



ELEMENTARY

SECONDARY

BEGINNING

INTERMEDIATE

DO YOU KEEP PETS?

—Tamagotchi—

The overall aim of my lesson is to have students learn to talk about pets and describe the daily routine of looking after pets through a theme on Japanese pop culture (Tamagotchi), of interest to this age group of students. Activities include a survey and a card game to decide on the students' reactions to the needs of a pet.



Janina Carlon
Armisdale High School,
New South Wales,
Australia

OBJECTIVES

LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES

- To talk about the pets they keep/Ask others about their pets
- To describe the daily routine of caring for a pet/Describe their own daily routine
- To learn to count small animals using the correct counters

TARGET FUNCTIONS	TARGET EXPRESSIONS	TARGET VOCABULARY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Asking for information ❖ Counting animals (small) ❖ Describing daily routine actions (verbs) ❖ Describing feelings ❖ Revising particles used before verbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ ペットを飼っていますか ❖ なんびき飼っていますか ❖ おふろにはいります ❖ わたしはかなしいです ❖ おなかですみます ❖ ~にいきます, ~をたべます, ~にはいります 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Counting animals(いっぴき, にひき, さんびき, よんひき, ごひき, ろっぴき, ななひき, はっぴき, きゅうひき, じゅうひき) ❖ Verbs relating to daily activities(おきます, うまれます, つけます, あそびます, いられます) ❖ Adjectives expressing feelings

CULTURAL OBJECTIVES

- To foster awareness of the activities Japanese children of the same age group pursue in their free time
- To appreciate various new trends in Japan that have gained popularity elsewhere in the world, e.g., *manga* (cartoons, animation), karaoke, and now the Tamagotchi—the virtual pet
- To learn about everyday life in Japan—that people in Japan also keep pets, but due to lack of space this can be restricted to very small animals, that the love of animals is universal

LESSON PLAN

SOURCE MATERIALS

Tamagotchi (produced by Bandai Toys, Japan)

Handout #1*

Handout #2*



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PROCEDURE

1. Introduction: ペットをかっていますか (3 mins.)

After the usual introductory greeting to the class the teacher shows the class a large cardboard box. On the front of the box is written わたしのペットです.

Teacher: I will tell you what is in the box after you learn to ask me in Japanese, so for practice, I would like you to find out about the pets your friends in this class keep at home. Break the class up into 5 groups (6 students/group) and conduct this survey of your group. The last person on the survey is the teacher.

2. The survey: Handout #1 (15 mins.)

Students complete the responses and then the whole class discusses which are the most common pets, the most unusual pets, etc.

Teacher: Who would like to ask me the survey question?

Student: せんせい、ペットをかっていますか。

Teacher: はい。

Student: どこからですか。

Teacher: にほんからです。

Student: ペットをなんびきかっていますか。

Teacher: いっぴきかっています。

Student: ペットのなまえはなんですか。

Teacher: たまごっちです。

Student: ペットはなににいますか。

Teacher: むらさきです。

3. Information about Tamagotchi given by the teacher (5 mins.)

Teacher takes out the Tamagotchi and introduces “The Virtual Pet” from Japan to the class:

Information 1.

Tamagotchi is at present one of the most popular toys in Japan with children of all ages and even adults. It starts life as a little egg that throbs up and down before hatching. After that, it needs all the same essentials for life as any other pet, e.g., food, drink, sleep, going to the toilet, playing, etc., except that all these needs are satisfied electronically. If you don't look after it properly, it may get sick or even die. To look after a Tamagotchi you must show responsibility and devotion. Today you will learn what you need to do and then the Tamagotchi will be the class pet.

Information 2.

The Tamagotchi requires 24-hour attention, so in Japan students have had to take them to school. This has become a problem in many schools where lessons were interrupted by the crying of the Tamagotchi in students' pockets. In many schools they have been banned. This led to a few young entrepreneurs who set up “Tamagotchi Caretaker” businesses which, for a price, will look after Tamagotchi for children while they are in school.

Information 3.

Keeping pets in Japan is very popular, although in the cities where space is limited, people tend to keep small pets such as cats, small dogs, birds, and fish. In small apartments, it is very difficult to keep a pet. Tamagotchi may be the ideal pet for those that cannot keep real pets.

Information 4.

For homework students could research other forms of Japanese pop culture.

4. How to look after the Tamagotchi—a card activity: Handout #2 (20 mins.)

1. Cut the card into the two columns:

1) If Tamagotchi does this:

2) You will:

2. Cut up each sentence on both halves of the cards and place the pieces in two separate envelopes. Label each envelope.

1) Tamagotchi

2) わたし

3. Give each group of six students the two sets of activity cards and explain that they have 20 minutes to match the cards in the envelope marked Tamagotchi (these are all the things that the Tamagotchi does that need your attention) with the cards marked わたし (these are all the responses that you have or things you must do for the Tamagotchi). During this activity there will be students reading aloud from the cards and discussion during the matching process. A set of verb and adjective flash cards may be necessary if the students don't know the words on the activity cards. It is a good idea to supply dictionaries so they can look up any problem words. Give students an uncut version of the activity cards with which to correct their group's answers. Tell the students they will take turns taking the Tamagotchi home each night as "Tamagotchi Caretakers" for the class starting from next lesson.

5. Extension activity

Students write a diary about their day looking after the Tamagotchi, e.g., what time it was fed, did it get bored and had to be played with, what time it went to sleep, etc.

6. Evaluation

- ❖ Interview
- ❖ Completion of the survey and card activity may be used to evaluate the students. While they are working in groups I talk to the students to gauge their reactions.

