

Hot Topics Japan

A Culturally Specific Discussion Book

People & Society

Personal Space
Japanese Restaurant Culture
Collectivism

Health & Fitness

Natural vs. Artificial Ingredients in Snacks
Medical Masks in Japan
Japanese Tea

Children & Education

Youth Subcultures in Japan
Juku Culture
Studying Abroad

Science & Technology

Cell Phone Etiquette in Public Places
Vending Machines
Robotics Research

Art & Culture

Manga
Karaoke
Japanese Gardens



with MP3 CD



Digital Sampler

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How to Use This Book

Hot Topics Japan is a two-book series specifically developed for the intermediate to advanced English language learner. The series is intended to support a discussion-style classroom and contains some of the most current issues of interest to young Japanese learners. Within each unit, reading and listening passages have been designed to both engage and inform learners. Learners will also be offered multiple opportunities for discussion related to the content of the unit. The graded passages allow students to comfortably progress to more challenging ones as they move from book one to book two. Exercises in the *Hot Topics Japan* series support development of learners' reading, listening, writing, and discussion skills.

Hot Topics Japan Unit Structure:



New Words and Expressions

Reading and listening passages for *Hot Topics Japan* were developed around a high-frequency vocabulary list while introducing a limited number of mid-range vocabulary items in each unit. A limited number of common expressions have also been included in each unit. All of these target vocabulary words and expressions are presented in a list for reference and study on the first page of the unit.

Warm-Up

Two discussion questions are presented on the title page of the unit. These questions target learners' background knowledge and experience related to the topic. After thinking about the questions together in small groups or as a class, learners will be prepared to move into the main part of the unit.

Before You Read

A short paragraph presents background information related to the content of the unit. The information and vocabulary presented in the paragraph facilitate comprehension of the listening and reading material in the unit.

Vocabulary Preview and Practice

Two activities focus learners on the target vocabulary of the unit. The Vocabulary Preview activity in all units first presents learners with the meaning of a vocabulary item. Learners then look for the matching item among a list of choices. The Vocabulary Practice activity requires learners to use target words in some way, either pairing items with synonyms or filling in blanks within given sentences.



Listening

Listen carefully to the following information and complete the note-taking activity.
Source: Two friends are talking about cultural differences.

What are two reasons Samantha is upset?

Because he is upset because David _____ when they talk.
 He also does not _____ with her.

How does David explain personal space in Japan?

People in Japan _____ together. Men and women also _____ in public.

What does Samantha think will help?

David said that _____ really _____ with David will make her more _____ with her.

What does Al suggest that Samantha do?

Al suggests that David be asked to be coffee because he is not _____.

UNIT 1 EXPRESSIONS

affected to feel more thoughtful, feeling
 uncomfortable to be more relaxed, feeling more relaxed, feeling more relaxed
 comfortable to be more relaxed, feeling more relaxed, feeling more relaxed

Listening

Learners move from vocabulary practice to a content-focused listening activity. The listening passage may either be presented as a conversation or as a short talk. A note-taking guide supports learners in organizing and recording the information heard in the activity.

Reading

How Close Is Too Close?

People communicate in many different ways. Obviously, people talk to each other. However, it is also possible to "talk" without even saying a word. Eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, and personal space can also "say" things the speaker may not even know about.

Personal space refers to the distance between two people. It differs in many reactions. What is comfortable in one culture may be seen as aggressive in another. This is not something that is known from birth. It is learned. Personal space in Middle Eastern or Latin American countries is very small. However, because Japan is a small country with many people, space is important.

When people grow up, they learn how they view personal space. People raised in rural or urban environments will be different. A person from Tokyo may have used for a smaller amount of space than someone from a small town like Ojima.

Personal space is also affected by the amount of space available. For example, in Japan, elevators can be very crowded during rush hour. There are workers used to push people into trains during rush hour. The Japanese naturally need more personal space than Americans or Europeans. However, due to the situation, Japanese people are better able to accept the lack of space on highways to ensure harmony with others.

Another factor is gender. Two women will typically stand closer together than two men. They will also stand closer than a man and a woman. Women also have each other more. If a couple is talking, they will stand close. The kind of relationship between the people affects personal space.

Status also affects personal space. A person of high status will be given more personal space. This is important in places like Japan. Status will also affect things such

UNIT 1 EXPRESSIONS

amount to be more relaxed, feeling more relaxed, feeling more relaxed
 comfortable to be more relaxed, feeling more relaxed, feeling more relaxed

Reading

After listening, learners will read a short article related to the unit topic. The information presented in the article builds on the content found in the listening activity. All reading passages in the *Hot Topics Japan* series are written to specified readability and vocabulary ranges. These ranges aim to develop reading skills while keeping the informative content of the passages accessible to high-intermediate learners.

Comprehension

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

| Personal Space in Japan | | |
|--|--|--|
| Definition: Personal space is the space _____ | Who seems to have less personal space? People from _____ _____ or _____ People from big cities like _____ People on the _____ Two _____ or a _____ couple | Who seems to have larger personal space? People from _____ like Ojima Two _____ or a _____ couple People from small towns who are together A person of _____ |

Discussion

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

- Have you ever seen people from other countries? Did they stand closer or further away from you? Did it make you uncomfortable?
- In general, Westerners touch more in public than the Japanese. Do you feel that this is changing?

