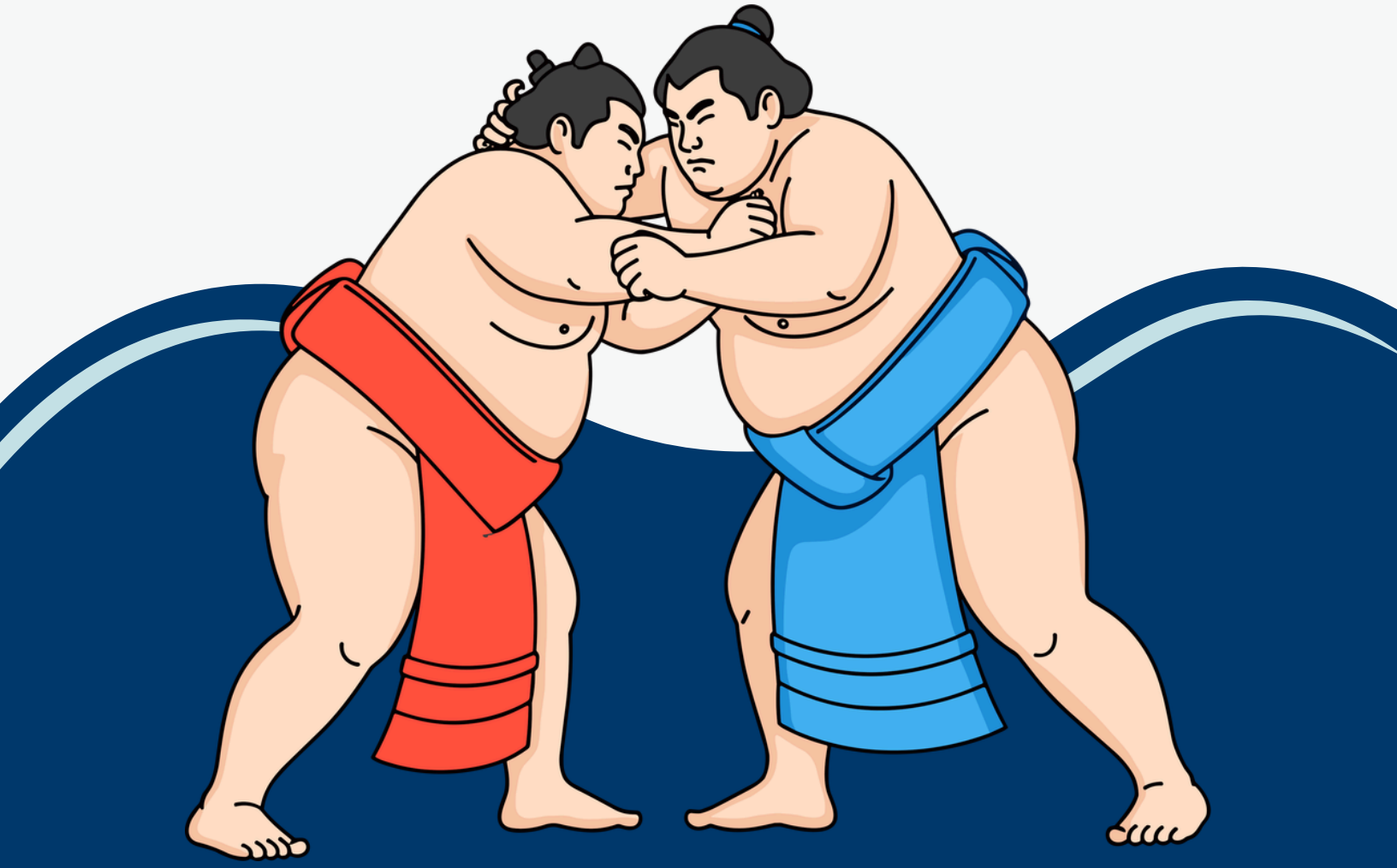
35th National

JAPAN BOWL

Team Study Guide



THE JAPAN-AMERICA SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON DC

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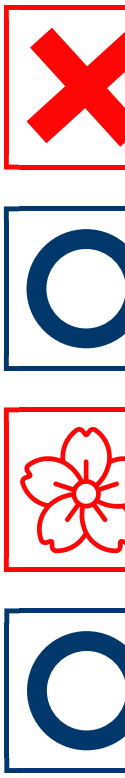
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CHANGE LOG

What's new at the 35th National Japan Bowl:

- The *Aisatsu*, *Aizuchi*, and *Shigusa* section (previously “Useful Expressions”) has been updated.
- The Gestures Guide has been removed - please check the *Aisatsu*, *Aizuchi*, and *Shigusa* section for guidance on body language.
- The Common Place Names list has been updated. Please review the new list carefully.

