

# Cultural Geography Activity

**networks**

## Asia

### Anime

Have you ever drawn a comic strip? If your characters had big eyes and big hair, chances are you've been influenced by anime. Anime is Japanese animation. It came to life following World War II, when a young artist named Osamu Tezuka published the book *Shintakarajima, or New Treasure Island*. Later, he adapted his work to films and television shows. Tezuka is considered the father of anime. He influenced generations of artists to come. He, in turn, was heavily influenced by early Disney films, such as *Snow White*.

Like many Disney characters, Tezuka's characters had big, round eyes—the better to express emotion. The females had big hair, and the males had big muscles. These artistic conventions are still part of anime today.

In the United States, cartoons are often lighthearted and geared to children. In Japanese anime, topics can be dark and bleak. The art form covers all genres, including drama, action, romance, and comedy. Anime is for both children and adults, giving it widespread appeal.

Although anime has a huge following among American youth, its cultural roots are still firmly in Japan. The gestures used by the characters reflect Japanese conventions. For example, Americans might gesture to their chest to indicate themselves. The Japanese would point to their nose. Other common gestures in anime include putting a hand to the head to indicate embarrassment and waving the hand quickly to signify no.

**Directions:** Use the text to answer the following questions.

- 1. Naming** Who is considered the father of anime?  
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- 2. Citing Text Evidence** Why do characters in anime have big eyes?  
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- 3. Comparing and Contrasting** How does Japanese anime differ from American cartoons?  
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- 4. Creating Visuals** Draw a three-panel storyboard for a scene in an anime film between two characters.