



**Japanese-Language
Education Overseas**

Japanese-Language Education Overseas

Students of Japanese gain understanding and appreciation of Japan in addition to knowledge of the language. The Japan Foundation encourages teaching of the Japanese language around the world, and ensures the quality of the education that students receive. Programs include organizing the JLPT, developing teaching materials, supporting new Japanese courses, and providing local and Japan-based training programs for Japanese-language teachers.

Support for Teachers and Institutions

As guidance from a single Japanese-language teacher can have a influence on a large number of students, the Japan Foundation conducts programs aimed at enhancing the teaching skills of educators who teach the Japanese language outside Japan. In addition to supporting training teachers, the Japan Foundation also grants to Japanese-language institutions overseas, and helps events planned for the purpose of Japanese-language education.

Support for Learners

The Japan Foundation provides both direct and indirect support for learners. Indirect support involves efforts to enhance the Japanese-language learning environment, including creating learning materials and training future teachers. Direct support involves training for people who need to learn Japanese because of their profession, including diplomats, public servants, employees of public sector entities, and researchers. We especially provide sustained support for types of overseas institutions that is difficult to set up or maintain courses for without external assistance.

Promoting Japanese-Language Education Overseas

Within the Japanese-language education programs conducted by the Japan Foundation, one of the significant parts is to construct basic foundations for Japanese-language education. Activities includes sharing Japanese-language education expertise, conducting a survey on Japanese-language institutions all over the world, and creating venues and opportunities for exchange of information. The Foundation keeps working at them in order to build a base from which Japanese-language education can spread out into the world.

Dispatch Specialists/ Support Institutions and Projects

The Japan Foundation dispatches Japanese-language specialist and assistant teachers to educational institutions outside Japan. Those institutions, which introduce Japanese-language as major or as an official subject for their secondary education, have strong demand for the specialists. The Foundation also provides grants for opportunities, such as instructional salaries to lecturers of Japanese-language courses run by NPOs, Japanese speech contests, seminars, and workshops.

JF Nihongo Network "the Sakura Network"

The Sakura Network is a global network linking core institutions, which influence other institutions in the areas or countries, and teacher associations to promote the Japanese language and improve the quality of Japanese-language education in cooperation with the Japan Foundation. The network aims to provide a Japanese-language learning environment to larger numbers of people, and is involved in projects to extend the use of the Japanese language around the world.

Training for Overseas Japanese- Language Teachers

The Japanese-Language Institute Urawa, an affiliated organization, provides training for non-native Japanese-language teachers who teach overseas. The training includes advanced training for Japanese-language educators with management roles in their country or region. It also provides programs such as training to enhance the Japanese-language skills and Japanese-language teaching methodology of teachers with relatively little teaching experience.

Training for Overseas Japanese- Language Learners

The Japanese-Language Institute Kansai, an affiliated organization, provides training programs for people having roles that are important in terms of building favorable relations between Japan and their home countries. The intensive study programs are offered to diplomats and other public officials. To encourage Japanese-language education overseas, the institute also provides educational programs to superior Japanese-language students in universities and high schools in certain countries.

Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT)

JLPT is a means of evaluating and certifying the Japanese proficiency of non-native speakers. The test is offered twice a year at test sites worldwide at the same time. A four-level test (Level 1 to Level 4) was offered through 2009, but from 2010 onwards the test has been revised, giving it five levels (N1 to N5). It is the largest-scale Japanese-language test in the world, counting approximately 770,000 examinees in 2009.

JF Standard / Japanese-Language Teaching Materials

Based on the principle of "Japanese for mutual understanding," the Japan Foundation has developed the JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education (JF Standard) as a tool to help think about teaching, learning, and assessment, and to play a core role in Japanese-language education. Recently, the Japan Foundation has also given priority to the development, management, and deployment of Internet and video tools to aid Japanese-language teachers and learners.

Survey on Japanese-Language Education Abroad

With the collaboration of Japan Foundation offices around the world, Japanese embassies, consulates, and other entities, a global survey of institutions providing Japanese-language education is conducted every three years. This is the only major survey covering Japanese-language education worldwide. The results of the survey are frequently quoted by newspapers, magazines, and other media.



