Do you know Japanese?

Ryan Walsh

So, you want to learn Japanese. The first question you might ask yourself is, ‘for what reason do I want to learn Japanese?’ Perhaps you wish to learn Japanese so that you can learn to understand the media you enjoy from there, or perhaps you wish to travel to Japan sometime in your life and actually be able to converse with the Japanese there. Whatever your reason for learning Japanese may be, you should make sure that it is something you are passionate about and dedicated towards. If not, then you may want to reconsider this massive commitment. If you are certain about your decision, then I hope that I can provide you with a few tools in order to do just that.

When learning Japanese, I believe there are three primary activities to do. First, you want to practice daily with memorization. Next, you want to practice your writing and speaking with someone who can correct you and assist you. Lastly, you want to immerse yourself in the language and feel more comfortable hearing or reading it.

The first tool that I recommend to anyone learning Japanese is flashcards. Flashcards are incredibly powerful for learning any subject, but they are particularly powerful when it comes to languages. With flashcards you can practice what is called, ‘spaced repetition’. Spaced repetition is where you learn a certain bit of information and then continue to recall it over greater and greater periods of time, reinforcing the information.

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日本語がわかりますか?

サイコパス Psycho—Pass [2012-13]

The series takes place in the near future, when it is possible to instantaneously measure and quantify a person’s state of mind and personality. This information is recorded and processed, and the term "Psycho-Pass" refers to a standard used to measure an individual’s being. The story centers around the "enforcement officer” Shinya Kougami, who is tasked with managing crime in such a world.

(Source: psycho-pass.com)
Anki is a well-designed electronic flashcard program that does a lot of the work for you. You can create (or download pre-made ones) a deck of flashcards that can have characters, pictures, and sounds on them. Anki will then show you these cards and you will try to identify them. After you identify the card, you will report how hard it was to remember the card if you did. Using this, Anki then determines when it should next show you the card in order to reinforce the memory. Anki is available on Windows, Android (AnkiDroid, unofficial), and iOS (as a paid app).

Once you begin to pick up on writing some basic Japanese sentences and phases, you can look to begin putting those skills to use. One of my absolute favorite tools for this is a website called Lang-8. Lang-8 allows you to post blog entries in the language you are trying to learn and then have native speakers of that language correct you. In turn, you will then help those trying to learn English by correcting their own posts that they write in English. Quite often, after you have worked with someone for a while, it is easy to get a Skype conversation where you can actively speak with someone of that native language and be corrected. It’s a very powerful method of learning and one that I recommend going towards if you have even basic Japanese skills.

The last general advice I will give is about immersion. In order to feel comfortable with Japanese, you will have to immerse yourself in it. This is the fun aspect of learning Japanese. You can accomplish this by taking part in any of your favorite mediums. Listening to music, watching anime (without English subtitles!), or reading news articles on Japanese websites. While doing this, make notes of words you do not understand and look them up. If you pair this with memorization and writing/speaking practice, you will find learning Japanese can be a lot less tedious.

I hope that you took away some useful information from this article and that you feel more confident in your desire to learn Japanese. It is not going to be easy and it will suck up a ton of your time, but hopefully you can have some fun while learning and gain something from it. I will be including links to the various resources I mentioned below. Also, please look forward to a short article in the coming weeks about installing a Japanese IME (input method editor) on your computer so that you can write in Japanese without a Japanese keyboard.

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If you want to write an article for the JClub/Anime Society biweekly newsletter email Nicholas at n_griffo@uncg.edu with your article or idea before our next issue on the 22nd!

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FLCL [2000-2001]

Naota is a normal Japanese 6th grade boy (although a little cynical), but when his older brother leaves for America to play baseball, his brother leaves his homeless 17 year old girlfriend Mamimi behind. Mamimi is sending mixed signals and advances to Naota, and he doesn’t know what to do about her. But to make matters worse, Naota’s world is totally turned upside down when he is run over by a woman on a Vespa. During their first encounter, she hits him over the head with her bass guitar, which then causes a horn to grow out of his forehead. She calls herself “Haruko” and her presence changes Naota’s life to even further insanity.

(Source: Anime News Network)
Cabinet approves ordinance to expand Japan's continental shelf

The Cabinet approved an ordinance Tuesday to expand Japan's continental shelf outside its exclusive economic zone to gain access to rare metals and other untapped natural resources under the sea floor.

The ordinance, which will take effect Oct. 1, covers a combined 177,000 sq. km in waters off Okinotori Island, Japan's southernmost territory around 1,700 km from Tokyo.

"It will help Japan to enhance its national interests through the development of resources," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, the top government spokesman, said at a regularly scheduled news conference.

In a recommendation in April 2012, the U.N. Commissions on the Limits of the Continental Shelf recognized Japan's continental shelf as being around 310,000 sq. km — equivalent to about 80 percent of the country's total land area.

But the commission put off a decision on an area south of Okinotori Island, the southern Kyushu-Palau ridge, with China and South Korea opposed to the expansion based on the argument that Okinotori does not qualify as an island.

Under the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, a coastal state can claim control of the seabed beyond the traditional 200 nautical mile limit for its exclusive economic use if it can prove the ocean floor is connected to its continental shelf.

(Source: Japan Times)

Japan, U.S. discussing offensive military capability for Tokyo

TOKYO —

Japan and the United States are exploring the possibility of Tokyo acquiring offensive weapons that would allow Japan to project power far beyond its borders, Japanese officials said, a move that would likely infuriate China.

While Japan's intensifying rivalry with China dominates the headlines, Tokyo's focus would be the ability to take out North Korean missile bases, said three Japanese officials involved in the process.

They said Tokyo was holding the informal, previously undisclosed talks with Washington about capabilities that would mark an enhancement of military might for a country that has not fired a shot in anger since its defeat in World War Two. Defense experts say an offensive capability would require a change in Japan's purely defensive military doctrine, which could open the door to billions of dollars worth of offensive missile systems and other hardware. These could take various forms, such as submarine-fired cruise missiles similar to the U.S. Tomahawk.

(Source: Japan Times)

Japanese Language Resources

Anki:
https://ankiweb.net
https://ankiweb.net/shared/decks/japanese (Various pre-created decks that have a ton of great information)

Lang-8:
http://lang-8.com/

Tagaini Jisho (Japanese Dictionary)
http://www.tagaini.net/

http://www.guidetojapanese.org/learn/

Erin's Challenge! (Cute Japanese lessons in multiple formats):
https://www.erin.ne.jp/en/