

Tokyo Imperial Palace

A Reading A-Z Level M Leveled Book
Word Count: 535

LEVELED BOOK • M

Connections

Writing

Use information from the book and outside resources to create a timeline of important events about the Imperial Palace. Begin with Edo Castle in the 1600s and continue through today.

Social Studies

The Imperial Palace gardens are home to many of Tokyo's trees. Research to learn more about the kinds of trees in the garden and create a poster with the information you learned.

Tokyo Imperial Palace



Reading A-Z

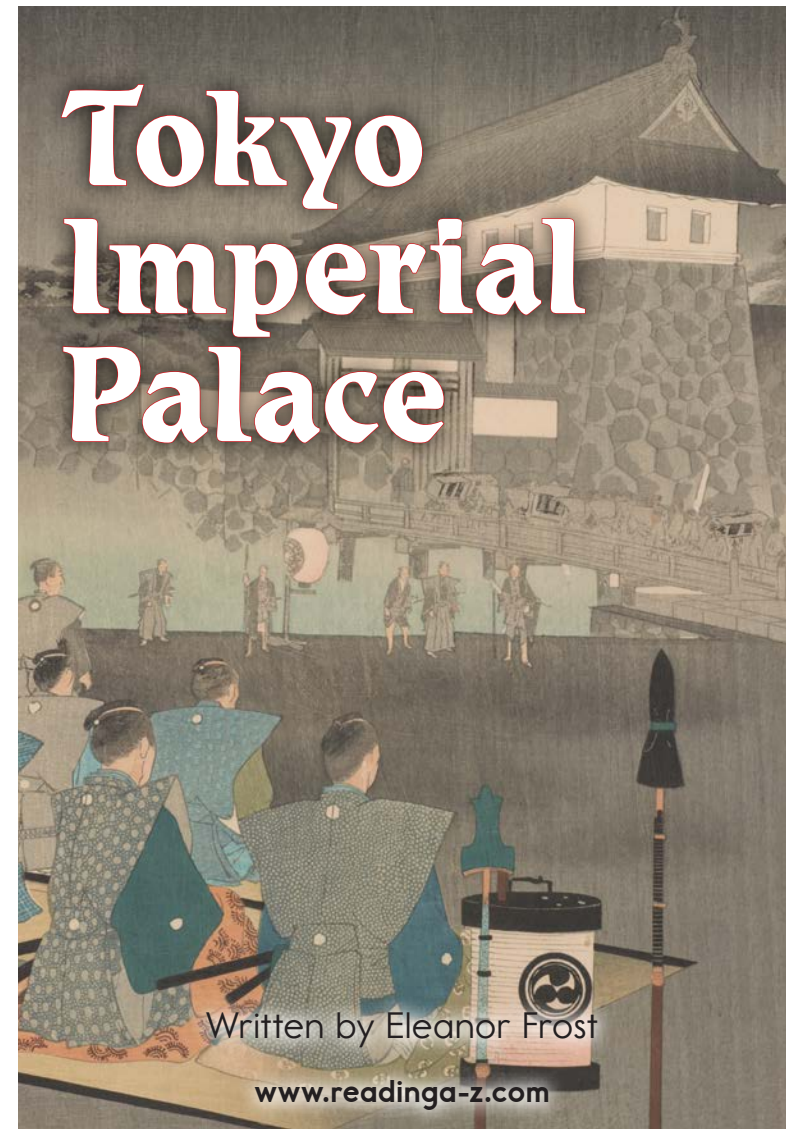
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Written by Eleanor Frost

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Glossary

emperor (<i>n.</i>)	a man who rules an empire (p. 4)
empress (<i>n.</i>)	a woman who rules an empire; the wife or widow of an emperor (p. 4)
grounds (<i>n.</i>)	the area surrounding a building; an area that is used for a specific purpose (p. 6)
imperial (<i>adj.</i>)	having to do with royalty or an absolute ruler of an empire (p. 4)
mortar (<i>n.</i>)	a liquid mixture of materials that hardens as it dries and is used to hold bricks or stones together (p. 9)
species (<i>n.</i>)	a group of living things that are physically similar and can reproduce (p. 14)



Focus Question

What is Tokyo's Imperial Palace, and why is it an important landmark?

