

AARON NAGASAKA

長坂アロン

WHAT I WISH I HAD KNOWN

BEFORE LEARNING JAPANESE



CHANGE THE WAY YOU LEARN JAPANESE
IT'S NOT HARD, IT'S JUST DIFFERENT!



WHAT I WISH I HAD KNOWN

BEFORE LEARNING JAPANESE by Aaron Nagasaka

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An amazing journey is about to begin!
Follow along, do the exercises and
have fun learning!



FOREWORD

THE BEGINNING OF A JOURNEY



I have the privilege to be living a childhood dream!

As a 14-year-old boy I wanted to use Japanese, I wanted to live in Japan and to enjoy life in this great nation.

I am lucky to be sitting here in Nagano, with my window open. The birds chirping in the background and I can look out and see the beautiful mountain scenery.

Japan is a majestic place with many hidden beauties. I am lucky to be here and to experience a Japanese way of life.

Is it all luck? Or is it because of a lot of focused hard work?

It was not always like this! The idea of living in Japan for many, many years was just a dream.



Learning Japanese was the beginning of that dream. But it took a lot of hard work and a lot of dedicated hours of study. Looking back it could have been a lot easier. There are many things I wish I had known before embarking on this journey.

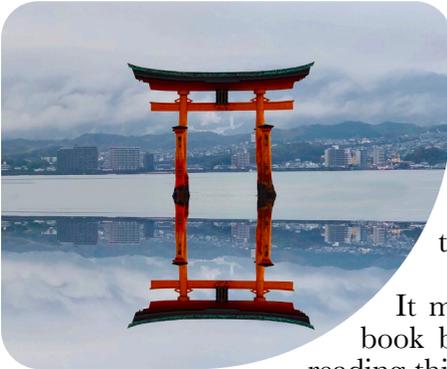
There are many times I have fallen and have had to claw my way out of a deep hole not really sure what I was doing. As part as my language learning journey I have built many amazing language bridges. My desire is to help you, so you don't make the same mistakes as I did.



This book is for you who might be where I was 20 years ago. This book is not designed to teach you Japanese, but to get you ready to learn Japanese. So many times we begin doing something but do not prepare to do it. This book will help prepare you to begin learning Japanese.



If you are a Japanese teacher, I hope this book can help you prepare your students to learn the language. Just think if all of your students had a goal, a reason and a why to learn the language. How amazing would your classes be if even half of your class was motivated to learn the language. You would find a different level of not only engagement but also a different level of learning that would happen in the class.



The best way to use the book is to go through it one chapter at a time.

Do the activities where asked and see if you cannot have your eyes opened to new possibilities to learn the language.

It may not be what you learn from this book but an idea you have as a result of reading this book that might change or have an impact on how you do things!

Japanese is a fabulous language with an amazing culture and pop culture. There are so many amazing opportunities awaiting you as you learn the language. Many fun and exciting doors will open leading to a different future than you could have imagined. Learning a language is a journey.

Enjoy the journey and have an amazing time!

Learning a language is like going on a holiday, it will change your life forever. Some people plan their holidays for over a year!

How many people ever prepare before leaning a new language?

-Aaron Nagasaka-



WHAT I WAS NOT TAUGHT

WHEN I FIRST STARTED LEARNING JAPANESE



Learning a language should not start with the language!

We live in a super exciting time in the world. We are super lucky. We have the ability to access so many exciting tools and things that I never had when I was just starting. When I started learning I had one textbook, a pen, some paper, and a few Hiragana flash cards. It wasn't until about three years later that I got some cassette tapes. That's right! Not even CD's! I'm not old, but this is how much things have changed since I started learning.



Now, you can access the world anytime you like to help you learn Japanese!

While working at a high school in Japan teaching English I learn't a great lesson. The students were amazing, their school was great, but the way they taught English was not. While attending one of the classes and helping out the Japanese teachers I had time to observe the students their reactions to classes and how they accepted what was being taught.



It was after one of the particularly boring classes that I began thinking about the way English was being taught. And then it dawned on me! Watching the teachers start the lessons on day one of a new school year and then follow up each lesson in a similar fashion was a little scary. It was like they opened up a funnel and began dumping in information. The only problem was that 90% of the students had tiny funnels and they were all turned up the

wrong way! This got me thinking ‘why were the students so dead bored and sleepy during class?’

Learning should be fun, learning should be exciting! RIGHT? Then it dawned on me!



We should not start teaching the language when we start teaching the language!

We need to be teaching the students how to actually learn how to learn Japanese instead of just jumping straight in and teaching the language! I realised I had to share what I had learnt.

When we start teaching a language we need to instead start with the skills that are required to master the language.

You will notice this is not like a normal book. It is set out to make you think. To get you to take action and to learn how to learn Japanese! Take the time to do the exercises and the tasks. They are designed to get you thinking and to help you explore language learning with a focus on Japanese. Many of the things taught in this book can also be used and applied to other languages.

● THINK ABOUT IT

Write below why you think the Japanese students were bored and disengaged in class.



Let's travel back 20 years to my first few days of learning Japanese.

It was the first day of school. I was new to the school as were all the grade seven students. We all had to pick a new language to study for the next six months.

I remember walking down the dimly lit halls of Kingston High school in the small town in Tasmania to where the language hub was. I remember looking at the various rooms. First I walked past the Spanish room with lots of cultural things hanging up. Just opposite the Spanish room was the Japanese room. It too had many posters, flags and different Japanese things hanging around the room. On the wall, however, was some Kanji hanging up. Something about the Kanji caught my attention. I continued on and at the end of the corridor. Near the exit was the German room. It was not well decorated and everything about the room was uninviting. I walked back past the Japanese room and thought how cool the characters on the wall looked. I was hooked!



The first day of Japanese class



The grade seven students eagerly entered the classroom and sat down. I was sitting middle to the far right of the classroom. The teacher welcomed us in Japanese, talked a bit about how she had lived in Japan and showed us some different Japanese objects like a bamboo Kendo sword, origami paper, and a map of Japan.

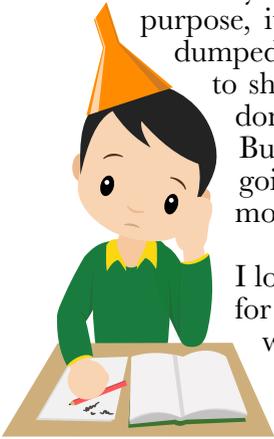


I thought the kendo sword was pretty cool. It was then straight into work. We were to cut out the Hiragana cards and colour them in. From there on in the Japanese class we focused on learning the language and preparing for the mini

weekly tests and the end-of-term tests. Sure we did some fun things but it was all about learning the language from the textbook. Did she do anything wrong? Not really. Did she try and engage us? Yes, she did her best, but...

My teacher missed the greatest teaching opportunity!

On day one we entered that room with giant funnels ready to learn. 20 minutes into the lesson we had swapped out the big funnels we had and opted for smaller easy to carry funnels that we could place upside down on our heads! In other words our teacher now had to fit all the information into a tiny opening of the funnel. We didn't do this on purpose, it is just how it works. Too much info is dumped at the wrong time and our brains begin to shut down. Sure she mentioned that we don't need to worry about Kanji etc. But still, we realised that we were going to be in this for the next six months.



I loved learning the language but my brain was not cut out for it. I was not very good in class. I struggled to keep up with everyone else and I always felt like I was never as good as the rest of the class.

Looking back I wish my teacher had helped us understand what learning a language meant!

What does learning a language mean?

Learning a language requires a new mindset. A Japanese learning mindset. It is not like your English mindset or way of thinking. It is something that changes the way we look at how we learn Japanese. A mindset is how we view or look at things. In order to learn something new we need to alter our mindset or way of thinking.

What is a new mindset?

This is one of the most important things to learn.

A new mindset means:

- Looking at Japanese differently.
- Being open to new ideas.
- Understanding that you are beginning life as a baby
- That you will now have two brains!

Looking at Japanese differently

Now that you are learning or teaching Japanese you cannot look at it through the eyes of English. Your education up until now will help you but it cannot be the backbone of how you learn Japanese. You need to look at Japanese through the eyes of the Japanese people and the Japanese language. To truly learn the language you must also learn aspects of the culture, customs, myths, history, and of course the language!



Being open to new ideas

As a learner and teacher of Japanese, you must and this is a must! You must be humble enough to learn and be corrected. The quick learners of languages make the most mistakes. They look the funniest and are happy to get out there and give it a try. Don't worry about being perfect, worry more about finding opportunities to use your newly acquired language or small your skills open to being this will help you allow your mind to more. People will help you. They will to correct you and skills. No matter how large are you need to be corrected. Doing open up and absorb so much be happier to love being able give you more



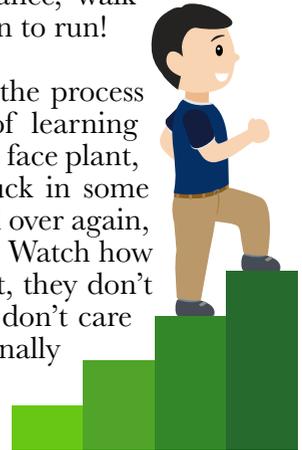
ideas on how to improve. The quiet, stubborn learners who always want to be perfect will find that the learning path will be a long slow upward battle.

You are beginning life as a baby again!

You are now a baby! Haha, that's right! Welcome to being a baby again! Just as a baby has to learn to lift its head, cry, roll over, start lifting its body so you have to as well. You need to learn to commando crawl, crawl then stand up with help of others. You will then learn to grab onto things as you walk along, wobbling and then finally taking your first free steps. After some time you will be able to balance, walk and finally learn to run!



This is not just the process that babies take to walk it is also the process of learning Japanese! But we forgot a few things! You will also face plant, roll off the mat, hit your head, fall over, get stuck in some strange small space you cannot get out of, and fall over again, fall over again and do that several hundred times. Watch how a baby reacts when they fall over, they get over it, they don't hold grudges, yell at you for helping them, they don't care how many tries it takes they keep going until finally they can walk!



The same attitude is vital to learn Japanese. You are going to fall, get stuck, not know what do to, feel stupid, feel dumb, feel embarrassed and you are going to get into situations you will not know how to get out of. So what do you do?



Learning is a journey, you have to start somewhere!

You and your students must start their language learning journey somewhere. It does not matter where or when we

start as long as we start the journey. Some will start and give up while others will keep going. Some will fall over in the mud and never get up. They will forever complain about the mud. Other's will fall over and get back up again. As a teacher and learner it is important for you to do your best, try again and never feel bad about making mistakes!

● ACTION POINT

What are you going to do when you fall over? What are you going to teach your students when they fall over, when they look silly and go bright red in the face? Write what you will do below.

Three suggestions

1. When you make a mistake, fall over and feel stupid and go bright red in the face, learn to laugh it off! That's right learn to laugh at yourself, the situation, and learn to just enjoy this silly moment. If you laugh, others will laugh as well. It will change an awkward experience into a funny one. Something you can look back at and laugh at!
2. Be open to learning. If you make a mistake look silly ask "What did I say or do wrong?" and then listen, learn and laugh again. People are happy to help you and teach you. Yes, there are nasty people in the world, that won't change, but as I have heard before there are only about nine nasty people in the world. They travel a lot but there are only nine of them!



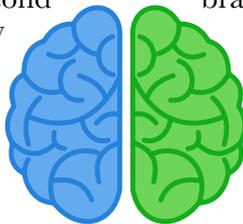
- Go home and write what happened. Record the event. This will serve to help you later on in the future. You will then be able to better help others when they make similar mistakes. Record it and move on. Don't hold grudges. Learn, let go and move on.

● ACTION POINT

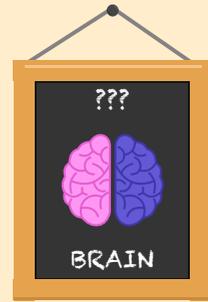
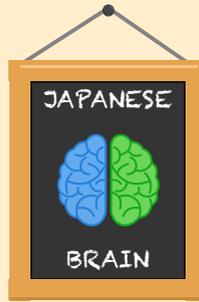
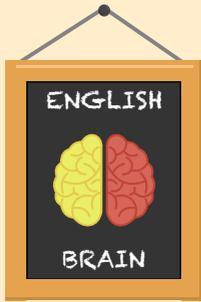
This book is about taking action. Write what you will start doing today when you fall over. How will you react? This is a small thing to do, but something that will help you prepare to learn Japanese faster.

A new brain!

Congratulations! You now have two brains! The moment you decide to learn another language you are gifted a second brain. As a teacher you would already have a second brain and now you have the ability of developing new brains in your students. The only bad thing is your brain starts out the size of a grain of sand. Haha yes, a grain of sand. But the cool thing is, your new brain, like your English brain can grow up to you!



If you want a super-sized super brain you can have one. But it also means you must put in the effort. Yes, that will mean doing some boring things



once in a while, but the harder you work the bigger your brain will get. Later on, in this book, I will teach you how to start to quickly increase your Japanese brain. But for now, just be happy that you get a second brain. If you speak two languages already, then you are doubly lucky because this will become your third or fourth brain! You can have as many as you like, this is a ‘make all the brains you like a smorgasbord!’

● THINK ABOUT IT

Now that you have a new brain, what exciting things would you like to fill it with? Write down some of the things you would like to fill your brain with.

When I first started out I wish I had of know that my brain will grow and make space for all of the extra information I was going to put into it. Unfortunately all my Japanese teachers failed to help prepare me to learn the language. They each taught the language in different ways. Some were more interesting than others, some had fun engaging games and



lessons. They each taught the language, but not one of them ever said “Today we are going to have a class solely on learning how to learn Japanese.” **Not one of them!**



I went to school, I attended close to 100% of my classes. Unless I missed the lesson where we did this...? I did the homework, but not one taught me how to learn the language. I attended through distance learning a special language learning high school, I even went to America for three months of intensive language study, I went to University, but not once did someone teach me how to learn.



They taught the language, grammar, spelling, fun ways to remember things, stroke order, customs and cultures, history, and much much more, but never did anyone teach about how to prepare to learn the language.



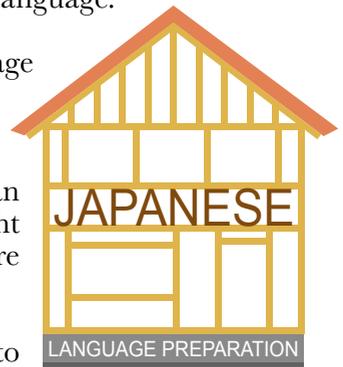
I feel so sorry for all the language learners around the world. I am sure most of them have never learnt how to prepare to learn the language and when they began learning, no one has ever taught them how to continue to prepare their brain to learn.



This is one of my missions in life, to make language learning easier, faster and more interesting. It is my goal to help you, the learner and you, the teacher to help teach others Japanese.



Unfortunately most learning courses get lost in teaching the language and making sure at the end you know a certain number of words, a certain level of grammar and can speak to a certain level. These are all very important, but the foundational skills or understanding how to learn a language are also just as important!



