

## Lesson 4: Japanimals

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### Learning Objectives:

- Research information about animals found in Japan
- Present findings back to the class

### Curriculum Links:

National Curriculum in England for **Geography** KS1 and KS2:

- Human and physical geography: describe and understand key aspects of physical geography, including: climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, rivers, mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes, and the water cycle

National Curriculum in England for **Science** KS2:

- Living Things and Their Habitats: Pupils should be taught to: recognise that living things can be grouped in a variety of ways; explore and use classification keys to help group, identify and name a variety of living things in their local and wider environment; recognise that environments can change and that this can sometimes pose dangers to living things.

National Curriculum in England for **English** KS2:

- Pupils should be taught to: speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English; participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates; retrieve and record information from non-fiction.

See the National Curriculum for further details:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/425601/PRIMARY\\_national\\_curriculum.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425601/PRIMARY_national_curriculum.pdf)

**Keywords:** Habitat, diet, carnivore, omnivore, herbivore, mammal, fish, bird, reptile, amphibian

### Resources:

Presentation: Japanimals,

Worksheets: Animal fact files, Japanimals worksheet

## Starter

- **Slide 1:** As a warm up, ask students to use the zodiac calendar on the presentation to work out which animal is associated with the year of their birth. Do they think it matches their personality? What about for their siblings and friends?

**Estimated Time: 5 minutes**

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## Introduce Learning

- **Slide 2:** Introduce the Learning Objectives, explaining any key words as necessary. Ask pupils to share any facts they already know about the animals found in Japan.
- **Slide 3:** Last week we explored the climate of Japan. We learned how this is affected by the geography of Japan, in particular the fact that Japan is a country made up of many islands that stretch for as much as 1,500 miles from north to south. We found out that the very north of Japan can be very cold and snowy, while the southern part of Japan can be very hot and tropical.
- Today we are looking at the different types of animals found in Japan. KQ: Using our learning from last week, what predictions can you make about the animals that will be found across Japan?
- Answer: the huge variety of climates found across Japan, as well as its isolation from mainland Asia means that the country has a high diversity of wildlife. Today we will learn about some of the incredible animals in Japan by exploring wildlife in five different areas: the north, mountains, rural areas, the sea and wetlands, and the subtropics.

**Estimated Time: 5 minutes**

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## Task 1

- **Slide 4:** Ask pupils to sit in pairs at their table and look at the map on the lesson worksheet with a partner. Ask them to discuss the animals they can see around the map and to think about where in Japan these animals are likely to live (linking back to last week's learning) and how the animals are classified: mammal, fish, bird, reptile or amphibian – or none of these? (Note: Crabs are crustaceans, which is a type of invertebrate).
- If pupils have time, they can also think about what the animals are likely to eat. Explain that we will find out this information, and more, later in the lesson. Remind the pupils that this is just a discussion task – they should not annotate their maps at this stage.

**Estimated Time: 10 minutes**

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## Extend Learning

- **Slide 5:** Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost main island, is home to many animals not found in other parts of Japan. These include the Hokkaido brown bear, Siberian salamander, red-crowned crane, and Japanese huchen, a type of freshwater fish. KQ: Why do you think Hokkaido has such unique wildlife? Answer: Firstly, Hokkaido's climate is very different to the rest of Japan and Hokkaido is at a much higher latitude than the rest of Japan. Also, it is because Hokkaido used to be connected to mainland Asia.
- **Slide 6:** Around three quarters of Japan's national land is mountains. Long mountain ranges form a backbone through the Japanese archipelago. The type of wildlife found in mountain habitats varies depending on the latitude and altitude, and include the golden eagle, Japanese serow (or goat-antelope), Japanese macaques, Japanese field mice, and black woodpeckers.
- **Slide 7:** In Japan there is a special word for the land found between mountains and flat farmland: satoyama, from the words sato, or village, and yama, or mountain. Satoyama is a form of rural landscape found in Japan that has been developed over centuries through small-scale farming and forestry. Features of this landscape includes rice paddy fields, canals and ponds used for irrigation, and managed grasslands and woodlands.
- These form unique habitats for a variety of living things, such as the Japanese tree frog, tanuki (also known as raccoon dogs), heike firefly, and medaka, a tiny freshwater fish. However, in recent years satoyama has been disappearing. As more and more Japanese people move to cities and rural populations decline, the maintenance of such traditional rural habits has also declined. This, in turn, has resulted in threats to the wildlife found here.
- **Slide 8:** Japan is an island nation, meaning it is surrounded by seas and ocean. It also receives a huge amount of rainfall, which creates many rivers, ponds and marshlands. Wildlife has adapted to these watery habitats in a variety of ways.
- Japanese rivers are home to an abundance of creatures, including the kingfisher, Japanese salamander, a type of huge amphibian unique to Japan, and ayu, a fish that uses both rivers and the sea in its lifecycle. Japan's marshlands are home to rich bird life, including the Japanese reed-bunting, the Japanese marsh warbler and the spot-billed duck.
- Moving to the coast, tidal flats and beaches host horseshoe crabs, loggerhead sea turtles and mudskippers. The waters around Japan are home to a variety of sea critters, including manta rays

and Japanese flying squid, as well as Japanese spider crabs and goblin sharks in the deeper waters off Japan.

- **Slide 9:** Stretching south from Kyushu are many islands (known collectively as the Ryukyu or Nansei Islands), which includes the island of Okinawa. These have a subtropical climate and include natural features such as coral reefs, mangroves, and evergreen subtropical forests. Thanks to their climate, and the fact that the islands have been isolated from mainland Asia for even longer than the rest of Japan, the islands are home to some unique wildlife.
- The amami rabbit is a primitive rabbit found only on the island of Amami Oshima. Ishikawa's frog is found in mountain streams on Okinawa island. The habu snake is highly venomous and preys mainly on rodents. In the seas around the islands are an abundance of wildlife including the humpback whale, which can reach as long as 13m, and the dugong, a marine mammal that some say was the original inspiration for mermaids.
- Now is the time when pupils should begin their independent or group research.

**Estimated Time: 10 minutes**

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## Task 2

- **Slide 10:** Introduce today's main task, which is to research one of the six animals found in Japan that we discussed during Task 1. Explain that pupils will have a range of resources available that they can use to research their assigned animal, including the fact files contained in the learning pack, tablets or computer (if available), and books from the school library. They can also use information they have learned in this lesson. Let children know that they will be presenting their research to the class.
- **Slide 11:** Once pupils have finished researching their assigned animal, ask them to present their findings, either individually or in small groups, to the rest of the class.
- While listening to their classmate's presentations, pupils should annotate the map of Japan on their worksheet to indicate where each animal can be found. As an additional challenge, pupils can add extra information about each animal, such as its diet or appearance.

**Estimated Time: 20 minutes**

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## Plenary

- **Slide 12:** Explain that wagara is the name given to traditional Japanese textile patterns, like the ones shown on the slide. Mostly they are inspired by nature and were connected with a particular season or occasion. The three designs shown here were each inspired by an animal. Ask the pupils to discuss in pairs which animal is represented by each pattern before revealing the answers.

**Estimated Time: 2 minutes**

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## Extension Activity

- Ask pupils to create a fact file for an animal from Japan of their choice, including an introduction, sections on habitat, appearance and diet, as well as some fun facts. There is a blank template in the animal fact file pack to record research.