

# Leisure Activities—Ueno Park

## Gayleen Mackereth

Edgewater College  
Auckland, New Zealand



**Ages:** 15 years old  
**Level:** Intermediate  
**Culture:** Saturday morning in Ueno Park  
**Japanese:** Expressions related to parks and leisure time activities

### Objectives

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. In this class students watch a short home video of people in Ueno Park on a Saturday morning and observe the things they are doing.

I chose this aspect of Japanese culture because I believe that seeing Japanese people doing ordinary things in their own environment teaches students the universality of leisure but at the same time brings an understanding of Japan as students ask why there are no students of their age in the park early on Saturday morning and why people in a crowded city need to use this park for leisure.

In this plan students learn the followings:

1. General knowledge about Ueno Park, its loca-

tion, and its importance to Tokyo people

2. The types of activities Japanese people like to do in their leisure time and the people who do these activities
3. The religious customs which are observed when visiting a shrine or temple
4. That this was once the land of the most powerful family in Japan (The importance of knowing about the Tokugawas and their place in history)

### Materials

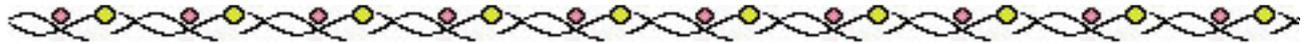
- 8mm home video of Ueno in Tokyo
- Worksheet "Leisure time in Japan" (one per student)

#### Other Leisure Activities in Japan

Golf  
Baseball  
Soccer  
Flower arrangement  
Kendo  
Karate  
Sumo  
Camping  
Skiing  
Judo  
Japanese card games  
Theatre  
Play music  
Play instruments  
Hiking  
Party  
Tennis

People	Place	Activities	Same as N.Z.	Observations
Grandparents Young children On Saturday no older children, only in the afternoon	Ueno Park	Running and Jogging Rowing, Cycling, Baseball, Feed pigeons Brush dog and walk dog	Yes, except we don't brush our dogs in the park	Clean and have lanterns down the pathway. Flowers Statues
Yong kids with their parents Grandparents	Ueno Zoo	Look at the animals	Yes	Open from 9-4:30 Pandas are the main attraction
High school children Parents	Ueno Central Mall	Shopping	Yes and No	Shop till they drop Cheap and permanent
All ages	Botanical Gardens	View the flowers Lots of gardens to view	Yes	Stone Lanterns Pretty flower arranging
All ages	Shrine	Pray Cleanse themselves	No	Ring a bell before they pray to get the gods attention

Worksheet "Leisure time in Japan" with students' notes



## Procedure

1. Warm-up. What do you know about leisure activities in Japan? Discuss old and new vocabulary and write it on board. (7 minutes)

### Grammatical constructions:

~ているあいだ。  
 ~つもりです。  
 ~でゆうめいです。  
 ~のために。

### Nouns:

ちず	じんじゃ
公園	おてら
みち	ぶつだん
はやし	かね
もものはな	いぬ
さくら	あひる
ゆうえんち	とり
どうぶつえん	はと

### Verbal expressions:

ジョギングをする。  
 うんどうをする。  
 そうじをする。  
 スポーツをする。  
 やきゅうをする。  
 ピクニックをする。  
 いぬとさんぽする。  
 たべものをうる。  
 カヌーをこぐ。  
 モーターボートをうんでんする。  
 じてんしゃにのる。  
 かいてんもくばにのる。

じんじゃをたずねる。  
 はやくはしる。  
 ゆっくりあるく。  
 こどもはないています。  
 きものをきています。  
 とりはあつまっています。

### Words indicating location:

~の上に  
 ~のうしろに  
 ~のしたに  
 ~の前に  
 ~のとなりに  
 ~のそばに

### Verbs indicating motion:

公園をとる  
 みちをわたる  
 みずうみをあるいてまわる

### Adjectives:

みどりのき  
 ひろい公園/みずうみ  
 かわいいいぬ/こども  
 たかいこうそうけんちく  
 うるさいあひる  
 あぶない  
 ふるいおてら/じんじゃ  
 さびしい  
 はやい  
 うれしい  
 しずかなところ  
 やせいのとり/どうぶつ



2. Show video. Ask students to say the appropriate words silently in their minds as each image comes up. (13 minutes)

3. Show video again while students make notes on the worksheet "Leisure time in Japan." (13 minutes)

4. Divide into groups of 6 pupils. Group discusses what was noted. All students check that they have noted all activities seen, try to draw some valid conclusions, and make some questions up for general discussion. (15 minutes)

Some questions teachers can use to stimulate cultural comparison are:

- a. Do you have any large parks like Ueno Park in your city?
- b. Do you know of any parks with lakes large enough to do boating?
- c. Compare the location of Ueno Park with lakes large enough to do boating.
- d. Compare the location of Ueno Park with parks in your area.
- e. Ueno park contains a zoo, botanical areas, and ancient shrines and temples. How does this compare with parks near your city?
- f. Which activities people do in Ueno Park are the same as and which activities are different from your own experience of parks?
- g. Would you say that people in Japan and in your country are really the same and that they enjoy the same things for leisure?

Note that those people going to the zoo on

Saturday morning are preschoolers, some parents and old people. School children are at school. Note the numbers of modern fathers taking part in family activities.

