



COMMUNICATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

—How Are You, Japanese Friends?—

Through learning Japanese, it is important for students to learn about how children their own age live in Japan and what they are thinking. Letter writing performs the role of real communication and contributes to learning Japanese as well. Then, each custom or artifact of Japanese life that we introduce in class seems more familiar because it represents the country where the students' penpals live. This lesson will deepen their understanding of Japan and broaden their perspective on the world.



Yoshida Yoshiko

Belmont State School,
Queensland, Australia

OBJECTIVES

LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES

- To learn self-introduction
- To learn how to ask questions, how to answer
- To explain about family, school, community

TARGET FUNCTIONS	TARGET EXPRESSIONS	TARGET VOCABULARY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Giving information ❖ Asking for information ❖ Writing letters ❖ Greetings ❖ Reading/writing hiragana and katakana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 私の好きな食べ物, スポーツは～です ❖ 私は名前, 年, 学年 です ❖ ～は何が好きですか ❖ 家族は～人です。あなたは週末に何をしますか 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Words for sports, food and drink, school subjects, family members, pets

CULTURAL OBJECTIVES

- To understand the lifestyle of children in Japan, how they think, etc.
- To talk about and explain one's own life in Australia
- To exchange opinions

LESSON PLAN

SOURCE MATERIALS

Video introducing sports, school life, customs, and events in Japan

PROCEDURE

LESSON 1: Sports

1. Discussion (10 mins.)

Discussion of the sports Australian children play and the sports Japanese children play as described in their letters. (Write the names of the sports on the blackboard, divided into those played in both countries, those played only in Australia, and those played only in Japan.)

2. Conversation practice (10 mins.)

Example sentences

- ❖ わたしはバスケットボールをします。(ペンパル名)もします。
- ❖ サッカーがすきです。じょうずです。
- ❖ にほんのこどもはクリケットをしません / オーストラリアのこどもはすもうをしません。
- ❖ わたしのしゅみは～です。
- ❖ ～クラブにはいっています。
- ❖ わたしのすきなスポーツは～です。

3. Video (10 mins.)

Introduction on video of sports particular to Japan and traditional sports.

LESSON 2: School in Australia and Japan

1. Discussion (10 mins.)

Students discuss their own school life.

- Subjects studied, extracurricular activities, club activities, etc.
- School life: school hours, breaks, games with friends, etc.

- School holidays: homework, how the holidays are spent, etc.

2. Video (20 mins.)

School life of children in Japan

3. Conversation practice (30 mins.)

Example sentences

- ❖ にほんの学校は / オーストラリアの小学校は～時から～時までです。
- ❖ 学校でさんずう、こくご、しゃかい、びじゅつ、おんがく、たいいく、りかをべんきょうします。
- ❖ うんどうかい、コンサート、キャンプ、学校さいがあります。
- ❖ ひるやすみになわとびをします。
- ❖ きゅうしよくがあります / ありません。
- ❖ おやつを食べます / 食べません。
- ❖ そうじをします / しません。

LESSON 3: Writing an essay about Japan

1. Video of customs and events particular to Japan (60 mins.)

2. Library research about Japan (60 mins.)

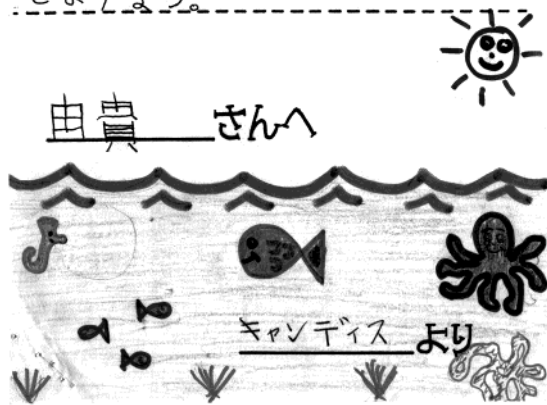
3. Discussion of videos and books (30 mins.)

- Lifestyle of children in Japan: school life, how time is spent after class, home life, etc.
- Religion: comparison with Australia; Shinto, Buddhism and their relevance to events throughout the year
- Food: Japanese cuisine, eating habits, etc.
- Traditional sports and culture: characteristics, ways in which they differ from Australia, etc.
- Relevance of cultural differences and differences between the countries, etc.
- How to write an essay

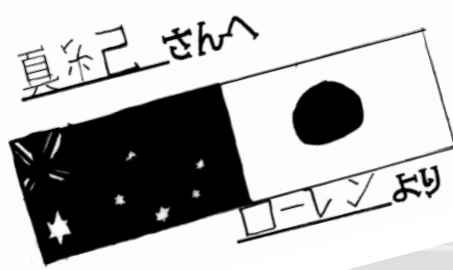
4. Writing an essay (60 mins.)

