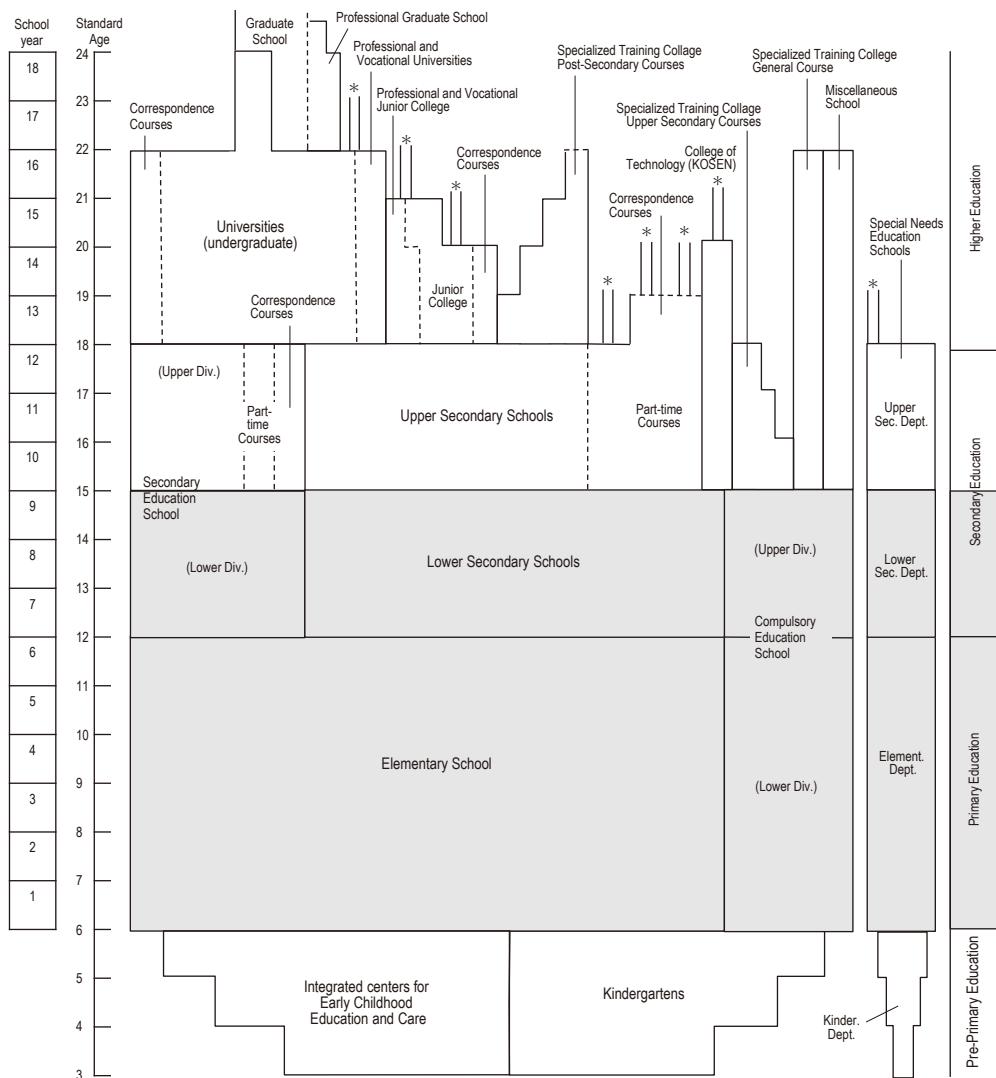


1

Education system in Japan

The Japanese education system is generally called the "6-3-3-4-year system" and consists of six years of elementary education, three years of junior high education, three years of high school education and four years of college education. Education is compulsory in elementary schools and junior high schools. Preprimary education is given at kindergartens etc.

Diagram of the school system in Japan



Notes:

- (1) The gray sections are Compulsory education.
- (2) *indicates advanced courses
- (3) Upper secondary schools, upper division of Secondary Education Schools, universities, junior colleges, and upper secondary department of schools for Special Needs Education can have separate courses with course terms of year or more.
- (4) A child aged from 0 to 2 years old can attend Integrated centers for Early Childhood Education and Care because it functions as school as well as child welfare institution.
- (5) Age and admission requirements for Specialized Training College General Courses and Miscellaneous Schools are not defined uniformly.

