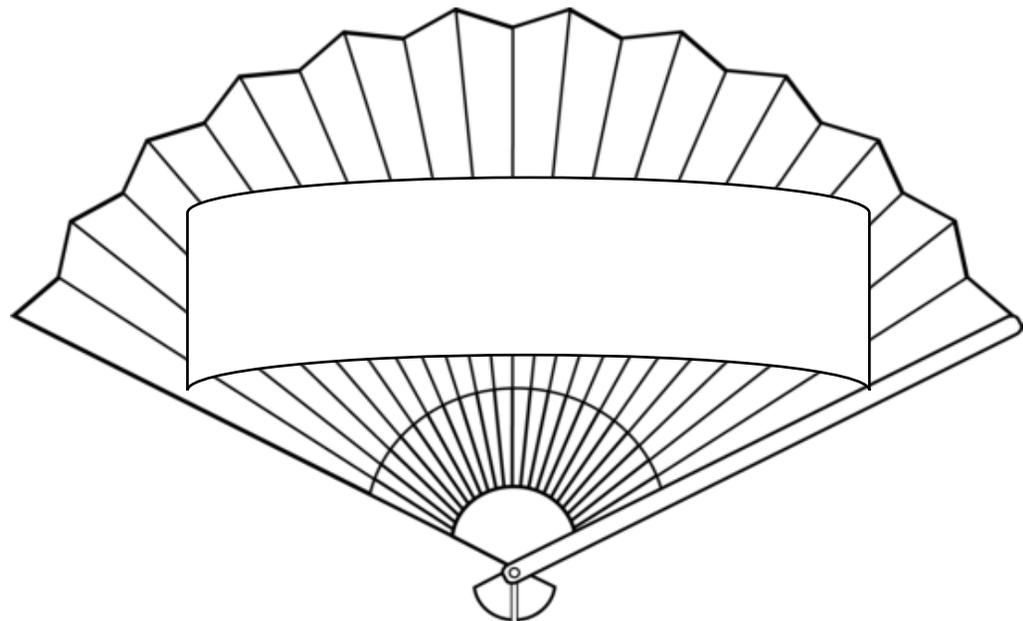
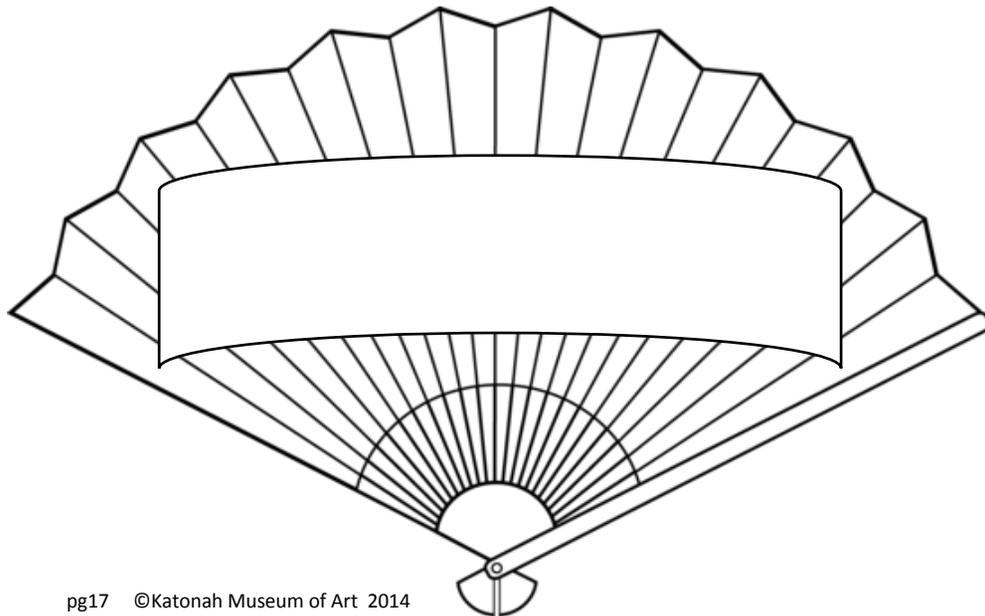
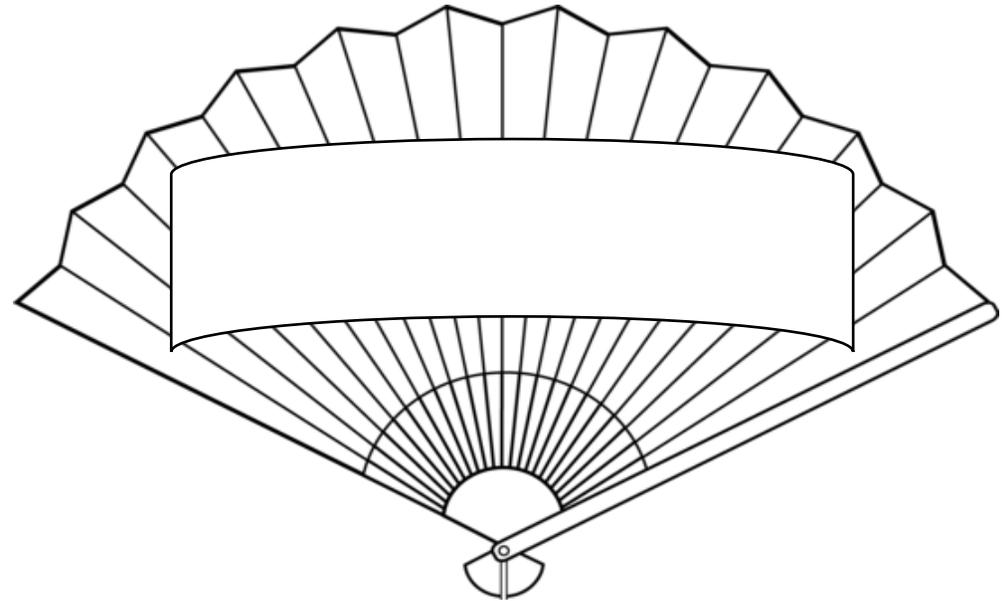
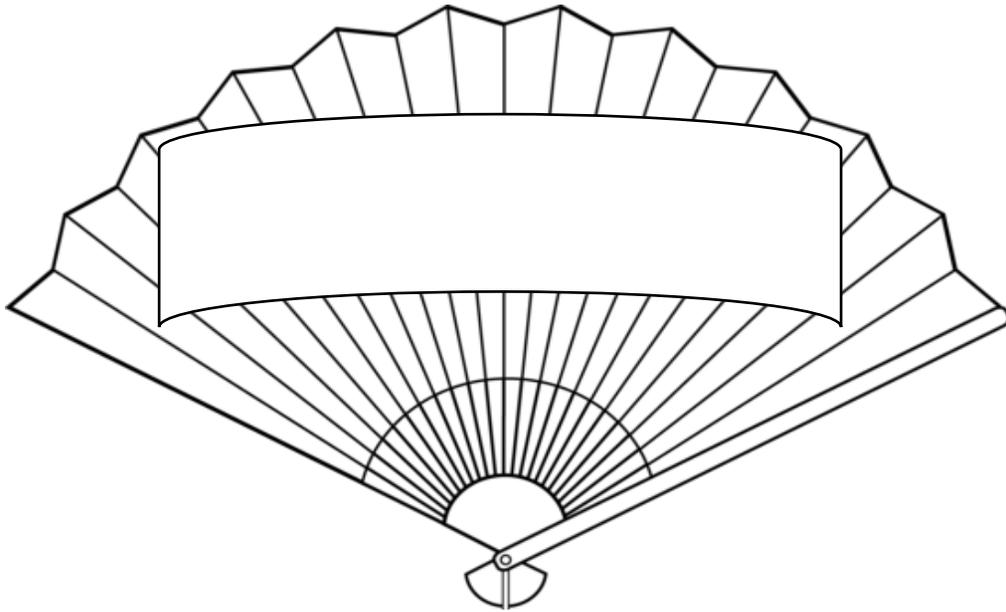
Met Publication