Learning a language without
taking action is like learning how
to swim but never getting into the
water.

When the time comes to swim,
you will sink.

-Aaron Nagasaka-



THE BASICS

DON'T GET OVERWHELMED



To learning a language you must start at the beginning!

In chapter 1 we learned that when we begin to learn something new we start out as a baby does. We have little to no knowledge about the language and we have little to no language muscles. It is easy to become overwhelmed with too much new information and when we become overwhelmed it is easy to also give into the negative self.

I remember being where you are and what it was like to have tones of new information thrown at me and the teacher hoping that some of it would stick.

Unfortunately my brain worked a little different. Most of what was taught didn't get very far. I forgot most of what was taught and felt bad each class because I was not as good as the students around me. I loved the



language, and felt bad that I was not doing well in

the class. Then came the negative talk. I began saying "I'm not as smart as others." "I wish I could learn more..." But whatever I did it didn't seem to work. I did have determination, and because of that I am here today. But I don't want you to go through that! I don't want you to be like me!



Have you or any of your students felt like I did? I was not your star student. I did not have top grades and I am sure the teachers thought I would never continue learning Japanese.

But like an annoying child that won't give up until they get what they want, I never gave up. I loved the language, there was something about it that had me hooked. But I still felt bad not being as good at the other smarter students in the class.

Below is an old American Indian story I heard recently about negativity and self doubt. This sets up the framework for this chapter nicely.

“An old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life. “A fight is going on inside me,” he said to the boy.

“It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.”



He continued, “The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too.”

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win?”

The old Cherokee simply replied, “**The one you feed.**” (*Billy Graham*)

What does this have to do with us has a negative self. Or as have portrayed it, two little shoulder. One an angel and The Devil is always there to tell you that you are ‘stupid’ and the angel is always there to help pick you up and give you positive



Japanese? Well, each of different animations people on each the other a devil. make you feel bad, ‘you cannot do it!’ But you feel good, to help thoughts.



Which one you listen to is up to you. When you learn Japanese you will always get outside forces pushing and pulling on you. But the greatest force comes from within. It is the inner voice that creates the most problems and that stops us from doing amazing things!

The one you listen to is up to you!

Japanese is a big language to learn, it has thousands of characters, three alphabets, a very long history, and many different parts to politeness. Each Kanji has several ways to read them and to top it all off there is a maze of customs to get through.

It's the truth, but the flip side is also true!

Japan is an amazing beautiful exotic country, with amazing beautiful friendly people, an interesting culture and delicious food. The language is a rich source of beauty and elegance. Each character is beautifully made up of smaller components that make learning them super easy! The Japanese are polite, helpful, and always happy to share their language with you. The country is very safe, clean and one of the best places you could ever visit!



It all has to do with how you choose to look at it. You can pick at the weeds or choose to smell the roses! Before complaining about the language and culture etc, take a look at your own culture.

Look at how complex English is, at least Japanese follows some rules! The English language also follows rules, but every time you find a rule there also seems to be an exception!



today to not
you do not have to let them in!

The more you learn, the more you grow, the more the voices of doubt will increase, unless you decide let them in. They will always knock at the door, but

● ACTION STEPS

It all depends on how you choose to look at it. From today I want you to choose how you are going to learn Japanese. Write below how you are going to choose to look at the language. Are you going to complain and pick the entire time or are you going to enjoy the journey and have an amazing time along the way? It's up to you!

How to set a Japanese goal

In this chapter, this is going to be one of the most important things you do. Setting a goal to help you learn more, achieve more and become more. However, before we go ahead and set a goal, let's have a look at what is a goal, why do we have goals and why is setting a goal so important.

What is a goal?

This is a fun subject, one that we could write a whole book on. Do a google search and you will find millions of search results. But let's keep this as simple as possible.

A goal is something you are aiming for. In a nutshell, that is all it is. It is something you want to achieve. If we have a look at archery. The goal is to hit the middle of the red circle. That's it! nothing



more nothing less. Let's add one more thing to setting a goal. Let's look at Japanese archery or Kyūdō. One of the main things that Kyūdō teaches is not just about hitting the target but also training the mind and body. I believe that this is an essential component to also setting a goal. A goal is usually one thing you are aiming for. Let's go ahead and set a goal, but before we do let's figure out what you want to achieve.



In the box below write down all the things you want to achieve while learning Japanese. Don't worry too much about which one you want to focus on, just write down everything you want to achieve. This might be learning kanji, hiragana, grammar, pronunciation, having neat writing, etc. Go ahead now and write down everything you want to achieve.

Now that you have written down all the things you would like to achieve by learning Japanese, choose the three most important things to you, or the three most important things you want to achieve.

The top three things I want to achieve are...

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

Out of the top three things above pick the number one thing you are going to focus on. This will become your goal for the time being. That's right you read correctly! I said for the time being. I say that because a goal is flexible and it will grow and change over time. But you must have something to start of with! Otherwise, you are like a tourist endlessly traveling the globe not knowing where they are going or why they are even traveling. They will spend time going from city to city never finding rest.



● THINK ABOUT IT

Your brain loves to achieve things. It likes to start and finish a task. When you finish a task you feel good, your brain is happy and your brain releases a load of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that is responsible for generating feelings of accomplishment, satisfaction and happiness. This release of dopamine not only makes you feel good but also motivates you to continue completing tasks and extend that pleasant feeling. That is why a goal is super important. It helps to build your confidence and also a self-realisation that yes you can achieve what you set your mind to! It may take longer than you expected and your goal may change to be something



different than you expected, but you need a destination, an endpoint and a goal to work towards. This is why a goal is important.

● ACTION STEPS

While reading this book you will notice there are many areas for you to write in, to take notes or to take action. This is all because learning without taking action is a waste of time. Now that you have your goal. I want you to break it down into 10 smaller action steps. Pull it apart and break it up into smaller bite-sized chunks. Take some time now and fill in the action points below.

My goal is

To achieve that goal the 10 big things I need to do are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

● ACTION STEPS

Now that you have your goal broken up into 10 smaller steps. There are two more important steps. First, take what you wrote on number 1 on the previous page and do it again. This time break it up into even smaller chunks. This will help you see the 10 small things you need to do this month. Doing this exercise you will be able to see that a big goal once broken down is easily attainable.

My No.1 thing was

To achieve this, the 10 big things I need to do are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

At the end of the week or month review how you went. Then look at No.2, write the 10 things you need to do to achieve that item.

At the end of this book you will find more space to complete all 10 items.



As you do this, again and again, month after month, you will begin to grow into the principle of goal setting. No longer will your language learning be just an airy-fairy idea. It will become a solid concrete set of actions. Each week you should be able to look back and see that you have achieved something. No matter how small it is, as long as you are achieving something that is important!



A word of warning!

I can already hear you saying “But what happens if I slack off and don’t achieve what I set out to do?” Well, welcome to being human!

Haha, that’s right you are human, we are sometimes lazy, we sometimes forget or slack off. That’s fine. But, that is also the cool thing about setting a goal. It is adjustable and changeable. When you drive a car with the navigation on when you make a wrong turn does your car tell you that you are stupid and that you should give up and go home? Or does it kindly and gently change its course and keep directing you to your destination. It never gives up, it just realigns and keeps going. This is the best approach to goals. Don’t give up, just realign to what you want and keep pressing forward.



Don’t be like the fox who wanted the grapes!

One hot summer's day a Fox was strolling through an orchard when he came to a bunch of grapes that were ripening on a vine. “Just one bunch to quench my thirst,” said the fox. Moving back a few paces, he took a run and a jump, and just missed the bunch. Turning round again with a One, Two, Three, he jumped up, but with no greater success. Again and again, he tried to reach the delicious grapes, but at last, he gave up, and walked away with his nose in the air, saying: “I am sure those grapes are sour anyway.” (Aesop’s Fables)



Don't be like the fox and give up on your goal. Instead, think about how you can reach your goal. Why not build a ladder or find a rock or two to make you higher. Don't give up and walk away complaining that the goal was not something for you. If you keep failing stop and look at what



you are doing. Stop jumping and instead spend some time building a ladder or a step. Doing the same non-productive process, again and again will only get you the same results.



Don't be like the fox and blame the grapes, instead look at the face in the mirror. Change the person staring back, don't make excuses and give up.

Make a vision board

A fun thing you can do after setting your goal is to make a vision board. This can be made in PowerPoint, a drawing program, or done with paper and pictures. Create a poster of all the things you want to do that are connected with learning Japanese. You can use words, but pictures are best. For example, if you want to climb Mt Fuji, put a picture of Mt Fuji on the board. If you want to eat Japanese sushi put a picture on there. Have a look at the below example. If you want to use this book feel free to use the following page and make your vision board of all the things you want to do with Japanese.

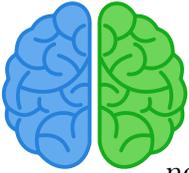
Once you have made your vision board copy it several times. Have a mini version on your phone and have one up on your wall so you see it every time you enter the room. This will give you hope and visually something to remind you of your goal.



● ACTION STEPS

Use this page to cut and past pictures or draw your vision board below if you like. (Feel free to also do this on your computer, phone or tablet as well.) The below space can be used to brainstorm ideas if you like.

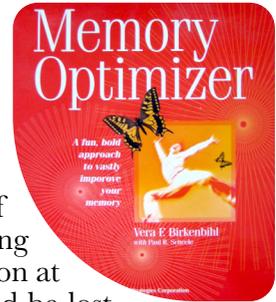
Enlarge your new brain!



This is where things begin to get exciting! As mentioned in chapter 1, when you begin learning Japanese you create a second brain, a Japanese brain. When you start out your brain is like a grain of sand. It is very small, but that does not mean it is not powerful! Before we explore a fun way to grow your brain there is one amazing thing I want to share with you about how your brain works.

Some years ago I did an amazing course through Learning Strategies called Memory Optimiser by Vera F. Birkenbihl and Paul R. Scheele. As part of this course, they talked about how the brain is like a giant web of information. Each bit of information is connected to another like a giant spider's web. When adding a new piece of information it needs to connect to something somewhere. If you just throw new bits of information at the web, they are likely to fall through the gaps and be lost.

However when you associate new information with something else you remember it longer. The more associations you have the better the information will stick and last.



aoi



blue



Wow wee!



aoi

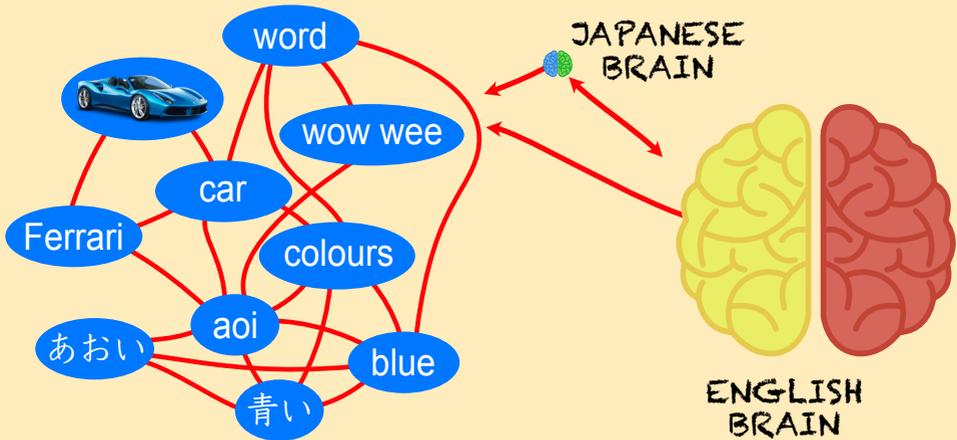
For example, let's say you are learning the word for 'blue' or 'aoi' in Japanese. Now if you have never learned the word before just throwing the word 'aoi' at your brain you are likely to forget it very quickly.

If however you can associate the word with something you know you will not only remember it faster but also longer. For example, let's say your friend comes to visit you one day.

They turn up on a brand new car, this is not just any car. It is a new Bright Blue Ferrari! When he gets out of the car and says “Well what do you think of my new car?”



Your eyes bulge, your mouth drops and all you can say is “Wow wee!” Get it ‘aoi’ ‘wow wee’? While they are not exactly the same, the next time you are asked what blue is in Japanese you will see the blue Ferrari and you will hear yourself saying, “Wow wee”, “aoi”.



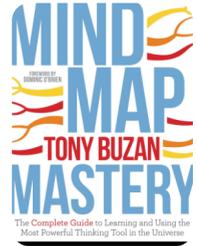
By doing this you have just created a connection in your brain to a new word. We could then take this a step further and add in the Kanji for blue, but for now, let's keep it simple.

For you to remember things you need to associate them with something else in your memory. When you are starting, your Japanese brain will need to borrow power from the English brain. But over time as your Japanese brain gets stronger it will be able to operate without the English brain's help.

Now that we know that our brain operates on associations when learning new things, let's do all that we can to quickly jump-start our Japanese brain and help it to grow.

Mind Mapping

Let's begin to build your spiders web even bigger. The technique we will use is called Mind Mapping. A mind map is an amazing tool developed by Tony Buzan and it allows us to quickly write down information and expand outwards. This works perfectly for associative learning. We will not learn all about mind mapping here. If you want to know more about the powerful method please search for 'Tony Buzan Mind Mapping'.



Mind Mapping Basics

First, grab some pens, pencils or markers and a blank piece of paper. Turn the paper sideways and in the middle write the word Japanese.

Second, around the middle circle draw a few branches like the picture below.

Third, on the branches begin to write anything you know about Japanese. Think simple! Any words you know, words like Sushi, Toyota, Emoji, etc. Then branch out from those words and write what they mean. Add more branches to the mind map, go crazy writing information on it. Spend about 10-15 minutes on this. have fun. Make it colourful, draw pictures to help you remember and visualise.

That's it. Have fun, go crazy and write as much as you can about Japan and the Japanese language. This is not a test but a fun way to get your creative thoughts flowing. Feel free to use the next page to start your mind map.



JAPANESE

The next step!

After you have spent some time mind mapping as much as you can in 10-15 minutes, let's now begin to make it more visual!

Grab some scrap paper, or you can use the page provided on page 31. Now let's have some fun! Grab some pens, pencils, magazines or you can search online and print out some pictures. If you like to draw, go crazy drawing.

Take one branch of information on the mind map and now you are going to make a poster with it. This may seem like a waste of time. You may be thinking about what this has to do with learning Japanese and you are correct. What does this have to do with learning Japanese? This is all about helping you see what you know and understand where you are in the language learning process. Some of you may have a lot of information while others not much at all. But what this process will do is hopefully it will get you thinking more about the language, more about the culture, the country, the people, and the food.



When we are just starting we want to do everything we can to help our little grain of sand to grow and become bigger. This process does just that. It also introduces ourselves to the language in a fun, inquisitive manner. As you do this you will find yourself thinking and wanting to know more about certain things. If a question comes to your mind quickly write it down and then look it up. be inquisitive and have fun playing with the language. That is the secret to learning.