Comprehension

The Comprehension activity of each unit integrates what learners have studied in the Listening and Reading activities of the unit. The graphic organizer presented on this page incorporates content from the entire unit to serve as a review and consolidation activity.

Discussion

Two open-ended discussion questions follow the Comprehension activity. These questions target learners' personal experiences and opinions related to the content presented in the unit.

Writing

Writing is the final activity in the unit, and it varies in form from unit to unit. The writing may either focus on having learners record their personal experiences or opinions, write a creative short piece to share with the class, or interview others and then record what they learn through the interviews. This activity provides closure to the unit through personal or class-based reflection on the unit topic.

Writing

Further Discussion

Interview a partner about his or her thoughts or opinions about personal space. Use the questions provided. Record your partner's answers on the lines below. Then report back to the class using complete sentences.

Partner: _____ Topic: _____

- Intimate Zone**
The intimate zone is between 0 to 40 centimeters. Only those closest to us are allowed into this zone. Who do you allow into this zone? How long have you known these people?
- Personal Zone**
The personal zone is 40 cm to 1.22 meters. This is the zone we use at office parties and social functions. Do you feel comfortable with your coworkers or classmates at this distance? Can you think of a time when you were not comfortable? Why?
- Social Zone**
The social zone is 1.22 m to 3.66 m. This is the distance that we stand with strangers. Have there been situations where you felt you needed to move when talking to a stranger? Are there exceptions to this?
- People from Different Countries**
Have you ever seen people from other countries? Did they stand closer or further away from you? What did you do?

Teaching Tips

The following approaches are suggested for teachers who are using *Hot Topics Japan* in courses that focus on communicative activities. The suggested activities should be adapted as needed to suit class sizes and allotted class times.

New Words and Expressions

In addition to having learners review the words 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. It does not matter whether or not learners' predictions are correct. The act of predicting naturally stimulates learners' curiosity resulting in active listeners and readers who are searching to find out if their predictions are correct or not as they work through the unit.

Warm-Up

Ask learners to work silently at first. Have them read the questions and jot down a few notes (words or phrases) related to each question. After learners have had the opportunity to silently consider the questions and write notes, they are better prepared to speak with partners or in small groups. Again, it does not matter if learners' answers to these questions are correct related to the unit content. Giving any answer at this stage promotes active listening and reading later in the unit.

Before You Read

Take some time to discuss the vocabulary and concepts presented in this paragraph. Along with activating learners' schemata related to the unit topic, the teacher will learn how much or little the class as a whole initially knows about the topic.

Vocabulary Preview and Practice

In addition to having learners complete the activities presented in the unit, discussion based on the vocabulary items can be extended by asking learners to use the words in other ways. For example, have learners list alternative forms of the vocabulary items (i.e. aggressive, aggression, aggressor, etc.). Ask learners to list synonyms, antonyms, or write original sentences with the words. Practice adding prefixes or suffixes to vocabulary items and guessing the meaning of the resulting words. For words with multiple meanings, see if anyone in the class knows another meaning for a given word.

Listening

After completing the activity, have learners read the transcripts in pairs for pronunciation practice.

Reading

At the beginning or end of class, learners can practice their reading fluency by silently re-reading passages from units that the class has already studied. This kind of activity is an excellent way to reinforce previously learned vocabulary along with developing the reading speed of learners.

Comprehension

After checking the answers to the activity as a class, have learners use the information in the graphic organizers to orally quiz each other. One person looks at the graphic organizer to ask a question. The other person should try to answer from memory. Learners then switch roles. In this way, each learner in a pair should be able to ask three or four questions to his or her partner along with answering three or four questions.

Discussion

For this activity, pairs or groups can be given the option of selecting one of the questions to discuss rather than trying to talk about both questions during their discussion time. Additionally, in order to make learners accountable for their discussions, require each pair or group to nominate one secretary to take notes and one speaker to report back to the rest of the class. After a given period of discussion, ask the secretaries to give their notes to the speakers. The speakers should then explain one or two interesting points listed in the notes from the discussion activity.

Writing

With large classes, it may be impossible for all learners to share their writing. An idea for keeping learners accountable for their writing and for adding a communicative aspect to this activity when it is impossible to share with the whole class is to have learners share their writing in small groups. Classmates should not be responsible for finding errors. Rather, they should just read what their classmates have written and comment on the information. Learners should focus on encouraging classmates by talking about the interesting points they find in the writing of others.

Personal Space

New Words and Expressions

| | |
|-------------|------------|
| affect | harmony |
| aggressive | rural |
| behavior | spend time |
| comfortable | status |
| communicate | unintended |
| ensure | urban |
| gender | |
| gesture | |

Warm-Up

1. How close do you typically stand to a friend? A family member? A stranger?
2. Do you hug your friends or family members? Do you shake hands with people?

