I. Feudalism - A feudal system existed in Japan for hundreds of years.

**Feudalism:** a political system of local government based on granting land in return for loyalty, military assistance and other service.

- Key Idea: Feudalism is about having someone give you land to convince you to be loyal to them.
  - When someone gives you land you become a ____________________
  - If you give some land to someone else you become a ____________________

II. Feudal Japan - By the 1100’s the emperor at Heian had totally lost control of the country. During this time the emperor at Heian was just a **figurehead**.

A. Outside Heian, powerful clans were fighting each other for power. Each clan had their own army of **samurai** (warrior knights).

B. The head of the strongest clan was called the **Shogun** (Chief General).

C. From the 1100’s - 1500’s Japan was in a constant state of warfare as each clan strove to dominate Japan. When a clan became the most powerful then their clan leader became the Shogun.
In Japan, the way of the warrior remained a powerful force in society until 1854. In Europe, feudalism ended 400 years earlier. Why did feudalism die in Europe? For one thing, growing towns offered alternatives to people who did not want to function within the feudal system. Also, military technology changed in the 1300’s. Large Armies with new weapons - the longbow in the 1300’s and guns in the 1400’s - made mounted knights less effective in battle.

Knights were often more interested in overseeing their land than in serving as warriors. Sometimes they refused to fight when asked to perform military service. When feudalism was strong, this would have resulted in a ceremony of public disgrace. But, after about 1400, kings began to rely on paid armies rather than asking knights to honor their feudal obligations.

In Japan, the ruling Shoguns eventually forced samurai to become literate and to learn administrative skills. In Europe, however, most knights didn’t learn these skills. Administrators in European kingdoms were often clergy members.

Feudalism in Japan lasted longer than feudalism in Europe partly because samurai who were not warriors became government administrators. Also, Japan sealed itself off from the West between 1635 and 1854, thus preserving its feudal society. Like in Europe, Feudalism arose in Japan to fill a need for government and protection. And just as in Europe, Japanese feudalism declined quickly when things began to change.