1-1

Elementary and junior high school

Enrollment in a public elementary and/or junior high school

- Custodians have the obligation to enroll their children aged 6 to 15 who are Japanese nationals in elementary school, junior high school or compulsory education school.
- In the case of foreign children, the children can be accepted by Japanese public elementary and junior high school etc. Tuition and textbooks are free of charge.
- Tell your local municipal office that you wish to send your children to Japanese public school.
- Visit an appointed school with required documents and the Enrollment Permit for International Students issued by the municipal office.
- In Japan, besides elementary and junior high schools, there are compulsory education schools which provide compulsory education comprising grade one through nine, and special schools for physically and/or mentally challenged children.

(See 1-4 for Night Junior High School.)

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

"Guidebook for School Enrollment for Foreign Children"

https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/clarinet/003/1320860.htm



Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

"Videos for foreign children and their parents"

<https://casta-net.mext.go.jp/multilingual-contents/videos-for-learners>



Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

"CASTA-NET" information search site to support the learning of children and students with connections to foreign countries

<https://casta-net.mext.go.jp/>



1-2

High school

- High schools are for those who have graduated from junior high school and wish to continue their studies. To get enrolled in high school you have to take an entrance examination and pass it, as a general rule.
- High schools are categorized into schools offering full-time courses, part-time courses and correspondence courses.
- High school graduates are entitled to apply to university.

1-3

Schools for foreign students

- Besides elementary, junior high and high schools, there are various types of educational institutes for foreign students, and the facilities aimed exclusively at educating foreign children are called "schools for foreign students."
- Each school has different background of cultures, ethnicities, languages, curriculums and post-graduate paths, so you should choose one suitable for your children. (Enrollment qualifications

for those who have graduated from schools for foreign students can be found in 1-7 Higher educational institutes (colleges and universities).)

The below is a website for persons related to schools for foreign students:

https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/kokusai/gaikoku/index.htm



1-4

Evening Classes at Junior High Schools

- In Japan, there are Evening Classes at Junior High Schools for those have not completed their compulsory education either in Japan or in their home country as well as for those beyond school age who were unable to receive a full compulsory education due to various circumstances.
- 32 prefectures and designated cities across Japan have 53 Evening Classes at Junior High Schools (as of October 2024).
- If you wish to get enrolled in Evening Classes at Junior High Schools near you, first of all, contact your municipal Board of Education.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology:

"For those who wish to learn at Evening Class at Junior High Schools".

https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/yakan/index_00005.htm



See the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's

"Evening Classes at Junior High Schools PR Materials" to watch videos showing what these classes are like.

https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/yakan/index_00004.htm



1-5

Examination for Granting an Equivalency Certificate of Lower Secondary School Graduation

- Those who have not graduated from junior high school in Japan can take this test.
- The test is held once a year.
- By passing the test, you will be qualified to take an entrance examination for Japanese high schools.

1-6

Upper Secondary School Equivalency Examination

- Those who have not graduated from high school can take this test.

- The test is held twice a year.

- If you pass it, you will be entitled for the following:

- i. To take entrance examinations for colleges/universities, junior colleges or professional training colleges in Japan.
- ii. To take tests for employment or qualifications which entitles people who have graduated from high school.

Outline (in English):

https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/shiken/mext_01319.html



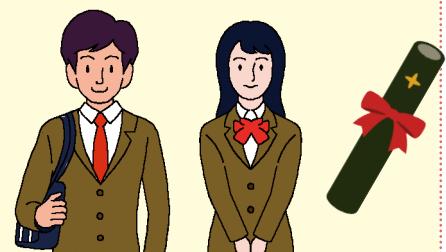
1-7

Higher educational institutes (colleges and universities)

Admission to college and university

- Those who have graduated from "high schools", "middle schools" or an accredited international schools in Japan (http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/shikaku/07111314/003.htm) are entitled to apply for the following schools:

- Colleges and universities
- Professional and vocational universities
- Junior colleges
- Professional and vocational Junior colleges
- Professional training colleges
(post-secondary course of specialized training colleges), etc.



- Those who have obtained one of the following certificates will also be qualified to apply for the above-mentioned educational institutes:

- International Baccalaureate
- Abitur
- Baccalaureate
- General Certificate of Education, Advanced-Level
- International A Level
- European Baccalaureate

(List of International Baccalaureate-accredited schools in Japan:

<https://ibconsortium.mext.go.jp/about-ib/school/>



- Those who have completed their 12-year education and graduated from an educational institute that is certified by any of the following groups are also entitled to apply for the above-mentioned educational institutes:

- WASC (The Western Association of Schools and Colleges)
- CIS (Council of International Schools)
- ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International)
- NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges)
- Cognia
- COBIS (Council of British International Schools)

Other institutes for higher education

- There are other institutes for higher education in Japan as follows and each has its own application requisites:

- Graduate schools mainly for postgraduates
- Professional graduate schools mainly for postgraduates
- Colleges of Technology mainly for junior-high graduates

1-8

Entrance examination to higher educational institutes

- To get enrolled in a higher education institute, you have to pass an entrance examination or document screening.
- Some institutes offer special assessments for foreign applicants.
- The Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students (EJU), operated by the Japan Student Services Organization, is employed by many colleges and universities as a special evaluation reference for international students.

