



Japan-in-a-Suitcase Curriculum Grades 1-5 • Five Week Lesson Plan

Week 1 – Life of a Kid in Japan: greetings, school life, chopsticks

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- a. Start the class like a Japanese class by having everyone stand up and bow.

2. What do you know about Japan? (10 minutes)

- a. Have the students brainstorm on things they already know about Japan
- b. Introduce things they may know (Hello Kitty, Pokémon, sushi, etc)

3. Where and what is Japan? (5 minutes)

- a. Discuss general geography of Japan

4. Elementary School Life in Japan (20 minutes)

- a. Introduce with PowerPoint (or by display/poster) various Japanese school items.
- b. Let students pass around school items and try on backpacks or uniform caps themselves.
- c. Talk about Japanese school lunch time and play the chopstick game.



5. Let's learn Japanese! (15 minutes)

- a. Teach how to introduce yourself in Japanese (including a bow).
- b. Have the students make two lines and practice introducing themselves in pairs.

6. Conclusion (5 minutes)

- a. Q&A with the students

Week 2 – Japanese Language: numbers, months, hiragana

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- a. Greet students in Japanese and review the previous week.

2. Learning Numbers - Easy as 1, 2, 3! (15 minutes)

- a. Teach numbers 1-10 in Japanese using song and dance.

3. When's your birthday? (15 minutes)

- a. Birthday Search - Students interview each other to ask birthday month in Japanese

4. Hiragana - Writing real Japanese! (20 minutes)

- a. Discuss and demonstrate the different writing systems in Japanese.
- b. Hand out a hiragana writing worksheet and guide the students in writing 5 characters.

5. Conclusion (5 minutes)

- a. Q&A with the students



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Week 3 – A Year in Japan: holidays, seasons, nature/animal vocabulary

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- a. Greet students in Japanese and review the previous week.

2. Japanese Holidays (10 minutes)

- a. Introduce Japanese holidays (using posters or PowerPoint)

3. Seasonal Craft - 'Tis the season.... (20 minutes)

- a. Do a craft/game with the students related to an upcoming holiday.

4. Nature/Animal Vocabulary (20 minutes)

- a. Talk about seasons in Japan and teach nature/animal words.
- b. Play BINGO to practice and review.

5. Conclusion (5 minutes)

- a. Q&A with the students

Week 4 – Historic Japan: wearing kimono & yukata, traditional games

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- a. Greet students in Japanese and review the previous week.

2. Brief look at Edo Japan (1600~1856) (10 minutes)

- a. Discuss samurai, ninja, artisans and what they really did. Also introduce Japanese historic architecture (including castles).

3. Traditional Clothing - Fashion Show! (20 minutes)

- a. Assist students in trying on various traditional Japanese clothes.

4. Traditional Games (20 minutes)

- a. Play with kendama.
- b. Play rock-paper-scissors in Japanese.



5. Haiku - Simple Poetry (OPTIONAL - if time allows)

- a. Teach about haiku and how to write them in English. Allow students time to try.

6. Conclusion (5 minutes)

- a. Q&A with the students



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Week 5 – Modern “cool” Japan: pop culture, kanji, origami

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- a. Greet students in Japanese and review the previous week.

2. Pop Japan (15 minutes)

- a. Show a brief video on modern Japan. Discuss video.

3. Cool Kanji - Writing Practice (20 minutes)

- a. Teach students to write several pictograph kanji characters.

4. Origami - The Art of Folding Paper (15 minutes)

- a. Pass out origami paper and lead the students in making several origami items (as much as time allows)

5. End of Program Discussion (5 minutes)

- a. Briefly go over the topics learned over the past five weeks to see if the students remember them. Ask the students what was most interesting, most fun, most difficult, etc.

