



INITIAL INTRODUCTION

—Encounters with Japanese Culture—

This is a plan to give a broad introduction to a large group (under 300) of pupils. It includes elements of the lesson that recur in future class or group lessons. It was designed to introduce pupils who are thinking of opting for a Japanese language and culture course something of the flavor of Japan and Japanese. It is, by its very nature, a one-time plan, but the format can be adapted for other situations.



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OBJECTIVES

LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES

- To respond to target language instructions
- To investigate the nature of unfamiliar subjects/words
- To use context to answer questions

TARGET FUNCTIONS	TARGET EXPRESSIONS	TARGET VOCABULARY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Greeting ❖ Saying thank you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ おはようございます, こんにちは ❖ ありがとうございます 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ おはようございます ❖ こんにちは ❖ ありがとうございます

CULTURAL OBJECTIVES

- To allow students to enjoy exploring what they know about Japan and its culture
- To wet students' appetite for further study of Japanese language and culture

SOURCE MATERIALS

- Objects/pictures related to Japanese culture
 - One copy of the work sheet per pair of pupils (for smaller numbers pupils can work independently)*
 - A large white/black board or other method of showing song words to a large group
 - A variety of small prizes
 - A tape recorder/CD player
- (depending on the choice of follow-up activity)

PROCEDURE

Preparation

- A large space in which the pupils can move freely and with a floor on which they are happy to sit if required.
- A number of tables, initially arranged against the walls but easy to pull out into the middle of the room.
- Objects/pictures
Estimate the number of pupils to attend (e.g., 300) and add 10 (in case). Divide the resulting number by 4 and round down (e.g., 77). 77 statements are thus required on the work sheet. 77 objects/pictures are thus needed. These can be actual objects, e.g., *furoshiki*, sake cups, chopsticks, *yukata*, *geta*, Japanese language newspapers, etc. They can be pictures from books: Mt. Fuji, Tokyo, a sumo wrestler, etc. (Hold the pages of the book by elastic bands or place in plastic folder to make sure it stays open at the correct page for the duration of the activity. They can be specially prepared items: a sheet with the kanji for mountain, a piece of *origami*, etc.) Each item is given a number and that number corresponds to a statement on the work sheet. The 77 numbered objects are placed in numerical order on the tables.
- Work sheet

Examples:	
❖ Map of Tokyo: Tokyo is the capital of Japan	
❖ <i>Origami</i> crane: the crane is a symbol of good fortune	
❖ <i>Furoshiki</i> : Japanese people use this fabric to wrap presents	
❖ <i>Geta</i> : these clogs are called <i>geta</i>	

The key point is that every statement should be true. One copy per pair should be duplicated. The printing should be arranged so that the numbers come as close as possible to the left hand margin.

Prerequisite

- At least one of each pair of pupils should have a

reading age of 13 or over in the language of the school (language the work sheet will be written in).

1. Introduction (5 mins.)

The pupils enter the room and sit on the floor. While they are entering, pick a boy and a girl to join you at the front. If there is no stage, provide chairs or a bench or table for them to stand on to be seen by the whole group.

When all are seated quietly call きりつ and gesture for them to stand up (talk in Japanese as you do this using lots of gestures to make your meaning clear). Call れい to initiate the bow. Call ちゃくせき and gesture the group to sit. Do not allow them time to start chattering but move straight on, with gesture, to have them repeat おはようございませう or こんにちは as appropriate for the time of day. Chant several times and then repeat the stand-bow-sit routine, inserting the greeting at the bow stage. Praise the group in Japanese, and then revert to English to explain that that is how classes start in Japan.

2. True or false quiz (25 mins.)

Ask the pupils to pair up and distribute one work sheet per pair. Explain that in a moment they will stand up and move into the center of the room while the tables are pulled from the wall. Tell them that each statement on their sheet relates to an object on the tables and their task is to examine the object and decide whether the statement is true or false. If they think it is true then they should do nothing. If they think it is false they should make a small tear in the left hand edge of their sheet against the number of the false statement.

