JAPAN

The Japanese characters that make up Japan's name mean "sun-origin", which is why Japan is often referred to as the "Land of the Rising Sun". Japan is home to the world's tenth-largest population, with over 126 million permanent inhabitants (Statistics Bureau & Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2018). The Greater Tokyo Region, located on Honshu Island, includes Japan's capital city of Tokyo and several surrounding prefectures. It is the largest metropolitan area in the world, with over 30 million residents.

Japan, often referred to as the State of Japan, is an island nation in the Eastern portion of the Asian Continent. Japan is situated to the east of the Sea of Japan, China, North Korea, South Korea and Russia, stretching from the Sea of Okhotsk in the north to the East China Sea and Taiwan in the south. From the 12th century until 1868, Japan was ruled by successive feudal military shōguns who ruled in the name of the Emperor. Japan entered into a long period of isolation in the early 17th century, which was ended in 1853 when a United States fleet pressured Japan to open to the West. After nearly two decades of internal conflict and insurrection, the Imperial Court regained its political power in 1868 through the help of several clans from Chōshū and Satsuma – and hence, the Empire of Japan was established!

Japan has the world's third-largest economy, having achieved remarkable growth in the second half of the 20th Century after the devastation of the Second World War. Japan benefits from a highly skilled and educated workforce; it has among the world's largest proportion of citizens holding a tertiary education degree.

Although Japan has officially renounced its right to declare war, Japan maintains a modern military with the world's eighth-largest military budget, used for self-defense and peacekeeping roles; it ranked as the world's fourth most-powerful military in 2015. Japan is a highly developed country with a very high standard of living and Human Development Index.
K-12 RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

HISTORY, CULTURE, LANGUAGE, AND TRADITIONS

- **Japanese Culture: Old Vs New**
  Japan has a distinct, fascinating culture that is unlike any other country, and will leave a lasting impression with you! This is part of what makes it such a captivating country to visit and it is certainly one of the most unique countries in the world!

- **History of Japan’s Literature**
  This page is based on Japan: A Pocket Guide, 1996 Edition (Foreign Press Center)

- **Guide to Japan Culture, Costumes, & Etiquettes**
  An informative guide created by Commisceo Global on Japan's culture & society, language, religion & beliefs, social etiquette & customs, and business protocols and work culture. This website also provides a quiz at the end of the page to test your knowledge on Japan!

- **Sengoku Daimyo**
  It is a webpage started by the late Anthony J. Bryant as the central linking point to shops and various projects, mostly related to medieval Japan. It is now maintained and updated in his memory by his friends and students so that it remains available to everyone with an interest in Japanese history.
Heilbrunn Timeline of History
The Met’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History pairs essays and works of art with chronologies, telling the story of art and global culture through the Museum’s collection.

Languages Spoken in Japan
Ethnically, culturally and linguistically, Japan is a very homogenous nation, a place where nearly 99 percent of the population speaks Japanese as their first language.

Asia for Educators
An initiative of the Weatherhead East Asia Institute at Columbia University for students and educators at all levels. Includes chronological outlines of Japan history, central themes and key points, and lesson plans.

Around the Globe: Japan
The Around the Globe: Japan collection allows students to take a virtual trip to Japan to learn more about Japan’s society and culture, as well as the art of Japan through the centuries. Explore significant events in Japanese history, the history of U.S.-Japan relations, and the experiences of Japanese Americans through videos, images, documents, and lesson plans.

About Japan: A Teacher’s Resource
About Japan provides a variety of resources about Japan to educators for use in the K-12 classroom. Resources are organized around the themes of culture, environment, globalization, history, Japanese language, and social issues and consist of lesson plans, articles by leading scholars and primary source images and video.

Politics and Contemporary Topics
Japan Reference
Japan Reference (JREF) is a travel, language and study guide on all things Japanese, with a growing travel section, a discussion forum, a section on Japanese language, a Japan photo gallery, a comprehensive directory started in 1999.

Japan Information Network
Japan information network has been introducing Japan such as its politics, economy, society and culture, and enhancing overseas understanding of Japan.
Contemporary Japan: Culture & Society
A specialist on contemporary Japanese society and culture, Prof. Bestor has focused much of his research on Tokyo. He has written widely on urban culture and history, markets and economic organization, food culture, the fishing industry, and popular culture. His current work is focused on globalization, consumption, and identity. This website is updated and managed by him.

Exploring Contemporary Japanese Society
The information in this Japan Digest invites comparison to contemporary developments in the U.S., Europe, and elsewhere. The proliferation of foreign food items in the U.S. has resulted in many changes. For example, some grocery store deli counters now serve sushi.

NEWS, MAGAZINES, AND JOURNALS

The Japan Times
A great resource to learn more about Japan’s news, opinions, life, community, sports and city guides/events.

The Mainichi
Japan’s National Daily since 1922.

The Asahi Shimbun
A top Newspaper agency in Japan with news covering politics, business, sports, culture, travel, science & technology, etc.

Japan Today
Japan Today, launched in September 2000, is a Tokyo-based online newspaper, featuring all the latest news on Japan and the world, including national, political, entertainment, business, technology and sports news.

NHK-World Japan News
NHK World Japan is the international service of Japan’s public broadcaster NHK. It provides the latest information on Japan and Asia through television, radio and online to a global audience.
# Lesson Plans and Activity Ideas

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## Exchange Programs

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<th><strong>Hokkaido JaLS Group</strong></th>
<th><strong>Program Description:</strong> Hokkaido JaLS aims to support you to find the best fit possible for your Japanese learning needs in a supported and flexible environment.</th>
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<td><strong>Eligibility:</strong> 18+ years</td>
<td><strong>Fees:</strong> Prices</td>
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<td><strong>Scholarships:</strong> No Information.</td>
<td><strong>KCP International</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Program Description:</strong> KCP International Japanese Language School is a highly challenging, affordable way</td>
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for the dedicated student to perfect your Japanese, for academic credit if you like, in all the excitement of Tokyo. And learning Japanese is just the beginning.

**Eligibility:** 18+ years  
**Fees:** Cost  
**Scholarships:** Available

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<th>Youth for Understanding</th>
<th>Program Description:</th>
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<td>This program advances intercultural understanding, life-long learning, global competencies, mutual respect, and social responsibility through transformational educational exchanges for generations of youth, families, and communities, supported by dedicated volunteers and professional staff. Youth for Understanding provides a homestay experience where you live with a Japanese host family who has agreed to open their home and their hearts to you!</td>
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**Eligibility:** High School Student  
**Fees:** Call/Apply for Price  
**Scholarships:** Available
References


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