Analysis Questions for Meiji Constitution

IB History

**Instructions:**

After the challenges to the power of the new Meiji government from the Satsuma rebellion, it became imperative for the Meiji oligarchs to establish a constitution to setup the framework for the new government and to move close to renegotiating the unequal treaties. In order to do that the oligarch, especially Ito Hirobumi, decided that the constitution of Japan would be promulgated no later than 1890.

In this activity you are going to a close reading of the constitution and attempt to answer the questions below. You may work together but you all need to create answers to these questions.

1. What is the Imperial Diet? Explain its structure, procedures for election and the powers given to each house.
2. What is the Privy Council? Explain its structure and powers.
3. What is the Judicature? Explain its structure and powers.
4. How will the Meiji government be financed?
5. In 1881 there was a crisis over which political system Japan should model itself after. Okuma Shigenobu wanted to follow the British system and Ito Hirobumi preferred the Prussian system.

Research both systems and attempt to identify which elements of the constitution were influenced by which. Which of the oligarchs got his way? How do you know?

1. In the decades leading up to the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution there was a strong peoples’ rights movement to push for the common man to have power in the governance of Japan. To what extent to this document respond to this movement?