UNDERSTANDING THE JAPAN BOWL CURRICULUM

— A NOTE TO STUDENTS —

Welcome to the National Japan Bowl study guide! We'd like to tell you a little about our curriculum and why it is designed the way it is.

The National Japan Bowl covers two distinct but interconnected areas: proficiency in the Japanese language and knowledge of Japan-related content. It is this dual nature of the Japan Bowl curriculum that makes the Japan Bowl unique. We have designed it this way because we are strongly aware that the more familiar you are with Japanese culture, society, history, geography and the arts, the better you will be able to communicate in Japanese.

As you'll see in the study guide that follows, the content-knowledge curriculum is divided among those topics we consider basic, like etiquette and current events, which are covered every year, others like history and culture in which the specific content rotates on a three-year cycle, and special in-depth topics. The language curriculum gives you the chance to use your language skills in real-world situations that require level-appropriate knowledge of kanji, vocabulary, and grammar, as well as interpersonal communication skills. It also aims to help you become comfortable with the kind of idiomatic and expressive Japanese that native speakers commonly use with each other.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please visit **http://www.japanbowl.org/** to download a PDF or Word doc version of the Study Guide. The Competition Guide will be shared on the website in late September, 2026.

For more information on team and student eligibility requirements, competition rules and format, and preparing for the competition, you can visit us at www.japanbowl.org.

We look forward to seeing you at the National Japan Bowl!

CONTENT TOPICS

ALL LEVELS

EVERY YEAR: THE BASICS
Etiquette at school, in public places, and as a guest in people's homes
Annual holidays and rites of life
Newsworthy events of the year (May 2026 to April 2027) related to Japan or to US-Japan relations

At the 35th National Japan Bowl, you will be quizzed only on the materials in the 2027 column.

3-YEAR CURRICULUM TOPICS			
	2027	**2028**	**2029**
Geography	**Regional Geography, Climate, and Natural Disasters** • Climate zones • Weather patterns • Earthquakes, typhoons, tsunamis, etc.	Physical geography and natural features	Prefectures, cities, and agriculture
History	**1600-1912** **Edo and Meiji Periods** • Major historical figures and events • Major political and economic developments • Major cultural and social developments	1912 - Present Taishō through Reiwa periods	710 - 1600 Nara through Sengoku periods
Arts and Culture	**Architecture and Gardens** **Premodern and Modern** • Major styles • Major examples • Major architects and landscape architects	Literature, theater, and film	Visual arts
Society and Social Issues	**Environmental Issues and Policies** • Climate change • Environmental disasters • Sustainability	Demography and demographic issues	Japan and the international economy

CONTENT TOPICS

ALL LEVELS

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">IN-DEPTH TOPICS</th></tr>
<tr><td>2027 Locality</td><td colspan="2">Kōchi Prefecture

• Geography and history
• Major local products and foods
• Major figures: Nakahama Manjirō (John Manjirō), Sakamoto Ryōma, Itagaki Taisuke, and Kusunose Kita
• Major festivals, cultural heritage designations, and UNESCO sites</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">2027 Deep Dive</td><td colspan="2">Ōzumō: The Three T’s of Professional Sumo

• Training: the stable system, rankings, and basics
• Traditions: the ring, attire, and names
• Tournaments: venues, rules, and ceremonies

