

# **A Student-Generated Quiz for Prospective Japanese Immigrants**

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## **Introduction and purpose**

This article derives from a discussion in a second year global English seminar.<sup>1</sup> While touching on the subject of cross-cultural communication conflicts as shown in movies, we had a discussion about immigration, and in particular, the difficulties immigrants faced in adjusting to a new society. This led to a small-group list-making exercise on the question of "What should be required of those who seek Japanese citizenship?" Implicit in the discussion, and the subsequent question, is that the person is an adult.

## **Part One: How well do you know Japan?**

The first section of this article contains a multiple-choice quiz written by my students and targeting aspiring Japanese citizens. The basic principle behind the quiz is to test potential Japanese citizens on the degree to which they have an understanding of Japan that would allow them to integrate and participate more easily into Japanese society. Before compiling the quiz questions, students took the 100 question American Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) test (this was done without any preparation by the students, who averaged 25% on this open-ended test.) We also examined and discussed the study topics for the British citizenship examination. Only then did students write their own questions about Japan.

Because our class was conducted in English, students were assigned to write the questions and answers in English. Additionally, we used the Western order for names, which is the opposite of the Japanese order (ie., Western: Yasunari Kawabata, Japanese: Kawabata Yasunari). I selected the most appropriate questions, re-worded some for clarity, and as it was a multiple choice examination, re-worked some of the wrong answers to make them less obvious. The questions varied in their degree of difficulty, and some questions may even stump native Japanese. While some of the questions may be a bit trivial, the overall test

shows what university students think is important about their own culture, which in itself is a satisfying intellectual endeavor. Also, if the reader has complaints about the intricacy of some of the questions, I suggest examining the American or British citizenship test.

1. In the Edo age, which class of job was considered the lowest?  
a) farmers b) Samurai c) merchants d) government workers
  
2. What is the name of the Japanese public broadcasting?  
a) JTB b) NHK c) TBS d) NBC
  
3. Which group of people is indigenous to Japan?  
a) Ryukyu b) Samumin c) Ainu d) Heknew
  
4. How many years is the compulsory education in Japan?  
a) 12 b) 10 c) 9 d) 6
  
5. Who is the cartoonist who made Doraemon?  
a) Osamu Tezuka b) Fujiko Fujio c) Hayao Miyazaki c) Monkey Punch
  
6. What is Osaka famous for?  
a) music b) gift-wrapping c) comedians d) architecture
  
7. What prize was created for literature in 1935, and is awarded for the best writing each year?  
a) Kikuchi Prize b) Kawabata Prize c) Soseki Prize d) Akutagawa Prize
  
8. What is the play in which actors turn their heads and wear various colors of make up?  
a) Kabuki b) Noh c) Kyogen d) Ningyojyoruri
  
9. When is the Heisei Emperor's birthday?  
a) January 15 b) November 23 c) November 3 d) December 23
  
10. What flower is the symbol of spring in Japan?  
a) tulip b) sakura c) ume d) tsubalo

11. What university is traditionally the most difficult to enter in Japan?  
a) Keio University   b) Kyoto University   c) Hitotsubashi University  
d) Tokyo University
12. What is the title of the Japanese National anthem?  
a) Furusato   b) Kimigayo   c) Sennokaze   d) Sakura
13. Who is the current Prime Minister of Japan?  
a) Ryutaro Hashimoto   b) Seiji Ozawa   c) Yasuo Fukuda   d) Taro Aso
14. What is the oldest wooden building in the world?  
a) Horyuji   b) Toudaiji   c) Kinkakuji   d) Kiyomizudera
15. Who is the Academy Award winning, most popular *anime* director in Japan?  
a) Akira Toriyama   b) Monkey Punch   c) Yoshiyuki Tomino   d) Hayao Miyazaki
16. Who was Musashi Miyamoto?  
a) writer   b) artist   c) samurai   d) musician
17. At what age can Japanese people legally vote, smoke and drink?  
a) 18   b) 19   c) 20   d) 21
18. Who wrote the novel *Rashomon*?  
a) Ryunosuke Akutagawa   b) Natsume Soseki   c) Yukichi Fukuzawa  
d) Osamu Dazai
19. What is a traditional Japanese toy children play with on New Year's Day?  
a) shogi   b) hagoita   c) osero   d) card
20. Who is considered the first Prime Minister of Japan?  
a) Natsume Soseki   b) Nobunaga Oda   c) Taisuke Itagaki   d) Hirobumi Ito
21. How many prefectures are there in Japan?  
a) 47   b) 53   c) 55   d) 57
22. Which of the following is a type of traditional folk song?  
a) hipuhopu   b) koto   c) biwa   d) enka