Play with the language. That is how children learn. They learn through play, the problem is that as we get older it seems to become a taboo thing to play and have fun. Learning has to be all serious and boring. Sit at a table and learn from a textbook kind of thing. But this is exactly what learning should not be! It should be bright, colourful, and fun! It should be interesting and engaging. That is how we learn best!



Take the time to make it fun and interesting and you will want to keep on learning more and more!

Let's review chapter 2

1. Don't become overwhelmed with the language.
2. The wolf you feed is the one that wins!
3. Set a goal for learning Japanese
4. Mind map everything you know about Japanese
5. Make a Japanese poster

● ACTION STEPS

Reflect on what you have learned so far. How has this changed your approach to learning Japanese? What things are you going to do, say and think differently? Write them below.

Poster page

Take time to build a solid
foundation and your Japanese will
be able to weather any storm it
faces.

Storms will come, winds will blow
but you will not be moved!

-Aaron Nagasaka-

MAKE IT VISUAL

MAKE IT COLOURFUL, MAKE IT FUN



Build a solid foundation and the rest is easy!

I hope you are feeling as excited about the language as I am! Japanese is an amazing language and by starting correctly you can build a solid foundation that will help you the rest of your life.

As a high school student I often got into trouble for drawing and doodling on my books. I used to like to colour things in and make them colourful. Looking back it was one of the best things I did to help with language retention.

In grade four we had to do a project on ‘The great fire of London’. I spend hours drawing and designing the project page... Haha yes I only wrote one small page worth of text and then coloured and decorate the rest of the page to look like the great fire. It looked amazing! It is one of the few projects I remember doing in primary school. All my teacher said was “I like your drawing but write more text next time”. I was so disappointed because I put so much effort into the picture and design. Have you ever felt like that? You put a lot of time and effort into being creative and all the teacher say is “Nice, but do more writing next time.” If you have read on!



This chapter is all about being colourful and creative! To make the most out of your language learning journey the more you expand your creative self the easier it will be. I am not saying that you need to be creative, but that it will help you more as you play with it. I understand that not everyone is super creative, not everyone likes to draw and use colour, but I also understand that the brain is not a monochrome device! It thrives on colour, emotion, sound, and movement. The more you can incorporate those things into your learning the better it will be!

Colourful language learning!

Monotone language learning is boring!

I am sure that if you have the choice to buy a black and white picture-less textbook or a full-colour textbook with illustrations and diagrams which would you choose. I am almost certain that 99% of you would go for the colour one! I said 99% because there is always 1% that just likes to be different. That's fine. I hope they enjoy the black and white boring textbook :) You may notice that this book is all in colour. Yes, it costs more, but is education worth the price? I think so! I have purposely tried to include as many illustrations, diagrams, and headings to make it easier to not only read but to also remember and use.



As you begin learning Japanese try to use more colour in your notes. Try to add little diagrams and pictures. These could be drawn or just printed out and stuck on. This will help you with remembering the material and the recall process. If you do not have access to a colour pen, just draw as many diagrams, illustrations or doodles as you can. It will help you remember and recall the information later on.



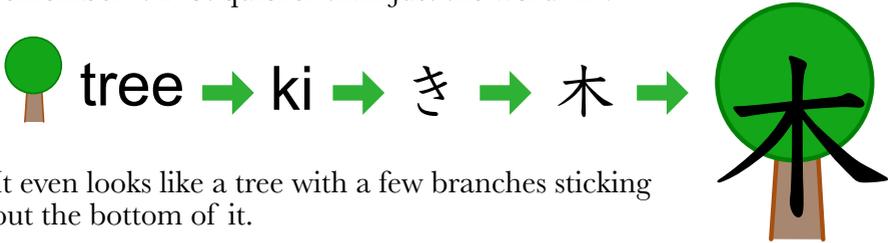
Learn to Draw

I can hear some of you saying “I can’t draw”, “I am going to skip this one”, etc. But please don’t skip this part. As I mentioned earlier you do not have to be an artist to draw. Honestly! And by the end of this section, you will see why! In just a few short steps I will show you how you can add life and fun to your notes. This will greatly help you remember more! Trust me! Don’t skip this. Follow along and you will be amazed!

I and going to teach you how to draw! That's right. I and going to teach you in **FIVE** simple steps how to draw! If you don't believe me, keep reading and you will be amazed at what you can do, how you can make your notes so much better and easier to read and remember in just **FIVE** simple steps. **READY?**

Step 1 to drawing

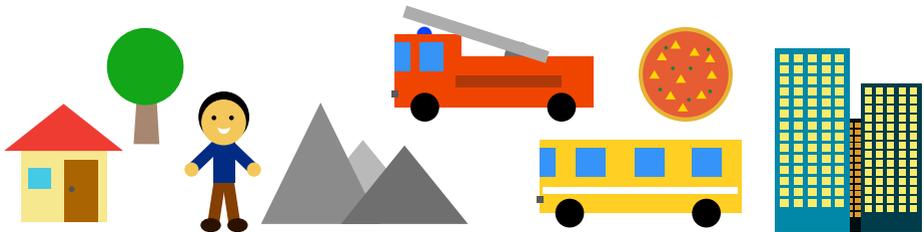
Draw a circle. That's it. Draw a circle. Now I know each of you can do that. You can turn almost any circle into something! try! Say you are learning the word 'tree' or 'ki' in Japanese Draw a circle and add some straight lines underneath! There you have a tree. Colour the top circle green and the bottom part brown. You don't have to be an artist to do that. But when you see the picture of a tree, and the work 'ki' you will remember it a lot quicker than just the word 'ki'.



It even looks like a tree with a few branches sticking out the bottom of it.

Step 2 to drawing

Draw a square/rectangle and a triangle. I know you can draw these basic shapes. You can make almost anything from these shapes. Look below. These drawings are simple but you don't have to be an artist to draw them!



● ACTION STEPS

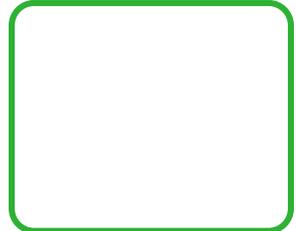
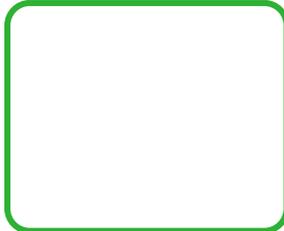
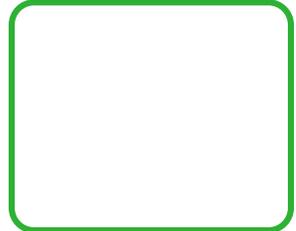
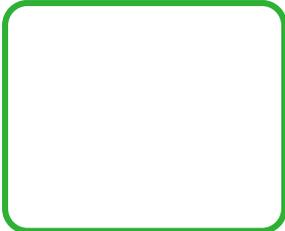
It is now your turn. Try drawing some pictures just using circles, rectangles, squares, and triangles. Add some colours write the word below the picture, and if you want to take this one step further, you can even look up the Japanese for for the picture! As you repeat this process a few times you get will better at adding simple images that are quick and easy to understand to your notes. Drawing is like any skill, the more you practice the better you become!



DRAWING

WORD cat

JAPANESE neko



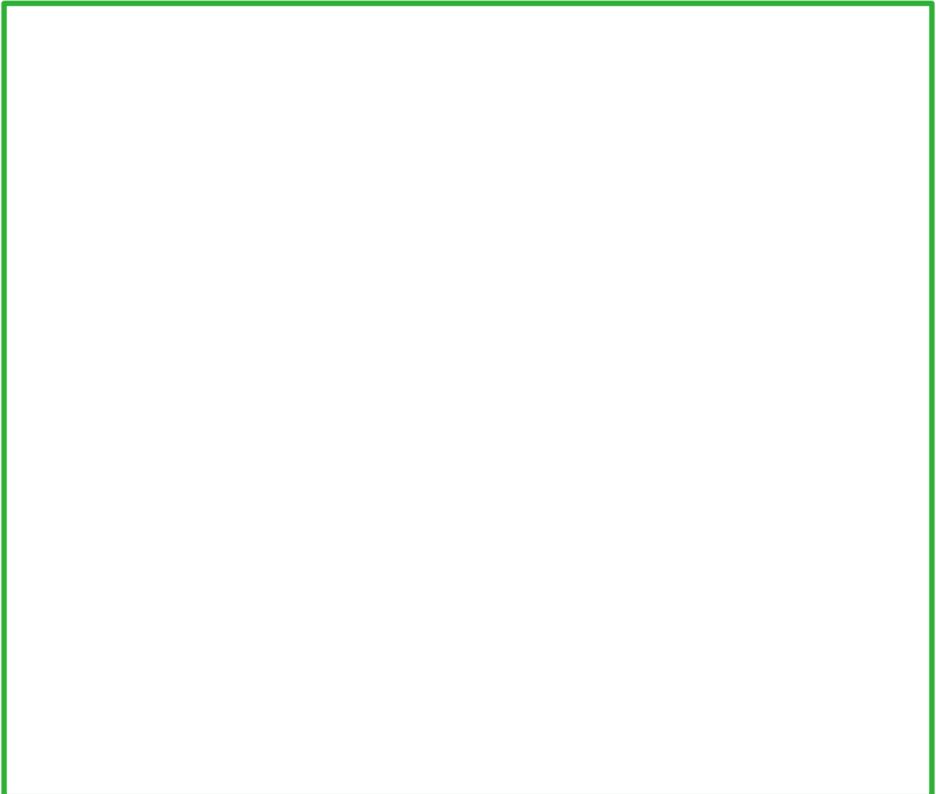
The most important thing here is to have fun. If your picture looks funny, laugh and move on. As long as you know what it means, it does not matter! Have fun using colours and simple shapes. The more you use this the better you will become. This is a simple skill you can learn and add to your language learning toolkit!

Step 3 to drawing

Learn to draw people. I can see you rolling your eyes now! Haha, but remember I didn't ask you to be perfect, I didn't ask you to be an artist, just to let go and have a go.

Using the shapes we have already used you can draw people. One big circle, a rectangle, some lines, and four more circles for hands and feet. They are simple, look good and all you need to do is add some colour. Remember to **KISS** your drawings! **Keep It Super Simple!**

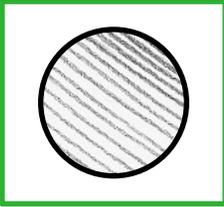
Have a go below. Try drawing your own person, add some colours, and you are done!



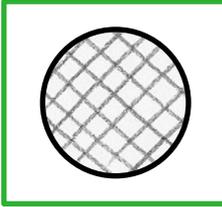
Step 4 to drawing

Use as much colour as you can. Sometimes your drawings may be pretty bad, don't feel bad, about it, own it. But just by adding a little colour, it can turn a bad drawing into something that can be better recognised and understood. If you cannot add colour try shading with a pen. Say for the tree shade the trunk darker than the top part. See below for four simple shading tricks.

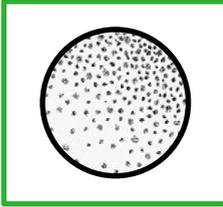
Hatching



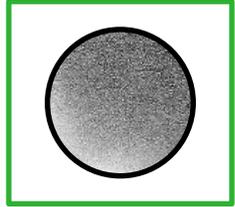
Cross Hatching



Stippling/Dots



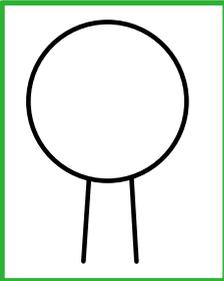
Blending/Shading



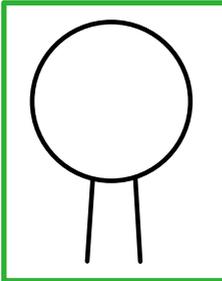
● ACTION STEPS

Now it's your turn to have a go at shading the below pictures.

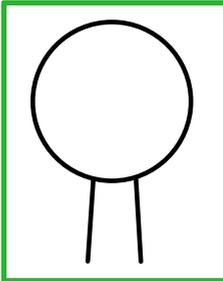
Hatching



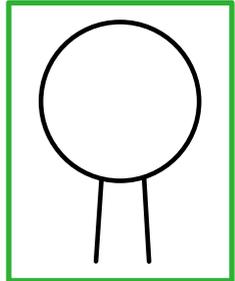
Cross Hatching



Stippling/Dots



Blending/Shading



Don't worry if you are not good at this. Remember it is a skill. Any skill just like Japanese takes time, and most important of all practice. Knowledge without use is wasted. Knowledge when used creates change.

Change is not easy, but to learn anything change is important!

Step 5 to drawing

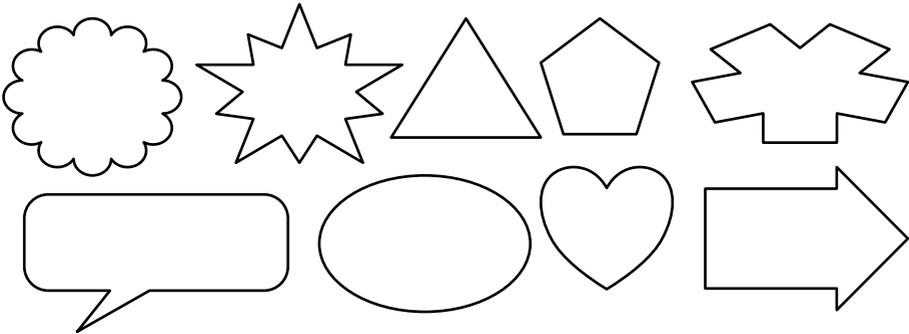
Okay, so we have gone over the basics of shapes, people colour, and shading.... now what? Well, the last thing is to use arrows and labels. This is one way to get out of actually drawing if you really don't want to. But by adding a few arrows, coloured rectangles, and adding a few labels you can spice up your notes and give life to the information you are learning. Remember your brain loves colour, shapes, emotions, and movement. Especially at the beginning, it is vital to give your Japanese brain all the opportunity you can to grow and expand!

Have a look below at a few markers you can use to spice things up.



● ACTION STEPS

Color in the ones below and add labels on them.



Learning to be more visual will greatly help you as you learn Japanese. If you are anything like me you will know what it is like to go to class to be given a pile of black and white boring worksheets. I understand that schools cannot print everything in colour so it will be up to you to make what you have rememberable. Add diagrams, pictures and colours to help you remember what is being taught.

Colourful new toys!

I love new things! Don't you? Isn't it fun to get something new and to then play with it? But at the same time don't you hate it when you get something new and never use it...! It sits around for months even years and never gets used. Then when you go to use it, it doesn't work.

