

Area of Study

Local and global citizenship.

Overview

This transition unit offers students an opportunity to learn about and appreciate various aspects of Japanese culture. Students are fascinated to learn about a culture which is different in many ways to the students' own. This unit will also help to develop skills in organisation, planning, communication and group work. The language element is just one of many optional elements of the course and the unit is suitable for students of all abilities, including those who have not been successful at languages in the past.

Related learning

- Links to English in preparing for oral presentation and film analysis.
- Links to ICT in researching presentation.
- Links to Home Economics in learning about the Japanese diet.
- Links to Art in exploring Japanese Art.
- Links to Music in listening to Japanese music.
- Links to History and Geography are also possible.

Outline of the unit

- The opening lesson should include a discussion on what students already know about Japan and a presentation on the country and some of the cultural aspects that will be explored in more depth later in the course. Use maps, photos, internet, etc.
- The following can be done in any order, depending on when computer/DVD access is available.
- Students plan an (imaginary!) trip to Japan. In groups, students do research on the Internet and come up with an itinerary, suitable accommodation, travel arrangements, a budget, etc.
- Students prepare a powerpoint presentation on some aspect of Japanese culture, i.e. onsen, restaurant etiquette, being a guest in a Japanese house, origami, festivals, etc.

Outline of the unit

- Students watch and discuss 2 Japanese “anime” films on different themes – e.g. “Spirited Away”, “Tokyo Godfathers”, “Princess Mononoke”, “Grave of the Fireflies”. Preferably in Japanese with English subtitles. Films to be followed by discussion/analysis.
- Students learn about Japanese food. If possible this could include a trip to a Japanese restaurant for lunch, or making a simple Japanese dish (udon, ramen, okonomiyaki) or else tasting typical Japanese food in the classroom (sushi, onigiri)
- Throughout the unit students will learn to say some very basic phrases in Japanese on topics such as – introductions / family / weather / free time / food , etc. The language component is a small part of the overall unit and can be integrated on a regular basis throughout the course.
- Students practise and act out a simple role-play practising the language learnt and possibly videoing it. For example, introducing yourself to your new neighbour in Japan / chatting up a Japanese student in the disco, etc. These role plays can be as simple or as complex as the ability of the class allows and can be either scripted as a class or in small groups, again depending on the ability of the group.
- Students learn how the Japanese writing system works and learn to write a few basic Kanji. This could include calligraphy if materials are available.
- The unit can be concluded with a class discussion of what they have learnt and also an evaluation of the unit by the students.

Breakdown of the unit

There are a range of time-table options.

1. 15 weeks- One double and one single class (Approx 30 hours class time)
2. 10 weeks- Two double periods per week (Approximately 27 hours class time)
3. Full Year- (Approximately 28 Weeks) One double period per week (37 hours)

The balance of time to fulfil a 45 hour Transition Unit would comprise a combination of guest speakers, trips (to a restaurant, museum or film), and independent research and project work.

Total: 45 hours

Aims

This transition unit aims to:

- help students to gain an appreciation for Japanese culture.
- provide students with an opportunity to develop team work and organisational skills.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit students should be able to:

- discuss and analyse selected Japanese films
- research the necessary information to organise a trip to Japan, select appropriate accommodation, organise and budget for an itinerary
- show an appreciation of various aspects of Japanese culture
- speak and write some simple Japanese phrases
- demonstrate an understanding of how the Japanese writing system works.

Key skills

How evidenced

information processing	Students will learn how to use the internet as a research tool. They will select and evaluate information from various websites in order to devise a travel itinerary for their imaginary holiday in Japan.
critical and creative thinking	Students will have the opportunity to critically analyse the “anime” genre of Japanese films, with particular reference to cultural elements / aspects and common themes. Scripting a role play will provide an opportunity for creative thinking.
communicating	Students will learn to communicate using simple Japanese phrases. They will also gain experience of speaking in front of a group as part of the oral presentation on their research.
working with others	Several activities will require group work – for example, students will work in groups to plan a trip to Japan, research one other element of Japanese culture and possibly, produce a short video. The groups should ideally be different for each activity
being personally effective	Students learn to be more confident when working within a group and when presenting to a group. Students will evaluate their own work and the work of others and receive and respond to feedback.

Learning approaches

- Classroom-based language learning (communicative approach), group work, use of ICT, discussion and debate, multimedia, research.

Assessment approaches

- Teacher assessment of dialogues / role-plays / video (spoken language)
- Teacher assessment of recognition of Kanji (through computer programme) and immediate individual mark/feedback given.
- Peer assessment of presentations.
- Student self-assessment of contribution to class.

Evaluation methods

On completion of the TU students will be asked to discuss and evaluate the Unit and suggest any amendments/improvements.

Resources

Useful websites:

General info on Japanese culture:

<http://www.japan-guide.com/>
<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/>

Japanese language:

<http://www.nhk.or.jp/lesson/>
<http://japanese.about.com/>

Hiragana/Kanji:

<http://www.csus.edu/indiv/s/sheaa/projects/hiragana.html>
<http://www.kanjistep.com/en/online/hiraganasteps/index.html>
<http://www.quia.com/jfc/296172.html>
<http://www.realkana.com/>
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~kanji/>
<http://www.nuthatch.com/java/kanjicards/>

Origami:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20000816223414/http://ccwf.cc.utexas.edu/~vbeatty/origami/folding/>

Films:

<http://www.nausicaa.net/miyazaki/sen/>
<http://www.nausicaa.net/miyazaki/grave/>
<http://www.nausicaa.net/miyazaki/mh/>
<http://www.sonypictures.com/cthe/tokyogodfathers/>