Words to Know

emperor	imperial
empress	mortar
grounds	species

Front cover: A three-story tower in the Imperial Palace

Title page: An 1897 color print showing Edo Castle

Page 3: Cherry blossoms at the gardens in spring

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World Landmarks
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Correlation

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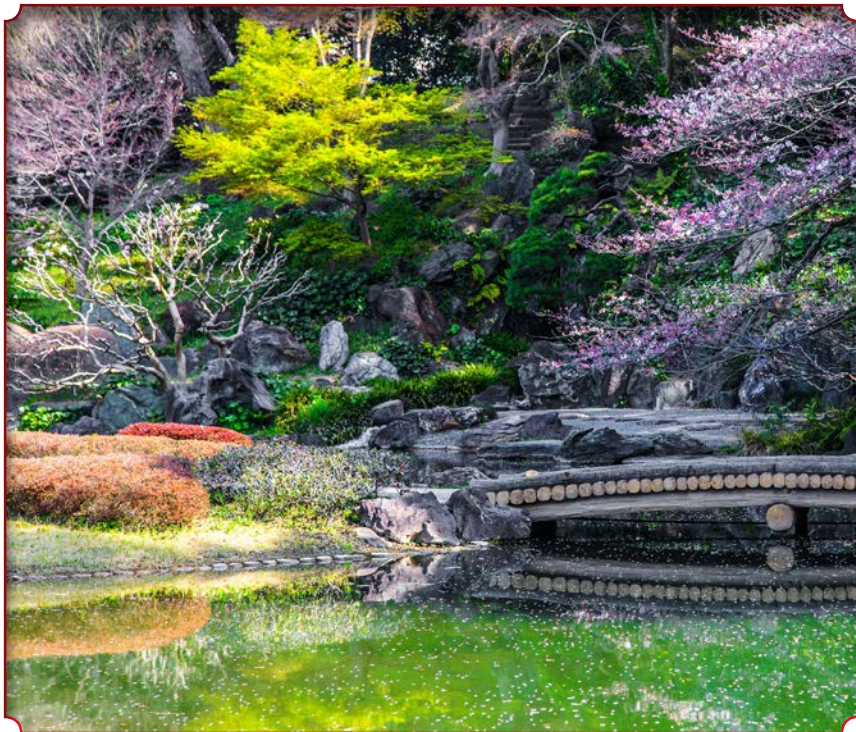
People enjoy the cherry blossoms along the Chidori-ga-fuchi moat.

An Important Landmark

The Imperial Palace is important even today. Therefore, the government takes very good care of it. Many people exercise on the palace grounds. Many others visit the palace for fun. Every spring, one million visitors come to see the cherry trees bloom there. People enjoy the beauty and history of the Imperial Palace.

Natural Beauty

The emperor protects nature at the Imperial Palace. More than 3,600 **species** of animals and insects live there. So do more than 1,300 species of plants. It is amazing to find so much natural beauty in such a big city.



The Imperial Palace gardens are home to 20 percent of all of Tokyo's trees.