Dispatch of Japanese Language Specialists and Support for Projects Targeting Wider Use of Japanese

The Japan Foundation sends Japanese-language specialists and assistant Japanese-language teachers to core Japanese-language institutions around the world. In each country, the specialists work towards the objectives of enhancing local Japanese-language education and enabling the institution to function independently. Their specific work depends on the particular mission, such as activities that include classroom-based Japanese-language teaching, giving advice on curriculum development and teaching materials, training local teachers, and supporting initiatives for networking among teachers.

Decisions on where to dispatch specialists take into consideration the condition of the receiving institutions and the state of Japanese-language education in the country or region. In 2009, a total of 102 specialists were dispatched to 39 countries.

In addition to dispatching specialists, the Japan Foundation provides salary assistance for Japanese-language courses, and grants for activities such as Japanese speech contests and seminars for teachers, in order to support Japanese-language education overseas.

A teacher participating in a seminar given by a Japan Foundation specialist commented that as teachers are normally immersed in the daily struggle of classes with no time to brush up their own skills, the seminar presents a great opportunity to step back and review their own teaching

methodology. Another teacher praised the grants from the Japan Foundation that enable purchase of prizes for speech contest winners as they provide an excellent motivation for the learners.

■ JF Nihongo Network

The JF Nihongo Network, also known as "the Sakura Network," is a global network linking core institutions and teacher associations to promote Japanese language and improve the quality of Japanese-language education in cooperation with the Japan Foundation. The objective for the end of fiscal 2010 is to increase the number of core members to 100. In 2009, 20 institutions joined, giving a year-end total of 74 institutions in 32 countries.

Sakura Core Projects organized by core members provide support to projects with a strong outreach effect that can lead to growth, expansion, and broader use of Japanese throughout their entire country or area. In fiscal 2009, 15 Sakura Core Projects were held in 14 countries, including projects for creation of teaching materials and seminars for teachers.

As the issues facing Japanese-language institutions and teachers become more diverse, the Japan Foundation is working to enhance information sharing and collaboration with core members to conduct activities that are a better fit for local needs, meeting necessities and effectively promoting the wider use of Japanese.



Above: Ukraine Japanese Speech Contest (September 2009, Kiev National Linguistic University)
Right: Japanese seminar at the Japan Foundation, Sao Paulo attracted 90 participants



Growing Popularity, with Start of Twice a Year Testing and a Move to the New Test

The Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) is a means of evaluating and certifying the Japanese proficiency of non-native speakers. The test is offered twice a year at test sites worldwide with the collaboration of local host institutions. In Japan, the test is administered by Japan Educational Exchanges and Services, and in Taiwan it is administered by the Interchange Association, Japan.

■ JLPT now Held Twice a Year

Until 2008, JLPT was conducted once a year in December, with all the worldwide test sites giving the test at the same time. In response to strong demand from Japan and other countries, from fiscal 2009 onwards, the test is held twice a year, in July and December.

In 2009, the July test was limited to just Level 1 and Level 2, and was held on July 5 in Japan, Taiwan, China, and Korea, where the test was administered by the Japan Foundation, attracted 215,000 applicants, with over 180,000 actually taking the test. Five of the test sites in China (Nanning, Weifang, Yangzhou, Kunming, and Haikou) offered the test for the first time.

The December test was held on December 6, 2009, and covered all four levels, with the Japan Foundation administering in 52 countries and regions. The test attracted 453,000 applicants, of which 375,000 went on to take it. There were three new countries where the test was held for the first time (Ireland, Serbia, and Colombia), and also two additional cities in China (Yanji and Lanzhou) and one additional city (Da Nang) in Vietnam. As a result, the total number of examinees for the two tests in the first year of semi testing was 555,849, marking a 42.3% increase from the previous year.

■ Preparing for the 2010 Start of the New JLPT

Over time, test applicants have become more diverse, and use of JLPT results has expanded from skill measurement to include employment screening and evaluation for

promotions and pay raises as well as use in place of a university entrance exam or as a form of qualification. Given these circumstances, it was decided to introduce a revised version of the test in 2010. The new JLPT takes full advantage of the most advanced research in Japanese pedagogy and testing theory, and reflects the vast wealth of data accumulated since the original test was launched over 25 years ago.

■ Key Points of the New JLPT

1) Focuses on communicative competence

The new test places importance not only on a learner's knowledge of the Japanese language including vocabulary and grammar but also on their competence at using the knowledge in practical communication.

2) A choice of five test levels

The new test is offered at five levels (N1, N2, N3, N4, N5) instead of the old four levels (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4), enabling examinees to choose a level more suitable for them.