Please also study the vocabulary listed below, cumulative by level:</td></tr>
<tr><td>LEVEL 2</td><td>Basho
Chanko-nabe
Mage
Mawashi
Oyakata
Rikishi</td></tr>
<tr><td>LEVEL 3</td><td>Dohyō-iri
Sumōbeya
Yokozuna - (Hakuho and Akebono, famous foreign yokozuna)
Yūshō</td></tr>
<tr><td>LEVEL 4</td><td>Banzuke
Gyōji
Keshō-mawashi</td></tr>
</table>

JAPANESE LANGUAGE

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:

- Kanji (basic, practical, family names, place names)
- Verbs with Multiple Meanings
- *Aisatsu*, *Aizuchi*, and *Shigusa*
- *Giseigo* and *Gitaigo*
- Affective Words
- Idioms
- *Yojijukugo*
- Proverbs
- Measurement Terms

IMPORTANT NOTE

For all materials in this Study Guide:
Level 2 students should study Level 2 items,
Level 3 students should study Level 2 and 3 items, and
Level 4 students should study all Levels' items.

Please use the following color code to guide your studies:

LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4

BASIC KANJI

We encourage you to study the kanji not only singly but as parts of words such as (LV 2) 週末, 父母, 米国, 時代, 何本; (LV 3) 料理, 物語, 生活, 南北; and (LV 4) 便利, 歩道, 中世, 戦国.

LV2	一	二	三	四	五	六	七	八	九	十	百	千	万	円
日	月	火	水	木	金	土	曜	先	昨	週	年	今	毎	何
時	間	午	前	後	分	半	回	末	上	下	左	右	人	男
女	父	母	子	家	族	自	姉	兄	妹	弟	友	本	語	学
校	小	中	大	走	生	話	書	見	言	休	行	来	出	入
口	会	外	国	駅	山	川	島	花	草	米	田	文	空	名
止	正	立	私	彼	英	代	広	明	教	室	牛	犬	表	主
力	洋	堂	工	皿	声	茶	枚	早	LV3	朝	昼	夕	夜	春
夏	秋	冬	天	気	雨	雪	風	南	北	東	西	方	都	県
市	町	区	丁	村	海	港	所	帰	寺	電	車	衣	食	住
活	品	物	着	飲	料	理	紙	店	屋	切	魚	肉	起	持
思	元	病	強	弱	同	飯	耳	目	手	足	頭	体	心	和

BASIC KANJI CONTINUED

親	昔	員	供	以	台	売	買	安	高	低	新	古	色	赤
青	白	黒	好	銀	払	勉	試	験	運	動	聞	音	楽	歌
絵	芸	術	院	読	結	婚	野	真	発	的	服	授	貸	館
宿	様	計	忘	研	究	内	絶	対	信	経	配	重	記	守
若	幸	両	々 (kanji repetition symbol)						**LV4**	世	界	地	図	鉄
道	旅	場	線	階	門	戸	次	当	歩	通	遅	引	開	閉
始	終	番	号	待	考	急	決	使	寒	暑	戦	近	遠	建
由	多	少	最	悪	全	部	用	知	果	作	化	死	卒	業
仕	事	映	画	医	者	神	社	農	産	漢	字	科	興	味
習	特	別	有	不	無	非	常	便	利	未	長	短	意	働
連	度	留	注	転	借	歳	題	痛	残	説	案	顔	情	悲
怒	変	比	笑	相	横	調	査	違	感	答	質	問	続	府

PRACTICAL KANJI

The following kanji are often used on signs in public places in Japan. It is useful to know what these kanji mean when you see them, even if you cannot pronounce or write them.

LEVEL 2	終 (しゅうじつ / しゅうてん) as in 終日 and 終点	非 (ひじょうぐち / ひばいひん) as in 非常口 and 非売品
LEVEL 3	危 (きけん / あぶ) as in 危険 and 危ない	禁 (たちいりきんし / げんきん) as in 立入禁止 and 厳禁
	災 (しんさい / さいがい) as in 震災 and 災害	
LEVEL 4	不 (ふねんぶつ / ふざい) as in 不燃物 and 不在	可 (かねんぶつ / けっさいか) as in 可燃物 and カード決済可

COMMON FAMILY NAMES

These names turn up so often that you want to be able to pronounce them correctly on sight.

