

Unit 1 Holidays in Japan

Objectives

- Discussion topic: how the Japanese celebrate their holidays
- New words and Expressions: ancestor, blossom, constitution, daily grind, designate, downtown, greenery, head to, kick off, labor, marine, pick up, refreshed, wind up

Introduction

New Words and Expressions (5 minutes)

- Greet your students.
- Ask students to make observations about the image on pages 9
- Have learners review the “New words and Expressions” and attempt to define them in pairs or as a class.
- Ask them to predict how the words or expressions might relate to the unit content.
- Note that it does not matter whether their predictions are correct or not. It simply aims to make them speak about their predictions to stimulate their curiosity and make them active.



Optional

Select 5-6 of the new words and write them on the board. Then, ask students to think about their meaning and try to define each word. In pairs, ask students to further their predictions about what the unit is likely to cover. On a separate sheet of paper, have students write down a sentence or two about their ideas using as many of the new words as they are able. Have students share their ideas with a partner and ask for volunteers to share out with the class.

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

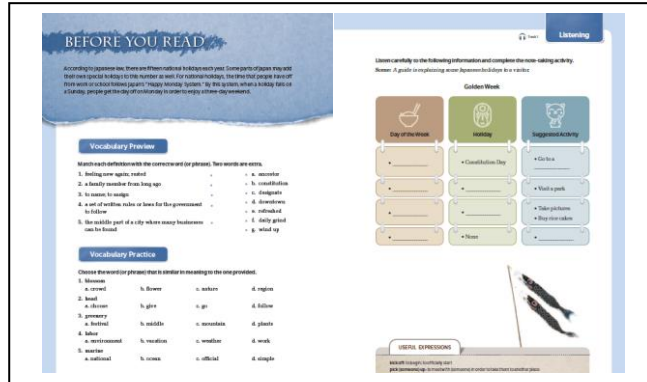
- This section works to engage students' interest in the unit topic.
- As an introduction to the main idea, this section includes general prompt for students to consider.
- Before asking students the warm-up questions, ask for volunteers to talk about how they spend their holidays. Ask follow-up questions like: What is your favorite holiday? How do you celebrate your favorite holiday with your family? What is the best part of this holiday?
- Have students look at the warm-up questions;
 1. Are there any holidays this month? What about next month?
 2. What did you do during the last holiday when there was no work or school?

Tip

Ask students to consider one or both of the warm up questions individually. To more fully develop their ideas and responses to the questions, have students create a web. For example, have students write down the last holiday when there was no school. Students should brainstorm their ideas by drawing lines from the holiday to things that they did. Students can choose two or three of their responses to discuss with a partner.

Before You Read (5 minutes)

- Ask for a volunteer to read the paragraph aloud to the class. Ask the student to pause after the first few sentences to ask probing questions like: What holidays did you celebrate when you were small? Then, allow the student to continue reading. Ask students to think about a question they might like to discuss once the main reading passage has been read.

**Vocabulary Preview (10 minutes)**

- This section presents learners with the meaning of a vocabulary item.
- Have students go over the words in the Vocabulary Preview section. They should match the words with the given definitions.
- Check the answers as a class. When checking, discuss how the words relate specifically to the unit topic.
- If time permits, have students make sentences with the words.

Vocabulary Practice (20 minutes)

- This section requires learners to use target words in some way, either pairing items with synonyms or filling in blanks within given sentences.
- Question 1 (finding synonyms):
 - a) Before asking students to complete the sentences, have them look at the words. Ask them to think of synonyms, or similar words, for each of the given words. This will force students to learn the meanings of each of the words.
 - b) Then have students work to complete each sentence with the given words.
 - c) If time permits, discuss with students how synonyms and antonyms differ. Ask students how the sentences change if the words are replaced with antonyms.
- Question 2 (note-taking activity):
 - a) Before students listen to the audio track, have them list or think about the different holidays that are celebrated in Japan. This will allow students to better prepare for and comprehend what they are about to listen to.
 - b) Then listen to the audio track and have students write brief answers for each question as they listen.

Optional

Before playing the audio, ask students to brainstorm the different ways people chose to celebrate holidays throughout the world. They should first think about different places and what holidays are celebrated there. They can think about what things people *probably* do, or what things *they* would do.

- Useful Expressions:
 - a) Before moving on to the reading passage, ask students to read the Useful Expressions on page 11. Write each phrase on the board. Ask students to list things that “kick off” soon. Ask students to think about when they had to “pick someone up.” Have students talk with a partner about their ideas.
 - b) Then ask for volunteers to share their ideas with the class. They can speak their ideas, or write their ideas on the board.
 - c) After finishing the reading passage, ask students to consider the Useful Expressions on page 12.

Write each phrase on the board. Ask students to think about their “daily grind.” Have students work together in pairs to brainstorm the things they do each day or week that make up their “daily grind.” Ask students to think about how they “wind up” their day, weekend, or holiday. d) Then ask for volunteers to share their ideas with the class.

Reading

Holidays Through the Year?

(5 minutes)

- Students should read the selection on their own.
- Have the students read aloud to a partner to practice fluency. Partners can take turns if time permits.