I remember when I got my first Japanese electronic dictionary. It was second hand and it looked great. I loved it. I took so much care of it. But I never bothered to really learn how to use it. I quickly returned back to my paper dictionaries as they were easier and I felt comfortable using them. About two years later I found my electronic dictionary in a box. I went to turn it on and it didn't work. The old batteries had leaked. I tried changing the batteries, but no luck. I checked to make sure they were new batteries, but it wouldn't work. The once loved dictionary went to the trash. I felt so sad.



Sometimes we are like this with learning something new. We are super excited for the first couple of weeks, maybe even months then what they call the 'Honey Moon' period is over and we realise we actually cannot just dream, but have to work. Often we begin to return to our comfort zone and stop studying. The once exciting adventure is forgotten and like 'the fox and the grapes', we come up with an excuse as to why we could not do it.

I am about to introduce some new fun tools, gifts that you have, but I don't want you to get excited and never use them! Please follow along and keep doing the activities where asked. You will learn so much more! There is no rush to get through everything. A little each day is better than none at all!

The gift of new ears!

This is super exciting! There is one thing I didn't add in the previous chapters. I mentioned that you get a new brain when you start learning Japanese, but I didn't mention that you also get a new pair of ears!



These are not just any ears but Japanese learning ears. These are ears that are linked to your Japanese brain!

There is one catch though, just as a baby learns to think speak and walk you must also learn to listen. Language is an interesting thing. If you think about it, the spoken language is just a bunch of sounds mashed together.

People who learn the same sounds and who can pronounce them can communicate with each other. That's why when you get your new ears, you won't be able to understand much. The more you expose yourself to Japanese, the better you will get. If I was to put a baby in a room and never talk to it, the baby would never learn to speak. A baby only learns by mimicking its surroundings. And so if you want to learn Japanese you must do the same. Listen as much as you can, do everything! This will be a gradual process that takes time. But one word at a time you will get better and better. Until you can run like a little child.



MY GOAL IS?

WRITE YOUR GOAL BELOW

As you do this please **remember your goal, you're why for learning Japanese.** If you have zero interest in science and history, don't bother wasting your time listening to history things, when what you really want to do is learn Anime. Listen to as much as you can of the things you like most, or have interests in!

Unless it is homework, then you should do it!



There are a few things that can help you in the process. Take notes. Don't go crazy writing down every word you don't know as you will quickly burn out. Rather pick up a couple of words, learn them, and come back for some more! Repeat the process again and again. Over time your listening ears will get better and you will find yourself being able to understand more.

Remember one thing! Have fun in the process. Language learning is meant to be fun and enjoyable.



The gift of new eyes!



I am sure by now you can guess this is coming. Just as you get a new set of ears, you also get a new pair of eyes! That's right. Just as you need to train your ears, you also need to train your eyes.

The more Japanese you see the better you will get. This really goes without saying but anything you choose to do in life, the more time and effort you put into it the better you will get. No matter what it is, the more effort and time, the better you get. The more Japanese you read, see, and watch the more you will retain and your eyes will begin to recognise more and more of the language.

● ACTION STEPS

Create a small amount of time each day, that is dedicated to just reading in Japanese. This can start off with something small. You might read the same sentence or phrase over and over again. As you get better, change what you read, make it longer and harder. But always start easy and slowly build up!



The gift of a new mouth!



I know you get it now. Just like your ears and eyes, you also get a new tongue and mouth. These come as a set. The mouth and tongue differ a little from the eyes and ears in that you need to learn to move them.

The mouth and tongue are muscles. And for a muscle to be any good it needs to be trained and used. As you learn to speak Japanese you will find that you are using a new set of muscles. After a day of trying to speak, you may go home with a sore mouth, jaw, and tongue. That is because you are using different muscles that you never use. The more you train it, the better you will get.

Three tips for training your mouth and tongue.

Mouth tip 1

Go buy a mirror. That's it. Buy a mirror and then move onto tip 2!

Mouth tip 2

Get comfortable looking at yourself in the mirror. Take some time staring at yourself, say some positive words like; “I am good at learning”, “This is fun!”, “The more I learn the better I get”. Affirmations can help, but they need to be followed up with action!

Mouth tip 3

Now listen to words being pronounced and copy their mouth movements. This is best done with a mirror so you can see your mouth move. If you are using a video, pause and replay it again and again. The more you mimic others, just like a baby the better you will get. If you don't want to use a mirror you can also use your phone. If you use your phone I recommend that you try recording yourself and then play it back and listen to what you should like and look like. Have fun!



Convert your room - Convert your mind



This is something fun you can do to get yourself into the mood! If you are feeling adventurous decorate your room with everything Japanese that you have.

When I was in High school I did just this. I was living on a farm at the time and the farm was raising Wagyu beef to sell to Japan. Some business people had come out to visit and I was studying Japanese and so I was invited to go and meet them and have dinner with them. They asked me if I wanted anything and I mentioned that I would love a Japanese flag. The next time they came they presented me with a huge Japanese flag. It went straight up onto my wall. It hung there for years. I still have the flag! I also had pictures up on my wall and a huge map of the country.



I wrote the words 'JAPAN' and when I went to the airport to see my brother off one time, I took photos of a JAL airplane. These are all small simple things you can do to help you not only get excited about learning the language but also help you achieve a dream.



I wanted to go to Japan. To help realise that goal I went and ate Japanese food. I bought Sushi and didn't even like it. But in my mind, and what I told everyone else was 'It tasted great'.



Decorating is a great way to get yourself in the mindset to learn the language. Just decorating your room is not enough. Decorating your brain is also important! That's right, decorate your mind. The easiest way to do this is to show it Japanese things, movies, songs, images, etc. These will help your Japanese mind grow and expend.

Make language learning fun and rememberable!

The key to learning anything is
learning to learn from your
mistakes.

Making mistakes is not bad.
Failing to learn from them is!

-Aaron Nagasaka-

HAVE FUN

MAKING MISTAKES!



Making mistakes is the key to becoming good at Japanese!

This is going to be a fun chapter! I am excited to see how this changes the way you look at learning Japanese! This chapter will open up the way you look at and think about learning.

I am sure many of you do or have felt the same way I did when I first started to learn Japanese.

Deep inside, all I wanted to do was to speak the language. But I was too worried about looking dumb that I didn't even try.



When I was 19 I had the most amazing opportunity to use Japanese! I went on a mission for my church, at part of this, I flew to America and did three months of intensive language training. This was amazing, I have never learned so much in such a short amount of time. After three months and being around similar learners to me, I flew back to Australia. As part of being a missionary, one of the rules is that you have to be with someone basically 24/7. We call the person you are with your 'companion'. I was with my first companion for about 12 weeks and I got a new companion. He was Japanese. He spoke Japanese and English. This was the opportunity of a lifetime to not only learn Japanese but also to use it. Do you want to know the sad thing?

Don't repeat my mistake!

I hardly spoke to him in Japanese. That's right. I lived with him for more than half a year. We would teach people in Japanese, and I would talk to them, but rarely to him. Why? I was too afraid. Little did I know that I had just missed an opportunity of a lifetime. Looking back I still want to



kick myself. Why was I so shy, or more than shy, so proud! That's what it is. Its pride. We don't want others to laugh at us.

The sad thing is people don't laugh! It's a myth. It is a lie. People rarely laugh at you when you try to learn a language! Yes, there might be a few nasty people, but in general, people actually want to help. People want to share and encourage you. It is our own self-pride that keeps us from trying.

MYTH!

3 Steps to overcome language pride

Step 1 to overcoming language pride/fear

Understand your fear. This is something that will help you. Take some time, write out your fear. What is it that stops you from speaking? Is it that you don't know any words, is it that you are not sure what to say, are you shy or not good at speaking to strangers? Or perhaps you are a perfectionist?

● ACTION STEPS

Think about it and write down what it is that is holding you back.

Step 2 to overcoming language pride

Let go of being perfect or feeling the need to be perfect. Many of us feel that we need to know lots of vocabulary, have good grammar and pronunciation, but that is not true. This is the little devil on your shoulder telling you that you are not good enough. But most times you are a lot better than you give yourself credit for.



● ACTION STEPS

Write below what is the worst thing that could happen if you spoke to someone in Japanese? What is it? Don't skip this. Write your answer below.

And if the worst situation was to occur how would you react? Write your answer to what you would do.

Flick the devil off your shoulder and go have fun trying!

Step 3 to overcoming language pride

Go and try! This is the hardest thing, but go and seek one on one situations where you can use Japanese. To make things even easier prepare for the situation. Set a time limit if needed. Say you have an opportunity to talk with a language partner, set some rules like:

- When starting only speak for 10 minutes a day. (*This will change as you get more confidence!*)
- Let's just practice what is in the textbook (I can guarantee that as you gain more confidence you will want to start talking about other things) but start with the simple things!
- Prepare for the language exchange beforehand. Make notes, write sentences and then have a go.
- Make mistakes, laugh and enjoy the experience.

Often FEAR is just something we have created in our minds!

Have fun making mistakes and use this time to build your self-confidence. I promise you that if you speak for even just 5 minutes in Japanese to someone you will walk away feeling amazing. The feeling of self-accomplishment is amazing! But I also want to warn you that the next time the opportunity comes to speak, you will be met with the negative inner voice telling you that:

- You are not good enough
- You don't know enough vocabulary
- You can't speak Japanese
- Haha, who are you to even try!
- You have only been learning for a few weeks or even days.



Squish any self-negative talk. Tell yourself that:

- I am still learning and this is a great chance to learn even more
- I know I don't know all the vocabulary, but I can practice that which I do know!

- I know I am not a native, but to get better I must practice.
- The worst thing I can do is make a mistake. We all make mistakes and this is a chance to learn from a native or someone who has more experience than I do.
- I know I have only just started, but why miss an opportunity to learn! This is going to be fun!



● ACTION STEPS

Write below five more positive sentences that you can use to push back the negative talk.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Play with the Japanese language

Do not think about language learning as something that has to be perfect. This is where I feel sad seeing students being drilled in school about grammar and vocabulary. Yes, it is important to learn vocabulary, but being drilled like robots takes away the fun. Rather than learning they just cram. Cramming will help you pass the test but it will not help you months later when you have forgotten every word you ever learned.



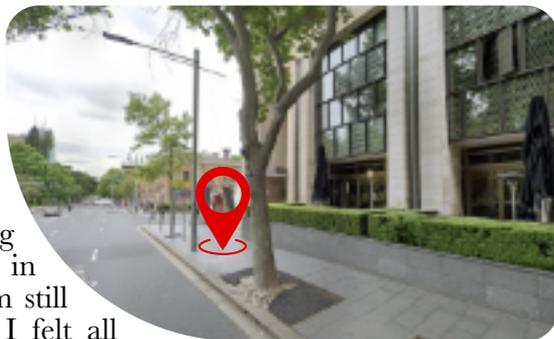
Make language learning fun. Be like a child and play with it. Experiment with it. Try writing in your journal in Japanese. Try speaking. Make mistakes and have fun along the way.

A life changing secret!

Remember my story about being too prideful to talk to my companion. Well, after more than half a year, I got a new companion. He spoke zero Japanese and I realised that I was on my own. I realised how stupid I was for being so prideful.

Then one afternoon something changed! I was walking along a street in Sydney just near Hyde Park.

I still remember where I was when this happened! I had been struggling for so long with Japanese. I loved the language and the people but I just could not get it. I had missed an amazing chance to speak daily in Japanese and now here I am still needing to learn Japanese. I felt all



alone. I had many people around me willing to help but I still felt all alone. Then one afternoon walking along, the sky was cloudy and it was a warm afternoon when it hit me like a bolt of lightning.

The thought came into my mind with such force it almost stopped me as I walked along. We were heading back to the apartment and as soon as I got back I wrote it down.

The thought was **‘Why don’t you think in Japanese’**. That's it!

Okay I know you might be thinking “I already know that! Why is that so special?” But just because you know something does not mean you do it. When I say “Think in Japanese” I mean you let your Japanese brain take over! This is when you say goodbye to your English brain and force yourself to think in Japanese. When you brush your teeth you say in

TWO: Play with the characters

I could write a whole book about this. There are many characters and much to learn. The key here is don't try and learn them all at once. Learn one character at a time, make learning them visual and play with them. The more you play the more you will learn.



Japanese characters can be a bit overwhelming. It can seem like falling into an endless pit of characters. The important thing is to just play. Enjoy learning new characters and **DO NOT** even think about learning them all at once. **One at a time!**

Unfortunately the sad thing is the way they are taught in most schools in not good. They are generally taught using a cramming method of show, hear, practice writing 20 or 30 times and hope you remember them.

If a character is taught correctly you should not need to write it anymore than 10 times! That's right 10 times!

THREE: Play with the grammar.

In Japanese and any language, this is important. This is how you link words together to make sentences. Start slow, and one by one build up your ability. Remember don't let yourself get stressed. Stress has the opposite effect on learning. It shuts down creativity and stops the brain from learning at its optimum. If you start to feel stressed:

- Stop what you are doing
- Close your eyes (*Don't do this if you are driving or doing something you need your eyes open for*)
- Breath out and in slowly and deeply three



- times feeling each breath as you exhale and inhale.
- Remind yourself that life is a journey and you are having fun learning Japanese. Remind yourself that you can do this.
- Breath again three more times, slowly and deeply.
- Open your eyes feeling refreshed and happier.

Grammar can be a bit like Kanji, complicated and confusing at times. But remember to learn it one step, one principle at a time and slowly you will get it. More than 20 years on and I am still learning.

FOUR: Play with words

The best way to do this is to make them as visual as you can, practice them and use them. Writing them a couple of times is great to learn the Hiragana/Katakana or the Kanji, but don't write the same word 100 times. It is counterproductive. It would be



better to write the word say once or twice. Use it as a sentence. Write the sentence down and then say the sentence to someone. You can even record the sentence and play it back to yourself.

To change things up a bit try playing games with the sentence. Turn it into a flashcard, or download a flashcard app and use it on your phone. There are so many ways you can learn vocabulary. Don't get stuck in the write, repeat process. Change it up and have fun.

How many mistakes can I make?

The last thing is to get out and see how many mistakes you can make! Make a game of it. No matter what you do, you are going to make mistakes!

The more you use Japanese the more mistakes you will make. Get good at laughing at them. Record them, and learn from them. The best language learners learn from their mistakes and laugh at them. This not



only makes it more fun to learn but also takes the stress out of the process. Even in English you make mistakes. I am sure if you look you will find mistakes in this book. Don't focus on the mistakes, focus on the experience, and what you can learn? Is the glass half full or half empty? That is only something you can decide.

Let's review chapter 4

1. Overcome your language learning pride
2. Understand what your fear is
3. Let go of being perfect
4. Go and try
5. Get good and playing with the language
6. Have fun laughing at your mistakes

● ACTION STEPS

Learning with no action is slow progress. As part of your progress take a few minutes to contact someone now and ask them to be your language partner. Write their name and when you will meet below. If you already have a language partner or an exchange buddy, contact them now and arrange a time to meet either face to face or digitally. Write below when you will meet them. If you don't have a language partner search for one and begin today!