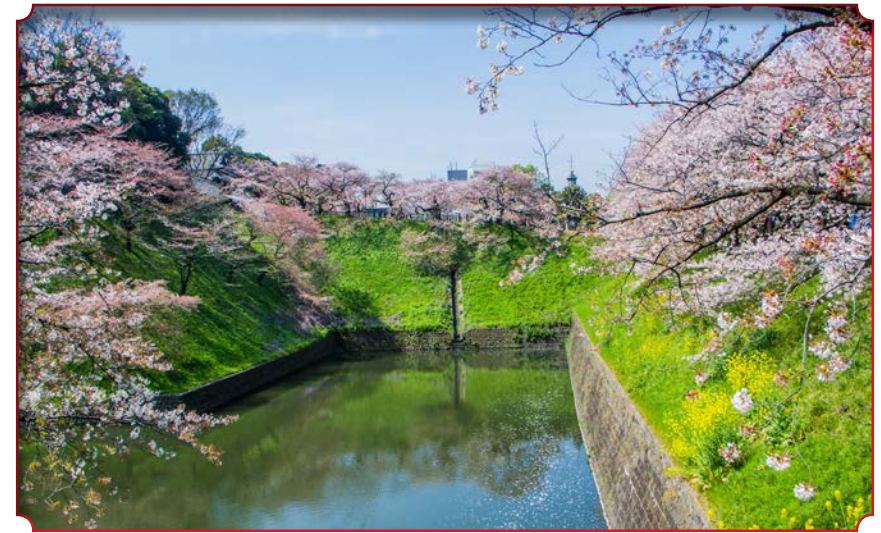
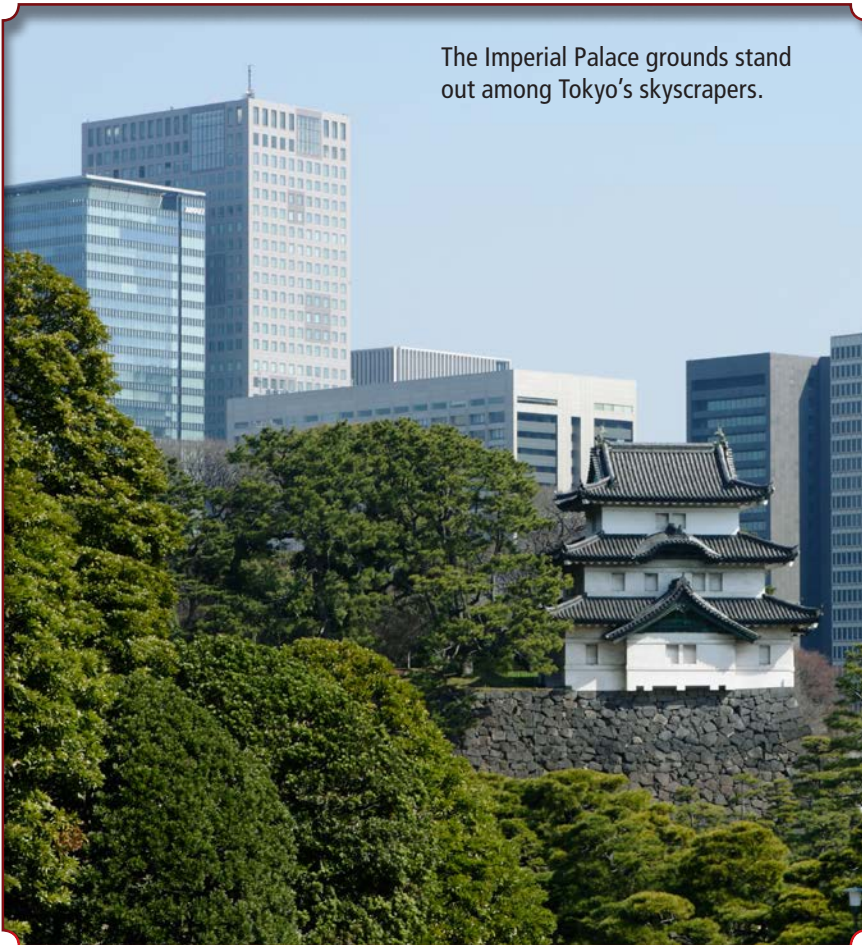


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The Imperial Palace grounds stand out among Tokyo's skyscrapers.



A Peaceful Place

The city of Tokyo is very busy and modern. The **Imperial** Palace sits in the middle of that city. It is a peaceful place. The **emperor** and **empress** of Japan live there.

Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko greet visitors in January 2017.



The emperor and empress live on the Imperial Palace grounds. The palace itself is also in this area of the site. The palace is a large building. It has two stories aboveground and one story below the ground. The emperor does his work for the government there. He takes part in special events. He throws big parties for important visitors.

The Imperial Palace Outer Garden is a free park. The Nijubashi Bridge is a famous bridge in this area.

The East Gardens are also open for people to visit. The East Gardens are beautiful all year. Some of the oldest buildings and walls in this area are from the 1600s.



Nijubashi Bridge

Where Is It?

Tokyo is on the east coast of Japan. The Imperial Palace lies in the heart of Tokyo. It is near the Japanese National Theatre and Tokyo Disneyland.