http://www.metmuseum.org/research/metpublications/Art_of_the_Samurai_Japanese_Arms_and_Armor_1156_1868

Name tag Activity Sheet for *Japanese Samurai Armor and Kimono*

Japanese fans are often given as gifts to honor birthdays. Fans are beautifully decorated with symbolic designs, especially of nature and animals.

Use the outline below to decorate a fan, clearly write your name on it, and wear on your visit to the Katonah Museum of Art.



A MOMENT IN PICTURES

The samurai loved to portray important moments and battles in their lives. They commissioned great and beautiful folding screens to be painted for their homes.

Think of a really important moment in your life. Create a screen that depicts what happened at that moment. You can use the panels to show the sequence of events.

A large rectangular frame divided into four vertical panels, intended for drawing a sequence of events. The frame is defined by a thick black border, and the four panels are separated by thin blue vertical lines. The panels are currently blank, providing space for the student to create their artwork.

LOOK AT THIS



Head-shaped helmet with a sake cup, a pair of chopsticks, and a pair of sickles
Edo period, 17th century
Iron, wood, lacquer, silk, and gold

THINK ABOUT THIS

Find this helmet in one of the main galleries.

What is the purpose of a helmet?

Samurai helmets are generally designed with these parts:

- the bowl
- the visor
- protective wings
- neck protector

Can you find these parts on this helmet and the others in the gallery? Can you imagine the purpose for each part?

Notice the details on each of the parts.