There will always be many
reasons not to learn Japanese.

All you need is one good reason
to learn it!

-Aaron Nagasaka-



DON'T LISTEN TO THE NAYSAYERS!



You only need one good reason to learn Japanese!

How many times have you been told you are not good at something? How many times have you been told that Japanese is hard! That Kanji is hard. That Japanese grammar is hard? To be honest I am sick of people saying that Japanese is hard! If you want to think everything is hard, it will become so! We are what we think!



Have you ever tried learning English? We have a million rules, there are always exceptions to every rule, many words sound the same, but they have different meanings, and half of the words we use, we don't even pronounce the way they are written. Whoever said the word 'knife' before and pronounced the letter 'k'? no one. Why do we even need the 'k'? I have no idea.

Most people only say Japanese is hard because they have never studied it before. If they have studied it, most likely they received a language dump rather than being taught how to learn, the language. Anything will be a little challenging when we first start.

The next time someone says Japanese is hard, smile and walk away...!

Okay perhaps walking away might be a bit rude, but walk away mentally, haha. Let them believe that myth and let them wallow in the depths of everything being hard. **But not you!** You are better than that! **Learning something new is not hard, it's just new and different.** You don't have the interconnecting links in your spider's web yet. But you know better. You know that as you play with new information and associate it with things you do know, it will not only get easier but you will become smarter and better at Japanese too!



Learning Japanese is not hard or easy, it's just different!

It all has to do with how we look at things! We can choose to let everything be hard, or we can choose to think of things as not being hard but just different. Lets say on Saturday you go with your friends to take photos amongst sunflowers. You can choose to complain about the heat, the bugs and the distance you had to drive, or you could enjoy the beauty of the sunflowers, the sun shining and the amazing time you got to spend with your friends laughing and talking in the car. It is up to you!



Every time we go to say something is hard, we should stop ourselves and change how we respond. Instead say “It's different, it's new, but I can learn anything, I may not get it all at once, but give me some time and I can learn anything!”



One of the key secrets to learning anything is what we did back in chapter 2. In chapter 2 you set a goal. This is your language learning goal. I want you to re-write that goal below. If you skipped that part in chapter 2 go back and complete it before moving on. Learning something new is useless unless we take

action. The reason for re-writing it is to help you remember it. This will bring it again to the front of your memory and it will help you remember why you are learning Japanese.

● ACTION STEPS

Re-write your goal below.

Don't let go!

Once you have your goal don't let go. There will always be people who will laugh, make fun of your dreams, and have negative things to say, but let them think what they want to think, not you! You are better, you are smarter and you can learn Japanese. It's not hard just new and different.

It is always easy to find reasons not to do things.

- I can't learn Japanese because there are too many characters
- I can't learn new languages
- Oh, I'm not that smart
- It cost too much
- I don't have time
- I have never been good at remembering
- Oh no, that's way too hard!
- It takes too long to learn a language



- Its a waste of time
- And on and on and on and on and on they go

Find reasons to do things!

Think about why you want to learn Japanese We covered this earlier but this is super important.

- I want to travel overseas
- I want to be able to understand anime
- I want to be able to read manga
- I want to get married in Japan
- I want to work in Japan
- I love the Japanese culture and want to learn more
- I want to go on an exchange to Japan
- Learning Japanese will give me more employment opportunities
- Learning Japanese will make me smarter
- Etc...

ACTION STEPS

Write three reasons for why you want to learn Japanese.

1.

2.

3.

When learning becomes hard your reasons will help you get through it. One of my favourite presenters Jim Rohn, teaches about the seasons of life. When you are learning Japanese, you will have your different seasons of your language learning. The seasons will be just like they are in Japan. Let's go through the different seasons to learning a language.

SPRING

Let's start with spring. Spring is an amazing time. In Japan, the cherry blossoms bloom and the country is covered in pink. Everywhere you look you can see the amazing beauty of nature.



Learning Japanese will be like the Cherry blossom. It starts from a small bump on a branch. Nothing more than a desire, slowly that bump turns into a bud, as the weather gets warmer the bud blossoms. Your Japanese will be very similar.



You will be excited to start, it will be a new adventure you will be filled with dreams and visions of all the cool things about Japan and Japanese. As you start you will begin to blossom. Just like the cherry blossom, you will also fall. Haha yes, we have talked about this. You will have negative thoughts, you will get lazy, you will slack off. But don't worry spring is not over yet. You will keep going, you will get into a rhythm and you will start to build upon your abilities. The pink blossoms may have dropped off, but the leaves of the cherry blossom tree will begin to grow and form. This is just like your Japanese. You will get stronger and better, word by word!



SUMMER



Summer is on its way! Summer is a fun time of the year. But it can also be a tough time of the year. Some summers are long and hot, others rainy and the humidity unbearable! Learning Japanese will be the same. You will have a test to prepare for, you will realise that you now need to learn grammar, vocabulary and you will need to practice the language.

Fear not, because summer is also full of fun times, lots of ice cream, swimming, fireworks, and lots of yummy fruits and food. As you get better you will be able to use your Japanese more and more. You will have more fun and you will start to gain more confidence. As you gain more confidence this can also be a dangerous time. This is when a lot of people will plateau out. They stop studying or they cut back their study time. As you do this you will start to notice autumn is on the way.



AUTUMN



In Japan autumn is just as stunning as spring. The country transforms day by day into this golden orange and red. The mountains and hills change colour, the leaves drop and so does the temperature. Just as you reduce your Japanese study time so too will your language ability slow down. You will find you forget words and things you learned earlier. You may begin to fall back into feeling insecure to talk to people again. When you are given the opportunity to meet your language partner, you will find excuses not to do it. Instead of meeting them, you will come up with a lame excuse and then stay at home watching youtube or sleeping.

Don't worry I know how you feel. I have been there, I have made those lame excuses, I have made reasons not to speak, or to meet up with people only to stay home and do nothing, all the while feeling slightly guilty. So how do we overcome that? Well, you need to push yourself to get out and enjoy the autumn leaves. Hurry. Enjoy the Autumn before the leaves turn brown and drop. Don't be like me and let go of amazing language learning opportunities. Before long winter will settle in!

WINTER

Just as spectacular as spring, summer and autumn are, so too is winter an amazing time in Japan. I am from Nagano and so when winter sets in everything turns a beautiful white. The mountains, the roads, everything turns white!



Some winters are colder and longer. Some are shorter and have less snow. Winter can be a cold long couple of months, but if you get out and enjoy it, you can have a lot of fun. Just like your language learning, there will be days you wake up and it's freezing cold. your futon is warm and soft, but you can see your breath as you breathe out from the warm blankets. You will not want to wake up.

There will be days you don't want to study, you don't want to learn. And there may even be days, weeks, or even months where you slack off from learning anything new. You kind of let it hibernate. You will struggle to pick it back up and get into it, the old negative talk will become stronger.

- I don't have time right now
- I have just started a new course
- I am super busy at work
- I will work on it tomorrow
- This week has been hectic
- And the list goes on...

Don't let the old negative talk start again!



I have been there, I have done that. So don't get down on yourself if you are in one of the cold winter slumps. Don't forget that no matter how cold and long your winter is, we can still have fun and get out and go snowboarding, or at least just have a snow fight!

That's right just throw some snow around, watch a movie, read a book, listen to some music and meet up with a friend. Even if you are back to



feeling less confident, just by meeting someone you will begin to feel better. When you meet them once, set up a time to meet again and begin your language exchanges again.

As you meet up again, beginning watching movies, listening to music, etc, the snow will begin to melt, the confidence will begin to return and you will begin to resume your language studies, just as we started with a little bump on a branch you will begin the cycle of the seasons again.

This not only applies to language learning but also to life. We each have times where everything is just perfect, then there will be days when it just rains on everything. Everything goes wrong and we just want to go back to bed. Don't worry though, because after a rainstorm there is a rainbow and the sun will shine! This is not me making things up. For the past 30 plus years of my life, this is how it has been. And to my knowledge, it was like that long before that.

So where to now?

Remember your why, review your goals and push on. Prove to the negative voices both internal and external that you are better than them. Not to be arrogant, but to show them that this is your life. You will live your life how you want. You get to choose who you become. Own that, be proud of who you are. Your past does not dictate your future. Your actions do! If you do the same thing again and again you will get the same result. Fear not to stand out and be different.



Let's review chapter 5

1. Don't listen to the naysayers
2. Learning Japanese is not hard, it's just new and different
3. Remember your why and re-write your goal
4. Enjoy learning the seasons of Japanese
5. Take action and own your life

● ACTION STEPS

To make the most out of the seasons, write down next to the four seasons what you will do and how you will act when things are going well and when they get hard. How are you going to react?

● SPRING

● SUMMER

● AUTUMN

● WINTER

Technology is one of the most
powerful tools you have to learn
Japanese.

Learn to use it as a tool!

-Aaron Nagasaka-

USE TECHNOLOGY

TO LEARN JAPANESE



Technology is a powerful learning tool for Japanese!

This chapter is a fun one there are so many fun things that can be done with technology when learning Japanese. It is also the opposite of what will be written in chapter 7. Both are vital to learning Japanese. If used as a tool both can become extremely powerful and helpful.

You live in one of the luckiest times to learn a language. Learning languages are not only more important than ever, you also have the greatest tools at your fingertips. You don't even need to leave your bed in the morning!

In this chapter we are going to go over some of the greatest tools available and how to best use them.

When I first started learning Japanese I literally had nothing. We had an ancient old TV that we had inherited from my grandmother, no internet, mobile phones were not even a big thing and even CD's were expensive! I am not that old, but it just shows how much things have changed in the past few years. I started learning Japanese in 1997. I was living in Tasmania. Tasmania is the small island at the bottom of Australia. A beautiful state but there is not much happening there. All I had was my textbook and well that's it. I had a class once a week at school and a teacher who spoke very basic Japanese. After some time we bought a computer and I saved up and bought a \$100 Japanese language CDROM. I don't even think they exist anymore. It had audio and I could even practice speaking and comparing my audio to a native speakers audio. I thought it was pretty cool and advanced. Let's fast forward a few years to now.



Cool tools you have to use!

Let's go through some cool tools you have that you can access for free or for next to nothing. *Before we do though, I do understand that not everyone has access to everything, but a large portion of the world does have access to a local library. Most local libraries are free and offer free internet access. If you are someone who does not have a phone or computer think about finding the closest library and paying a visit. They are often free to sign up and offer many great services like free wifi and internet.*

Video lessons



Let's start with one of the greatest things you have available! Video lessons. Now that we live in a video connected world, you can call anywhere in the world for free or next to nothing and talk with someone in high definition with little to no lag as if they were standing next to you!

Many companies offer lessons this way. If you live where there is no one to talk to this is a great option. Search on the internet and try using their services. They are not always very cheap but they offer a great one to one opportunity to improve your language lessons. The great thing about these lessons is you can usually do them when you like at a time that suits you. Many offer a free trial class so you can play around and find one that you like best. The other great thing is you can choose what you want to learn about. You can do it on any topic, and practice anything you want to work on. This is your money and your time.

Using online video services

1. Have in your mind a plan of what you want to achieve. Because you are paying if you don't have a plan you will waste your time and money. I suggest that you set out a plan for a month and then let the other person know what you want to study. If for example you just

want to do free talking, give them topics. This will not only help you prepare for the lesson but also help them know and understand your goals and intentions. If you let them choose you will most likely end up doing something you don't really want to do.



2. Prepare for your lessons. Give yourself a week to prepare for the lesson. Learn some new vocabulary and grammar to help you. This will help make your lesson meaningful and you will feel like you have achieved something at the end of the language session.



3. Set a regular time to meet. Because it is super easy to call and meet, it is also super easy to not call, to change the schedule and not do the lesson.

You will always have an excuse why not to join. But instead of finding a reason why not, find three why you should.

● ACTION STEPS

Stop right now before moving on and quickly write three reasons why you should do an online lesson. (Think ahead to when you are all signed up and have done a couple but are a bit tired and just want to take the night off.)

1.

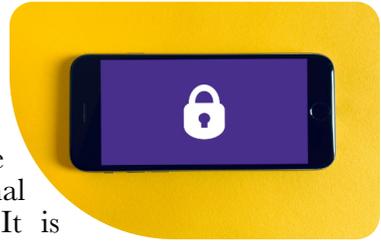
2.

3.

4. Don't be afraid to change teachers. This is something I had problems with. I started with one teacher and then felt bad to quit. I wasn't really doing very well with the teacher and I felt like they did not care. Eventually I built up the courage and stopped. If you feel bad telling them, you can send them a message. Often when you join an online

video course you pay for a certain amount of lessons. Say you paid for 5 lessons. Use them up and then find another teacher. It feels terrible but this is your learning journey, your time and money. If you find you don't like the teacher, or you just don't get along well, change teachers. Try someone new and different and see how you go!

5. Most of all, have fun and enjoy making mistakes and learning together.
6. The last point is don't share private or personal info with them. No matter how close you get, you don't know them. They could be anywhere in the world. Keep your lessons professional and focused on language learning. It is better to be safe than sorry.



Applications



I have not used the word mobile here because nowadays there are many apps for computers as well. I will not even begin to tell you of some of the cool apps that are out there to learn. If you want to know some, feel free to check out my blog posts on apps or just google the best apps to learn Japanese.

There are so many and what I think is the best app, may not be what you like. I have tried so many apps. If you want to focus on listening there is an app for that. If you want to do flashcards and vocabulary, there is an app for that. If you want to do reading, there is an app for that.

Don't try to find an app that teaches everything but one that teaches the one thing you want to focus on.

For example, I have some apps I love for practising Kanji. I have apps I

like for grammar and others for listening and speaking practice. When I want to work on Kanji I go to that app. If it's reading I use another etc.

I do recommend that you learn to search for apps in Japanese. Many of the best apps are not in English. If you want to learn Japanese, there are some amazing apps that are all in Japanese and made for the Japanese market. They are great for things like Kanji and children's stories. Some are paid and others free. Shop around, download some, use them keep the ones you like and delete the ones you don't like. I do recommend that you group your apps into a folder or onto one screen so you are not always looking all over the place for them.

**Learn to search
in Japanese for
apps!**



Please use apps as a tool, and not as the only way to learn Japanese. The next chapter will cover this more in-depth but for now, think of technology as a tool to learn Japanese.

Your phone

Your phone is one of the best learning tools you have! From the camera to the apps that can be installed to the voice recording abilities you have, they can all be stuck into your pocket and carried anywhere.



Have you ever wondered how you sound when you speak Japanese? Well, why not try recording yourself, read something or say something and then listen back to what you said. I know you may hate your own voice, but by listening again and again you can get to learn what you did well and where you should improve. You can even get a native speaker to say something for you and then play it back and practice mimicking them.