Reading
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Holidays Through the Year


Taking breaks provides students and workers a chance to step away from their **daily grind**. They can return **refreshed** and ready to face the new challenges that come their way. Maybe it is for this reason that Japan has **many** national holidays for people to enjoy. Fifteen national holidays in Japan occur throughout the year. Additional holidays and festivals provide extra time off or simply interesting ways to spend free time.

One of the busiest holiday seasons in Japan is the spring. As the cold days of winter give way to spring, everyone begins to look forward to **bonnansu**, or cherry **hanami** viewing parties. Schools and companies are not required to give people time off during the **bonnansu** season. Great crowds, however, still find the time to get out and enjoy cherry blossoms all across Japan. Depending on the region and weather, the best time for **bonnansu** parties may be any week in March through early May. On May 5th, the spring holiday season ends at the start of Golden Week with Children's Day. As with the other holidays that make up Golden Week, Children's Day is a day off. It is the last day off in that week.

The first national holiday in summer is **Matsuri**. They also known as Obon Day. This day was made a national holiday in 1996 and falls on the first Monday of July. Marine Day is followed by the celebration of Obon in the middle of August. Obon is not an official national holiday, but many people choose to take their summer vacations then. Between August 15th and 16th, people may travel back to their hometowns to remember their **ancestors**. Others may choose to visit the ocean or mountains as part of their summer vacation.

About a month after Obon, Japanese students and workers get another national holiday on the **New Year**. This is the day in the fall when there are equal hours of daylight and night-time. The full months of October and November both have national holidays as well. People can enjoy a day giving their favorite sport an **honors** and Sports Day on the second Monday in October. Then, in November, there are days off on

November 2nd for Culture Day and on November 23rd for **Labo** Thanksgiving Day. The Japanese year **ends** with the winter holiday celebrating the Emperor's Birthday. When Prince Naruhito becomes emperor after his father, this national holiday will mean **celebration**. However, for now, people celebrate Emperor's Birthday holiday on December 23rd. After that, another year **begins** with the national holiday of New Year's Day on January 1st.



Comprehension

Complete the following chart based on the information in the Listening and Reading sections.

Season	Holiday	Day of the holiday	Do people take time off from school or work?
Spring	_____	_____ in _____	Yes
	_____	May 5	_____
Summer	_____	_____ of July	_____
	_____	August 15-16	_____ that not a national holiday
Fall	_____	_____ in late September	Yes
	_____ and _____	_____ in October	_____
Winter	_____	_____ 3	Yes
	_____	_____ November	_____
_____	_____	_____ November 23	_____
_____	_____	_____ New Year's Day	_____

Discussion

Read and consider the following questions. Discuss them with your class.

1. What is your favorite holiday? Why do you enjoy this holiday?
2. Think back to a past holiday that you remember as being special. What did you do or what happened on this holiday? Why was it so special?

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After Reading

Comprehension (10 minutes)

This exercise checks students' reading comprehension.

- Ask students to quickly summarize what they read. This can be done on paper or in pairs.
- Have students complete the graphic organizer using information from both the Listening and Reading sections.
- Check answers together as a class, then have students add to their list of questions they began before they read the selection. Have students trade their questions with a partner and answer them on a separate sheet of paper.

Discussion (10 minutes)

Students will read and consider the questions for discussion.

- Have students work in pairs or small groups to answer one of the questions. To fully respond to a question, students can work together on one of them.
- Ask pairs to select one person to act as secretary to record notes as the discussion proceeds. Then, have the other student share the group's ideas with the class.
- Students who responded to the other question should develop their own, follow-up questions for the groups presenting.

Follow-up Questions

Question 1:

- Who do you spend your favorite holiday with?
- What places do you visit or activities do you do during your favorite holiday?

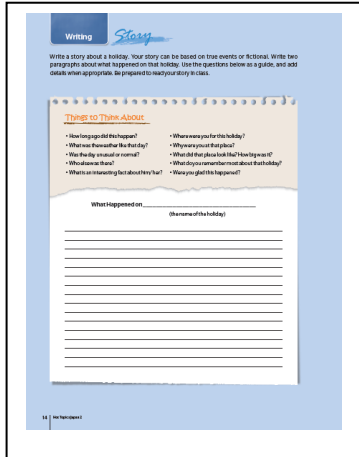
Question 2:

- How do you make the holidays memorable currently?
- What makes the holidays special in general?

Further Discussion

Writing (15 minutes)

- Have students work in pairs to brainstorm the answers to the discussion questions once a holiday is chosen.



Sample Response

Last New Year, I spent the day with my family. The weather was cold and snowy. We got up very early to watch the sun rise. Later, we visited the Meiji Shrine. Many people were there and it was very busy.

During the day, we ate a lot of delicious food. We played fun games and spent time together as a family. It is my favorite holiday.

Extension

Put students in groups of two or three. Have them exchange their stories and read silently. Students should exchange again stories so they can read every group member's writing. Then, ask students to generate a few questions or suggestions for their peers to help "fine tune" the writing. Go around the classroom to listen to the groups' conversations. Wrap up the activity by having volunteers from each group talk about one or two interesting things they learned from the stories they read.

