

Japan: Seasonal Series

January New Year

Katy Simpson (2019) edited by the Japan Society

Learning Objectives:

- To acquire knowledge about food, decorations and customs associated with New Year in Japan.
- To understand Japanese vocabulary for seasonal food, decorations and customs.

Extended Objectives:

- To recognise some Japanese characters and match them to rōmaji (roman letters)
- To copy hiragana words for key vocabulary relating to New Year

Curriculum Links:

National Curriculum Guidelines for MFL Key Stage 2:

- Broaden their vocabulary and develop their ability to understand new words
- Present ideas and information orally to a range of audiences
- Discover and develop an appreciation of a range of writing in the language being studied.

Keywords:

Oshōgatsu	New Year	Hatsumōde	year's first temple visit
Kadomatsu	bamboo decoration	Daruma	good luck dolls
Kagami mochi	rice cake decoration	Jyoya no kane	bells rung on NYE
Osechi ryōri	assortment of colourful dishes	Otoshidama	money given to children
Mochitsuki	rice cake pounding	Nengajyō	New Year's cards
Ozōni	soup with rice cakes	Fukuwarai	traditional game

Resources:

- Presentation: New Year
- Activity: New Year Card Match
- Worksheet: Speech Bubbles

Additional resources:

- [Ready Steady NihonGO](#) (Lesson 9: Winter)
- Fukuwarai Game
- New Year's Card Worksheet and Template, Zodiac Animal Chart, Kite Making Activity

Japan Society Loan Resources (Activity Chest):

- Kendama (Ball & Cup) game; Hanetsuki set (Bat & Shuttlecock); Hyakunin Isshu Card Game; Daruma doll; Nengajo (New Year's Cards; Otoshidama Envelopes; Hiragana Charts)

Task 1

1. Discuss celebrations at New Year in the culture/country of the students. Is New Year an important celebration where they come from? What kind of food do they eat? Do they play any special games? Do they exchange gifts? What other activities do they do?
2. Explain to the class that you will give them some information about how Japanese people usually celebrate New Year. Highlight that New Year is the most important celebration in the Japanese calendar for most Japanese families, so they eat a lot of special food, and do special activities during this time.
3. Give each pair of pupils **New Year Card Match** and ask them to spread them out on the table. As they listen to the information on the PowerPoint presentation, they should match the vocabulary in rōmaji (romanisation of Japanese words) to the pictures. * See also Extension Task 1.
4. Present the information about Japanese customs from the PowerPoint presentation.

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Task 2

1. New Year Quiz – ask the class to tell you which category the words fit in based on their matching task (decorations, food and customs)
2. Use the animations on the PowerPoint slides to check the pupils' answers.

Estimated Time: 5 minutes

Task 3

1. Tell the class they will choose one fact that they remember about Japanese New Year to write on **Speech Bubbles** to share with the class. Take some examples using the prompts from the final slide of the PowerPoint presentation.
2. Pupils write their favourite fact to share with the class. These can be used as class decoration or to stuck on the board to facilitate summary discussion. * See also extension task 2

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Extension Activities

1. Some students can try to read the hiragana cards included in the **New Year's Card Match** pack using a hiragana chart. More advanced students can include hiragana words on their speech bubble by copying them from the cards in Task 1.
2. Watch the animated story about how the order of the zodiac animals was decided:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38gjhZvb3cs&t=542s> (external resource)
3. Check out Lesson 9 (Winter) of Japan Society with Japan Foundation's online resource, Ready Steady NihonGO to learn more language activities related to New Year's:
<https://www.japansociety.org.uk/resource?resource=13>
4. You may also wish to include additional explanations of New Year celebrations using the **Teacher's Background Notes** and Japan Society loan resources: hanetsuki, daruma doll.
5. You may wish to play a traditional children's game with the students, **Fukuwarai Game** (see **Teacher's Background Notes**) or the **Kite Making Activity** (see additional resources)