The below is a website for foreign nationals:

<https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/ryugaku/eju/index.html>



2

Financial support for the education costs

2-1

Financial support for elementary and junior high students

- There is a system that offers assistance for the expense of school supplies such as uniforms, school bags, stationery and school lunches.
- Low-income parents whose children go to elementary or junior high school are eligible for this assistance.
- The requirements for the assistance and the amount to be paid vary on the municipality in which the applicant resides.

For further information on this system, please visit:

https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/career/05010502/017.htm



2-2

High School Tuition Support Fund

- High-school students whose annual household income is less than 9,100,000 yen, can receive financial aid to cover the expense of high school tuition.
- Students who go to national or public high school are eligible to receive financial aid equal to the amount of the tuition.
- The amount of the aid for private high-school students varies depending on their household income.
- In order to receive the aid, an application form must be submitted.
- Details will be announced by the school you attend.



For further information on this system, please visit:

https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/mushouka/1342674.htm



If you want to read it in English:

https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/mushouka/20220329-mxt_kouhou02-2.pdf



2-3

High School Supplemental Scholarship Fund

- Low-income parents whose children go to high school can receive benefits to cover the expense other than tuition fees, such as the expense of textbooks and school supplies.
- The amount of the benefits differs in the kind of schools students attend.
- In order to receive the benefits, you have to apply for an application form must be submitted.
- Details will be announced by the school your child attends.

For further information on this system, please visit:

https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/mushouka/1344089.htm



If you want to read in English:

https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/mushouka/20240326-mxt_kouhou02-2.pdf



2-4

Scholarship for undergraduate and postgraduate students

- Scholarships are provided by the Japanese government, local governments and private foundations.
- National financial aids consist of two types:
 - i. Grant type: scholarships that do not need to be repaid
 - ii. Student loan type: financial aids that must be repaid



* Some student-loan type scholarships have interest charges while others don't.

- Foreign students who continue with higher education and have one of the following residence statuses may be eligible for the financial aids offered by the Japanese government:

- i. Special Permanent Resident
- ii. Permanent Resident
- iii. Spouse or child of Japanese national
- iv. Spouse or child of Permanent Resident
- v. Long-Term Resident (who intend to live in Japan permanently)
- vi. Dependent who meet the requirements (those who have graduated from elementary school, junior high school, or high school in Japan and intend to work and settle in Japan even after graduating from university)



- There are also grant-type scholarships for those whose status of residence is "Student" and have satisfied the academic requirements.

The below is a website for foreign nationals:

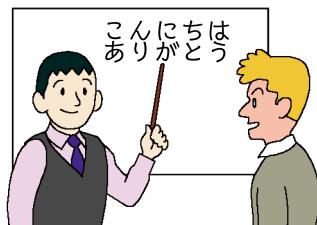
https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/ryugaku/scholarship_j/shoreihi/index.html



3

Learning Japanese

Knowing Japanese will make your life easier in Japan. You can get to know others and make friends with them. They may help you when you need any help. You may be able to fulfill your dreams. In order to live your own life in Japan, it is strongly recommended that you keep studying Japanese.



3-1

About the Japanese language

- Japanese language uses five types of characters: hiragana, katakana, kanji, and English letters (romaji) and numbers. Both Hiragana and Katakana have 46 characters each and those written in smaller versions (four characters for Hiragana and nine characters for Katakana). The special symbols “、” “—” are also used.
- Kanji will be helpful once you memorize them. Some may look complicated. Start by learning the simple ones.
- Learn about romaji as well, which is often used when you type or text for mails and social media
- If you live in Japan, it is very important to know the names of local places and streets by reading and writing characters such as Kanji. Japanese also has many dialects and they have an important role in your community life. You can learn these dialects at Japanese classes in your area and through communication with local residents.
- Other than the above-mentioned, there are forms of polite speech in Japanese. It would be better if you become able to use polite Japanese depending on who you are speaking to.

