

Talking About Japan

Lesson Objective: To develop the students' ability to speak fluently within the context of Japan by playing a fun board game.

Skill Level: Pre-intermediate and up

Preparation Time: About 20 minutes per board game (assuming you have a laser printer and an office guillotine).

Lesson Duration: 1 hour

Preparation advice

- Print the "Japanese or Not" warmer. You need one sheet per group.
- Each board game requires one dice.
- For best effect, print this lesson in colour.
- The question cards and challenge cards require double-sided printing.
- Once printed, the question cards and challenge cards need to be cut out. Do this with an office guillotine if you have one. Alternatively, use scissors.
- Stack the question cards and challenge cards separately. Do not mix them.
- Print the money single-sided or double-sided. Double-sided looks great if you don't mind using a little more ink. You need at least sixty 1000¥ notes per game.
- Once printed, the money also needs to be cut up. Do this quickly with an office guillotine or alternatively use scissors.
- Each player requires a counter to represent their position on the board. A simple solution is to cut up small square pieces of paper. Each player will be able to write their initials on one of these and use this as a counter.



Teaching procedure

Warmer

1. Before you do the warmer, split the class into groups of between 3 and 5 students.
2. Show the groups the “Japanese or not” sheet. Tell them that they have to decide if each thing on the sheet is Japanese or not. If they decide that something isn’t Japanese, they should state which country it’s from. Tell them they have 5 minutes to do this, then give each group the “Japanese or not” sheet and allow them to begin the task.

Now is a good time to do some prep for the board game. Hide about fifteen 1000¥ notes outside of the classroom. Also clean your white-board and write the words “Drawing Challenge” at the top. Make sure there are a couple of pens and a white board eraser next the white board.

3. After 5 minutes, review the answers with the students.

Board game

1. Keep the students in the same groups as before. Give each student a small square piece of paper and tell them to write their initials on it. This will be their counter.
2. Next give each group a stack of 1000¥ notes and instruct each student to take a 1000¥ note from the stack.
3. Hold up the game board and show them where they start. Tell them that they go around and around the board, in other words, the game doesn’t end when they complete one lap.
4. Tell them that when they land on a question square, they should take one question card. The whole group should then discuss and answer the question together.
5. When they land on a challenge square, they should take a challenge card. They must do the challenge alone.
6. Give the students the rest of the game and allow them to begin playing.
7. Do an initial sweep to be sure each group is doing things correctly. For example, be sure that they are properly discussing the questions and that they are speaking English.
8. It may be necessary to hide some more money, when most of the money that was hidden earlier has been found.
9. At the end of the lesson, get the students to count their money and declare a group winner. If you want, you can also review the “Drawing Challenge” pictures and choose a winner for the best / funniest drawing.