

The Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese (JFT-Basic) Can Now Be Used for “Employment for Skill Development” and “Student*” Status of Residence

Assessing Proficiency at Three Levels—A1, A2.1, and A2.2 (A2)—Starting August 2026

* Enrollment in a Japanese language education institution

Beginning in August 2026, the Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese (JFT-Basic), one of the Japanese language tests administered by the Japan Foundation (JF), will be able to assess Japanese language proficiency across three levels: A1, A2.1, and A2.2 (A2).

This update makes it possible to use the test not only for the “Specified Skilled Worker (i)” status of residence but also to verify the Japanese language proficiency required under the Employment for Skill Development Program launching in April 2027. It can also be used to apply for the “Student” status of residence (for enrollment in a Japanese language educational institution) from August 2026.



Since April 2019, JFT-Basic has been administered to measure the level of Japanese language proficiency needed by foreign nationals about to reside in Japan mainly for work, in order to communicate in everyday life situations. As of August 2026, the test is offered in Japan and in 13 countries worldwide. In FY2025, a record-breaking 217,000 people took the test, raising the cumulative total to about 590,000 and reflecting its widespread use among foreign nationals seeking employment in Japan.

With the ongoing expansion of acceptance of foreign nationals, the Employment for Skill Development Program is scheduled to begin operations in April 2027. The program requires proof of a prescribed level of Japanese language proficiency at key stages: prior to starting employment, at the time of a voluntary change of employer, and when transferring to the “Specified Skilled Worker (i)” status. JFT-Basic's three assessment levels—A1, A2.1, and A2.2 (A2)—have been set to correspond to these stages.

Additionally, from August 2026, the test can also be used as proof of the required proficiency when applying for the “Student” status to enroll in Japanese language educational institutions.

By expanding the test's applications to suit various purposes for coming to Japan—from employment to study—JFT-Basic aims to further support the smooth and reliable acceptance of foreign workers and international students in Japan.

[Overview of JFT-Basic]

Organizer	The Japan Foundation
Official website	https://www.jpf.go.jp/jft-basic/
Countries where the test is conducted	Mongolia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Japan
Eligibility for the test	Foreign nationals who are not native speakers of Japanese Indonesian nationals must be at least 18 years old on the test date Myanmar nationals must be at least 17 years old on the test date

Press inquiries :

Kumakura (Ms.), Fukushima (Mr.) , Branding and Communication Dept. Public Relation Div.,
The Japan Foundation
Tel: +81-(0)3-5369-6075 / Fax: +81-(0)3-5369-6044
E-mail: press@jpf.go.jp

	Test-takers in Japan must hold a status of residence (short-term stay acceptable)
How to apply	Online application via the registration website [Prometric's registration website] https://www.prometric-jp.com/ssw/test_list/archives/1
Test Fee	Test-takers in Japan: 10,000 yen (including consumption tax) Test-takers outside Japan: varies by country
Payment methods	Credit card, digital wallet, voucher, etc. (varies by country)

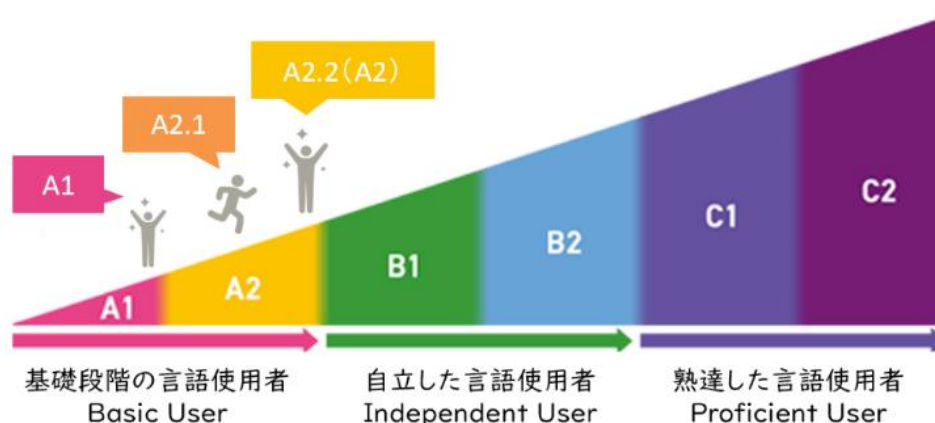
[Features of the JFT-Basic]

1. As a rule, the test is conducted every month.
2. The test can be used to apply for the status of residence: “Specified Skilled Worker (i),” “Employment for Skill Development,” and “Student*” *Enrollment in a Japanese language education institution
3. The test is computer-based, with results available immediately after taking the test.

[Japanese Language Proficiency Levels Assessed by the JFT-Basic]

	A1	A2.1	A2.2 (A2)
Until July 2026	—	—	○
From August 2026	○	○	○

- 145 to 174 points are assessed as A1, 175 to 199 points as A2.1, and 200 to 250 points as A2.2 (A2).
- A2.1 indicates that the test taker has reached A1 and is progressing toward A2.2 (A2).



A1 Level

- Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.

Press inquiries :

Kumakura (Ms.), Fukushima (Mr.) , Branding and Communication Dept. Public Relation Div.,
The Japan Foundation
Tel: +81-(0)3-5369-6075 / Fax: +81-(0)3-5369-6044
E-mail: press@jpf.go.jp

- Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.
- Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

A2 Level

- Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment).
- Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.
- Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

<The CEFR Global Scale: Common Reference levels>

[Reference Materials]

1. Number of Examinees (FY2019-FY2025)
2. Test Schedule for FY2026

About the Japan Foundation (JF)

With a mission of cultivating friendship and ties between Japan and the world, JF is an incorporated administrative agency promoting international cultural exchange through Arts and Cultural Exchange, Japanese-Language Education Overseas, and Japanese Studies and Global Partnerships Programs.

In the field of Japanese-Language Education Overseas, JF works to create and enhance Japanese-language education environments worldwide in order to give more people around the world opportunities to study Japanese. It dispatches NIHONGO Partners to support Japanese-language education in Asia.

It also disseminates information about Japanese-language teaching methods, develops and provides teaching materials, and offers a wide range of Japanese-language learning content for both teachers and learners. Moreover, JF undertakes a wide range of programs in Japanese-language education, including administering tests to assess the proficiency of Japanese-language learners.

For more information, please visit the Japan Foundation website.

<https://www.jpff.go.jp/j/project/japanese/index.html>

Press inquiries :

Kumakura (Ms.), Fukushima (Mr.) , Branding and Communication Dept. Public Relation Div.,
The Japan Foundation
Tel: +81-(0)3-5369-6075 / Fax: +81-(0)3-5369-6044
E-mail: press@jpff.go.jp