STUDENT RESPONSES

If the learning of language is given an understood purpose, real learning will take place. My students made a tremendous effort in this lesson to learn as much as possible because they needed to learn how to look after the Tamagotchi.

1. Students completed the survey in record time because they were eager to find out what was in the box and ask the question: せんせい、ペットを飼っていますか。 They wanted to see the pet.
2. Students were fascinated by this new electronic toy. Initially the virtual pets had not been seen in our town, although they have now arrived. I will continue to use them in the future since they are a new example of pop culture.
3. Students listened intently to the "Information" part of the lesson and laughed.
4. Students completed the card activity very efficiently. I noticed excellent use of dictionaries. (Developing how-to-learn skills.)
5. When the bell rang at the end of the lesson many students stayed behind to ask more questions about the Tamagotchi and to get a better look at it. Many of their questions I then developed into other lesson topics, e.g., A student asked me what kind of sound the Tamagotchi makes. This was a great lead into the onomatopoeia of animal sounds. I called this lesson "Did you know that Japanese pets speak Japanese." An Australian dog says "bow wow" but a Japanese dog says "wan wan." (See page 88)

REMARKS

A Balance of Traditional and Modern Japanese Culture

The major aim of my Japanese program is to provide students with accurate information so that they may broaden their perspectives on and values regarding Japan and become well-informed citizens of this rural community. The best way to understand a society is to learn the language of that country.

My own philosophy is that an understanding of Japanese culture and society is more important to the majority of my students than linguistic competence. The majority of my students will stay in our town after graduating from school and will rarely have an opportunity to use the language I teach them.

My lessons always start with things about which the learners have knowledge, and this gives them confidence from the start. For example, in my lesson on Tamagotchi I start with general information about pets and with simple words like dog and cat, etc. As the lesson progresses I introduce the new information and the more difficult aspects of the lesson. If you do not capture their interest at the start, you will lose the rest of the lesson because real, efficient learning will not take place.

Students will soon recognize why the lesson is relevant to their needs and interests. There must always be a purpose to the language being taught, and if there is a purpose it will motivate the students to want to learn. The use of cultural themes is the only way language can be made relevant. The more students do, the more they learn, so lessons must be student centered with plenty of opportunities to develop their own independent learning skills. This is an essential part of lessons that encourage students to play an active role in extending their language learning at home and into the future.

I also have my own philosophy concerning what type of cultural aspects I choose as the theme for my language lessons. I believe it is original, and I would like to share it.

The topics included in typical lessons in Japanese culture, telling, for example, about traditional houses with tatami rooms, Japanese festivals, kimono, and children's songs, stress how very different the Japanese culture is from our own. These differences were part of old Japan and they were there because Japan was isolated from the Western world for many centuries. They are part of Japan today but not as big a part as apartment houses, karaoke, mini skirts, and baggy socks, Tamagotchi and other electronic games, and business suits. These aspects of modern Japan are very similar to our own culture. Through radio, television, and the telephone the peoples of the world have been able to learn from each other and share their cultures.

The world in which our students belong has become even smaller through overseas school trips and communications via the World Wide Web. We should always look at our overall Japanese teaching programs to see if we have a balance of traditional Japanese culture and modern Japanese culture and even aspects of Japanese popular culture which is most relevant to the age group we are teaching. If we achieve this balance our students will be better able to see the similarities of culture that bring us together rather than only the differences, which may be interesting, but that make it so foreign that we cannot ever really become close.

COMMENTS

Ms. Carlon used one of the latest games as a tool for teaching Japanese language and culture. Electronic games like Tamagotchi are part of a universal culture shared by the young generation around the world. Limited space, i.e., no place to keep a real pet, is perhaps one of many reasons why this game became so popular. I would suggest that this information be given as a follow-up to this lesson. After each student has had a turn keeping the Tamagotchi, there could be a discussion to reflect on their experiences and consider why this game has become so popular. Opinions diverge regarding the ethical value of virtual pets, but it is certainly useful to make active use of a recent element of pop culture among young people as a vehicle for teaching.

— SURVEY —

ペットを飼っていますか

INSTRUCTIONS

In your group find out the following information about the pets your group keeps.

QUESTIONS

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. ペットを飼っていますか。 | Do you keep a pet? |
| 2. ペットをなんびき飼っていますか。 | How many pets do you keep? |
| 3. ペットのなまえは何ですか。 | What is the name of your pet? |
| 4. ペットはなににいますか。 | What color is your pet? |

ANSWERS	1	2	3	4
わたし				
さん				
せんせい				

VOCABULARY

なんびき

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| 1.....いっぴき | 6.....ろっぴき |
| 2.....にひき | 7.....ななひき |
| 3.....さんびき | 8.....はっぴき |
| 4.....よんひき | 9.....きゅうひき |
| 5.....ごひき | 10.....じゅっぴき |

If Tamagotchi does this:	You will:
たまごっちがうまれます。	うれしいです。
たまごっちがおきます。	でんきをつけます。
のどがかわきます。	のみものをあげます。 (.....をのみます) のみものをやります。
たいくつです。	あそびます。
おなかがすきます。	えさをあげます。 (.....をたべます) えさをやります。
おふろにはいりたいです。	おふろにいれます。 (おふろにはいります)
うんちをします。	トイレにいかせます。 (トイレにいきます)
びょうきになります。	ちゅうしゃをします。 (くすりをのみます)
わがままになります。	しつけをします。 おこります。
ねます。	でんきをけします。
たまごっちがしにます。	かなしいです。