Explain that it does not matter which order they visit the objects; they should go where there is a space. Also explain that they can pick up, open, touch, etc., as required, but that each object should remain with its number and should not be carried round the room. They can go on either side of the table. Depending on the length of the session, the number of pupils, etc., it may be possible for some pupils to visit every number but experience shows that in 20 minutes between 20 and 60 numbers will be visited. The main task of the teacher during the exercise is to be alert for "silliness" (unlikely) and for pairs who are finding the exercise difficult and who need to be steered to an easier area. The pupils will not realize that every statement is true and will look for false answers: some statements should thus be true but difficult for non-Japanese pupils to believe: a picture of a large *kofun* (some Japanese tombs are larger than the Pyramid); a picture (or Dinky toy)

of an Austin car (the first cars manufactured in Japan were British); a handkerchief (it is impolite to blow one's nose in public but O.K. to sniff), etc.

3. Identifying winners (3 mins.)

Decide on a time limit and call the group back to the middle; push the tables to the side and have the group move to their sitting places but keep them standing. Ask any pair with more than 10 tears on their sheet to sit down; 9 tears, 8 tears, etc. You are unlikely to get a sheet with no tears at all, so take it slowly from 4 tears to identify winners (reward if appropriate).

4. Brief explanation (2 mins.)

Tell them that every statement was true and that they now have a sheet with lots of true facts about Japan and its culture as a start to their file. Explain that they will have an opportunity to see all the objects again during their course; point out particularly anything written in Japanese (e.g., a newspaper, a child's book, etc.) and give a brief explanation about how much of it they may be able to learn to read.

5. Dancing, singing, and handicrafts (10 mins. each)

Move on to one or more (depending on length of lesson) final activity chosen from one of the following:

- ❖ Dancing
- ❖ Singing
- ❖ Scissors-paper-stone contest (most practical)

Dancing:

Play a short extract from a *たんこうぶし* (coal miners' song) and ask for suggestions about what kind of a song it is: folk song; sung by what kind of folk? Most groups will probably get as far as work song but will then guess rice farming or fishing. It may be necessary to tell them "mining." Then ask for ideas about what actions miners do; have the volunteers come to the front (onto chair, bench, table as before) to demonstrate the action. Get about four and arrange in some sort of sequence (e.g., digging coal, loading trucks, pushing trucks, hauling up the lift, etc.). Play the music again and demonstrate the step; have whole group in a large circle moving anti-clockwise with the four or five movement demonstrators in the middle. Start the music and off you go: turn to the middle and clap

for the *さのよいよい* section. If the group responds well, add a backwards portion saluting the gang boss.

Singing:

Any Japanese song will do but one that works well is *かえるのうた**. Show the words and ask "Which animal goes *gua gua*?" (this can be done in target language and extended to other animals if large animal flash cards are available; otherwise, hold in abeyance to compare with French, German or other languages taught in the school at a future time). Teach the words and the tune. Once the whole group is secure, split as for a round and add actions suggested by the group.

* Music and words for *かえるのうた* is attached on TJJF Reference Page.

Scissors-paper-stone contest:

Use one of your winners as the *おに* against whom all of the rest of the group compete. To avoid cheating, either have the *おに* blindfolded and ask him/her to make his gesture only after the rest of the group have held up their hands, or have him/her turn his/her back on the group to conceal the gesture. Whole group stands: teach *いち, に, さん* stressing that you want their hand shape on *さん*. Depending on the size of the group/time available, only losers sit down each time or only those who win stay standing. Again, a small prize for the winner, if available.

6. Review (5 mins.)

There may need to be some administration here while the group is told how to fill in the option form if they are to elect for Japanese. Finally, review *おはようございます(こんにちは)* *いち, に, さん* and any other words taught and teach *ありがとうございます*. Use *きりつ* and *れい* and then *ありがとうございます* to make a formal ending. The group then leaves the room.

Note

- The objects should be kept in the Japanese cupboard for use during classes as appropriate; all the teachers of Japanese should be aware of what statements were used so that they can reinforce and build on the information in future lessons.

REMARKS

Stimulating Pupils' Interests

Classes such as this, although one off, seem to me to be very important in setting the tone for a Japanese course. They establish that the teacher will use the target language which can be “understood” through gestures and therefore is not threatening. They show that by “parroting” pupils can hear, use, and remember phrases for everyday use, even before they have any grasp of the structure of the new language. They show, through the choice of statements, that there are familiar words already in the language and that the script, although daunting, is not impossible and can be fascinating. Most importantly of all, they show that the culture is not just pretty pictures of kimonoed girls on the classroom wall but is an interesting meld of East and West of immediate relevance to their everyday lives.

