

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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Hot Topics

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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.

5 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.

10 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.

15 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**

20 **harmony** with others.

25 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.

30 **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 _____ _____ - Two _____ 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?
