

# WHY IS MY CHILD LEARNING JAPANESE ANYWAY?

THERE ARE MANY EXCELLENT REASONS FOR YOUR CHILD TO LEARN A SECOND LANGUAGE. IF YOU HAVE NEVER STUDIED A SECOND LANGUAGE, THIS IS A CHANCE FOR YOU TO ENSURE THAT YOUR CHILD GETS THAT OPPORTUNITY AND ALL THE BENEFITS THAT THIS PROVIDES. INTERESTINGLY, THE MOST COMMONLY CITED REGRETS BY ADULTS REGARDING PAST SCHOOLING ARE AROUND LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE AND A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.



# Why is my child learning Japanese?



The study of a second language:

Improves literacy skills in English by helping your child better understand how grammar and language systems work

Develops higher order thinking skills as students learn to question perceptions of culture and ways of interpreting history and cultural norms

Develops skills in communication and collaboration with others across linguistic and geographical borders

Provides a real purpose for application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Prepares your child for their role as a global citizen in our increasingly multicultural society.

We acknowledge that the study of any foreign language has a range of benefits. Your school has chosen the study of Japanese for this course. There are many factors that may have contributed to this decision, including:

The strong links that exist between Japan and Australia in areas such as business, sport, the arts, and tourism

The popularity of Japanese culture in Australia such as animation, martial arts, and cooking

The close geographical distance and ease of travel for school exchanges in a safe and stable country

The lack of time difference enabling online interactions in real time via videoconferencing etc.

The opportunities for further study in Japan in fields such as technology, science, design and cinema.

All of the above reasons are important, but what drives my own personal passion for Japanese is the potential for change that it offers: previous Japanese students have, due to their Japanese skills, stood out amongst a sea of university and high school graduates, won internships at Google Tokyo, brokered investment deals, studied animation, and trained Japanese sporting teams in rugby, cricket and AFL. All of their individual life choices were enhanced by their Japanese studies, regardless of the level of fluency they attained.



I was educated in a small coastal town of Australia with little experience of multiculturalism. My own opportunities to learn a second language were limited until university. I was an unlikely candidate for Japanese study as my own grandfather had been interned in a Japanese Prisoner of War camp in WW2. Yet within 6 months of beginning my study of Japanese, I knew that it would change my life.

I discovered another aspect of my personality as I took on a new language and new cultural mannerisms, such as bowing and eating with chopsticks. This learning took me to Japan where I saw life through a new lens. I climbed Mt Fuji at dawn, I rode through ancient streets aloft a festival shrine, I listened to the stories of Hiroshima survivors. What I gained the most though was a sense of hope for future generations. The youth of today often struggle with anxiety about their future in a world of increasing uncertainty. My message to them is my own story, that in just two generations, two cultures that were once at war could become so close. Such an outcome inspires me to believe that a greater understanding of our different cultures and languages will eventually help us bridge the gap between the nations of the world.

This hope continues with your child now.

Here are a few links that can deepen your own understanding of contemporary Japan/Australia relations and the opportunities available to your child:

[http://japan.embassy.gov.au/tkyo/ausjpn\\_relations.html](http://japan.embassy.gov.au/tkyo/ausjpn_relations.html)

<https://www.austrade.gov.au/australian/export/export-markets/countries/japan/market-profile/market-profile>

<http://www.skijapan.com/>    <http://snowjapan.com/>

