

## 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 romaji (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:

|              |                         |              |                           |
|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Oshogatsu    | New Year                | Hatsumode    | year's first temple visit |
| Kadomatsu    | bamboo decoration       | Daruma       | good luck dolls           |
| Kagami mochi | rice cake decoration    | Joya no kane | bells rung on NYE         |
|              | assortment of colourful |              |                           |
| Osechi ryori | dishes                  | Otoshidama   | money given to children   |
| Mochitsuki   | rice cake pounding      | Nengajyo     | New Year's cards          |
| Ozoni        | 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

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## Starter Activity

- **Slide 1:** Look at the photo of osechi ryori on the PowerPoint. Ask pupils - what can they see in the picture? What do they think this might be?
- **Slide 2:** 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?
- 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.

**Estimated Time: 5 - 10 minutes**

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## Task 1

- **Slide 3:** Give each pair of pupils the New Year Card Match activity 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 romaji (romanisation of Japanese words) to the pictures. \* See also Extension Task 1.
- **Slide 4 – 10:** Present the information about Japanese customs from the PowerPoint presentation. Refer to the Background Notes and notes section (click on Notes at the bottom of the PowerPoint) for more information about Japanese New Year.

**Estimated Time: 10 - 15 minutes**

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## Task 2

- **Slide 11:** 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.
- 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.

**Estimated Time: 10 - 15 minutes**

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## Extension Activity

- **Slide 12:** Challenge pupils to see if they can remember what each Japanese word means and which category they should place it in (food, decorations, rituals, customs, activities).
- Use the animations on the PowerPoint slides to check the pupils' answers.

**Estimated Time: 10 - 15 minutes**

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## Additional Resources & Activities

- **Hiragana Cards:** 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.
- **Video:** 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)
- **Ready Steady NihonGO:** 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>
- **Loan resources:** 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.
- **Games:** 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)
- **New Year's cards:** It is custom for people to give and receive cards known as nengajo during the New Year celebrations in Japan. You could try making our own nengajo as an additional activity, using the PDF template available on our website: <https://www.japansociety.org.uk/resource?resource=11>