3) Accurately measures Japanese competency with scaled scores

The new test adopts a new scoring method to more accurately reflect examinees' Japanese-language competence. Scores are calculated as "scaled scores" instead of raw scores.

4) What you can do in Japanese is easily visualized

A "Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Can-do List" will be presented to help visualize what successful JLPT examinees can do with their Japanese skills at each of the test levels.

■ New JLPT Logo

To mark the commencement of the new JLPT in July 2010, we called for suggestions for a new JLPT logo. A total of 825 ideas were received by the March 10, 2010 deadline, and the selection committee decided to adopt the design proposed by Kinoshita Yoshio of Aichi Prefecture.



Above: Waiting for JLPT to start in Manila, the Philippines
Right: New logo for JLPT

日本語能力試験

JLPT Japanese-Language
Proficiency
Test

Both Educators and Learners get the Best Environment for Learning Japanese

■ Support for Japanese-Language Teachers Abroad— Japanese-Language Institute, Urawa

One of the main pillars of the Japan Foundation's Japanese-Language Education Overseas activities is support for teachers. Training in Japan for Japanese-language teachers active overseas is conducted by Japanese-Language Institute Urawa, which is affiliated with the Japan Foundation. This institute is also a focus for support for teachers such as the development of the "JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education" that plays a central role in the infrastructure for Japanese-language education overseas.

Since its establishment in Saitama-city, Saitama Prefecture in 1989, the institute has welcomed over 10,000 trainees, building a considerable reputation as a training facility for Japanese-language teachers from outside Japan.

The year 2009 was the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Institute Urawa. To mark the occasion, the Institute Urawa held a number of special events to introduce its training programs and activities over the past 20 years. These events aim to communicate its success and to enhance contacts with the community, as the work of the institute is only possible due to the collaboration of the local people.

■ Special events to mark the 20th anniversary of the Japanese-Language Institute, Urawa

- The 49th International Speech Contest in Japanese (June 14, 2008: Kawagoe-shi, Saitama Prefecture)
- Seminar on International Understanding for High School Students (August 29 to 30, 2009)
- Symposium: JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education: Its Uses and Potential (October 4, 2009)
- Japan Foundation Awards for Japanese Language Commemorative Lecture and 20th Anniversary Ceremony (October 9, 2009)
- Linking through Japanese language: International Exchange Festival 2009 @ Kita-Urawa (November 21, 2009)



Above: To familiarize themselves with Japan, Japanese-language teachers training at the Institute Urawa meet with local people in Saitama City where the Institute is located.

Right: A foreign service/public servant trainee on the 2009 course. This day's schedule involved a visit to a local elementary school as an opportunity to observe the Japanese education system first hand.

■ Support for the Overseas Japanese-Language Learners— Japanese-Language Institute, Kansai

Another main pillar of Japanese-language education promotion is support for Japanese-language learners. Japanese-Language Institute Kansai, established in 1997 in Tajiri-cho, Osaka, provides programs for overseas students, targeting university and high school students, and also programs for specialists, with a need for Japanese ability for work purposes from overseas. It is also involved in e-learning development, such as the *Japanese in Anime and Manga* website.

Of the Japanese-language programs for specialists, those designed for diplomats and public servants are conducted with the cooperation of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, inviting the foreign ministries of other countries to send young foreign service officers, public servants, and employees of other public sector entities to the institute for eight months of training in Japanese language and Japanese affairs. In fiscal 2009, 28 specialists from a total of 25 countries took part in this program.

The Japanese-language courses are designed to cater to the needs of trainees likely to take up posts at diplomatic missions to Japan or in other official organizations to handle work related to Japan. As these courses aim to impart the communicative competence that would be useful for such work, the curriculum is prioritized towards oral communication. The training also includes lectures by specialists, cultural experiences, visits to administrative, business, and cultural facilities, and study tours. These activities are designed to allow trainees to familiarize themselves with Japanese society and culture, and to construct their own networks in Japan.

Of the 697 trainees (596 foreign service officers, 101 public servants) who have undergone this training, as many as 202 have been assigned to their country's embassy in Japan, and six have become their country's Ambassador to Japan.*

These figures demonstrate that graduates of the program go on to be active in areas related to Japan.

*Figures for embassy and diplomatic appointments are based on October 2009 data.