Although this session is 80 percent fun, a considerable amount of learning has taken place and a firm base has been laid for future classes. The pupils have seen that they will not just be learning the language in isolation but in the context of the culture of the country where it is spoken. They have also begun, possibly unconsciously, to make comparisons between their own language and culture and that of the Japanese and the questions that these comparisons will raise will stimulate their interest in the classes to follow.

If pupils are to learn successfully it is crucial that they remain interested in the subject. As teachers of Japanese we are fortunate that the culture provides us with such a wealth of interest with which to stimulate our pupils.

COMMENTS

For the main exercise of this lesson, obviously one major challenge is to collect all the bits and pieces to place on the tables. This would be easy for someone who has lived, or traveled extensively in Japan, but may be more difficult for those whose in-country experience is limited. Don't let that discourage you—a trip to the library and a few good picture books, some surfing on the Internet or a visit to the local Asian food store are probably enough to get you started.

This activity need not be limited to the beginners language classroom as the items used could be varied for more advanced students. The lesson is just as appropriate in a social studies course and could be adapted to many cultures in the world. We hope that many teachers have an opportunity to use and enjoy this imaginative and creative lesson.

The scissors-paper-stone game is not completely unfamiliar to students and that adds to its enjoyment. I think an opportunity to learn some more vocabulary may be missed here by completing this activity in English. *じゃんけんぽん* and *あいこでしょ* are not difficult to learn and would add more authenticity to this game. Another fun *janken* activity to do with lots of students is to have them begin with a *janken* in pairs, the loser attaches himself to the winner, forming a snake (2 people in length, the second person behind the first and with his hands on the first person's waist). The leader finds another pair and *jankens* again, the losing pair join the winning pair and the snake becomes four people long. As the leader continues to win his *janken* matches so more people are added to his tail, until snakes of 5 or 20 or 50 or more people are formed. Eventually there should be one long snake, headed by a master *janken* player!

WORK SHEET

1. waribashi	this piece of wood can be used as chopsticks
2. hashioki	this is part of a table setting
3. hyakunin-issu set	this game is traditionally played at New Year
4. matcha	this green powder is not a medicine
5. happi	these coats are worn at festivals
6. an ear of rice	this is the staple food of Japan
7. shitajiki	every primary school child should have one of these
8. a shōgakkō-yonen maths book	this book is used by 10 years old
9. map of Japan	Sapporo is a town on the island of Hokkaido
10. a Hokusai print with Mt. Fuji	this is the highest mountain in Japan
11. a Japanese coin or bank note	Japanese money is called “yen”
12. a world map with Japan in the center	Japan is in the same hemisphere as the U.K.
13. an umbrella	the rainy season in Japan starts in June
14. picture of the Japanese Royal Family	Japan has the world’s oldest monarchy
15. relevant animal	this year is the year of the _____ (e.g., horse)
16. a piece of calligraphy	this Chinese character means _____ (as relevant)
17. any Japanese canned drink	recycling is important to the Japanese
18. a noren	this “noren” is used to divide space
19. a furoshiki	although Europeans use these as scarves the Japanese do not
20. a tea cup	this is a tea cup
21. geta	these clogs are called “geta”
22. map of Tokyo	Tokyo is the capital of Japan
23. origami crane	the crane is a symbol of good fortune
24. kofun	some Japanese tombs are larger than the Pyramids
25. a picture of an Austin car	the first cars manufactured in Japan were British
26. a handkerchief	it is impolite to blow one’s nose in public but o.k. to sniff

このどうぶつはなんてなく？

ANIMALS	in Japanese	in Chinese	in English
いぬ (dog)	ワンワン	wang wang	bow wow
ねこ (cat)	ニャーニャー	miao miao	meow meow
うし (cow)	モォー	mou mou	moo moo
うま (horse)	ヒヒヒーン	huir huir	neigh neigh
ぶた (pig)	ブーブー	du du	oink oink
やぎ (goat)	メェー	mie mie	nah nah
あひる (duck)	ガーガー	gua gua, ge ge	quack quack, ga-ga
かえる (frog)	ケロケロ	gua gua	cluck cluck
にわとり (chicken)	コケコッコ	wo wo	cockadoodle doo

かえるのうた

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