

AP[®] Japanese Language and Culture

Syllabus 1

General Overview

This syllabus describes how students in the AP Japanese Language and Culture course are prepared to demonstrate their proficiency at the Intermediate Mid to Intermediate Low range of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines. In addition to **communication**, this course seeks to incorporate **cultural** appreciation and awareness, **connections** to other fields of study, **comparisons** between the Japanese language and culture and the students' own language and culture, and use the many **communities** beyond the classroom to enrich the students' learning (*Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century*). The course is conducted almost entirely in Japanese. [C8]

Although based on a second-year college Japanese textbook, this course includes many content-based activities and age-appropriate topics. Numerous authentic texts, including Japanese DVD segments, short stories, and Internet resources are used to help students further develop their listening and reading skills. [C10] Each unit culminates with a project that showcases students' understanding of some aspect of the main topic. Students create an online electronic portfolio of their work, write regularly in a 日本語日記, and engage in email exchanges with students in Japan. [C14, C7]

Each unit progresses from structured learning activities to more open-ended learning activities. Students listen to simulated and authentic announcements, reports, and conversations. They read authentic and semi-authentic email messages, brochures, articles, letters, and stories. [C10] Students write for various audiences, using various formats, and they practice comparing and contrasting cultural aspects of Japan and their home country. [C4] They practice speaking on the phone, making announcements, narrating a story, and presenting an opinion on various Japanese customs. [C12]

As each unit progresses, students spend more time on the unit final project, which is content based. The teacher shares with the students the criteria upon which their performances will be assessed before assigning each final project. [C13] They receive feedback based on formative assessment and personalized suggestions for improving their communication and learning strategies and students work in pairs, small groups, and as a whole class to take advantage of opportunities to learn from one another. [C11, C12]

C4—In addition to communication, the course also addresses the Standards other goal of cultural competence.

C7—In addition to communication, the course also addresses the Standards other goal of the use of the language within the broader communities beyond the traditional school environment.

C8—The teacher uses Japanese almost exclusively in class and encourages students to do likewise.

C10—The teacher chooses from among both conventional print and aural materials such as textbooks, audiovisual materials, and Web-based content designed for language learning. He or she also makes use of materials generally used by native Japanese speakers, such as print and Web-based texts; animated computer programs; and video-, CD-, and DVD-based products. The teacher scaffolds students' experiences with these texts, particularly those that would normally be considered beyond the grasp of high school students.

C11—The course teaches students to develop both communication and language-learning strategies.

C12—The teacher plans and implements structured cooperative learning activities to support ongoing and frequent interpersonal interaction, and employs a range of instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of her or his learners.

C13—Formative and summative assessments are frequent, varied, and explicitly linked to the Standards goal areas. Prior to assigning an assessment task, teachers share with their students the criteria against which their performances will be evaluated.

C14—The course provides students with frequent opportunities to conduct Web searches, word process, and write emails in Japanese.

Weekly Schedule

Students meet for class four days each week, 50 minutes per day. Each day the students begin with a brief learning task, usually reading or writing kanji characters in context they have been learning, while the teacher takes attendance.

Day 1.

On Mondays we have a short discussion about the weekend's activities or similar topic. The students are encouraged to ask each other questions and make comments. [C2] Students do a listening task or view a DVD segment related to the topic of study. [C1] Students increase their vocabulary as they work in pairs on several oral activities in the textbook. The teacher encourages students to make note of the page numbers of any difficult vocabulary or grammar, so they can review them later. [C11] For homework, students review the vocabulary and kanji covered in class and do a listening activity in their workbooks.

Day 2.

On Tuesdays, students take a short quiz on the vocabulary and kanji assigned on Monday, and the quizzes are corrected for immediate feedback. Next, they practice reading an authentic or semi-authentic text related to the topic. [C1] The teacher provides necessary support, such as doing prereading activities in which the teacher elicits schemata related to the topic or students practice vocabulary essential for comprehension of the text. [C10, C12] The teacher also models and explicitly teaches reading strategies, such as skimming and inferring the meaning of unfamiliar terms based on the context. [C11] Following the reading activity, students work in pairs on oral activities in the textbook or do project work. [C12] For homework, students either do workbook activities or project work, depending on the unit schedule.

Day 3.

On Wednesdays we begin by correcting the workbook activities or letting the students briefly report on their projects. Students then practice their writing skills, in response to writing prompts related to the unit topic, or they continue to work on their project. Some weeks, for example, students may read a short passage in English about an aspect of Japanese culture and then write a paper in Japanese describing it and expressing their opinion. [C4] The teacher provides clear guidelines for each writing assignment and also teaches writing strategies, including outlining, extensive rough draft writing, and self-correcting. [C11] The teacher may review pertinent grammar principles and introduce new kanji characters. If students are working on

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projects, they may be in the lab doing Web searches and writing email. For homework, students complete a second draft, looking up any unfamiliar vocabulary or kanji, or they continue project work, depending on the unit schedule.

