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OF WASHINGTON DC



2025

National Japan Bowl® TEAM STUDY GUIDE SUPPLEMENT **GESTURES GUIDE**



REMEMBER THIS PART OF THE STUDY GUIDE?

Every year, many of the Japan Bowl's language questions address listening comprehension skills and language use in context. The Japanese-language categories covered in the Japan Bowl also include the material in the following lists:

Material covered every year

- Kanji (basic, practical, family names, place names)
- Measurement Terms
- Aisatsu and Body Language (including gestures)

While most languages include the spoken word, communication is nothing without body language. This guide contains a few gestures we would like you to know that may appear during the competition.



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“COME HERE” WAVE

こっちこっち



If someone wants to beckon you closer in Japan , they will wave with their palm facing down. This gesture kind of looks like the American "Shoo!" wave, but the movement is a bit different.

To try this one, hold your hand out with your palm facing the floor. Bend at the wrist while keeping your fingers straight. You can lift your arm up like Kanji-kun is doing, stick it straight out, or keep your elbow to your side close.



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“THAT’S NOT SO” OR “NO PROBLEM” WAVE

ちがう、いえ いえ



In your studies, you may have heard the word 「ちがう」. It means "to be wrong or different" and is usually used to say "No, that's not the case."

Take your hand, thumb towards your face and pinky outward, and put it right in front of your nose. Moving from the elbow, wave your arm back and forth kind of like you smell something funky, but don't let your wrist flail around. Keep it nice and straight.

Note: This gesture can also be used when saying 「いえいえ」 in response to thank you. It's just like saying "Oh no problem" in English but it's very formal. The next time your friend says 「ありがとう」 to you, try using this gesture as you say 「いえいえ」 to mean "No problem."



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CROWD HAND CHOP

すみません



This gesture is a signal to people around you that you are trying to move through the crowd.

Keep your arm close to your body with your thumb towards your face and your pinky facing away (just like in the ちがう wave). Instead of swinging side to side, chop down like you are trying to cut something in half. Do this gesture while walking, and add a slight bow to show you're sorry for any inconvenience.



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DEVIL HORNS



In America, this gesture signifies mischief, but in Japan it is used to refer to someone who is angry. You can use it to also show that you are angry but in more of a playful way.

Put your hands on top of your head, just above your ears. Ball your hands into fists but leave your pointer fingers up. To really hit this one home, make a scary oni face to frighten and confuse your friends.

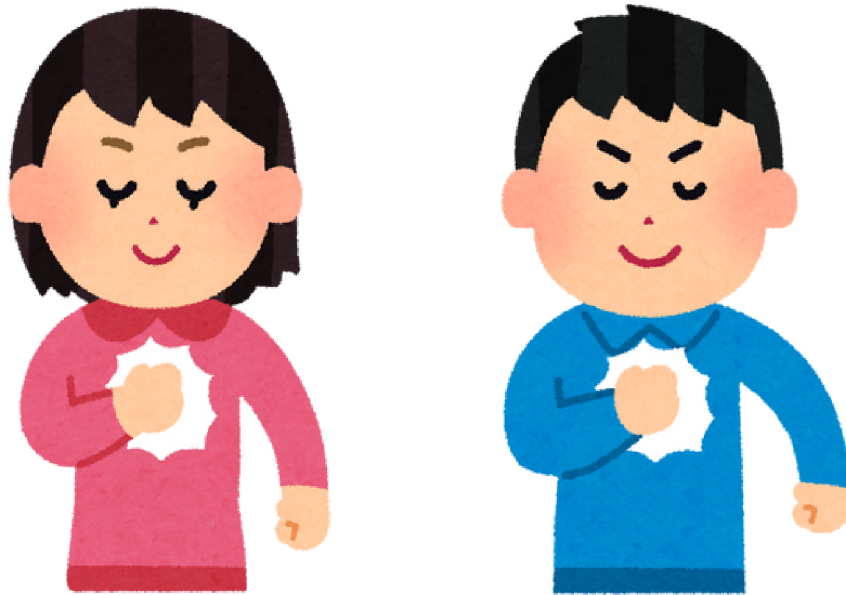


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CHEST THUMP

まかせなさい



If you want to show someone you are confident, or say "leave it to me," you can thump your hand against your heart, either as a balled up fist or flat against your chest.



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GAL PEACE

ギャルピース (ギャルピ)



After a Japanese member of a Korean idol group struck this pose in a photo in 2021, it has gained popularity thanks to female K-Pop idols and social media, and was dubbed "Gal Peace" in 2022.

