

AP[®] Japanese Language and Culture

About the Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP[®])

The Advanced Placement Program[®] has enabled millions of students to take college-level courses and earn college credit, advanced placement, or both, while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. Students who earn a qualifying score on an AP Exam are typically eligible, in college, to receive credit, placement into advanced courses, or both. Every aspect of AP course and exam development is the result of collaboration between AP teachers and college faculty. They work together to develop AP courses and exams, set scoring standards, and score the exams. College faculty review every AP teacher's course syllabus.

AP Japanese Language and Culture Course Overview

The AP Japanese Language and Culture course emphasizes communication (understanding and being understood by others) by applying the interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication in real-life situations. This includes vocabulary usage, language control, communication strategies, and cultural awareness. The AP Japanese Language and Culture course strives not to overemphasize grammatical accuracy at the expense of communication. To best facilitate the study of language and culture, the course is taught almost exclusively in Japanese.

The course engages students in an exploration of culture in both contemporary and historical contexts. The course develops students' awareness and appreciation of social, political, and educational issues (e.g., the role of religion in society, traditional versus modern gender roles), as well as more traditional topics (e.g., arts, customs, festivals, geography, and history). Throughout the course, students develop interpersonal skills that enable them to request and confirm the receipt of information, ask for and provide directions, and issue and respond to invitations. They also develop more cognitively challenging functional language skills, including the ability to compare phenomena, express opinions and preferences, and discuss life experiences. Additionally, students develop a command of a significant number of the most prevalent kanji characters used in Japanese writing.

The AP Japanese Language and Culture course is designed to be comparable to fourth semester (or the equivalent) college/university courses in Japanese language and culture.

RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisite courses; however, students are typically in their fourth year of high school-level Japanese language study. In the case of native or heritage speakers, there may be a different pathway of study leading to this course.

AP Japanese Language and Culture Course Content

The course content is organized into six units, which create an interesting, meaningful context for learning. The suggested sequence is as follows:

- **Unit 1:** Families in Different Societies
- **Unit 2:** The Influence of Language and Culture on Identity
- **Unit 3:** Influences of Beauty and Art
- **Unit 4:** How Science and Technology Affect Our Lives
- **Unit 5:** Factors That Impact the Quality of Life
- **Unit 6:** Environmental, Political, and Societal Challenges

Foundational to the course are the three modes of communication: interpretative, interpersonal, and presentational. Students demonstrate their abilities in the interpretative mode by engaging with written, print, visual, audiovisual, and audio texts; in the interpersonal mode by speaking with and writing to others; and in the presentational mode by speaking to and writing for an audience.

As students work with the modes of communication listed above, they practice various task models that familiarize them with what will be on the exam while helping them build linguistic skills and cultural competencies.

Course Themes

The following six themes help integrate language, content, and culture into a series of lessons and activities:

- Families and Communities
- Personal and Public Identities
- Beauty and Aesthetics
- Science and Technology
- Contemporary Life
- Global Challenges

Course Skills

The following skill categories describe what skills students should develop during the course:

- **Comprehend Texts:** Comprehend written, audio, audiovisual, and visual text.
- **Make Connections:** Make interdisciplinary and cultural connections.
- **Interpret Text:** Interpret the content of written or audio text.
- **Make Meanings:** Make meanings from words and expressions.

- **Speak to Others:** Communicate interpersonally by speaking with others.
- **Write to Others:** Communicate interpersonally by writing to others.

- **Present Orally:** Communicate through spoken presentations.
- **Present in Writing:** Communicate through written presentations.

AP Japanese Language and Culture Exam Structure

AP JAPANESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE EXAM: 2 HOURS

Assessment Overview

The AP Japanese Language and Culture Exam assesses student understanding of the skills and learning objectives outlined in the course framework. The exam is 2 hours long and includes 70 multiple-choice questions and 4 free-response questions.

Format of Assessment

Section I: Multiple-choice | 70 Questions | 1 Hour, 20 Minutes | 50% of Exam Score

- **Part A:** Listening Selections (30–35 Questions; 20 Minutes)
 - **Part B:** Reading Selections (35–40 Questions; 60 Minutes)
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Section II: Free-response | 4 Tasks | 40 Minutes | 50% of Exam Score

- Question 1: Text Chat (**12.5% of Exam Score; 10 Minutes**).
- Question 2: Compare and Contrast Article (**12.5% of Exam Score; 20 Minutes**).
- Question 3: Conversation (**12.5% of Exam Score; 3 Minutes**).
- Question 4: Cultural Perspective Presentation (**12.5% of Exam Score; 7 Minutes**).

Exam Components

Multiple-Choice Section

Part A:

Listening Selections

Part A of the AP Japanese Language and Culture Exam includes 30–35 multiple-choice questions in sets of 2–5 questions each, all with a listening selection stimulus. The audio stimuli include a public announcement, voice message, cultural presentation, radio broadcast, uncontextualized dialogue, and school debate.

Part B:

Reading Selections

Part B includes 35–40 multiple-choice questions in sets of 2–5 questions each, all with a reading selection stimulus. These print stimuli include a journalistic article, short story, email, letter, step-by-step instructions, and travel brochure.

Free-Response Section

Question 1: Text Chat

- ◆ Students are required to respond to a series of text chats. They are given a statement identifying an interlocutor and conversation topic and six messages to which they must respond. Each message consists of a chat entry in Japanese and brief directions in English on how to respond. Students have 90 seconds to read each message and respond at each turn in the text-chat exchange.

Question 2: Compare and Contrast Article

- ◆ Students are required to compose a compare-and-contrast article on two related topics or two opposing sides of a single topic. They identify three aspects of the topic and highlight similarities and differences between the two. In addition, students are asked to express their preference for one of the opposing sides and to provide their reasoning for that choice. Students are given 20 minutes to write an article of 300–400 characters or longer.

Question 3: Conversation

- ◆ Students participate in a simulated interpersonal conversation comprising a statement in English that identifies an interlocutor and the conversation topic. They then engage in a series of four related prompts in Japanese. After each prompt, students have 20 seconds to respond.

Question 4: Cultural Perspective Presentation

- ◆ Students are required to present their own view or perspective on a given Japanese cultural practice or product. They have 4 minutes to prepare their presentation and 2 minutes to deliver it.