Adapting Japanese-language Teaching Materials to Different Media Extends Their Reach

■ Online Version of

Erin's Challenge! I can speak Japanese

Erin's Challenge! I can speak Japanese is a Japanese-language program developed by the Japan Foundation in 2005. A growing number of young people are studying Japanese language because they are attracted to manga, anime, and other aspects of Japan's "cool" culture. For these young people, this program is designed to help learners compare and contrast Japan with their own culture and to observe the background behind the differences. Originally, this program was created as TV program on 2006, and broadcast worldwide. In March 2010, the online version of *Erin's Challenge! I can speak Japanese* launched. The Japan Foundation is making educational materials available in a range of media formats for the benefit of learners with few opportunities to hear live Japanese and little exposure to Japanese culture.

The online version of *Erin* envisages Japanese-language learners with a wide range of proficiency levels, so special attention was paid to functions allowing study by individual learners. For instance, skits can display the conversation with four different types of subtitles (including English) to suit the user's reading ability. Moving the cursor over a word in a dialogue script displays a balloon with explanations of the grammar being used, and indicates lessons where the point is covered. A total of 1,519 new drill questions make copious use of audio, photographs, and illustrations, enabling users to practice communicating, not just practice sentence forms. Content aimed at developing cultural understanding include *Bunka Quiz* (Cultural Quiz) lessons aiming at accreditation as an instructor, and *Yattemiru Game* (Let's Try), that provides simulated experiences of Japanese culture. Each of these has 25 newly developed lessons. In addition, registering enables users to store their scores and track the pages studied, and also permits the user to create an individual avatar and try actually communicating in a virtual environment.



■ Japanese in Anime and Manga Website

Japanese anime and manga, perhaps the best known elements of Japan's pop culture, are winning high favor with young people around the world and are motivating many to start learning Japanese. To reach these Japanese learners who love anime and manga, the Japan Foundation launched an e-learning site *Japanese in Anime and Manga* in 2009 to offer a fun way to learn Japanese and discover Japanese culture.

Because the characters appearing in anime and manga are each unique, and because of the range of genres, many of the expressions used are not covered by conventional Japanese textbooks and dictionaries. That makes them particularly difficult for the learners to understand.

The site is designed for people who enjoy Japanese anime and manga, but caters to Japanese-language learners with a wide range of ability levels, from beginners to advanced learners. This website was created so as to make use of many of the expressions actually used by characters in anime and manga popular overseas. Adopting the anime/manga perspective, users can learn a vivid style of Japanese not found in the usual textbooks and dictionaries. Users can learn in a fun way through quizzes and games, choosing their own preferred study contents and method, according to their own level and interests. With eight characters of types typically encountered in anime and manga (Boy, Girl, Scrapper, Samurai, Old man, Butler, Lady, and Osakan), users can learn distinctive expressions unique to each character. They can also study expressions typical of four popular anime/manga genres (love, school, ninja, and samurai), including frequently encountered phrases, onomatopoeia (sound FX), and background cultural information.

In only two months after the release of the English version in February 2010, the website was accessed over half a million times (page views) from 128 different countries. In response to this popularity, we are working to add to the content to make it more comprehensive.



Above: From *Japanese in Anime and Manga* website
Left: From the online version of *Erin's Challenge! I can speak Japanese*

Japanese-Language Education: Constructing International Infrastructure and Monitoring Progress

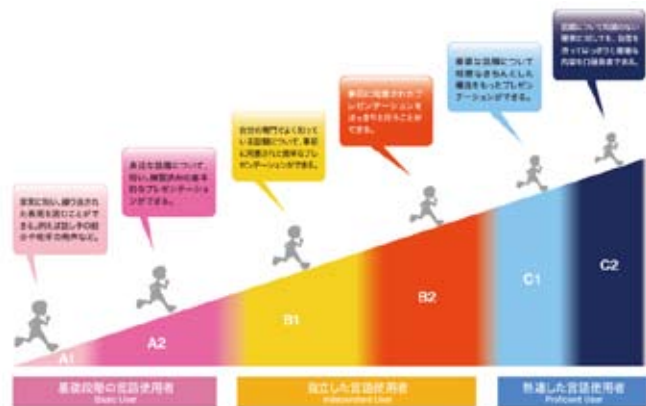
■ JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education

Based on the principle of 'Japanese for mutual understanding,' the Japan Foundation has been developing the JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education (JF Standard) as a tool to help think about teaching, learning, and assessment in Japanese-language education since 2005. "The JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education 2010" was published at the end of March 2010. Aiming for greater international acceptance and use of the Japanese-language, the Japan Foundation is involved in a number of initiatives to provide infrastructure for Japanese-language education. The JF Standard plays a core role in those efforts.