23. In what type of play do all the actors wear masks?  
a) kabuki b) noh c) Takarazuka d) rokyoku
24. Where do the Ainu people originally come from?  
a) Okinawa b) Shikoku c) Kyushu d) Hokkaido
25. What is the Hakone Ekiden?  
a) The high school national baseball tournament  
b) A modern dance involving the use of fans  
c) The New Year's Sumo tournament  
d) A long distance running relay race
26. How many years was the Edo age?  
a) 64 years b) 100 years c) 200 years d) 260 years
27. What is the national sport of Japan?  
a) sumo b) kendo c) baseball d) judo
28. What is the longest River in Japan?  
a) Tone b) Shinano c) Fuji d) Shinkawa
29. How many regular types of coins and bills are there in Japan?  
a) 8 b) 10 c) 11 d) 9
30. Who wrote the classic *Tale of Genji* in the Heian era?  
a) Hikaru Genji's mother b) Sei Shonagon c) Murasaki Shikibu d) Kinotsurayuki
31. Who was the first Nobel Prize winner in Japan?  
a) Kobo Abe b) Eisaku Sato c) Kakue Tanaka d) Hideki Yukawa
32. How many times is the temple bell rung on New Year's Eve?  
a) 12 b) 31 c) 100 d) 108
33. When does the academic school year begin in Japan?  
a) January b) March c) April d) September

34. When is the Doll Festival in Japan?  
a) November 11 b) March 3 c) May 5 d) July 7
35. What is the biggest lake in Japan?  
a) Hamana Lake b) Lake Toya c) Lake Mashuko d) Lake Biwa
36. How many professional baseball teams are there in Japan?  
a) 6 b) 10 c) 12 d) 20
37. Japan hosted the Winter Olympics in Nagano in 1998. Before that, Japan hosted one other Winter Olympics and one Summer Olympics. What years did Japan do this?  
a) 1972 and 1964 b) 1968 and 1960 c) 1948 and 1952 d) 1976 and 1980
38. What percentage is Japan's consumption tax?  
a) there is none b) 3% c) 5% d) 10%
39. How many Japanese national holidays are there?  
a) 14 b) 15 c) 16 d) 13
40. What is the emergency telephone number to contact the police?  
a) 110 b) 666 c) 177 d) 117
41. What is the meaning of the Japanese flag?  
a) red represents umeboshi, an essential Japanese food  
b) white represents rice, a staple food  
c) the red represents the rising sun  
d) the red represents the blood of Japanese purity
42. Which artist sold the most records in 2007?  
a) Pornograffiti b) Bs c) Mr. Children d) Masayoshi Akikawa
43. Who is the creator of Atom Boy?  
a) Osamu Tezuka b) Fujiko Fujio c) Monkey Punch d) Takehiko Inoue
44. What is Tanabata?  
a) The star festival on July 7 b) A famous subway station in Tokyo  
c) a soy-based drink d) one of Japan's leading department stores