LETTERS WRITTEN BY CHILDREN

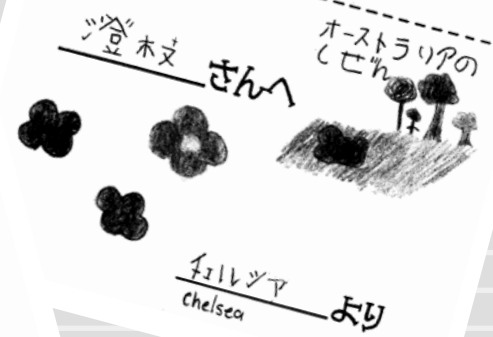
おてがみ ありがとうございました。
 おげんごですか。わたしは とても けんごです。
 じが じょうご ですね。
 イルモント しょうがこうは 9じから 3じまで
 えいご、えんご、しごかい、わか、おんがく、たいいく、かいてい、
 かんぎょう、せびりつなどいっしょに べんごをします。
 わたしは フットボール と サッカー が すきです。
 おおきくなったら じしよになりにたいです。
 しょうらい なんにたいにたいですか。
 またてがみをかいてね
 さようなら。



こんにちは 真紀己。⑨
 おてがみ ありがとうございました。
 わたしはおばたかかいたえがすきです。
 わたしのおとうさんはいりいりなとご
 ぐをはんは"りしています。
 おかあさんはいりいりいます。
 わたしはおとうとががいます。
 さいようしん のしご"とはなんですか。
 またてがみをかいてね。まています。
 バイ!



こんにちは 澄木文
 おげんごですか。わたしは とても けんごです。
 こか"みをうけたいです。わたしは 6月
 6月のかわりか"り7月のほ"めまてあつめ
 すみでした。わたしはあなたか"た"りたス
 た"すてあへ"ルモントしよア"か"るこ"りまた
 のしご"あまたてか"みをかいてね。
 さようなら



REMARKS

Introducing Japanese Culture in a Flexible Way

Australian society is composed of a large number of diverse but coexisting peoples, religions and cultures. One could assume that it would not be too difficult for Australian children growing up in this multi-cultural society to understand Japanese culture through Japanese language education. Yet the culture must undergo various processes before it can be accepted by Australian children and Australian society at large. Broadly speaking, the contrasts between Australian and Japanese societies include individualism versus group orientation, multi-ethnic versus ethnic homogeneity, and ways of thinking and values derived from Western and Eastern civilization, respectively. The character of a society is established according to its national policies, education, religion, and history as well as through the family and the expected roles of men and women.

While Japanese culture in Australia must adapt to the very different nature of Australian society, the culture itself is intrinsically flexible and change around the world is already evident. One example is traditional haiku, which is now becoming popular around the world. In many English classes in Australia students write English haiku by creating verses of 5, 7, and 5 syllables, and haiku is not only used in education but is recognized as a unique form of poetry by people in general. It is no longer surprising to hear words such as "haiku" and "tanka" in everyday conversation. It appears that, like "sushi" and "bonsai," these words are being incorporated into the English language.

On the other hand, my experience at Belmont State School indicates that most annual Japanese events are enjoyed by Australian children in their original form, perhaps because children do not resist the idea of absorbing a hitherto unknown culture. When a set of *hina* dolls lent to the school by the Japanese consulate was displayed in our library, the children sat down spontaneously in front of the dolls to admire them. For a moment their interest centered on whether or not the miniature sword was really sharp. Beside the doll stand, one of the students wearing a long-sleeved kimono (*furisode*) faced the camera with the serene smile no different from a Japanese girl. At our Tanabata Festival the children each wrote their own poignant pleas like "I want my father to come home" on the prayer slips (*tanzaku*). The underlying hope that the gods might hear their prayers is common to children of all cultures.

The unprejudiced way children make Japanese culture a part of their own lives requires us to reassess culture in terms of teaching the children in the "place for learning" that is the classroom. In this kind of classroom Japanese culture is one element of the Japanese language lesson. Introducing culture in tandem with Japanese language education enhances the acquisition of new language, and, it goes without saying, promotes understanding of the Japanese people. Accordingly, it is necessary for the teacher to have a proper grasp of the true nature of Japanese culture, and to introduce it in a flexible way that allows the children to think freely and be able to make their own judgments.

COMMENTS

In this plan, students are assigned a theme for their letters and they discuss it in their own language beforehand. This is a valuable way of arousing their interest by bringing out what they already know. The lesson also includes conversation practice introducing words and sentence patterns. The plan does not state specifically how the practice is conducted, but it is hoped that such practice does not end as simply rote exercise. There is some concern, moreover, about the extent to which students will retain the content of the lesson given the time available to cover the content described.