Day 4.

On Fridays, students bring their writing assignments or their unit project work to class. The teacher collects these items, and the students work on speaking activities. In response to written prompts about the topic, students participate in a conversation, give information, narrate a story, or describe and express their opinion. The teacher models and teaches communication strategies, such as paraphrasing, question asking, or circumlocution. [C11] Sometimes students record their responses with a digital recorder, and sometimes they work with a partner or small group. Students use criteria provided by the teacher to assess their own or others' progress with language control, cultural awareness, and vocabulary use. [C13] For homework, the students write in their 日本語日記, discussing various topics, giving opinions about class activities, and explaining news articles. Each written and oral assignment is corrected and annotated with suggestions for further improving grammar and pragmatics, as well as organization of paragraph, development of thoughts, cohesiveness, and coherence. [C13] Students keep a notebook of their graded written and oral work, and they are encouraged to learn from mistakes and not repeat them. [C11] Students compare polite expressions in Japanese with their native languages. Students also compare and contrast writing systems. [C6] Through contrastive analysis, students deepen their understanding of the structural similarities and differences between Japanese and their own languages. [C6, C11]

Fall Term (approximately 11 weeks)

Unit 1: Travel. [C9]

Students discuss travel, transportation schedules, sightseeing, and travel planning. They use authentic and semi-authentic texts, such as travel advertisements and public transportation schedules. Students recognize similarities and differences between the types of transportation and lodging in Japan and their home country. [C6]

Students learn about 旅館、駅弁 温泉, regional dialects, and other cultural topics. They speculate about why these things are important to Japanese people, and they compare and contrast Japanese cultural practices and perspectives with their own. [C4, C6]

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Students listen to conversations and narratives on audio CDs about transportation and travel plans. They practice writing postcards and diary entries about real and fictitious travel events. Rather than discarding their graded written work, students are encouraged to keep copies in a folder and learn from them in order to avoid making the same kinds of mistakes repeatedly. [C11] Listening and writing assignments are assessed to provide frequent feedback and suggestions for improvement. [C13]

With help, students do Web searches for potential vacation spots in Japan. [C14] They learn a number of useful search terms and phrases, and how websites are often organized. Students practice reading strategies, such as identifying the main idea and inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words from context. [C11]

Students begin an email exchange project with students in Japan. They introduce themselves, provide information about their hometown, and solicit information about their “keypal” and his/her hometown. They are required to write at least two messages in Japanese and at least two messages in English, providing an opportunity for the student in Japan to develop her/his English proficiency. [C2, C7, C14]

The unit culminates in a project in which students work together in small groups to produce an attractive travel brochure to a Japanese city of their choice. [C3, C12] Students use Web searches to gather information about their chosen city. [C14] They research local places of interest, transportation, as well as lodging options. Students receive individual and group grades for their participation on their group project.

After the travel brochures are completed, they are displayed in the classroom. Each student then creates a written travel itinerary. Students describe in detail, among other things, where they will go, what they will see, how they will get around and where they will stay, and how long they will be in each location. Each student shares with the class the imaginary travel plan and related information in a brief oral presentation. [C3]

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Unit 2: At Home [C9]

Students discuss housing, furnishings, and related topics. They recognize some of the similarities and differences between traditional Japanese and western style homes. [C4, C6] As they watch several DVD segments, including 生活環境: *Homes and Their Surroundings*, they try to identify the main ideas and specific information (*Living Japanese*, 2007). [C1, C10] The teacher provides warm-up activities and focus questions to help students get the gist of difficult texts. [C10, C12]

Students learn about 日本の家具, gift giving, 義理, and renting an apartment in Japan. They discuss the Japanese gift-giving custom (gift-giving seasons, to whom they give gifts, why they give gifts during gift-giving seasons). [C4] The students learn necessary vocabulary and kanji, and they write several short letters, such as an invitation to a friend to visit the friend's home.