Even though helmets were designed with specific parts they each have a unique look including animal shapes, designs, different decoration, color, materials. Describe this one.

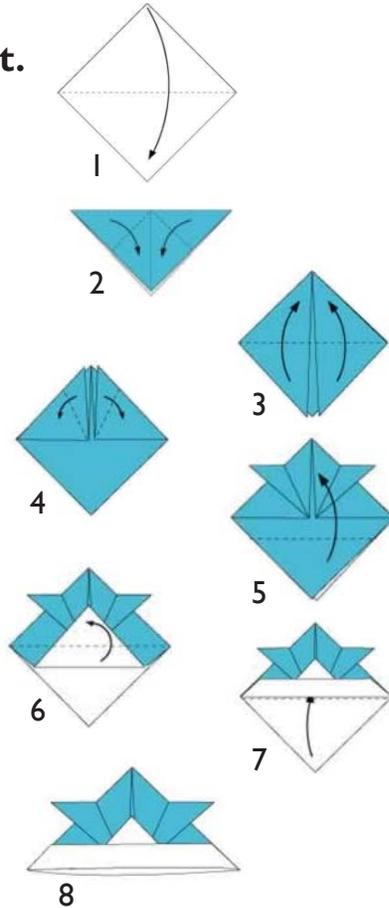
Imagine more...

This helmet is designed with swords, chopsticks, and horns. Why? What would you include on your helmet?

TRY THIS

Create a samurai helmet.

1. Fold in half
2. Fold in the dotted line to meet the center line
3. Fold in the dotted line
4. Fold in the dotted line
5. Fold in the dotted line
6. Fold in the dotted line
7. Tuck the corner into the pocket
8. Finished

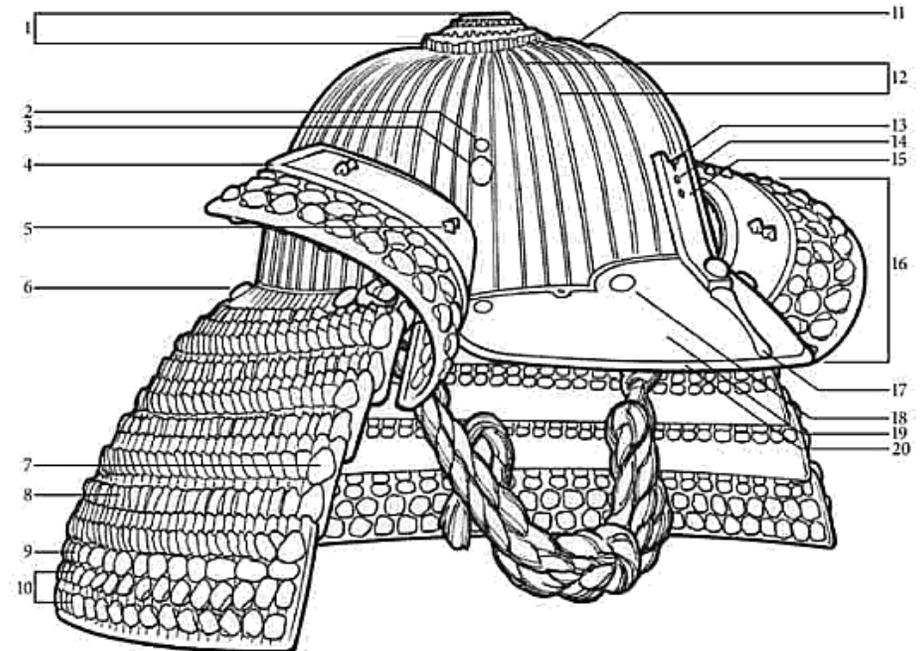


Imagine more...

If you want to add more to your helmet use materials from the scrap bag to add neck guards, animal shapes, and other elements.

SAMURAI HELMET PARTS

Kabuto Terminology - I Key Parts and Common Features



- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Tehen-no-kanamono - top fixture | 11. Hachi - helmet bowl |
| 2. Shiten-no-byō - erect rivet | 12. Suji tate - erect flange |
| 3. Hibiki-no-ana - hole (with lacing) | 13. Iri hassō kizami - 'V'-shaped cut |
| 4. Fukurin - trim moulding | 14. Sashimono-dome-no-ana - pin-hole |
| 5. Sakura-byō - decorative rivet | 15. Haraidate-dai - front crest holder |
| 6. Hachi tsuke-no-byō - anchor rivet | 16. Fukigaeshi - winglet |
| 7. Mimi ito - decorative lacing strand | 17. Shinogi - end prong |
| 8. Ke-date - connective lengths of lacing | 18. Sanko-no-byō - peak rivet |
| 9. Uname - segment of lacing | 19. Tsuke mabizashi - affixed peak |
| 10. Hishi-nui - lacing cross-knots | 20. Fukurin - trim moulding. |

HELMET