Then there is your camera. This is one of the coolest Japanese learning tools you have! This is when you might be out and you see something you

are not sure out, but you are too busy to look it up. Take a photo and email the photo to yourself or set a reminder to look it up when you get home. You can even show the pictures in your language sessions with a study buddy and that could be the topic of your lessons. *‘All the cool things I found and don’t know the meaning of them’.*



YouTube

I am not sure how much needs saying on this, but YouTube is a super powerful tool. There are billions of videos on millions of topics. Google your questions and most times you will find someone has made a video on that topic. It might be a grammar point or how to pronounce something. The great thing is most of this is all free! Free great language training you can watch and learn anywhere!



There is also a warning about using YouTube. As useful as YouTube is, it is also **a huge time waster**. You may have the greatest intention of going on to watch a video to better your Kanji, but you may end up watching how the miniature flies of Antarctica can fly a million miles to reach the northern hemisphere. *(A made up example but you get my point!)* If you are going to use YouTube as a tool you need to be very strict with yourself on just watching what you are going to watch and getting out of there before you get lost.

If you do find that you tend to get sidetracked, depending on the device you are using you can set a timer on the app. After 10 minutes *(Or whatever time you set)* it shuts down for the day. This may help you stay focused on the learning objective.

Social media

There are many social media apps and sites you can connect with the world at large. Many of these like Facebook and Instagram have options to follow others and to join different groups. This is a great way to connect with like minded people who are also learning and interested in what you are interested in.



Like YouTube, it is important to think of these as tools. You can spend hours chatting and doing nothing. If you join a group use it as a tool. post questions and then help others if you notice something you know that someone is asking. They are a great source of information when you are studying.

There is one thing to be aware of, these groups are full of people who are interested in learning languages. They will most likely not be perfect at the language and so when you ask questions don't take everything as 100% correct. People will be sharing what they know. It is good to see what replies you get and if you feel confused by the replies you might want to take your question elsewhere.

Like any tool, they have their uses and there are also times where they can hinder your language learning.

Pick and choose the ones that work best for the situation you need to use them. Read on to chapter 7. In chapter 7 you will learn some more amazing tools that are often not used but can be better than any smartphone or digital tool available!

Disconnecting from technology
regularly will help you earn
Japanese faster!

-Aaron Nagasaka-



DON'T USE TECHNOLOGY TO LEARN JAPANESE



Amazing tools that can boost your Japanese learning!

In this chapter we are going to explore some exciting things. But this chapter will be very different to chapter 6!

Where possible do not use technology to learn Japanese!

I know some of you are probably thinking, 'Wait, in the last chapter you just said to use technology and now you are saying not to use it?'. This is true. I am an advocate for technology. I love to use technology, but I also don't like the overuse of it. There are so many cool things we can do with technology that sometimes we forget that some of the most effective ways to learn are best done without technologies help. Let's have a look.

I know I might sound old, but when I started learning Japanese I didn't have the technology. I didn't have the option and so I didn't know the difference. Lets fast forward a few years to when I was studying at the University of Tasmania. Smartphones were pretty much everywhere and computers were fast and powerful.

I had a few electives that I needed to fill. I thought it would be fun to do graphic design as it is something I have always enjoyed. The Art campus was right on the waterfront in an old Jam factory. The atmosphere was fun and I had some great teachers. The first year we were all sitting in class excited to



jump on a computer and begin designing some cool things, the teachers came in and talked about the course and then said, for the first year you will not touch a computer. In my head and I am pretty sure others were like **'We what?' 'No computers, how do we do graphic design?'**. They wanted us to understand what graphic design truly was and how it really works. And so for the first year we didn't touch a computer. Everything was hand made, drawn and designed. This taught us the importance of what design was all about.

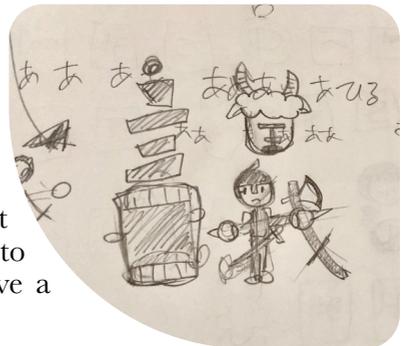
Don't get sucked into technology

You might laugh, but a large amount of Japanese education is all about paper and using their hands to write and learn. Japan might create a lot of technology and cool things, but that does not mean they use them. There are so many traditional ways to learning, some are great, others are outdated and not all that good. But when you are learning to write characters it is important to step back from what technology can do and allow your hand to hold a pencil or a pen and sense what it is like to write without the aid of technology.



It is so easy to become trapped in the mindset that you need this and that to learn, but if you want to keep things simple some of the best things are a paper-based dictionary, paper and a pen. I personally like to use blank paper with no lines. It allows me to be free and to explore the language more.

Try going tech-free and see what it is like to study Japanese. It will force you to think of new ways to learn, it will force you to think of creative things to do to learn and remember what you are studying. Rather than living on what others have created sometimes it is best to go find your own path, explore and have a look around.



I remember one time I travelled to Hiroshima and then caught a train down to go and see Ikutsushima Shrine. I caught the ferry across to the island and walked over to the huge Toori in the water. There were many school children taking photos and other tourists around. I took some fun photos before the water came in and then walked up away from where the tourists were.



I found a small path and headed up the hill. The autumn leaves had fallen, it was a bit cloudy and super beautiful. Not a leaf had been disturbed and there was no one around. I climbed up the hill and looked out over the bay and I could see the town below. It got me thinking that

often we just follow what everyone else is doing. We often only see the tourist spots and because of that we miss some of the more beautiful places around. From that day onward I have always tried to explore the small narrow streets that are quiet, beautiful and rich in natural history rather than just following the tourists.



The same goes for studying Japanese. Sometimes we get so tied up in a textbook or technology that we forget that there is a whole other world out there waiting to be explored.

Japanese is a rich language with many amazing hidden paths that can be followed. By stepping back from technology we can allow our brain the opportunity to begin exploring those hidden paths.

Learn to write in a book

When it comes to learning to write I would recommend going for a paper book. Something you can write in. There are many studies about how important it is for your brain to hold a pencil and learn to write characters.



You will not only learn them quicker when you

handwrite them, but because you are using your body to create them, you will also remember them longer. I recommend that you spend time learning each character.

1 Character

休

2 Pronunciation/ Meaning

キユウ へ to rest
やす-む へ

3 Vocabulary/ Meaning

休み - to rest
休日 - holiday

4 Pull apart

亻 木

5 Visual

亻 = 人 
木 = 木 

6 Make a story

A person is resting next to a tree - to rest

Say you want to learn a new kanji. First, look up the character, and try writing it in your notebook. Make sure you know its meaning and how to pronounce it. I would then recommend that you try and find some words that use the character. Make sure you know their meanings as well. Now that you know what the character means and how to read it, let's learn the character.

Pull the Kanji apart. (*Most Kanji are made up of other kanji. Knowing some of the more common different parts will make kanji much faster to learn. It might be slow to start with but in the long run, the invested time now will pay off.*)

With your pen or pencil write the different parts, try drawing some pictures about the parts, and try turning your character into a picture. Make it as visual as possible. Lastly make a story about the character. This will help you remember the character longer. This also makes learning Kanji a lot of fun.



It is now a good idea to practice writing the character a couple of times, but not too many. Give yourself time, play with it, and practice saying the character and the words associated with it. Then give yourself some time away from it, come back and see if you remember it. Repeat this process over a day or two and you will be amazed at not only how much you remember, but how much longer you retain the information.

Having a book where you can be free in, is vital to be able to do this!

Journal writing

This is one of the best things you can do to improve your Japanese! This is a non-digital Japanese journal. A place where you can write about anything but in Japanese.

Try writing about the day. Use new words you have learnt and have fun.

Don't worry about being perfect or even being correct, just use what you know. Some people believe you should only write correct sentences, I don't believe so. I am a big believer in actually using what you know. If you are always worried about being 100% correct just like speaking your progress will be much slower. Just like a baby. Parents do not correct their child each time they fall over or try to say a new word. Instead they praise them, smile and laugh at the funny things they say.

If you want someone to correct what write you can, but you don't have to. Over time you will self-correct many small mistakes as long as you learn correct Japanese and are open to being corrected, you will improve! Don't feel like you have to fix everything.



If you look back to when you were a child in primary school your English was pretty bad. Your teacher did not try and fix everything, rather they praised you for the work you did. Look at the picture I did in grade one. It is hard to even know what was written. But the teacher praised me for my work. Just like your mother-tongue, the more you use your Japanese the better you will get!



How to do journal writing?

1. First, buy a journal. I recommend you buy a hard covered book, but it is up to you. It is important to buy something you like and feel comfortable opening and using.
2. Open up and write the days date. I also like to write the day as well.
3. Then begin writing. You can write one sentence or ten sentences. It is all up to you.
4. That's it! Have fun, stick things in your journal, draw and just enjoy the experience of playing around and writing in Japanese. I still have half of my first ever Japanese candy in my journal. It has melted a bit over the years but it is still there.



Don't worry too much about how to write as much as just doing it. Take the time, and enjoy using your Japanese.

● ACTION STEPS

Before moving on, find or buy a book that can become your Japanese journal. If all you have is lined paper, that is fine. As long as it is something you can use and that you can go to each day, or every-other day to write in and practice using your Japanese.

What does going tech-free do?

Going tech-free. This is an interesting thing. I am not saying never use technology to learn. I am a big advocate for it, and I use it daily. The Japanese dictionary on my phone is one of the most used apps I have. But there is a special feeling of not being tied down by batteries and cables.



Your brain works differently and you will find that if you always use an electronic dictionary you will learn less. By using a paper dictionary your brain is forced to try and remember more. This is one of my most used Kanji dictionaries. I have carried and used this for almost 20 years. Going tech-free helps free up your creativity and allows you to think more freely.

Talk to real people



In the previous chapter we talked about the amazing benefits of video calls. There is a huge downside to this though. While they are super convenient and they allow you to talk to anyone anywhere in the world, you do miss out on a lot of learning opportunities.

When you meet someone in person you get a lot more out of the conversation. It is not just the language that you are learning but the culture, the mannerisms and the different things and ways Japanese people move, act and speak. By meeting someone face to face you get to see their body language, mimic them and you get to learn on a much deeper level. Where possible try to meet real people. I would also suggest that you try to do different things.

Do things like:

- Going for walks
- Having a coffee or hot chocolate
- Having a meal together
- Go sightseeing
- Visit art galleries



- Visit museums
- Go to botanical gardens and parks

Think of things that do not cost money but allow you to talk and chat about a wide variety of things. As you meet take a notepad or something to take notes on. Your phone would work well for this, but make sure you have something for notes. You will hear many new words and talk about all kinds of things. Don't miss the opportunity to learn.

Let's review chapter 7

1. Don't get sucked into the technology only path when learning Japanese
2. Use paper and a pen, take time to explore the language
3. Write in a journal at least once a week, but daily if possible. The more frequent you write the more you will learn
4. Talk to real people, this will teach you much about the culture and language that you cannot get from video calls.

● ACTION STEPS

Look for opportunities to explore the language. Before you move onto the next chapter take some time to think about some aspects of Japanese that you are interested in. What things would you like to know more about?

Write your thoughts in the box below.

Growing anything takes time.
Those who put in the most time
get the most delicious fruits.

The more time you invest, the
better your Japanese will become!

-Aaron Nagasaka-

EXPERIMENT

WITH LEARNING JAPANESE



Most people give up before tasting the fruits of learning!

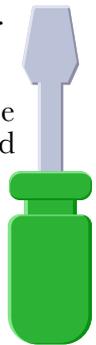
I want to congratulate you on getting this far. You have either read the last eight chapters or you are skipping around reading what interests you the most. Either way congratulations. The sad thing is many people will give up before they even get to taste the fruits of their learning.

It is a bit like a farmer who wants to grow apples. They prepare the soil, plant the seed and then they help the tree to grow. Growing the apple tree takes many years. What would happen if the farmer gave up? They would never get to taste the delicious apples. The same goes for learning Japanese. If you give up after a few months you will never taste the fruit!

The truth is, it's not hard, it's just different and learning Japanese requires action. Action will only come from understanding why you are learning the language and then working on your broken down mini goals.

Do not get stuck on one learning method

Learning a language is an amazing experience and a lot of fun. But there is a problem, we often get stuck using the same tools again and again. We forget that there are many, many ways to learn a language. There are many tools in the shed that can be used, but often we just go to the shed, take out the same tools and use them. Some of this comes from fear. We are afraid that if we change it may not work. So before you move on I want you to quickly write down all the current tools that you have. These tools might be things like dictionaries, iPad, books, textbooks etc. Write down everything **you** currently have. Don't worry about what is available, just write the tools you have.



● ACTION STEPS

Write the tools you have to learn Japanese.

Toolbox

Okay, now I want you to have a look at the below box. Here you can see a few more tools that are available. This list is not everything, but it is a start. **What tools can you take from this toolbox and add to your own toolbox?**

Dictionaries/ books/ computer/ tablet/ phone/ teacher/ friends/ students/ library/ internet/ apps/ Facebook/ Instagram/ Youtube/ Vimeo/ google images/ Pinterest/ language exchanges/ University study groups/ language groups/ workshops/ seminars/ blogs/ twitter/ online videos/ online music/ music/ electronic dictionaries/ thesaurus/ Japanese kokugo dictionaries/ children's books/ second hand bookstores/ online bookstores/ local restaurants/ video chats/ video calls/ Skype/ Zoom/ FaceTime/ Facebook messenger/ local community groups/ Japanese society groups/ Japanese associations/ texting/ cultural workshops/ overseas travel/ virtual tours/ google street view/ flashcards/ language courses/ night courses/ mind mapping/ volunteering/ and many more!

When you start to get bored of what you are doing, this is a signal that it is time to change things up. Do something different. Learning a language is a journey, and a process. If you only ever do the same things, then you

can only expect to get the same results. Change things up, play around and experiment with new ideas. If something does not work, see what worked and move on. Go to the shed and pick some different tools to use.



Learn to learn from others

This is one of the most important things you can do! I have seen many people and even I have struggled with this. We all will at some point experience this. Someone who might be younger or older will be telling us or sharing how to do something and we ignore them because we know better, only to find out an hour, a day a week even a month later, that had we listened we actually would have saved time money or that embarrassing experience, had we listened!



Some of us do this and learn from it, but others always think they know what's best, they know what is right even when they are not even close to the truth, they don't want to admit that they were wrong. They always know everything even when they have no idea. I am sure we all know someone like that, haha it may even be you.

As a learner of Japanese, I want and be open to learning, you know and allow others If you cover your cup and everything, you miss out on learning journey.



you to empty out your cup Empty out what you think to help teach you. think that you know what could be an amazing

Just recently I was watching a personal development program by Tony Robbins and he mentioned that he went to every Jim Rohn event he could (*Jim Rohn was an amazing personal development speaker*). Tony Robbins mentioned how he would take tones of notes on everything that was being taught even though he had heard the stories before, even though he

knew most of the lines word for word. But what stuck out to me was he said that he always walked away learning something new. You may have been studying Japanese for years, months or just days. But there is always more you can learn.

