

## Japan: Seasonal Series

### September Otsukimi

The Japan Society with Yuko Tochii and Laura Boddy (2019)

#### Learning Objectives:

- To learn about the customs, foods and decorations associated with Otsukimi in Japan.
- To learn about the diversity of beliefs and stories about the moon around the world.

#### Learning Outcomes:

- Students will summarise the The Moon Rabbit story by making a story plate

#### Curriculum Links:

English National Curriculum Links:

- Discussing the sequence of events in books and how items of information are related (Year 2).
- Develop positive attitudes to reading, and an understanding of what they read by listening to and discussing fiction (lower KS2).

National Curriculum Guidelines for MFL Key Stage 2 (optional task)

- Broaden their vocabulary and develop their ability to understand new words
- Explore the patterns and sounds of language through songs and rhymes and link the spelling, sound and meaning of words.
- Appreciate stories, songs, poems and rhymes in the Japanese language.

#### Keywords:

Otsukimi	Moon Viewing	Saru	Monkey
Tsuki	Moon	Kitsune	Fox
Susuki	Japanese pampas grass	Ojiisan	Old Man
Tsukimi Dango	Moon viewing dumplings	Sakana	Fish
Usagi	Rabbit	Kudamono	Fruit

#### Resources:

- Otsukimi PowerPoint Presentation
- Otsukimi Background Notes
- Video: [How to draw a Story Plate](#)

#### Additional Resources:

- New Year's PowerPoint Presentation
- Video: [Make a Rabbit for the Tsukimi Festival](#)
- Digital Kamishibai: [The story of the Moon Rabbit](#)
- Video: Making Mochi <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T44R78e2Dms> (external resource)
- Videos: The Rabbit Song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vWDSmXV994> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYQ9Tue02f4> (external resources)
- Activity Pack: Otsukimi

---

## Task 1: What is Otsukimi?

1. Discuss beliefs relating to the moon in the culture/country of the children. What image do people think they see when they look at the moon?
2. Explain how Japanese people celebrate the Moon Viewing festival (Otsukimi) using the **Otsukimi Presentation** and the **Otsukimi Background Notes**.

**Estimated Time: 5 -10 minutes**

---

## Task 2: Rabbits on the Moon

1. Ask students to look at the next illustration and try to identify what shape they see in the moon.
2. Explain that in different cultures there are different beliefs about what you can see in the moon (see presentation for examples of Europe and New Zealand).
3. In Japan, it is believed that you can see the shape of rabbits making rice cakes (mochi tsuki) on the moon. You might want to look at Japan Society's New Year's Resource for an explanation of rice cake making or show a video clip (see link under additional resources)

**Estimated Time: 5 minutes**

---

## Task 3: The Story of the Moon Rabbit

1. Students will now listen to the Japanese folk tale which explains the story about how rabbits came to be on the Moon. There is a choice of versions, both included in the PowerPoint presentation:
  - A version entirely in English.
  - A version in English with key words in Japanese. The task is suitable for both learners and non-learners of Japanese as students can guess the meanings from the illustrations.
2. As a plenary activity you could listen to or sing The Rabbit song in Japanese with students, using the lyrics from the final PowerPoint slide. See the notes in the slide for suggested links to the music.

**Estimated Time: 10-15 minutes**

---

## Task 4: Make a Story Plate

1. Ask the students to recall key locations, characters, and events in the story and gather these ideas together on the board. Ask students:
  - Who is the main character in the story?
  - What other characters are involved in the story?
  - What do the characters do and why?
2. Tell students they are going to draw some of the most important elements of the story on a paper plate. You can model the activity for students with a well-known story, or show them a finished example. See the video **How to draw a Story Plate** for reference.
3. Each student draws the characters, objects, buildings, landscape to make a 'Story Plate' and should try to incorporate all of the different elements of the story onto their plate.
4. Share the plates and encourage them to talk in an unstructured way about what they have drawn, making comparisons between what they and their partners have drawn.

**Estimated Time: 30 minutes**

---

## Extension Activities

1. You could look at kamishibai stories with a moon theme, for example **The Moon Princess** (Kaguya Hime) which you can request from Japan Society's [Loan Resources](#), or download as [a digital resource](#).
2. Students could make an origami rabbit using the [Make a Rabbit for the Tsukimi Festival](#) video (illustrated step-by-step instructions are included in **the Otsukimi Activity Pack**).