



# COMPARING CULTURES TOGETHER

—Exchanges through E-mail—



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## PURPOSE

This lesson allows students at high schools in Japan and the United States to communicate with each other via e-mail on the topic of preschool education in both countries after viewing the video *Preschool in Three Cultures*. Students at schools in both countries learn how to express their opinions and questions to each other in the languages that they are studying.

## POINTS TO BE STUDIED

### LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES

#### TARGET FUNCTIONS

- ❖ Introducing oneself
- ❖ Learning to type in Japanese
- ❖ Reading Japanese students' self-introductions
- ❖ Expressing opinions
- ❖ Asking questions regarding others and their opinions

#### TARGET EXPRESSIONS

- ❖ ~と思います / 思いました, ~と言います / 言いました, わたし / 僕の意見では~, ~ています, お~

#### TARGET VOCABULARY

- ❖ 保育園, 幼稚園, 小学校, 中学校, 高校, 大学, 大学院, 寺, 神社, 教会, 体操, 思いやり, 弁当, 感想, 意見, 似る, 返事

### CULTURAL OBJECTIVES

- To learn naturally about the lives of Japanese high school students through an exchange of ideas between the students in U.S. and peers in Japan
- To work with classmate and with Japanese peers to recognize aspects of Japanese and American culture that are embodied in the preschool education of the two countries
- To look at themselves, and not just the people of another culture, anthropologically
- To examine the credibility of an ethnographic video

### OTHER OBJECTIVES

- To practice to be familiar with the use of e-mail and the Internet
- To develop closer connections with students in Japan through learning about each others childhood experiences

**SOURCE MATERIALS**

Grammar quiz (Handout #1\*)

Kanji quiz (Handout #2\*)

Video: *Preschool in Three Cultures*, Yale University Press*Minna no Nihongo* Vol. 1, 3A Corporation

Internet-connected computers

Printer

Flash cards

**PROCEDURE****Preparation**

1. In this lesson, the students watch a video and exchange opinions and impressions about it by e-mail with students in Japan (in this case, students at Doshisha High School). The following preparations are made in advance of the lesson.
2. The teachers at the home and Japanese schools assign their students counterparts in the other school and distribute their respective e-mail addresses. The students introduce themselves to each other in Japanese via e-mail. They are given four days to exchange e-mail with each other. During this time, the students in the home school go over the material in Lesson 21 of *Minna no Nihongo*. This lesson introduces target expressions such as ~と思います, ~と言います, and ~でしょう that are useful in expressing facts and opinions. The students are told to prepare for a quiz on these expressions at the end of the unit (Handout #1). They also review the following forms: お~, わたし/僕の意見では~, ~ですが, and ~ています. Finally, they are introduced to the target vocabulary and given take-home flash cards. They must write hiragana on the back-side of each kanji and then cut the sheet into individual cards. The students have already learned 高校 and 大学, so they only have to learn to recognize the kanji and understand the meanings of fifteen new words. They are told to prepare for a quiz on these words at the end of the unit (Handout #2). Students in both classes then watch the Japanese and American sections of the video. For homework prior to the present lesson, the students are instructed to use the material of Lesson 21 and at the beginning of the unit to write out three comments and three questions about what they saw in the video.

**1. Writing comments and questions (5 mins.)**

Each student writes one of her/his comments and one of her/his questions on the blackboard.

Example comments:

- ❖ その先生はあまり親切だと思いません。
- ❖ 日本の保育園のほうがアメリカの保育園よりもい

いと思います。

- ❖ 日本の保育園が楽しいと思います。

Example questions:

- ❖ お弁当にどのようなものが入っていますか。お弁当はおいしいですか。
- ❖ 日本人はみんなBuddhistですか。
- ❖ 日本の保育園にはスポーツの試合がありますか。

**2. Discussion (20 mins.)**

The students individually read their comments and questions aloud. After each comment or question is read, the class together discusses (a) its grammatical accuracy and (b) its content. High school students generally experience great difficulty in trying to exchange substantial opinions and questions in Japanese. However, having learned grammatical forms that enable them to express opinions and also having carefully prepared comments and questions the night before, they are actually able to discuss the video's content in this class.

**3. Flash cards (3-4 mins.)**

Students are given practice in memorizing the unit's target vocabulary (kanji and pronunciation) using large-sized flash cards.

**4. Review (3-4 mins.)**

The procedures and expectations of sending e-mail regarding the video to the students' Japanese peers are reviewed.

**5. Writing letters (10-12 mins.)**

The students work together to begin writing their letters in Japanese. The teacher floats around the classroom providing individual assistance to students in need. The following is an example of what students have written:

こんにちは、雅彦さん。ビデオを見ましたか。僕達は一昨日見ました。そして、宿題で、色々な感想や意見を書きました。僕の感想と意見を雅彦さんに書きたいと思います。

そのビデオはとても面白かったと思います。僕の意見では、そのビデオは少し古いです。僕の保育園のクラスには、30人ぐらいの生徒がいました。そして、僕のクラスはもっとにぎやかで楽しいクラスでした。雅彦さんの保育園はどうでしたか。こまつだに保育園と似ていましたか。こまつだに保育園はお寺にありましたが、雅彦さんの保育園もお寺にありましたか。毎日、体操をしましたか。毎日お弁当を食べましたか。ところで、僕の兄は靴の会社で働いています。僕はエンジニアになりたいと思います。雅彦さんはどんな仕事をしたいと思いますか。

では、雅彦さんの返事を待っています。書いてください!!!