Read, study and learn

If there is one thing that you can do to boost your Japanese, I would recommend you learn to read. I know most people will complain that this is slow and takes a lot of time. But I never said to read a book a day, just to read something, anything, small or big, learn to get into the habit of reading every day. This will help boost not only your reading but your writing, your characters, your grammar and if you read out loud your pronunciation as well.

I realised this when I was attempting to read a 600+ page book. Yes, when I was reading page one I was excited, by page five it felt like I would never finish. At that time I was living in Sydney in some apartments near the city. I used to take my book and sit on the balcony and read every day out loud for 10-15 minutes.



When I first started, it was slow and I had no idea what I was reading. As time went on, I began to get quicker and understand more. I did have the bonus that I had read the book in English. So I would read a name and instantly be able to guess the situation. After many months I eventually finished the book. during the time, my speaking, listening and writing ability all improved.

When you study one thing it spills over into other parts of your language learning. The more you can read, write and LEARN FROM OTHERS, the faster you will not only improve but also feel confident about yourself and using Japanese. That is the ultimate goals, to have confidence. When you begin to feel confident you



will use the language more, you will speak more, you will do more and the improvement cycle begins. If you lose confidence you will do less, you will learn less and the backwards cycle begins.

● ACTION STEPS

If you ever get into a backward cycle, try this one thing to help you out of it. Stop whatever you are doing and say **'I am going to do ____ for the next five minutes.'** and fill in the blank. Stop what you are doing and do it. Only for five minutes, no more or less. As soon as you do that, you will instantly feel better about yourself.

Repeat this once or twice a day and you will begin the cycle of Japanese confidence again.

One good idea could change everything!

'Ideas are great, but it is acting on the ideas that bring about change' Some people have a lot of ideas, but no action. If you have an amazing idea and do nothing with it, someone else may get the same idea, take action and then get all the credit for it. I remember reading a story about someone who had an amazing idea to build a product. They did nothing with the idea and years later they were out shopping when they saw their idea in a shop window. **If you don't act, that idea will be given to someone else!**



One night I was walking home from work and I had this thought to do something. I said to myself 'I will write it down when I get home' (*I had my phone I could have written it there and then, but I didn't!*). I got home and was busy doing things when the thought came again. I said to myself 'I will write it down later'. The next day I had the same thought. I said to myself 'Oh, I must write that down.' I went upstairs to my office, I sat down, opened up my journal **and nothing.** I had no idea what the

thought was. I thought about it again and again, and still to this day I have no idea what it was. It left, and I missed an opportunity. Don't be like me. Act on thoughts and ideas you have. You may just have an idea to try learning Japanese in a particular way that could change the way we study the language.

Unless you take action you will never know.

As you learn Japanese you will have many ideas on ways to change your study, or how to learn better. Write them down and act on them. You never know where they could lead you to.

Share what you learn with others

Sharing is one of the quickest ways to learn. I learnt many years ago, that if you want to learn faster, get good at sharing what you learn. The more you share what you learn the longer it will last. Get good at sharing new information, new vocabulary and grammar with others. As you get good at teaching what you have just learned you will remember it more. It is said that 'the teacher learns more than the student'.



I remember when I first learned this. My teacher said that the more you teach others what you learn when learning Japanese the better you will recall the information later. I took this to heart and tried sharing what I had learnt. This sounds easier than it is in reality. Not everyone is going to want to listen to you every day to find out what you have learnt. But there are some fun other ways that you can share what you learn.

You don't have to share what you learn face to face with a real living human! There are many more ways. Have a look on the next page!

How to share what you learn

1. Start a blog
2. Get together with friends and classmates and have a sharing session to review and practise teaching each other what you learnt in class. This is a great way to review.
3. Teach your parents - they might like the idea at the beginning but this may not continue for long. It is however a great way to help them appreciate a new found love for Japanese that you have.
4. Go to social media and turn your daily posts into sharing what you have learnt. This will not only help you but others who might also be learning Japanese.
5. Keep a journal. Write and use what you learnt for the day in your journal
6. When you meet with your study buddy once a week try sharing with them for 10 minutes about what you learnt.
7. If you are doing video lessons share in your lesson what you have learned recently.

Remember, sharing does not need to be with people, but the idea is to use what you learn. The biggest problem with education is that often it is a one-way method. The teacher teaches and the student is meant to learn. The truth is education is meant to be a two-way method. I love the Japanese character 'teach' or '教' for this reason. Let's have a look at it. There are three main parts.

First is the character 'Earth' - (土)

Education should come from the heart of us. Rather than being something we are just teaching because it is our job, it should come from the very core of us. And if you think about the centre the earth is like the foundation of who we are. It's is a staple foundation of everything. A farmer cultivates the earth to grow healthy produce. We eat that produce to survive. The earth is the foundation for us to survive and live on.



Second is the character 'Child' - (子)

We should be like little children when it comes to learning. A child is open, willing and desires to learn and grow. They have a natural desire to learn and absorb information. Over time this desire can be depleted and squished out of them but as children, they love to learn and then play with what they learn. They don't need fancy textbooks or videos, but they do need to be engaged. A good teacher knows how to engage their students.



Third is the character 'Hit' - (打)

The last character or part means to hit. What does hitting have to do with learning, well no, we do not hit our students. But rather I see it as an action word. We must take action. Think of it as hitting your fits on the table to say, *"Yes I am going to learn this, this is great."*



Become good at learning and sharing and you will see a huge change in how you not only learn but also how much your Japanese grows.

The greedy learner

There is one last important thing about sharing what you learn. If you just keep everything you learn you may miss out on the opportunity to help someone else. Learning a language is a bit like hiking up and down hills and valleys, there are times we get it, and there are times it just goes straight over our head and we find ourselves at the bottom of a dark valley looking up wondering how to get out of there.



As you push forward you learn and as you learn you pull yourself out of the valley. You have now just built a bridge

over that problem, kanji or grammar principle. You have two choices here. You can keep that info for yourself and the next time you come to the same problem you already have a bridge and so there is no need to hike down into the valley. You could also share what you learnt and help someone else. Essentially you become a bridge-builder for Japanese. You get to help others who might be learning to not have to go down into the valley, they can cross your bridge and save themselves the time and effort.

This is what a teacher does, or should do. They should build bridges for their students, giving them the needed tools to learn the language. I do not think that they should build all the bridges, but they should provide their students with the tools to save you from falling into the valley of confusion and darkness.



The saying goes, the more you help others, the more you help yourself. Just like this book. I realised that I have 20 plus years of learning experience and I realised that most people go about teaching the language, but not many go about preparing to learn it. I hope this book has so far opened up your mind, given you some ideas and helped you feel that Japanese is an exciting journey to take. Try sharing and see how it goes.

● ACTION STEPS

What do you know that might be of assistance to someone else? Have a think and write it below.

Each amazing journey begins with
the first step.

-Aaron Nagasaka-



DON'T LET FEAR

STOP YOU LEARNING JAPANESE



Learning all starts with one small step!

This is an amazing time to be alive, to learn and to study. As we are nearing the end of this book, there are only two chapters left. I hope the last two chapters can help you on your learning journey. To help you be your best self while learning Japanese.

We each have one great weakness that can stop us from becoming great. This can stop us from progressing and enjoying the fruits of learning one of the best languages in the world. This weakness is called FEAR!

If you are anything like me, there have been times when you let fear stop you. I remember when I was in high school, there was a cute girl I liked. I had heard from her friend that she was also interested in me... but I was afraid to ask her out on a date. She is married with children now. I remember thinking how my high school years would have been so different. But I let fear stop me from taking action. Have you ever let fear stop you from doing something you wanted to do?

● ACTION STEPS

Use the space below and think back to a time when you let fear stop you from doing something? Be as honest as you can.

When did fear last stop you from doing something you wanted to do? This is an interesting topic but a very real problem for many people. Often we have things we want to do, say or become, but we let fear steal that opportunity and instead of taking that opportunity we let it slide.

This is not just for people who are shy or lack self-confidence, every human has had times where they have decided to give in to fear. So how do we overcome it and not let fear decide how we live our lives? The problem is uncomfortable and as humans, we don't like to leave our comfort zone. We like to be able to feel like we are in control and the things that are uncomfortable for us, we move away from.

How to begin to overcome fear in FIVE steps

STEP ONE

The first step to overcoming fear is to understand what fear is. Fear is a natural, powerful, and primitive human emotion. It involves a biochemical response as well as an emotional response. Fear alerts us to the presence of danger or the threat of harm, whether that danger is real or perceived.

Sometimes fear stems from real threats, but it can also originate from imagined dangers. If you are feeling fear when doing something stop and think about what that fear is. Is it physical or an emotional fear. Record what that fear is and then move onto step two.



STEP TWO

The next important thing to do is to understand why and when do you feel that way. In regards to learning Japanese understanding your 'WHY' and your 'GOALS' will help aid you in overcoming your fears. If you know why you want to do something then when you are faced with a

STEP THREE

Now that we have looked at what fear is, and you have written about when and why you feel fear, let's have a look at some ways to combat it.

Fear is not something new. It is not something that only you experience. Fear is something we all experience. I often feel fear, but I do not have to let it stop me doing something.

Just the other day I was at the river with my younger son. The water was very low and we were making our way up the river to get to an old bridge. We were jumping from rock to rock playing a game to see who gets wet feet first. We got to a point where the bigger rocks stopped and we had to make a leap from one rock to another. I all of a sudden felt fear. I knew I could make it, but fear set in.

My son asked “Do you think we can make it?” Wanting to help him not feel afraid I said “Of course we can make it!” He replied, “But what happens if we don't?” I thought about it and replied “What is the worst thing that could happen? You slip, fall off the rock, get wet and then get carried down stream.” (*The water was not that strong*), I continued, “It just means you won't need bath.” We then laughed and looked at the jump. The worst thing that could happen was I get wet. I made the jump and was fine. He then jumped and only just made it getting his sandals wet a little. It was a great learning experience for both of us.



themselves for their game or race. Mentally preparing is great, but it must be combined with 'ACTION'. Then doing the thing you visualise. First take small steps, overcome small fears and then build up to work on the big ones. Many fears we have are made up and not true. This can be, because we have perceived something incorrectly or we have overthought a problem making it bigger than it really is.

**Break your
fear into
smaller
steps**

AT A TIME

STEP

SMALL

ONE

**THEN
TAKE
ACTION!**

● ACTION STEPS

Think of something you fear or hesitate to do. Write it below. Then break up the fear. Pull it apart. What is the worst thing that could happen if you did it. Write mini steps you can take to overcome it.

STEP FOUR



Breath. Learning to control your breathing. If you can't physically close your eyes, imagine yourself closing your eyes and breath. This will help you when you are feeling nervous or fearful. Slow your breathing and breath deeper. Relax your body stand up or sit up straight. Feel strong, breath out and in, see yourself feeling confident, breath out and in, smile and feel confident. You are the best you, you have the courage

to take action. You are not the old you. The old you was afraid to take action but not you. You are not going to let old fears block your future. Breath out, and in. Slowly but confidently. Breath out and in three times. As you breath out see your fears and weaknesses disappear. As you breath in feel new confidence and strength entering your body. Then stand up and take action. As soon as you take action you will realise the thing you feared was nine times out of ten not all that bad. You can do anything you put your mind to, but you must then take action!



STEP FIVE



Act regularly. Doing small acts each day will help you overcome your fear. Most fears we have are made up or only partially true. The fear of talking on the phone, the fear of public speaking, most of it is a mental block or a self-doubting belief we have. Assess your fear and then do small things to put you out of your comfort zone. Do it enough and that fear will become less. It may never go away, but you will become stronger dealing with it.

● ACTION STEPS

What can you begin today to take action on a fear you have. Write three things you can do today to take action.

1.

2.

3.

Get used to stepping out of your comfort zone

We each have a comfort zone. We each are happy where we are, or so we think. But to tell you the truth, often when we say we are happy or comfortable, deep down there is something we wish we could do.

When I was in High school on exchange in Japan. I so desperately wanted to talk more with the students. I wanted to talk more, have more fun and go out and do things with them. I however am not an extrovert and so doing such things was hard. I was too shy and didn't know how to push myself out of my comfort zone.

It was not until the last day of my school year in Japan. That's right the last day, I had enough confidence to hang out with different students. AHHHH! It was so much fun. Remember that girl I liked and she liked me, I was too shy to approach her. I also felt bad leaving after a year, but at the same time, I used that as an excuse! I missed out on many opportunities because of feeling afraid or fearful.

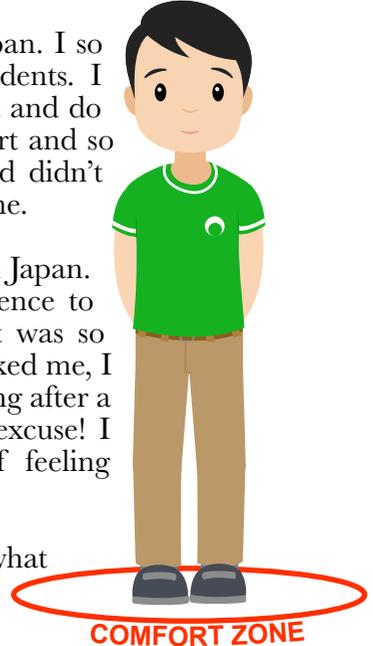
But looking back and accessing the situation, what was I really afraid of?

- Was it looking stupid?
- Was it not knowing what to say?
- Was it fearing others may laugh?
- Was it not knowing how to act?

It was probably a combination of several of them. But looking at the situation now, if only I could have grabbed that 17 year old me and said,

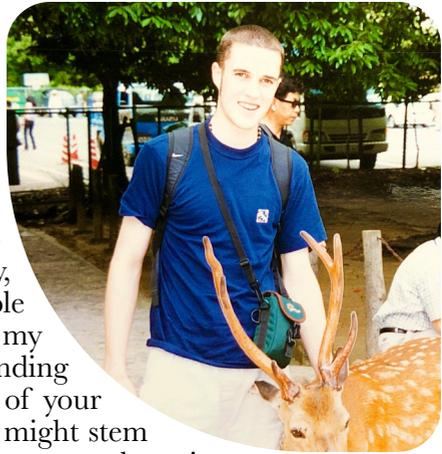
“Hey Aaron, they don't really care how if you make a mistake, they don't care how bad your Japanese is! They actually want to talk with you and become friends. They want to talk and have fun.

Not approaching them is actually robbing not only yourself of an amazing opportunity but also them of one. You are missing out on making lasting friendships and memories! For their sake, smile, laugh and try to talk with them.”



Think about what your fear is. Do you need to step out of your comfort zone? That is up to you! I wish I had of. Understanding what it is that holds you back is important.