5. Whole class: Conclusions drawn, similarities and differences to New Zealand. (8 minutes)

6. Follow-up lesson(s): The video is shown in short segments and after each segment the students are asked to write a short passage in Japanese about what they have seen on the video. Finally, the students are asked to speak in Japanese for two minutes describing what they have seen in the video and to extend this by making comparisons with their own experiences of parks in New Zealand.

### Student Response

This class deepens cultural understanding by:

1. Fostering an understanding of the importance of the park for people living in crowded city dwellings
2. Helping students to realize that Japanese people are just like themselves and that while certain leisure activities are the same, some activities are different, often being dictated by the environment
3. Introducing a little of the history of the Tōshōgū Shrine and the history of the land on which Ueno Park is built

Just by seeing real Japanese people in their city, interest in culture, religion, and history is stimulated. Students want to go to Japan and experience this for themselves. Students are also amazed at the range of shops and goods available in Japan and are



interested in the idea of shopping streets.

On the class one student comments:

"Personally I believe that a video is a good source to use for demonstrating an aspect of Japan's leisure activities because it's better than using books, where you have to read the information and at the most one or two photographs to demonstrate certain points, although it is not as good as seeing it in real life."

### **Culture and the Foreign Language Class**

In my opinion, it is impossible to dissociate Japanese language from culture and impossible to teach the language without constantly teaching culture. To me, culture is the most fascinating aspect of the study of the Japanese language yet it is inextricably bound up with the language.

If one is teaching Japanese, how can one teach about spring and cherry blossoms without mentioning the importance of nature and all the activities prescribed by the seasons in Japan. Whether the phrase is 花見, つゆ, たいふう or むしあつい all of the words are bound up with the culture, the way people act and think. None of these things pertain to New Zealand.

How can one talk about school without mentioning club activities, exams, and school lunches? How can one say 「どこへいきますか」 without talking about trains? There are almost no trains in New

Zealand and definitely no 地下鉄 or 新幹線. How can one teach about shopping without 「いらっしゃいませ」? How can one do an introduction dialogue without teaching about 名刺 and bowing? Then, of course, pupils want to know why one bows, and you are already going back in time to the roots of culture.

Yet culture is more pervasive than all the realities of everyday life. It is how people act, feel, and behave, and how they are part of the society they live in, and includes the civil, religious, and moral codes of that civilization.

I believe that it is essential to tell students I teach about Japanese society. If one can interest them, for example, in the festivals of Japan, one can then lead them to find out more about the religions and customs behind them and to an interest in deeper aspects of culture and belief systems.

I believe that there are four essential steps in cultural awareness: introduction, fascination, questioning one's own society, tolerance and understanding of other's culture. It is only when one has experienced learning Japanese and learning to love the culture that one can really change pupils' lives and teach them to live in peace.

## Comments from the Feedback Committee

### Educating for Cross-cultural Understanding

Video resources are a very good way of promoting cross-cultural understanding. A great deal of information can be communicated in a relatively short space of time. This particular video highlights some characteristics of Ueno Park on a Saturday morning. Care should be taken to ensure that students realize that this is only an example of one park and that even many Japanese people may not be familiar with these scenes. If this is the only resource they see, there is a danger that students might develop a stereotypical view of Japan. Including shots, for example, of the Middle Eastern population around Ueno and of the Keisei train station which plays a key role in moving people to Narita Airport would provide added depth.

If the purpose is to compare leisure activities, the scenes should probably also include a wide range of age groups and areas. For instance, *karaoke* should be included as a typical leisure activity for young people. Recently, quite a few people also spend many hours with computers. On the other hand, it may not be quite appropriate to identify going to a temple as a leisure activity.

In addition to pointing out and making a list of the differences and similarities, a discussion on why there are such differences could be very interesting. Especially, in schools where students come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, such discussions will lead them to better understand each other as well as Japanese culture. Talking about themes such as global trends of young people in terms of leisure activities could be interesting.

### Language Learning

It would be useful if the video could further develop some language skills. For instance, students could make suitable narrations for each

scene. The video could be more effective if selected objectives, including a language focus, were planned in advance. Filming some interviews might be interesting too. Even if students do not understand the dialogue, it would be interesting for them to see the nonverbal behavior of the interviewees. The following is a suggestion for making such a video:

Step 1. Decide where you will go and what kind of shots you will be able to take.

Step 2. Choose which grammatical points and cultural points you would like to introduce and review in the video and make a list.

~で~をしています。~が大好きです。あまり~ません。  
こうえん、いけ、どうぶつえん、うんどうじょう、かいもの、パチンコ、きっさてん、えいがかん、コンピュータ、テレビ

Step 3. Decide if you would like to practice dialogues and narrations or if you would like to include some interviews with ordinary people.

Step 4. Prepare dialogues and narrations suitable for the shots you will take. If the video includes an interview, decide what kind of questions you would like to ask.

Example: (interview, R = Reporter, A = Person on the street)

R: すみません。ちょっと、おねがいがあるんですが  
.....。わたしは ニュージーランドから きました。  
にほんごを おしえています。にほんじんの レジ  
ャーについて、ビデオを つくっています。インタ  
ビューに こたえていただけませんか。

A: ええ、いいですよ。

R: にちようびには いつも なにを しますか。

A: そうですね。たいてい テレビを 見えていますね。