45. What is a famous story written by Natsume Soseki?  
a) *Botchan* b) *The Pillow Book* c) *Snow Country* d) *The Golden Pavillion*
46. What is the name of the current era in Japan?  
a) Showa b) Heisei c) Meiji d) Taishou
47. Which place is **not** a World Heritage Sight?  
a) Atomic Bomb Memorial b) Yakushima c) The Golden Pavillion  
d) Itsukushima Shrine
48. How many main islands does Japan have?  
a) 3 b) 4 c) 5 d) 6
49. Which city was **never** a capital of Japan?  
a) Nara b) Kobe c) Kyoto d) Asuka
50. Which was the worst natural disaster in modern Japan (in terms of most victims)?  
a) Isewan Typhoon 1959 b) Great Kanto Earthquake 1923 c) Kobe Earthquake 1995  
d) (Okushiri) Hokkaido Tsunami 1993
51. What is the first era in Japan?  
a) Jomon b) Yayoi c) Hakuo d) Asuka
52. When did the Heisei era begin?  
a) 1946 b) 2000 c) 1974 d) 1989
53. When was Okinawa returned to Japan from the US?  
a) 1946 b) 1952 c) 1972 d) 1976
54. The Japanese diet is composed of the House of Representatives, or Lower House (*Shugiin*), and the House of Councillors, or Upper House (*Sangiin*). Which is more powerful?  
a) the House of Councillors (Upper House)  
b) the House of Representatives (Lower House) c) They are equal

55. In 1854, what history changing event occurred?
- a) The Japanese capital moved to Tokyo
  - b) The Satsuma Rebellion
  - c) a US mission forced Japan to open up to the West
  - d) Prime Minister Ito was assassinated
56. How many syllables are there in a Haiku poem?
- a) 15   b) 17   c) 19   d) 21
57. Who is the greatest Haiku poet in Japanese history?
- a) Akiko Yosano   b) Takuboku Ishikawa   c) Issa Kobayashi   d) Matsuo Basho
58. The man considered the greatest director in Japanese film history is:
- a) Jyuzo Itami   b) Akira Kurosawa   c) Akio Morita   d) Takeshi Kitano
59. The largest mass protest in Japanese history (involving millions of people) was:
- a) to protest the Vietnam War in 1968
  - b) To protest Japanese involvement in Manchuria in 1933
  - c) To protest Japanese involvement in World War II in 1944
  - d) To protest the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1960
60. Which sport is mentioned in both *The Pillow Book* and *the Tale of Genji* in the Heian Era?
- a) kemari   b) kendama   c) yabusame   d) aikidou
61. Who was the first Japanese woman to win an Olympic track and field gold medal?
- a) Hitomi Kinue 1928   b) Yuko Arimori 1992
  - c) Miyu Yamamoto 1972   d) Naoko Takahashi 2000
62. Which of the traditional Japanese combat techniques was the first to become modified into a sport?
- a) archery   b) kendo   c) judo   d) karate
63. The first Olympic medal won by a Japanese was a bronze medal in 1924. What sport was it in?
- a) 10,000 meter run   b) 1500 meter freestyle swim
  - c) freestyle wrestling   d) 800 meter relay

64. The highest rank in sumo is:  
a) juryo b) ozeki c) yokozuna d) chankonabe
65. To be considered literate a person needs to be able to read at least how many Chinese characters (*kanji*)?  
a) 1000 b) 2000 c) 3000 d) more than 4000
66. The most popular high school sport is:  
a) soccer b) baseball c) basketball d) kendo
67. The award for best pitcher in Japanese baseball is the:  
a) Sawamura Award b) Nomo Memorial Award  
c) Murakami Award d) Ruth Award
68. Numbers that are considered bad luck are:  
a) 8 and 7 b) 3 and 5 c) 4 and 9 d) 2 and 13
69. How many members are there in the Japanese House of Representatives, the Lower House (*Shugiin*)?  
a) 92 b) 220 c) 184 d) 480
70. Which is **not** a national holiday in Japan?  
a) Adults Day b) Sports Day c) Vernal Equinox Day  
d) Peace Day (*Shusen Kinenbi*)
71. Imperial Prince Shotoku Taishi (574-622) was famous for:  
a) unifying Japan b) writing a Constitution  
c) painting landscapes d) his skill with swords
72. *Ukiyo-e* is a type of:  
a) charcoal ink d) Buddhist sculpture  
c) watercolor on canvas d) woodblock print
73. The Japanese national bird is:  
a) crested ibis (*toki*) b) sparrow (*suzume*)  
c) green pheasant (*kiji*) d) crane (*tsuru*)