They do listening tasks on CD, such as a segment about a real estate agent showing a house to a potential tenant. They listen to the agent's description of the house and write down as many details as they can. [C1] The teacher models and teaches listening strategies, including taking notes in English and inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words from context. [C11]

For the final unit project, each student searches for an apartment in Japan, based on provided criteria. The teacher demonstrates how to use several Internet real estate resources, and the students practice retrieving online information about renting an apartment in Japan. Then, based on certain scenarios (i.e., a college student in Koganei-shi), students do Web searches to find suitable housing. [C14] Students prepare a

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presentation on the housing that they chose, explaining why it is best for their scenarios. [C3] Students do a self-assessment on their project, and it is combined with peer assessments of their presentation. [C11, C13]

Unit 3: Cars and Transportation [C5, C9]

Students learn to talk about cars and driving, auto maintenance, and public transportation in Japan. They do listening exercises on CDs that accompany the textbook, and through oral activities and homework, they increase their vocabulary and kanji related to these topics. [C1]

Students learn about 自動車学校、回数券 (English words made in Japan), and other aspects of Japanese culture. [C4] They discuss these practices and make inferences about cultural perspectives. They recognize the similarities and differences between types of transportation in Japan and their home country. [C6]

With assistance, the students read texts about Japanese traffic signs and Japanese perspectives on driving safety. [C1] The teacher instructs students to use reading strategies, such as asking questions before reading a text and using contextual clues to assist in its comprehension. [C11]

Students practice writing about the topic of cars and transportation. For example, they write a newspaper ad for a used car, and they also write text messages with a friend about buying a used car. [C2, C3] They practice informing, describing, explaining, and expressing preference. They are taught writing strategies, such as outlining and circumlocution. [C11] With longer writing assignments, the students exchange their papers for peer feedback, and with short-answer writing assignments they receive more immediate and

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frequent teacher feedback. [C13] Due to time factors, there is no final project for Unit 3.

The fall term final exam is based on a modified AP Japanese Language and Culture exam that incorporates multiple-choice and free-response questions, based on the three topics studied. [C13] The students are given several opportunities beforehand to practice the types of questions that appear on the final exam.

Winter Term (approximately 11 weeks)

Unit 4: The Body and Health [C5, C9]

Students discuss feelings and emotions, and health and illness. They describe physical characteristics of people, psychological states, and talk about health and various sicknesses and injuries, and their health insurance system. They listen to the comprehension CD that accompanies the textbook. [C2] Students are provided with strategies for improving listening comprehension, such as using contextual clues to help determine the meaning. [C11] Each student writes an email exchange partner about a sport or hobby the student enjoys and solicits information from the exchange partner about the exchange partner's favorite sport or hobby. Each student must write at least two messages in Japanese and two messages in English. [C7, C14]

Students learn about changing Japanese attitudes toward drinking and driving as well as smoking in public, and they learn about health care in Japan. Students use Web searches to find information about health insurance and other societal emphases on physical wellness. [C14] Then they compare and contrast the information with their own country. The students think about the reasons for the differences. [C4, C6]

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Students view a DVD interview called 剣道—剣道の例: *Kendo in Contemporary Society (Living Japanese, 2007)*. [C1, C10] The teacher provides scaffolding, such as brainstorming before viewing, to elicit students' background knowledge about martial arts to assist the students' understanding. For example, students will discuss what they think is important in martial arts. [C10, C12] The students view the interview twice to understand it better.

With a little help, students read a Japanese graphic novel (「週刊少年サンデー」の「武心/1/生まれ変われるのなら、僕は鳥になりたい」) about a chronically ill child who learns martial arts as a form of therapy. [C1, C10] Students learn about graphic novelists and their work. They write a story with a health or illness theme, and they develop it into a short graphic novel. Each student has a role in the group and works cooperatively within a group. Students read each other's graphic novels and provide constructive feedback based on a list of criteria, including aesthetic qualities, accuracy, and interest. [C3, C12, C13]

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Unit 5: Life and Careers [C5, C9]

During this unit, students discuss school, careers, and how to job search. They learn kanji and vocabulary related to these topics. Students interview someone who has a job, ask why the interviewee chose that job, and write the result in Japanese. [C2] Each student writes a paper about the job the student would like in the future, and why. [C3] These papers are posted on the class wiki, and then students read one another's papers and make thoughtful comments. Students reflect in their 日本語日記 on this feedback.

