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JAPAN FOUNDATION 
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Japanese study and future opportunities

WHY LEARN A LANGUAGE?

Learning languages enriches students' lives on a personal, social and cultural level, and presents opportunities for employment in an increasingly interconnected world. On a personal level, if students know a language, it deepens their experience of discovering a new culture and making friendships. Many students who have visited or experienced homestays in Japan have found it a life changing experience.

On an employment level, languages provide a distinct advantage. Language skills are an indication of reasoning ability, communication skills and an open, enquiring mind. They are a key element in a job application, regardless of occupation. Even if not specifically related to the job, the fact that you have studied Japanese indicates that you are open to new ideas and adaptable to different environments.

One example where language learning has been shown to be an important skill is in the field of computer coding and programming. This is because learning programming languages resembles learning a natural language!

Then there are career opportunities in working for or with Japanese companies if you have Japanese language skills. Japan is the third largest economy in the world, and many Japanese companies have expanded overseas.



Big companies that have businesses in Australia include Asahi, Canon, Fujifilm, Fujitsu, Hitachi, Honda, Kirin, Mitsubishi, Nintendo, Sekisui House, Sony, Suzuki, Toyota, and Yakult. More recently these have been joined by Muji, Rakuten Securities, Recruit Holdings, Uniqlo, and others. As of 2016, there were 97 Japanese companies ranked in the top 2,000 companies in Australia employing 58,128 Australians.



There are some jobs that require Japanese / English bilingual skills in Japanese companies in Australia. However, even if the job doesn't require a high level of Japanese skills, your ability and willingness to communicate in Japanese will always be an advantage, as this promotes goodwill and can help to build relationships and teamwork in the workplace.



にほんごがんばって! Nihongo ganbatte!

Messages from Senpai

Career paths for Japanese learners

~わたしと日本語~



Shannon Whiley

*Cultural Affairs Officer,
Consulate-General of Japan
in Brisbane*

Q1. What motivated you to study Japanese?

I was captivated by Japan's remarkable culture and its beautiful language

through hosting students and watching Studio Ghibli films, so wanted to learn as much as I could.

Q2. How did Japanese study influence your choice of career?

I really enjoyed learning Japanese, so I decided on a career where I could use the language while sharing my love of Japan and Japanese with others.

Q3. How do you use your knowledge of Japanese language and culture in your current position?

In my position I can speak Japanese and teach others about Japanese culture, acting as a bridge between Australia and Japan. It's great!

Message to students of Japanese

Don't be afraid to explore the possibilities - there are so many things you can do with Japanese, even within Australia!



Jaryd Sarky

Consultant, Mergers & Acquisitions, Deloitte Japan

Q1. What did you study at University?

I studied Japanese as part of a double major degree in Arts and Science (Chemistry) at university. I was able to study in Japan on a student exchange program, and this opened up a world of new opportunities.

Q2. What opportunities did you gain?

I now work in Tokyo at Deloitte Japan as a consultant assisting Japanese companies with strategic planning of international mergers and acquisitions. I specialise in the fields of pharmaceuticals, chemicals, precision machinery, and energy. My work has taken me all over Japan, and also to Korea, China, Thailand, France, the UK and Germany!

Message to students of Japanese

Study Japanese and a world of opportunities will open for you!



Queenie Chan

Graphic Designer

Q1. How did Japanese study influence your choice of career?

Japanese was a compulsory subject in middle school, and I became motivated to understand and use the language as I think the best way to learn about a culture is through the language. I had wanted to work in the creative industry since I was a child. My Japanese language skills enabled me to look for inspirations in Japanese artwork, and to study and gain new knowledge from a different perspective. Ultimately, I decided to work in Japan to pursue my goal of becoming a graphic designer who works internationally.

Q2. How do you use your knowledge of Japanese language and culture in your current work?

Since I am now working in a Japanese company, all the Japanese language and culture that I have learnt has become essential to my work. My knowledge of formal Japanese allows me to communicate with my team and clients clearly and effectively. My knowledge of Japanese culture helps me to carry out projects and blend in with workgroups.

Message to students of Japanese

Even though there may be difficult times when you are learning unfamiliar things, I am sure it is worth your time and effort because a world of the unknown full of excitement is waiting for you!



Sara-Jane Seery

Technical Delegate Translator
(Equestrian) Tokyo 2020

Q1. How do you use your knowledge of Japanese language and culture in your current work?

Knowledge of Japanese language and culture is imperative to perform the role of translator/interpreter. Culture influences language and as an interpreter/ translator this affects word selection, delivery and tone.

Q2. What are your plans for the future?

After the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, I would look to explore further career possibilities

with Japanese sign language and braille. I started learning Japanese sign language whilst living in Japan on the JET Program and it was my first experience with disability and inclusivity. I believe we have a responsibility to explore the multiple avenues our second languages provide and create value for all members of the societies we serve.

Message to students of Japanese

You do not need to make a career with your Japanese skills, it can be for your own personal enjoyment. However, should you want to use your Japanese language skills in your work, explore as many possibilities as you can - integrate your hobbies and interests - and diversify your language skills. Enjoy the journey, marvel at the new experiences and cherish the connections you make with people along the way.



Carol Cheng

Research and Liaison Officer, CLAIR Sydney

Q1. How did Japanese study influence your choice of career?

After graduating from university, I participated in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme as a Coordinator for International Relations for 3.5 years. This fortified my Japanese language skills and initiated my interest in international relations relations, which led me to my current role.

Q2. How do you use your knowledge of Japanese language and culture in your current work?

Japanese is the main language used in my current workplace and I use Japanese at work every day. My main responsibilities include compiling information about Australia in Japanese, explaining Australian culture in Japanese and cross-checking English articles with their Japanese source.

Message to students of Japanese

Choosing to learn Japanese back in Year 7 was one of the best decisions I have made in my life as it led me to where I am now. Throughout the process, I have made a lot of discoveries about myself and my own cultures. I would highly recommend learning Japanese to anyone who wants to challenge themselves!



Matthew Todd

Japanese Language Teacher

Q1. What motivated you to study Japanese?

I chose Japanese in Year 7 because I really liked Pokemon when I was a kid! When I started studying it I found that I enjoyed it, so kept going.

Q2. How did Japanese study influence your choice of career?

I knew I wanted to do work related to Japan in some way. I chose an Arts degree majoring in Japanese language and History at ANU for two reasons: one, I really liked learning more about Japan and its history and culture; and two, I knew that all the skills I would learn in this degree would be useful, no matter what kind of work I would do in the future.

Q3. What do you find satisfying about your work as a high school teacher?

I get to share my knowledge of Japan with the next generation of Japanese scholars. I love watching people learn about Japan for the first time – so often, they are caught up in the excitement I had when I was learning to write kanji when I was a kid, or the thrill of making connections between things they might know about Japan already and the new stuff they are learning in the classroom.

Message to students of Japanese

You might not be planning on a career focused on Japan, but Australia and Japan have such a close relationship, it's always useful to have some knowledge of Japanese language and culture. Employees and businesses will always be keen to have someone on staff that can interact with Japan whether you plan on becoming a lawyer, a scuba diving instructor or a scientist.