74. Which one of these leaders re-unified Japan?  
a) Shotoku Taishi b) Iemitsu Tokugawa  
c) Ieyasu Tokugawa d) Tsunayoshi Tokugawa
75. *Kaizen* is often used in a business sense to mean:  
a) Just-in-time b) overtime c) continuous improvement d) death from overwork
76. The most important philosopher of modern Japan, who harmonized Zen with Western philosophy is:  
a) Kafu Nagai b) Kitaro Nishida  
c) Muneyoshi Yanagi d) Ryohei Murayama
77. Japan's rainy season takes place primarily within which two months?  
a) December and January b) November and December  
c) August and September d) June and July
78. The average life expectancy rate in Japan is:  
a) 78.2 years b) 81.2 years c) 84.4 years d) 85.2 years
79. What year was Japan admitted to the United Nations?  
a) 1948 b) 1952 c) 1956 d) 1964
80. What event in 1905 signaled that Japan was a world power?  
a) Japan invaded Korea b) Japan defeated China in a war  
c) Japan defeated Russia in a war d) Japan built the world's largest navy

## **Part Two: Student suggestions for potential Japanese citizens**

This section categorizes and summarizes the answers students wrote in response to "What should be required of those who seek Japanese citizenship?"

Student responses were taken from a written homework assignment in which they were assigned to list five requirements (after the questions had been discussed in class). student responses were divided into four general categories: 1) language; 2) customs, culture and morals; 3) laws; 4) job, income and other requirements.

Naturally, everyone mentioned language as an important requirement. All students mentioned that aspiring citizens should be able to speak Japanese to some degree, and some mentioned the ability to read and write. Some students were very definitive: *A person must*

*speak Japanese. Another was clearer but perhaps less demanding: A person should speak Japanese enough to live a daily life. Another connected language to making friends: A person should make Japanese friends in order to learn the customs and language. Making friends is the fastest way to learn the Japanese language. Another added fluency to the equation: A person must speak Japanese fluently because Japan is a monolingual country.*

Implicit in the section concerning customs, cultures, and morals, was a certain knowledge or image of foreigners and how they might be different. Some were obvious and natural: *know Japanese manners and rules, be cooperative, understand group society (wa), be kind to everyone- especially the elderly, try to get accustomed to Japanese lifestyle.* Others were a little more surprising, and showed a concern about foreign ways: *be tolerant towards other religions, love Japan best (because) patriotism is very important, understand Japanese history and the atomic bomb, cherish animals (don't bully or abuse them), divide the trash appropriately.*

Responses in the law section included: *Understand and respect Japanese laws (such as no guns for Americans); understand the differences between the laws in their former country and Japan.*

Other requirements include several expected items: *should have lived in Japan at least five years, carry an identity card at all times, have sufficient income or money to live in Japan, have no criminal record (three people mentioned this), have a job or skills to make a living (also three mentions).* One person was very specific: *should have an annual income over 4 million yen.*

This exercise was just one small part of our global English seminar. We also discussed and made presentations on cultural communication conflicts in movies, flags in English speaking countries, 'English only rules', English and cultural imperialism, language extinction, English education in elementary schools in Japan, explaining important Japanese people, and definitions and the meaning of World English. For being a one-semester class, we sure covered a lot of ground.

### Quiz Answers

1.c 2.b 3.c 4.c 5.b 6.c 7.d 8.a 9.d 10.b 11.d 12.b 13.c 14.a 15.d 16.c  
17.c 18.a 19.b 20.d 21.a 22.d 23.b 24.d 25.d 26.d 27.a 28.b 29.d 30.c  
31.d 32.d 33.c 34.b 35.d 36.c 37.a 38.c 39.b 40.a 41.c 42.d 43.a 44.a  
45.a 46.b 47.c 48.b 49.b 50.b 51.a 52.d 53.c 54.b 55.c 56.b 57.d 58.b  
59.d 60.a 61.d 62.a 63.c 64.c 65.b 66.b 67.a 68.c 69.d 70.d 71.b 72.d  
73.c 74.c 75.c 76.b 77.d 78.b 79.c 80.c

### **Part Three: Discussion: The test-making process and an analysis of questions**

After discussing immigration and watching some scenes from the movie *Green Card*, the class took the US INS test. The test came from the web site of Arudou Dabido (formerly US citizen David Alwinkle), who has become a Japanese citizen. Students were allowed to use a dictionary and were given 30 minutes over two class periods to write their answers. Of course, the time was insufficient, and there was no background reading or preparation. However, the purpose was to give students a flavor of the test, not to pass it. The test is weighted towards functions of government including the role of the president, Congress, the Supreme Court, Constitution, Bill of Rights, and amendments to the Constitution.