The class views several DVD interviews of Japanese people talking about their jobs. They also view a DVD interview called 女性の語る職業観: *Women and Work (Living Japanese, 2007)*. [C1, C10] Each interview is viewed twice, assuring better comprehension. With some pre-activities serving as previews, the students grasp the main points and several details. The teacher uses scaffolding—redundancy, paraphrasing, and

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restatement—to help students better understand the interviews. The teacher also encourages students to use contextual cues to assist in comprehension. [C1, C10, C11, C12]

Students learn about Japanese elementary and secondary schools and compare this information with their own culture. [C4, C6] They use Web searches to learn about a particular school in Japan and share this information with the class. [C14] Students discuss Japanese educational practices and the possible perspectives that are related to these practices. They use an online discussion board on the class wiki to express their opinions about educational practices. They read other students' postings and respond to at least one of the other students' postings. [C2, C14]

For the unit final project, students look for jobs online on Japanese classified pages. They learn about the job descriptions and the necessary applicant qualifications. Students prepare a résumé in Japanese. They

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dress in the attire of their chosen profession and present to the class information about its characteristics, qualifications, benefits, and contributions to society. [C3, C13]

The Winter Term final exam is based on a modified AP Japanese Language and Culture Exam that incorporates multiple-choice questions and a free-response section, and that assesses the three communication modes. [C13] Students are given several opportunities to practice the types of test questions beforehand, and the test questions are drawn from the topics studied in units 4 and 5.

Spring Term (approximately 10 weeks)

Unit 6: Communication and Media [C5, C9]

Students talk about telecommunications in Japan, the postal system, and various other media. They do listening comprehension exercises on the CDs that accompany the textbook. They learn about 公衆電話, television stations and newspapers in Japan, アニメ, 漫画, and films. They compare and contrast these aspects of Japan and their home country. For instance, they learn about high literacy rates in Japan, and discuss them from different perspectives. [C4, C6]

As with other units, students learn vocabulary and kanji related to the topic and take frequent formative assessments. With some help, they do Web searches for Japanese news articles, and they scan several articles of interest. [C14] The teacher offers reading strategies, such as gleaning information from the first and last paragraphs. [C11]

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Each student does an email exchange with a student in Japan about the types of media both students use and how they use them (print, broadcast, and online media). Each student sends at least two messages in English and two messages in Japanese. [C2, C7, C14]

Students use a free Internet phone service (i.e., Skype) to speak with students in Japan, or simulate this experience with the teacher. [C2] They prepare conversation outlines, and follow up on a topic of a previous email message. Students reflect on their performance, based on *Standards*-referenced criteria, and they make goals to improve.

With assistance, students read several short newspaper articles on familiar topics. They also listen to several news broadcasts, repeated twice. [C1] The teacher tries to simplify these with warm-up activities and by teaching students listening strategies, such as thinking of a few focus questions beforehand, and taking notes while listening. [C11]

Students practice writing for a general audience (i.e., a magazine article) and for specific audiences (i.e., recently Tokyo immigrants). Students exchange papers and seek feedback from their peers, before submitting their papers to the teacher. [C3]

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Students then view a DVD interview called アニメと漫画について語る: *Communicating Through Anime and Manga* (Living Japanese, 2007), and the teacher scaffolds this exercise by providing an outline or background information (in English or in simple Japanese) and some repetition and restatement. [C1, C10] The interview is viewed twice, to enhance comprehension. [C10, C12]

The final unit project is to work cooperatively in pairs to produce a news report in Japanese. Students report on a recent event at school (i.e., sports game, debate competition, or art exhibit). The report is recorded and a podcast is placed on the class website. Before they submit the final product, students are given formative feedback based on assessment criteria provided at the beginning of the project. After the news reports are produced, students listen to a news report that was produced by another student pair, and they respond to a key question on the class discussion board. [C3, C12, C13]

Unit 7: Nature and Culture [C9]

Students talk about geography and the environment and traditional Japanese culture. [C5] Although these topics do not seem related, students discover several connections, as the culture of Japan often reflects a deep respect for nature. Students also compare and contrast the geography and customs of various countries. [C6]

Many listening exercises on CD are provided. With some assistance, students watch and answer questions about a DVD segment called 自然環境をどう見るか: *Perceptions of Nature* (Living Japanese, 2007). [C1, C10] The teacher provides reading exercises with questions whose answers can be easily inferred from the context or uses multiple-choice questions or fill-in-the-blank questions. [C10, C12] Students recognize similarities and differences between the opinions expressed in the DVD and views commonly held in their own country. [C6]

C1—The course prepares students to demonstrate their level of Japanese proficiency in the interpretive mode of communication; at the Intermediate Mid to Intermediate Low range of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines; and as articulated in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (Standards)*.

C3—The course prepares students to demonstrate their level of Japanese proficiency in the presentational mode of communication; at the Intermediate Mid to Intermediate Low range of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines; and as articulated in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (Standards)*.

C5—In addition to communication, the course also addresses the Standards other goal of connections to other school disciplines.

C6—In addition to communication, the course also addresses the Standards other goal of comparisons between the Japanese language and culture and those of the learners.

C9—The teacher ensures that the selected themes and topics are developmentally and intellectually appropriate for the students.