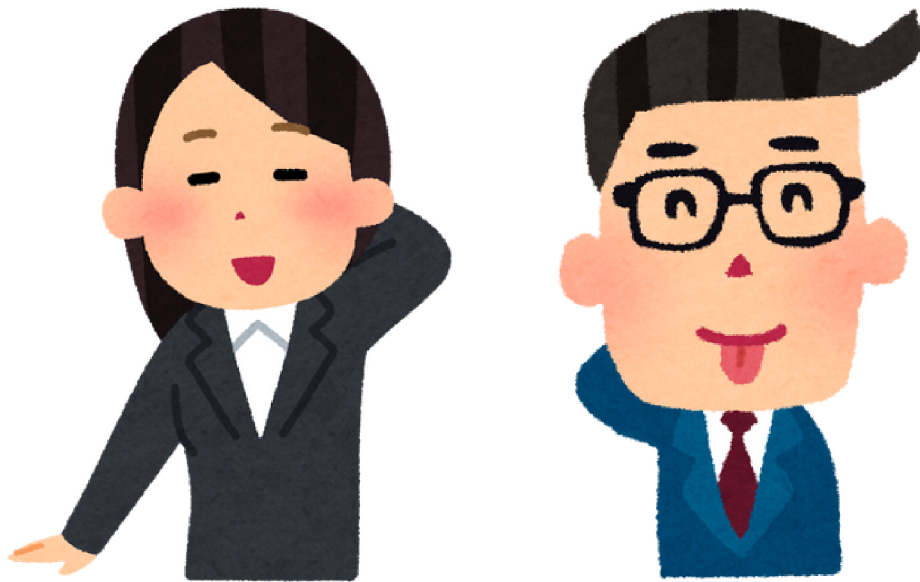
To make this pose, flip your average peace sign upside down. Your arms can be fully extended or bent.



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EMBARRASSED HEAD RUB



If you're feeling embarrassed or awkward about an action you did, this gesture will help express that. Simply bring a hand to the back of your head; you can also either rub the back of your head, smile awkwardly, or stick your tongue out slightly to add more depth of meaning.



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EMBARRASSED MOUTH COVER



If you're feeling embarrassed or awkward about something you said, you can bring one or both of your hands up to cover your mouth, palm facing your face. It generally means, "ah, I shouldn't have said that."

This gesture can also express shock.



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POLITE POINTING



Pointing with your finger can be considered impolite in Japan.

If you need to tell someone which direction to go or want to point to a specific object or person, use your open hand to point in the general direction instead of using your index finger.



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MONEY SIGN



When talking about money or to express that something is expensive, this gesture is helpful.

Make an OK sign, then bring your hand to rest horizontally in front of your chest with your palm up. Your pinky should be closest to you, with your thumb and index finger making the circle sign away from you.

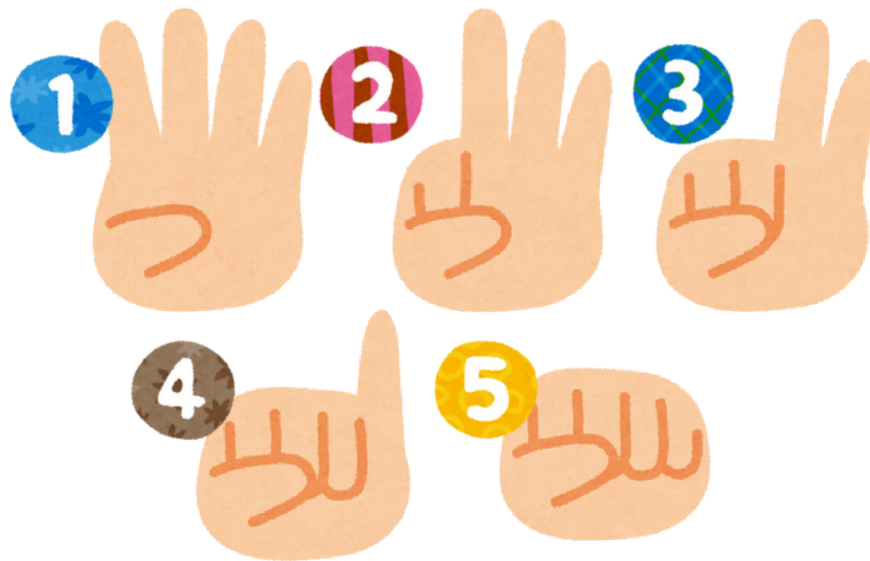


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COUNTING

(to yourself)



You may notice in Japan that when people count to themselves, they use a different hand position, counting the fingers as they put them down.

Open your hand and put down your thumb. That's one. Put down your pointer finger. That's two. Middle. That's three. Keep going. When your fist is closed, you've counted all the way to five.

NOTE: This is only used when counting to yourself. When showing numbers to other people, the Western style of counting is used (pictured below).



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The **33RD NATIONAL JAPAN BOWL**

will tentatively be held on
April 4 (Fri) & 5 (Sat), 2025.



For more information, visit

JAPANBOWL.ORG

or email japanbowl@jaswdc.org



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