Following the test, we examined the study questions for the British Immigration test. These questions were more general, and were geared towards understanding and functioning in Britain. About 20 minutes of class time was spend discussing the British questions. The questions (taken from the UK Community Legal Services direct website) covered four pages, but included these general topics: How the UK is governed, housing, services in and for the home, travel and transport, identity documents, at work, equal rights and discrimination, travel and transport, health, education, leisure, money and credit, migration, changing role of women, population, religion and tolerance, the regions of Britain, and customs and traditions. (Immigration and Nationality)

For homework, students were assigned to write ten multiple choice questions each to compose our own Japan immigration test. They were asked to focus more on culture and less on government, and to make the test "kind of fun." To do this, students had to reflect on what is important about Japan, and what a prospective citizen should know.

#### **Correlation to the US Test**

A few student questions had direct antecedents on the US test:

<b>American Test</b>	<b>Student quiz</b>
Number of states	number of prefectures
the first president	the first Prime Minister
seven questions about the flag	meaning of the Japanese flag
the current president	the current Prime Minister
the US national anthem	the Japanese national anthem
number of senators	number of Lower House members
age of adulthood	age of adulthood

### **Unique Japan**

Other questions were creative efforts on the part of students. They considered what was important about living in Japan, and what a prospective citizen should know. Implicit in their questions was a knowledge of differences between Japan and Western countries. These topics include years of compulsory education (#4), best university (#11), types of money (#29), the beginning of the school year (#33), consumption tax (#38), number of national holidays (#39), emergency phone numbers (#40), literacy requirements (#65), bad luck numbers (68), biggest lake and longest river (#35 and 48), rainy season (#77), national bird (#73), kaizen (#75), and Japanese life expectancy (#78).

Japan has a longer history than the US, and history and historical events were heavily represented. Thirteen questions dealt with historical topics and persons.

### **A New Perspective**

Still, the number and variety of quality questions was insufficient. There were many very similar questions. For example, seven students asked about the number of prefectures. In order to diversify the questions, and spur students to think more about their own culture, the class took part in a Japanese culture activity in a 'Password' type format. (Tanner 2003) Teams of two were given a list of ten names from history and culture. They had to explain about these people and when someone guessed the correct answer, their team earned a point, as did the successful clue givers. There were three rounds of clues: the first round included any type of hints, the second round was limited to one-word clues, and the third round only involved gestures and pantomimes.

After completing this activity, students were assigned to write five more immigration questions, emphasizing people and culture. The goal was to provide a cross-section of Japanese culture and some of the key people involved. The variety was tremendous, and covered sports, music, haiku, movies, anime, performing arts, woodblock prints, writers, samurai, and military conquests. The range was wide, although some questions were overly-specialized or trivial. While the US quiz required knowledge of only a few people (George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Patrick Henry, Francis Scott Key), there were many Japanese names and a wider variety of occupations. Pride in Japanese accomplishments was apparent in their questions.

### **Instructor Bias**

While consciously trying not to appropriate the test, I was the final arbiter of the questions and content. Students were encouraged to make their questions culturally broader than the government-oriented American quiz. I also emphasized that they should represent key names and the cultural uniqueness of Japan. Questions I felt were cliches, such as those

involving Mt. Fuji or chopsticks, were eliminated. Students were generally adept at considering what they think foreigners should know. All students are represented here, with the least represented having two questions, and the most represented being nine. Clearly, this student had a knack for writing interesting questions and framing them in clear, concise context. Test-making is a useful exercise in itself. A student-centered approach helps students realize what is necessary for a good test, and how difficult it is to write quality incorrect answers.

### Notes

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