BEFORE YOU READ

Personal space is the distance between two people that allows them to feel comfortable. If the distance between two people is too great, one person may see the other as cold or shy. If it is too close, the person may be seen as aggressive or angry. Some cultures are comfortable with touch while others never come into contact with each other. When talking with someone from another country, it is important to remember that his or her personal space may be different. Understanding that countries are different in their approach to space may help create better understanding and fewer problems with miscommunication.

Vocabulary Preview

Match each definition with the correct word (or phrase). Two words are extra.

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------|
| 1. to motion with hands, head, or body when speaking | • | • a. gesture |
| 2. the sex, male or female, of a person | • | • b. aggressive |
| 3. pushy, bold, and assertive | • | • c. unintended |
| 4. to change or influence in some way | • | • d. communicate |
| 5. to express thoughts, feelings, or information with someone else | • | • e. comfortable |
| | | • f. gender |
| | | • g. affect |

Vocabulary Practice

Choose the word (or phrase) that is similar in meaning to the one provided.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------|------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. urban | a. city | b. problem | c. village | d. together |
| 2. harmony | a. rude | b. dislike | c. agreement | d. music |
| 3. rural | a. country | b. outside | c. city | d. ready |
| 4. status | a. culture | b. space | c. time | d. position |
| 5. behavior | a. angry | b. action | c. shy | d. distance |



Listen carefully to the following information and complete the note-taking activity.

Scene: Two friends are talking about cultural differences.

What are two reasons
Samantha is upset?

Samantha is upset because Yoshi _____
_____ when they talk. He
also does not look _____
_____.

How does Ai explain
personal space in Japan?

People in Japan _____
_____ close together. Men and women
also rarely _____ in public.

What does Samantha
think will help?

Samantha thinks that _____ more
_____ with Yoshi will make him more
_____ with her.

What does Ai suggest
that Samantha do?

Ai suggests that Samantha ask him for coffee
because he is not _____.



USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

offend: to hurt one's feelings; to annoy

spend time: to do some activity that requires a significant amount of time

comfortable: to be at ease; to feel good

How Close Is Too Close?

People **communicate** in many different ways. Obviously, people talk to each other. However, it is also possible to “talk” without ever saying a word. Eye contact, facial expressions, **gestures**, and personal space can also “say” things the speaker may not even know about.

Personal space refers to the distance between two people. It differs among countries. What is **comfortable** in one culture may be seen as **aggressive** in another. This is not something that is known from birth. It is learned. Personal space in Middle Eastern or Latin American countries is very small. However, because Japan is a small country with many people, space is important.

Where people grow up **affects** how they view personal space. People raised in **rural** or **urban** environments will be different. A person from Tokyo may have need for a smaller amount of space than someone from a small town like Ojika.

Personal space is also affected by the amount of space available. For example, in Japan, subways can be very crowded during rush hour. There are workers hired to push people into trains during rush hour. The Japanese normally need more personal space than Americans or Europeans. However, due to the situation, Japanese people are better able to accept the lack of space on subways to **ensure harmony** with others.

Another factor is **gender**. Two women will typically stand closer together than two men. They will also stand closer than a man and a woman. Women also face each other more. If a couple is dating, they will stand closer. The kind of relationship between the people affects personal space.

Status also affects personal space. A person of high status will be given more personal space. This is important in places like Japan. Status will also affect things such



USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

ensure: to make sure of; to make happen

unintended: without a particular reason in mind; accidental

as the amount of eye contact made.

Personal space is important to be aware of. It may also affect people from other countries in a way that is **unintended**. Being aware of this provides understanding about how **behavior** affects others.

Comprehension

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

| Personal Space in Japan | | |
|--|--|---|
| Definition: Personal space is the space _____ _____ _____ | Who seems to have smaller personal space? - People from _____ _____ or _____ _____ countries - People from big cities like _____ - People on the _____ _____ or a _____ couple | Who seems to have larger personal space? - People from _____ like Ojika - Two _____ or a man and a woman who are together - A person of _____ _____ |

Discussion

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

1. Have you met many people from other countries? Did they stand closer to or farther away from, you? Did it make you uncomfortable?
2. In general, Westerners touch more in public than the Japanese. Do you feel that this is changing?

Interview a partner about his or her thoughts or opinions about personal space. Use the questions provided. Record your partner's answers on the lines below. Then report back to the class using complete sentences.

Partner: _____ Topic: _____

1. Intimate Zone

The intimate zone is between 15 to 45 centimeters. Only those closest to us are allowed into this zone. Who do you allow into this zone? How long have you known these people?

2. Personal Zone

The personal zone is 46 cm to 1.22 meters. This is the zone we use at office parties and social functions. Do you feel comfortable with your coworkers or classmates at this distance? Can you think of a time when you were not comfortable? Why?

3. Social Zone

The social zone is 1.22 m–3.6 m. This is the distance that we stand with strangers. Have there been situations where you felt you needed to move when talking to a stranger? Are there exceptions to this?

4. People from Different Countries

Have you met many people from other countries? Did they stand closer to, or farther away from, you? What did you do?