3-2

Reference Framework for Japanese Language Education

- “Reference Framework for Japanese Language Education” was newly established in 2021 to make learning Japanese easier for you, with reference to CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; Learning, teaching, assessment).
- This describes learning contents and action targets according to six levels of Japanese language (A1 to C2) and Japanese language proficiency (“listening,” “reading,” “speaking (interaction),” “speaking (expression),” and “writing”).

* Please use it as a reference to check your Japanese language level and to study setting the next goal.

- Resources that we have created and made available include “Seikatsu Can Do,” a guide to using the reference framework, and “Nihongo Check!,” a Japanese language self-assessment tool.

Reference Framework for Japanese Language Education, guide, Seikatsu Can Do
and more

https://www.nihongo-ews.mext.go.jp/information/framework_of_reference



C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.
C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.
B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with proficient speakers of Japanese quite possible without strain for either party.
B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.
A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.
A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

3-3

Where to learn

By attending Japanese classes, you can not only study the language, but also exchange information and make friends at the same time. Find a language school or lesson near you.

Nowadays an increasing number of learners choose distance learning through social media or E-learning. Find the method that is suitable for you.

(1) Japanese language school

- There are courses with different purposes: to prepare for school study, for work, or to prepare for examinations
- There are classes for beginners through advanced learners.
- You can choose to learn in a group or in a private class.
- You have to pay for the classes.

(2) Japanese classes in local communities

- Japanese classes are organized by local governments, international associations, or NPOs.
- Classes are held in community centers, schools, churches or volunteer centers.
- Teachers are volunteers in many cases.
- Some classes are free of charge. They are more economical than studying at a language school.
- Generally, classes are held once or twice a week for one to two hours.

The below is a list of responsible departments for Japanese language education in each region and Japanese classes organized in the region:

https://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/kokugo_nihongo/kyoiku/nihongokyoiku_tanto/pdf/93036701_01.pdf



* Check the following when you search for Japanese classes:

- ①Name of the class ②organizer ③venue ④contact number ⑤how to contact ⑥supported languages ⑦course period ⑧number of sessions ⑨timetable (day and time) ⑩qualification for application ⑪cost ⑫class type (group or private) ⑬number of students ⑭level ⑮who teaches ⑯what to learn ⑰availability of parking, baby-sitting services, etc.

(3) Online classes, distance learning

If you are too busy to go to language school because of working or parenting, you can study Japanese online using SNS or E-learning. There are various version of tuitions and services, so find the one that is most suitable for you.

3-4

Website for Japanese learners: “Connect and Enhance Your Life in Japanese” (known as Tsunahiro)

This website is for foreign nationals who live in Japan to learn Japanese, aiming to communicate in Japanese or use Japanese in daily life.

You can choose learning contents in videos and scripts based on your Japanese level, the situation and keywords that interest you. Study and use Japanese to connect with society and broaden life's possibilities.

- **Available languages:** Japanese, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional), English, Filipino, French, Indonesian, Khmer (Cambodian), Korean, Mongolian, Myanmar, Nepali, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Thai, Ukrainian, Vietnamese (18 languages)
- **Situations for learning:** Scenes from daily life such as greeting people, shopping, using a bank, using a train, going to a municipal office, and preparing for disaster and emergency, child rearing

“Connect and Enhance Your Life in Japanese”:

<https://tsunagarujp.mext.go.jp>



3-5

“Nihongo Check!,” a Japanese language self-assessment tool based on the Reference Framework for Japanese Language Education

This online system has a self-assessment tool targeting Japanese language learners both in Japan and internationally that allows users to answer questions from a “Can do” section, providing a straightforward assessment of their Japanese language skills. It is designed to encourage individual study based on the results and help set goals for learning Japanese.

The Reference Framework for Japanese Language Education has six levels (A1 to C2) and covers five language activities, including listening, reading, speaking (interaction and expression), and writing. Japanese language learners assess their own proficiency by answering questions regarding their language abilities on a four-point scale as follows: “1. I cannot,” “2. I can hardly do it,” “3. It’s difficult, but I can just about do it,” and “4. I can.”

○ **Supported languages:** 14 languages, including Japanese.
Chinese, English, Filipino, Indonesian, Khmer, Korean, Mongolian, Burmese, Nepali, Portuguese, Spanish, Thai, Vietnamese, and Japanese (with furigana readings).

Check your level at the following page.

<https://www.nihongo-check.bunka.go.jp/>



Japanese Proficiency Self-Assessment Tool

Check Your Japanese Level!

Check Your Current Japanese Proficiency Level

LANGUAGE

English 英語

Before Checking

