



Ekiden 駅伝



Ekiden is a long-distance multi-stage relay race in Japan. *Eki* means “station” and *den* means “message”. Schools in Japan will often hold ekiden races annually and teamwork is a very important part of the race!

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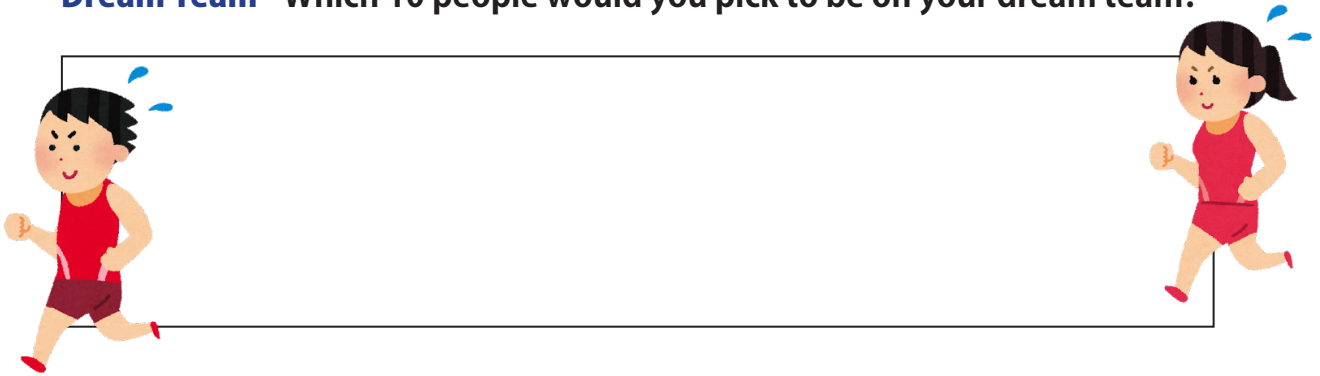
The name Ekiden comes from the old postal system in Japan. Many years ago, post and messages were delivered by different people from station to station instead of one postman or horse travelling the whole way.

The Hakone Ekiden is the most famous university ekiden race in Japan. Each team has 10 relay runners. The two-day race covers over 200km from Tokyo to Hakone which is longer than the distance between London and Liverpool!



By Dick Thomas Johnson, CC BY 2.0

Dream Team - Which 10 people would you pick to be on your dream team?



Try writing ekiden in Japanese kanji characters:

 eki			
 den			

Tasuki たすき

Runners don't carry batons in ekiden races. Instead they wear a sash called tasuki which is passed between runners as they finish their leg of the race – just like how messages were delivered in the past! It is a symbol of perseverance and hard work of each runner.



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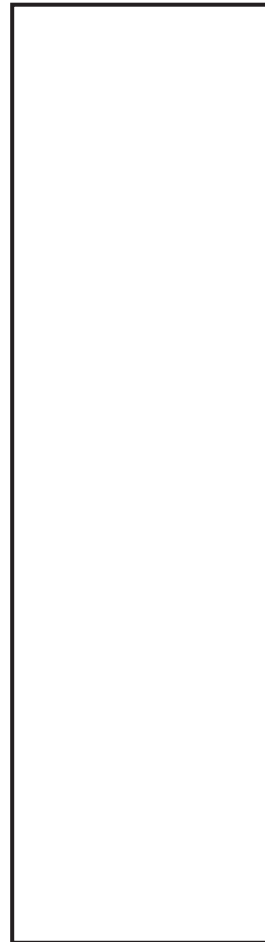
Design your team's tasuki

Try designing your team's name in a stylist font, add some simple patterns and design, or some inspirational words or cheers.

Front



Back



Inspiration:

一番 *ichiban*

This means "number 1"

ファイト *fai-toh*

It sounds like "fight-oh",
but it means "go for it!"



Did you know?

There will be an ekiden race in the UK in 2024 to mark the 100th anniversary of the Hakone Ekiden. The route goes from Oxford to Windsor along the River Thames - this route was chosen because Emperor Naruhito studied at Oxford and wrote a book called *The Thames and I*.

Fun Facts

Take the quiz below to test your knowledge and learn about Ekiden and Japan.



1. In which year do you think the first ekiden race was held?

a. 1917

b. 1960

c. 2000

2. In the first Ekiden, runners ran along the Tokaido Road between Kyoto and Tokyo, covering a distance of

a. 200km

b. 350km

c. 500km

3. In the UK, we have Kings and Queens, Japan has an Emperor and an Empress. Both Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako studied at University of Oxford.

True or False?

4. Which flower is the symbol of the Japanese emperor and his family?



a. Cherry blossom



b. Chrysanthemum



c. Camellia



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