マツト

#### 4. Evaluation

Self-introduction e-mail:	25 points
Video response e-mail:	25 points
Grammar quiz (Handout #1):	15 points
Kanji quiz (Handout #3):	15 points
Homework:	10 points
Class participation:	10 points

#### Remaining lessons of the unit

1. The students send their e-mail to their counterparts in Japan and await responses. Meanwhile, they prepare for and take the grammar and vocabulary quizzes (Handouts #1 and #2).
2. Once all the Japanese students' e-mail has arrived, the students share them with each other during one class period. In the case of Phillips Academy, because the students at Doshisha are generally good at English, and in order for them to derive a linguistic benefit from this activity, they are instructed to write their responses to the Phillips students' e-mail in English. This is the first time that English is used in the unit. During this class, the students at Phillips are allowed to use English to report on the e-mail that they received from the Doshisha students. A social studies-style discussion ensues, in which students use their own and their Japanese peers' views not only to discuss differences between Japanese and American culture as they are seen in preschools, but also to critique the credibility of the video. In this way, students in both countries are able to help each other not only linguistically; they are also able to provide real-life filters for each other to recognize and see beyond the limits of a single ethnographic videotape.

#### Remarks

- Students are told at the beginning of the unit that the evaluation of their video response e-mail, homework, and class participation will have both linguistic and cultural components. Regarding the linguistic component, they are told that they will be

evaluated on the accuracy and thoroughness of their speaking, reading and writing. Also, they are told that they will be expected to use the forms introduced in Lesson 21 of the text correctly in their writing. Regarding the cultural component, they are told that they will be evaluated according to how well they use the opportunity to communicate with their Japanese peers about culture as it can be interpreted by the viewing of the video in question. Specifically, they are told that their grade will reflect their success in:

- ❖ sharing opinions and asking questions;
- ❖ understanding the relationship between the practices of a Japanese preschool and some of the features of Japanese culture; and
- ❖ drawing comparisons between Japanese and American culture.

#### From the committee

This lesson plan provides a suitable range of topic options and a well-designed schedule of activities pertinent to the contemporary context of widespread e-mail use. In introducing vocabulary for this lesson, instead of simply presenting the words with their translations, the teacher could reinforce the students' grasp of the vocabulary by having them put the words for the different levels of schooling (保育園, 小学校, etc.) in the correct order, or by conducting a quiz involving comparisons of the Japanese and home-country education systems. Also, since the words 寺, 神社, and 教会 appear together in this lesson, the students could be assigned the task of explaining the differences between them. Furthermore, at the video-viewing stage, the students could be given a question sheet about the video that they have to complete by using the target expressions and sentence patterns.

## GRAMMAR QUIZ

名前 \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. ~と思います

Choose the word that best fits in each blank and conjugate it appropriately.

来ます おもしろいです 帰ります 役に立ちます 上手です 行きます

- そのビデオはどうでしたか。  
とても ( ) と思います。
- サントスさんは日本語ができますか。  
ええ、( ) と思います。日本に2年いましたから。
- その辞書はいいですか。  
ええ、とても ( ) と思います。
- ジュリーさんはいませんね。  
かばんがありませんから、もう家へ ( ) と思います。
- 彼女は来ますか。  
いいえ、今日は ( ) と思います。

### 2. ~と言います

Explain what Bさん said in the spaces provided.

- A: あした、暇ですか。  
B: あしたは会社へ行かなければなりません。  
Bさんはあしたは \_\_\_\_\_ と言いました。
- A: デパートはこんでいましたか。  
B: ええ、とてもこんでいました。  
Bさんはデパートは \_\_\_\_\_ と言いました。

### 3. ~でしょう

Choose the word that best fits in each blank and conjugate it appropriately.

あります 暑いです すきました 地図です 疲れました

- おなかが ( ) でしょう? 何か食べませんか。
- それは日本の ( ) でしょう? 東京はどこですか。
- ( ) でしょう? エアコンをつけましょうか。

## VOCABULARY QUIZ

名前 \_\_\_\_\_

漢字	ひらがな	英語
寺	_____	_____
感想	_____	_____
弁当	_____	_____
返事	_____	_____
高校	_____	_____
幼稚園	_____	_____
大学院	_____	_____
保育園	_____	_____
神社	_____	_____
教会	_____	_____
似る	_____	_____
思いやり	_____	_____
小学校	_____	_____
体操	_____	_____
意見	_____	_____
大学	_____	_____
中学校	_____	_____