C10—The teacher chooses from among both conventional print and aural materials such as textbooks, audiovisual materials, and Web-based content designed for language learning. He or she also makes use of materials generally used by native Japanese speakers, such as print and Web-based texts; animated computer programs; and video-, CD-, and DVD-based products. The teacher scaffolds students' experiences with these texts, particularly those that would normally be considered beyond the grasp of high school students.

C12—The teacher plans and implements structured cooperative learning activities to support ongoing and frequent interpersonal interaction, and employs a range of instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of her or his learners.

C13—Formative and summative assessments are frequent, varied, and explicitly linked to the Standards goal areas. Prior to assigning an assessment task, teachers share with their students the criteria against which their performances will be evaluated.

Students read authentic and semi-authentic texts, and they do several writing assignments, such as writing a letter to the editor about an environmental issue. They write a book review about an actual book they have recently read. Students are taught to outline beforehand the information they would like to include and to write several drafts, getting feedback from peers and the teacher for finishing their final draft. [C1, C3, C11, C13]

The culminating unit project is an analysis of an aspect of traditional Japanese culture. Students select a cultural product, like 名刺, from a list, and they study related practices, such as 初めて会う人との名刺交換. Students use Web searches to gather information about their product, then summarize their research and express their opinion regarding a key question, such as 日本人はなぜ名刺を使うのでしょうか. Their research and opinions are expressed in writing on a special section of the class website. All students are then invited to view the research projects of all other students, briefly summarize in English the research, and then restate the main points and opinions expressed by the students. [C3, C4, C14]

Students are encouraged to practice the kinds of listening they will do on the test. They use notes and old tests to develop a list of questions like the teacher has used before. With a partner, they take turns asking random questions from the list and answering them orally or in writing. [C1, C2, C11, C12]

The spring term final exam is also based on a modified AP-type exam that incorporates multiple-choice questions and a free-response section, covering all three communication modes, and the four major language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. [C13]

Sample Assessment

Formative assessments are given frequently to allow students to monitor their performance and make any necessary changes before summative assessments. The criteria for summative assessments are provided to students in advance. [C13] Students are assessed in several key areas, including participation, use of the target language, daily homework, Web-based work, and projects. The students' presentations will be assessed with respect to the following categories: task completion, content, organization, style, accuracy, and cohesiveness. Rubrics will be created based on the rubrics currently used for AP Japanese speaking and writing.

C1—The course prepares students to demonstrate their level of Japanese proficiency in the interpretive mode of communication; at the Intermediate Mid to Intermediate Low range of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines; and as articulated in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (Standards)*.

C3—The course prepares students to demonstrate their level of Japanese proficiency in the presentational mode of communication; at the Intermediate Mid to Intermediate Low range of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines; and as articulated in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (Standards)*.

C12—The teacher plans and implements structured cooperative learning activities to support ongoing and frequent interpersonal interaction, and employs a range of instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of her or his learners.

C2—The course prepares students to demonstrate their level of Japanese proficiency in the interpersonal mode of communication; at the Intermediate Mid to Intermediate Low range of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines; and as articulated in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (Standards)*.

C4—In addition to communication, the course also addresses the Standards other goal of cultural competence.

C13—Formative and summative assessments are frequent, varied, and explicitly linked to the Standards goal areas. Prior to assigning an assessment task, teachers share with their students the criteria against which their performances will be evaluated.

C11—The course teaches students to develop both communication and language-learning strategies.

C14—The course provides students with frequent opportunities to conduct Web searches, word process, and write emails in Japanese.

Main Texts

Colligan-Taylor, Karen. *Living Japanese*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

Yookoso! Continuing with Contemporary Japanese Student Edition with Online Learning Center Bind-in Card, by Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku. New York: McGraw-Hill, Third Edition, 2006.

Workbook/Laboratory Manual to Accompany Yookoso! Continuing with Contemporary Japanese, by Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku. New York: McGraw-Hill, Third Edition, 2006.

Student Audio CD Program to Accompany Yookoso! Continuing with Contemporary Japanese, by Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Useful Websites

www.goo.ne.jp—A Japanese Web portal with useful categories in travel, real estate, employment, auto sales, and many other topics.

www.google.co.jp—A search engine for any Japanese language website worldwide.

ja.wikipedia.org—A free online Japanese encyclopedia with useful articles on Japanese language, society, and culture.

www.waterfordschooljapanese.wikispaces.com—Our class website (wiki) with useful class information, and places for students to add to content, participate in discussion boards, and exchange email.

www.rikai.com—A website that provides users with the ability to view other Japanese language websites, with the translation overlaid on the Japanese text in the Web page.