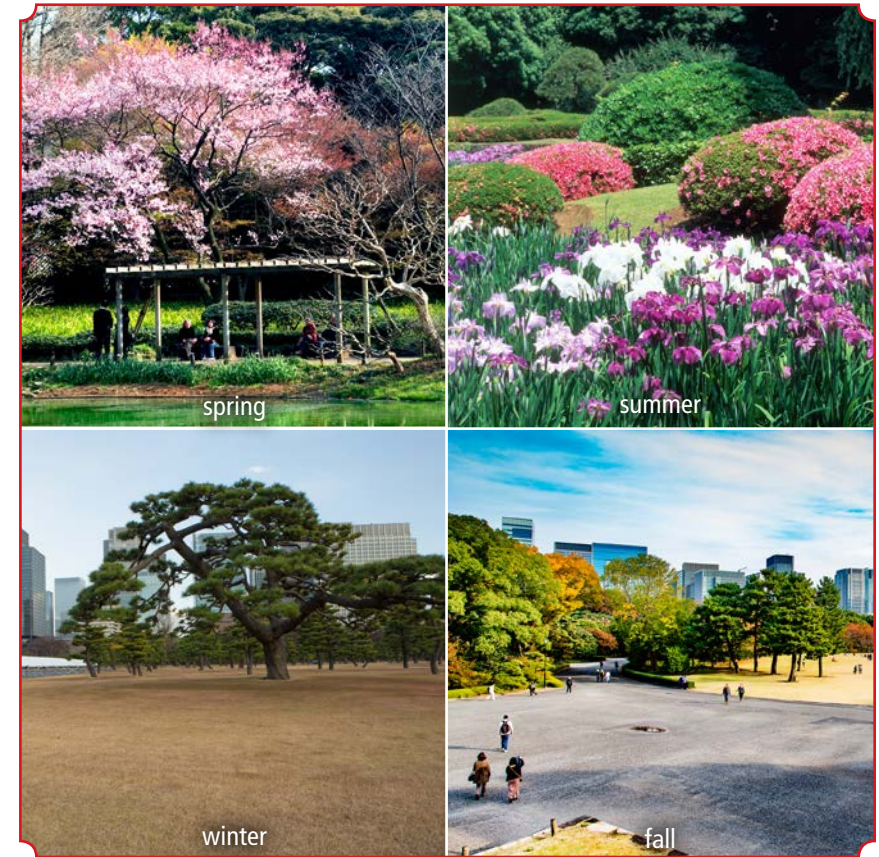


History of the Palace

A castle has stood on the site of the Imperial Palace for hundreds of years. In the early 1600s, a powerful lord built a grand castle called Edo Castle there. Sadly, its beautiful main tower burned down in 1657. Visitors can still see the stone base of that tower on the **grounds** of the Imperial Palace.



The stone foundation of Edo Castle's original main tower still stands today.



Four views of the Imperial Palace grounds show their diversity.

Four Sections

The Imperial Palace in Tokyo has four areas. They are the Imperial Palace Outer Garden, Kitanomaru Park, the East Gardens, and the Imperial Palace inner grounds.

The Tokyo Imperial Palace



The Imperial Palace grounds

- are about 115 hectares (284 acres) in area
- are surrounded by moats
- have defensive stone walls, some from the Edo period
- are home to several museums



The new dining room (top) included European-style tables and chairs instead of traditional Japanese tables and chairs (bottom).

In the 1800s, the emperor decided to move his home to the site of Edo Castle. He ordered workers to build a new palace there. They finished building the new Imperial Palace in 1888. The new palace looked Japanese on the outside. Inside, though, there were many European decorations and furniture.

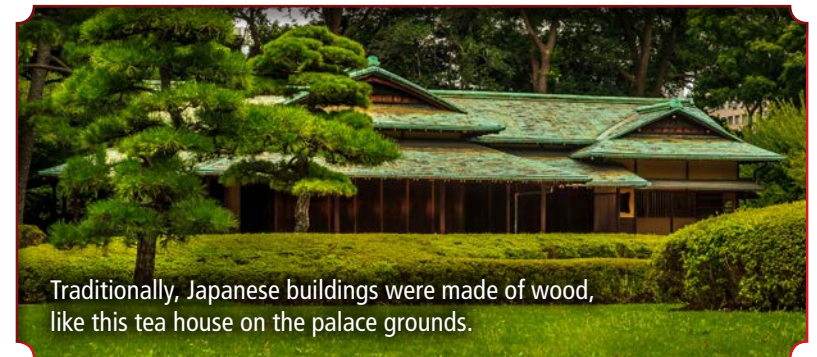


The current palace is home to Japan's emperor and empress.

During World War II, the United States bombed the area around the palace. The palace was made of wood, so it was damaged by fires. After the war, Japan built the palace again. This time, workers used cement instead of wood. They finished in 1968. The building we can see today looks very much like it did before the war.

Building the Walls

The palace grounds have stone walls around them. Workers used a special way of building to make them. The builders stacked stones to form the walls. They did not use any **mortar** to keep the stones together. That way, all the rainwater could drain out through the cracks. Even heavy rain would not damage the walls. This way of building also helped protect the walls in an earthquake. Some of the stone walls from the early 1600s still stand today.



Traditionally, Japanese buildings were made of wood, like this tea house on the palace grounds.