Understanding this will make your life easier. The next time you have the opportunity to talk in Japanese or to meet someone, instead of shying away, stop and ask what is the worst possible thing that could go wrong? What is my why for learning Japanese? Understanding these things will help you realise a lot of your fear is just a made-up idea. This idea might stem from a bad experience in the past, from you not knowing what to say or do. But that does not mean it is correct.



Facing your fears and taking new steps to change how you are, you will open up new paths new options and new experiences. There are a few small things you can do to change it all up.

When you walk into a room and you are feeling afraid, breath deep, stand up straight, put your shoulders back and smile, greet people and try then try to find someone and go chat with them. See how you feel. When you do it once, the second time will be much better.

People are not all that scary.

Take control and you will be okay.

I remember in Japan. I was team-teaching with another teacher. She was held up and so I had to start the class. I could have gone into the room shy and not sure what to do, or I could have done what I had previously mentally prepared to do.



I walked in smiled at everyone, looked around and then asked everyone to stand up and we began the class. I had nothing prepared and so I pulled out my vocab book and began testing the students on new words that were learning. It was not much, but I was in charge of not only myself, my thoughts, my actions but also the class. They did not know the difference, and all 40 pairs of eyes didn't even really care what was happening. But only because I was in charge of myself, it was so much easier.

Then a few weeks later I walked to the fourth floor of the school and the bell went. I walked into the classroom expecting the usual teacher to join me as he always did. Well he didn't show. I Started off the lesson with a small activity and he still didn't show. So what did I do? I simply took control of the situation. But before I took control of the situation I needed to be in control of myself. I



smiled inside and thought 'I have no idea where he is, it is not normal for him to be late. I will just teach what we had planned.' I had no materials printed so I got them to get into groups and work from their textbooks and use note paper to do the work.

Did the entire lesson go perfectly? Not really. Did that matter? Not really! Was it a great learning experience and would I do it again? Yes, it was a great learning experience and I would do it again!

But also I learned another great lesson about fear. Often it is worse in our minds than it is in reality!

Face your fear. It is not as bad as you have made it up to be!

Let's review chapter 9

1. How to overcome fear in five steps
2. Get used to stepping out of your comfort zone.
3. Don't let fear rule your life
4. Face your fears
5. Fear is often not as bad as it seems in your mind

● ACTION STEPS

List one fear below that you want to work on in relation to Japanese. Describe the fear and when you feel it most. See the fear and see yourself overcoming it. Remember the two wolves. The one you feed is the one that wins. Feed fear or feed your confidence. List little things you can do to work on overcoming the fear and go and act on them. Come back and record your success and failures. Learn from them and keep trying.

● IMPORTANT NOTE

I am not a doctor or a psychologist. I understand there are many different fears people have. Some fears and conditions need professional help and even medication to overcome. If you are working with a professional please follow their advice. I am speaking from my personal experience and what has worked for me. Feel free to try it, see if it works for you. If it does great! If not, don't worry. Change things up and try something else. Be wise and don't do anything unwise or dangerous!

Keep your map close by.

-Aaron Nagasaka-

WHERE TO NOW?

ON YOUR JAPANESE LEARNING JOURNEY



Where are you now on your Japanese learning journey?

Wow! You are on the last chapter of this book. I hope that this has been an amazing eye-opener and help to you beginning your Japanese journey. If you are a teacher helping others learn Japanese I hope that it has been a help to you to better help your students prepare to learn Japanese.

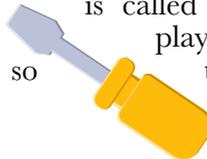


I love learning Japanese. I love the language, the culture, the food and the history. There are so many amazing things to learn. However where is the best place to start from now. If you have been studying or teaching Japanese for a while where to start from now?

This book is not designed to take anything away from what you know. It has been designed to add more to what you already know.

The best place to start learning Japanese is where you are right now!

To help you on your Japanese language learning journey I would love to share with you something that I think will greatly help. It is something that I just recently learnt. It is called the 'Clarity Tool' From Dean Graziosi. I want you to play along and see how you go. I have tweaked it a little so that it works for learning Japanese.



The Japanese clarity tool

Your current Japanese language status

Please follow along and fill in the areas below. Write down below where you are at the different areas of Japanese. Please be completely honest with yourself (*you do not have to show this to anyone!*)

● ACTION STEPS

What do you really want out of learning Japanese?

How is your Japanese speaking ability?

How is your Japanese reading ability?

Your one-year Japanese goal

It's one year from now, where do you want to be with your Japanese? Write this as though you have already achieved it and are looking back smiling at all you have accomplished.

● ACTION STEPS

How is your Japanese speaking ability one year on?

How is your Japanese reading ability one year on?

How is your Japanese listening ability one year on?

How is your Japanese writing ability one year on?

Study what you love!

When learning something this is super important. You may have a class and you may need to learn certain vocabulary and grammar, but if you can link them to what you are interested in you will not only learn faster but want to do the study!

So for example say you love history. You are obsessed with Japanese history, but you must learn 20 new words this week. Why not try and use those words and write about Japanese history. Use the words turn them into something you love. go looking for things about history, read and look for the words you are learning.



As you learn, make it into a game, making it fun and interesting is so important. If you just write the new vocabulary ten times, sure you will pass the test the next day, but those vocabulary will not be placed into your Japanese brain. They go into what I call the **'holding box'**. 'The holding' box is a place for cramming. When you cram information it is stored in the 'holding box' for a short time. The holding box can be very useful, but it is small and when it gets full, any information is overwritten with new information. You may get a day or two out of it, a week if you are lucky and then the info is gone. What you need to do is get the info out of the holding box and place it into your Japanese brain before it is lost. The holding is only good for temporary information. Have you ever asked someones name and then forgotten it? Thats because it went into the holding box and then was quickly over ridden with new information.



You can however skip using the 'holding box' altogether and instead place it straight into your brain. It does take a bit more work, a bit longer to do, but the benefits are that the info is stored on your Japanese brain. Any information stored in your Japanese brain will last much longer.

Start with something! Anything!

Sometimes students will come and ask “Where do I start?”, or “What is the best place to start learning a language?”. These are valid questions. I would suggest you start with your why first, set some goals and then pick something you are interested in, remember the mind map? Start with that, start with anything and just begin to expand on it. Start with basic sentences, some grammar to help you make basic sentences and then it is all about building upon what you know and expanding from there.



It is a bit like building a house. You do not start with the walls first. First you start with an idea, then a plan and then you begin digging to make the foundations. Don't try to build the walls before you have even drawn up a plan.

A little each day

As we near the end of this book some may be wondering about the actual language education.

- Where is the best place to learn?
- How much to learn each day?
- Should I learn online?
- Should I learn at a school?
- My school doesn't teach Japanese
- Japanese looks way too hard!

Let's have a look at the above dot points in a bit more detail.



Where is the best place to learn?

The best place to learn is a hard question. This is because it all comes down to what is your ‘why’ your ‘reason’ and your ‘goal to learn’. If you want to just do it for fun, then online is a great place to start. If you want to do it for work or business then a course might be the best way to start. You may want to use a tutor first instead of a class etc.



Before deciding where is the best place, I would suggest deciding your reason for learning. This will better help you know where is the best place to study Japanese. There is however one great place! If you have the chance, come to Japan and study via immersion. I do strongly recommend that you do a bit of preparation. Coming to Japan with zero understanding of the language, culture or history could be challenging experience.

How much to learn each day?

This question is better answered with ‘***how much do you want to learn?***’ I would say study as much as you can and as much as you want to learn. Studying once a week will get you once a week results while studying once a day for 5 minutes will give 5 minutes a day results. This is not bad! It is better to study a little each day than one a week. I would recommend that at least 15 minutes a day is best. AT LEAST! The more the better.

You may think you don’t have any time, but I can guarantee if I was to take your phone away from you, you could probably find at least 15 minutes a day. While writing this book I started watching a youtube video only to end up wasting 40 minutes learning about how orca kill other whales. Interesting but also a total waste of time. We can easily waste half an hour watching videos on Instagram without even noticing it. 15 minutes is not hard to make. You will need to make the time. This will mean stopping/reducing one activity/thing for another.

When you study Japanese you need to create a new habit. Our days are generally already full of habits. Some good some bad. In order to add a new habit into our day, we need to get rid of another. Have a look at your daily schedule and think about what you can reduce or eliminate to make way for Japanese.

● ACTION STEPS

Write below what habit or habits you can get rid of or reduce to make time to learn Japanese.

Should I learn online?



This all depends on your situation. Some study better online while others are better with a textbook or a class. If you are just starting out, online is a fun way to get your feet wet, to test the water and to begin. But it does not mean you have to have all your study online. There is nothing wrong with having a mix of different approaches.

As you begin, it is good to have a class a set structure or time that you are forced to study. The class could be online or in person. The reason for this is the 'honeymoon' period. Once this is over and your motivation drops a bit, if you are attending a class it will help you keep up with learning Japanese.

Should I learn at a school?

If you have the opportunity to learn at school, I would recommend you take the opportunity, but do not base all your learning on what the school teaches. Often school teachers are not native. Their language skills are often basic to medium and they can only help you to a certain point in your language learning. They do their best and they try their hardest. They know enough to teach and to help you, but in the long run, you want to think of them as beginning guides not as the map to learning Japanese. If you are lucky and have a native Japanese teacher listen to them and learn as much as you can from them. Try your hardest to be their number one student. The better you are the more help they will want to give you.



It can be hard for teachers. They may have lived in Japan, studied there or just love the language. They know enough to teach the basics of Japanese, which will help you pass all your tests in school. Living out of Japan can make it hard for them to keep up their skills. Help them where you can, support them and learn as much as you can from them. But remember that they are a guide on your journey.

If you are a Japanese teacher at a school, I feel your pain. I understand your frustrations. Having been a language teacher and watched many language teachers teach I know you do your best. I know it can be hard living out of the country and trying to keep up your skills. Do your best to keep up your skills. You do not need to be perfect! I came to understand this living in Japan. I spent time observing native Japanese people and realised they make mistakes as well. They forget Kanji and mess up when they read and write. The idea of being perfect is wrong!

Do not try to be perfect at Japanese, be your better best!

My school doesn't teach Japanese!

If your school does not offer Japanese, look around, ask your teachers. Your school may offer language via distance education. If this is the case you might be like me, the only student in your school taking Japanese. There are many online recourses, apps, and other things you can do as well. I would suggest asking your school teachers/guidance councillors what options are available.



If you live in a tiny town in the middle of know where, don't worry. Think out of the box. Get creative and try taking some online classes. Be self motivated, which is what language learning is. Someone cannot force you to learn, that desire has to come from within!

Japanese looks way too hard!

This is something we have covered before but remember, Japanese is not hard, it's just different. Give it time. Give yourself the time and space to learn and trust that you can do this.

It is not hard, it's just different!

Starting out learning anything can be perceived to be hard. Remember your spiders web, remember your mind map and posters, if you didn't do them go back and begin playing with the language. Don't get sucked into the 'EVERYTHING IS HARD' trap. It is not hard, it's just different!

Every time you go to say something is hard, stop yourself and change it to something positive. It is like trying to build a lego set with millions of tiny pieces and not using the instruction booklet. People will complain it is hard, but if they were to pick up the instruction book and follow the simple steps they would be able to complete the set. The same goes for Japanese. 'Take it one step at a time'

Look in the mirror

In the last part of this book, I want to focus on **YOU!** To do this I want you to follow along. Grab your phone or a mirror. If you are using your phone open the camera app and flip the screen so you can see yourself! If you are using a mirror just look at it.



As you look at yourself, I want you to look past your faults, don't sit there and pick at your face. Own it! Smile, be happy that you have this amazing face. Be grateful for it. For your nose, your eyes and ears. Your hair, no matter if it is straight, or curly, long or short. Be grateful for what you have. Take a deep breath in and smile slowly exhaling.



Now please look again at your face but this time go deeper, pass through the skin to what's inside. Be grateful for your brain, its ability to learn and your opportunity to learn Japanese.

Be grateful for who you are and what you have. Own it, own yourself and smile. You may not have a face like a filtered Instagram model who took 100 pics to get the perfect angle with the perfect lighting. You don't need to have such a face. When you get old it is only going to get wrinkly and sag anyway. Be happy you have what you have.

Next, I want you to take one last look at yourself and then move your gaze downwards to your heart.

Accept that you are amazing! You possess all the needed skills to begin Japanese. Your skills may not be perfect but those are enough to start. As you go on you will learn more, your skills will improve and you will become not only smarter but better at learning Japanese.



Let's review chapter 10

1. Where are you now?
2. Study what you love
3. Start with something! Anything!
4. A little each day
5. Choose to make this journey an amazing one!

● ACTION STEPS

As this is the last chapter of the book, there is one action step I would like you to take. Grab your planner, your phone calendar or a paper calendar. On the calendar, fast forward 1 month and put a mark to review one chapter of the book. Do this for the next month and so on. Come back to this book month after month and review where you are and how you are going. Repetition is vital to learning anything. See what you may have missed and what can help you progress further on in your Language learning.

ONE FINAL NOTE

If you were sitting here opposite me I wish I could somehow help you feel and know that you can do this! That you can do anything you put your mind to. Learning Japanese is like learning anything. Take it one small chunk at a time. Ignore the negative thoughts and people. Don't give up. Japan is a magical country with so many amazing things. Yes it has its problems, but then again so does any country.



Hold onto your dream!

If you are a teacher, please do all you can to inspire your students! Because of what my first teacher did, I got inspired. I wish she had of better prepared me to learn the language, but she probably did not know

about preparing her students to learn a language. I loved some of the things she did and it got me interested. It kindled a tiny flame. It was then up to me to keep that flame going. If you are a teacher do your best to ignite your students flames. You never know where it will lead to.

The direction of my life changed because of learning Japanese at school. I have been able to help children all around the world because I could speak Japanese.



I had the opportunity to spend four years helping to design and build an online learning program while working with a Japanese company in Australia. I got to film, edit, create illustrations and animations, record and direct the project. That program has been sold all over the globe.

This only happened because I could speak Japanese. So many cool doors have opened up because I could speak Japanese. You never know what will happen in the future!

Keep up your language, work on it, push at it, play with it and have fun with it. Don't be afraid of change. Don't be afraid to step out and do something different. Change brings amazing opportunities. Have courage to accept challenges and know that if you try you can do it. You may fail the first time. Learn from it, try again move forward.



Last of all remember the two little people sitting on your shoulder. You get to choose the one you want to listen to. One will always be there to make you feel bad and tell you can't do it. The other will always be there to tell you that you can! The one you listen to is the one that will get stronger!

All the best beginning and continuing your Japanese journey! I am excited to see where it takes you and where you go with learning Japanese.

As they would say in Japan 頑張りましょう!

My No. thing was

To achieve this, the 10 big things I need to do are:

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2.

3.

4.

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6.

7.

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9.

10.

● REVIEW

Look at how you went accomplishing your mini goals. Write below what you did well and what you would do differently next time.

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Do you ever feel like learning Japanese is a struggle? Have you ever felt like something is missing? If so you are not alone.



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