Two competences are required in order to achieve mutual understanding through language: competence in accomplishing tasks, which involves what a person can do by using that language, and competence in intercultural understanding, which involves understanding and respecting other cultures by expanding one's horizon through encounters with different cultures. The JF Standard 2010 illustrates Japanese-language proficiency by using a set of statements that describe what the learner "can do" in Japanese. These Can-do statements, which are based on the language proficiency levels specified by CEFR*, are published online on the *Minna no 'Can-do' Website*. Regardless of where in the world you learn or teach Japanese, using the same metric enables you to assess the level that you are learning or teaching at, enabling learners to set achievable objectives that suit their proficiency level and needs, and thereby to ensure that the teaching / learning process goes smoothly. The Japan Foundation provides these tools in the form of a portfolio. This is used to assess the results of nurturing competence

* CEFR refers to the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment." Since its publication in 2001, the framework has come into widespread use around the world. The JF Standard is based on the CEFR approach, enabling a language learner's proficiency in Japanese to be correlated to CEFR levels.

- A1 Can read a very short, rehearsed statement – e.g. to introduce a speaker, propose a toast.
- A2 Can give a short, rehearsed, basic presentation on a familiar subject.
- B1 Can give a straightforward, prepared presentation on a familiar topic within his/her field.
- B2 Can give a clear, prepared presentation.
- C1 Can give a clear, well-structured presentation of a complex subject.
- C2 Can present a complex topic confidently and articulately to an audience unfamiliar with it.



The six Can-do levels

in accomplishing tasks and competence in intercultural understanding. Language students can use the tools to assess their own Japanese-language proficiency, record their linguistic and cultural experiences, and review their progress as part of student-centered learning.

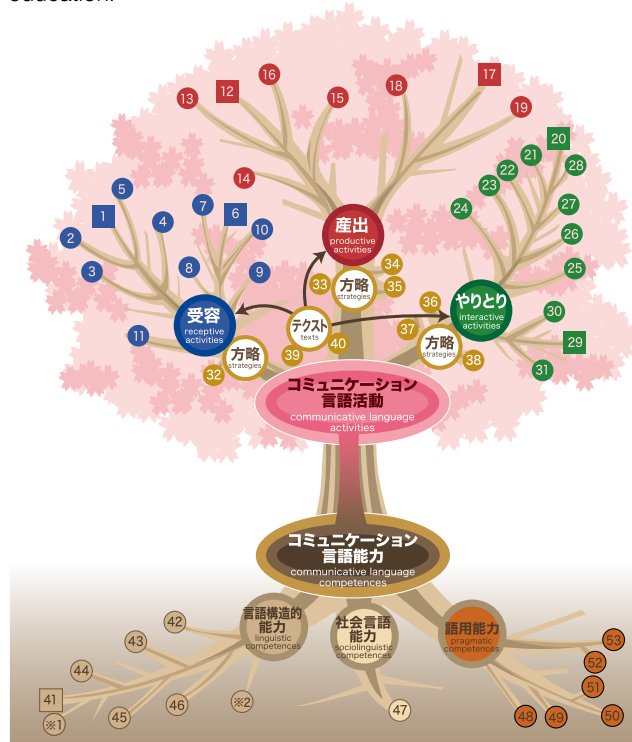
■ Survey on Japanese-Language Education

The Japan Foundation has a strong reputation for its comprehensive approach to Japanese-language education overseas. Its biggest strength is that in addition to having Japan Foundation offices overseas, it dispatches Japanese-language specialists around the world, and via Japanese embassies and consulates and the institutions it supports, it has access to up-to-date information on the state of affairs regarding Japanese-language education. Using this network, the Japan Foundation publishes a survey report on Japanese-language education that covers the whole world every three years.

In fiscal 2009, Japanese-language institutions worldwide were surveyed through questionnaires to elicit the number of students, number of teachers, purposes for studying Japanese, problems and concerns with Japanese-language teaching. Collated results and analysis of the 2009 survey will be published during fiscal 2010.

In addition, the latest information for each country or region is updated annually on the Japan Foundation website.

Thus these country-specific information and the results of surveys of educational institutions are used by a broad spectrum of people, from media representatives to people wanting to know the current state of Japanese-language education.



The "JF Standard Tree" depicts the relationship between communicative language activities and communicative language competences as a tree.