



WATCH & LEARN: ARTS & LIFESTYLE

HOW WE LIVE: JAPANESE CULTURE

JAPANESE SCHOOLS (3:20 min)

VIDEO Script & Vocabulary (page 1 of 2/v.822)

PRE-INTERMEDIATE (A2 - B1) AND ABOVE

- ◇ Read the script and note new vocabulary
- ◇ Write three sentences using new vocabulary
- ◇ Prepare for the discussion questions

Starting
Off

Japanese schools are quite different from those in the West. This video takes a look at 10 things you didn't know about Japanese schools.

- 1 Read the **Video Script** below. The words in **bold** are defined in the **Vocabulary** section. Look up any new words in a dictionary.
- 2 Go to the **Your Turn** section at the end of this document. Practice using new words and expressions from the video script to prepare for your next class.
- 3 Look at the **Discussion Questions** and prepare your responses for the next class.

Video Script:

Narrator: Ten things you didn't know about Japanese schools. Most of us could go to school with any **hairstyle** we want. Well, **within reason**. In Japan a boy must have his hair **trimmed** close to his ears. It must not contain any **layers** and styling is a **big no-no**. The girls have it slightly more relaxed regarding hairstyles, but they're not allowed to shave their legs, put on make up or even wear nail polish. Why? Because students should be focused on learning and not their appearance. Remember that **school crush** you used to have? You know that one you used to constantly **stare** at and write hearts with their initials next to yours. Well if you're a Japanese student you can forget any of that as relationships are **banned** as their seen as a distraction. If you're attending a Japanese school you can forget buying your lunch on a break or taking in your favorite peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Nope. Lunchtime at Japanese schools sees everyone eating the exact same meal. Students have to eat at their classroom desk and they're served either rice, fish, or soup. Don't like that menu well then **you're out of luck** cause Japanese schools enforce a rule that everyone has to eat every single bit of their food otherwise they'll be punished. Japanese schools don't employ **janitors**. Instead students and teachers have to all **take turns** in sweeping the floors, clearing up **rubbish** and cleaning the toilets. The best thing about this is that they **think twice** about causing any **mess** or sticking some gum to the table because they know at the end of the day it'll be them cleaning it up. Japanese schools don't use substitute teachers. If a teacher calls in sick or goes on holiday then the students are expected to sit quietly and teach themselves. This is seemingly **unheard of** in European or American high schools as leaving thirty teens to study on their own would in most cases prove disastrous. Even in a country as safe as Japan, students are taught to defend themselves against a possible intruder. They have a special weapon called a "sasimartow" which is a pole with two curved prongs which is adapted from an ancient Samurai weapon. It's designed to **immobilize** the intruder and it can be found hanging on the wall in pretty much every school in Japan. **Greetings** are a core part of Japanese culture and, of course, schools are no exception. At the start and the end of each day all students have to stand up and bow in **unison** to their teacher.

Video Script continued on next page...



Discussion Questions:

- ◇ What are some of the ways that you think schools might be different in Japan than in your own country?
- ◇ If you could change certain things about the way schools are administered in your country what might those be?
- ◇ What are some of the other differences between the culture of your country and that of Japan? Do you generally view these differences favorably, negatively or are you indifferent?

Vocabulary:

- **hairstyle** - manner of wearing one's hair
- **within reason** - a reasonable limit
- **trimmed** - cut
- **layers** - different levels
- **a big no-no** - strictly forbidden
- **school crush** - romantic infatuation with another student
- **stare** - look at for a protracted period
- **banned** - prohibited
- **you're out of luck** - you have no choice; no better option
- **janitors** - professional in-house cleaners
- **take turns** - each intermittently participate
- **rubbish** - garbage or waste
- **think twice** - hesitate or be reluctant to do something
- **mess** - dirtiness or untidiness
- **unheard of** - unimaginable
- **immobilize** - prevent from being able to move
- **greetings** - saying hello and goodbye
- **unison** - one at a time

Vocabulary continued on next page...





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HOW WE LIVE: JAPANESE CULTURE
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Video Script continued...

Some schools even start the day with meditation in order for the students to relax and improve their concentration. Japanese students are not allowed to arrive late or miss a class. Well, unless you have an exceptional reason.

Punctuality is very, very important. Not only this, but they don't sit there **watching the clock** hoping for the day to end. No, most of them even stay late

for after school workshops and for extra classes. Pretty much every single Japanese student has to wear a traditional uniform. For boys the uniform is a high collared black suit. For girls it's a pleated skirt and a sailor **blouse**. Japanese students only get five weeks for their summer break, but theirs is in the middle of the school year instead of the end. They don't spend it partying and playing computer games. Instead they go back to school and participate in numerous activities. Its reasons like this that **rank** the Japanese fourth in a list of the best maths and science students in the world. And that brings this list to an end.

Vocabulary continued...

- **punctuality** - being on time
- **watching the clock** - counting the moments for something to come an end
- **blouse** - shirt or top
- **rank** - numerical listing

Your Turn! Using new vocabulary is the best way to learn and remember it.

1 Choose three words or expressions from the video that are new to you and write a sentence using each one in the box below.

2 Try to use them in a context that is familiar to you to help you retain them.

3 Please ask for feedback on your sentences in the next lesson.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