LEVEL 2	たなか 田中	やまだ 山田	やまぐち 山口	なかむら 中村	きむら 木村	はやし 林	ほんだ 本田
LEVEL 3	たかはし 高橋	やまもと 山本	まつもと 松本	まつした 松下	いのうえ 井上	こばやし 小林	よしだ 吉田
LEVEL 4	さとう 佐藤	わたなべ 渡辺	いとう 伊藤	のむら 野村	しみず 清水	すずき 鈴木	ささき 佐々木

COMMON PLACE NAMES

These place names commonly appear on signs and in maps, websites, news stories, manga -- every kind of reading material. It is useful to know where these places are located and how they are pronounced.

LEVEL 2	ほっかいどう 北海道	ほんしゅう 本州	しこく 四国	きゅうしゅう 九州	
	おきなわ 沖縄	とうきょう 東京	おおさか 大阪	きょうと 京都	
LEVEL 3 and LEVEL 4	こうちけん 高知県	こうちし 高知市	にほんかい 日本海	たいへいよう 太平洋	せとないかい 瀬戸内海
	ひろしま 広島	なごや 名古屋	よこはま 横浜	さっぽろ 札幌	ふくおか 福岡

VERBS WITH MULTIPLE MEANINGS

Many common words in Japanese have multiple meanings that sound the same but that are written with different kanji. One example is さす:

LEVEL 2 and LEVEL 3	差(さ)す →	かさを差(さ)す	西日(にしび)が差(さ)す
LEVEL 4	指(さ)す →	人を指(ゆび)で指(さ)す	将棋(しょうぎ)を指(さ)す

AISATSU, AIZUCHI, AND SHIGUSA

You are already familiar with many greetings (*aisatsu*), set phrases used in daily life, and expressions (*aizuchi*) and body language (*shigusa*) that facilitate social interaction. As you're studying, you might find it useful to keep a running list, but here are some examples to start.

ALL LEVELS	*Aisatsu*	どうぞ
		おじゃまします
		おかげさまで
	Aizuchi	やったー
		あのう
		なるほど
		たいへん
	Shigusa	bowing
		beckoning wave
		pointing at your nose

GISEIGO AND GITAIGO

Giseigo refer to animal and human sounds (e.g. chirping, laughing) while *gitaigo* are used to describe a certain state (e.g. facial expression, atmosphere).

ALL LEVELS	うきうき	どきどき
	うっとり	どんどん
	おろおろ	はっきり
	ごろごろ	もぐもぐ
	さらさら	よれよれ

AFFECTIVE WORDS

Emotions are expressed differently in different languages. Short words like the ones below can convey all sorts of emotions if used properly.

LEVEL 2	うっかり かなり すっかり なんとなく
LEVEL 3	そのうち ばっちり どうやら とっさに なんとか
LEVEL 4	あたかも たいして (〜ない) そっと ひょっとしたら

IDIOMS

Many common Japanese idioms, including the ones below, refer to body parts and are used in everyday conversation.

LEVEL 2	き　みじか 気が短い みみ　いた 耳が痛い め　まる 目を丸くする
LEVEL 3 AND LEVEL 4	あし　ぼう 足が棒になる あたま　あ 頭が上がらない かた　も 肩を持つ こし　おも 腰が重い はら　き 腹を決める は　く 歯を食いしばる みみ うたが 耳を疑う

YOJIJUKUGO

Yojijukugo are idioms consisting of four kanji.

LEVEL 2	いっせきにちょう 一石二鳥	にっしんげっぽ 日進月歩
LEVEL 3	いちぶしじゅう 一部始終	ゆうげんじっこう 有言実行
LEVEL 4	ぜんだいみもん 前代未聞	かんぜんむけつ 完全無欠

PROVERBS

Proverbs are an integral part of all languages and cultures, and Japanese is no exception.

LEVEL 2	鬼(おに)に金棒(かなぼう) 月(つき)とすっぽん
LEVEL 3	急(いそ)がば回(まわ)れ 石(いし)の上(うえ)にも三年(さんねん) 好(す)きこそものの上手(じょうず)なれ
LEVEL 4	光陰矢(こういんや)のごとし 雨降(あめふ)って地固(じかた)まる 鉄(てつ)は熱(あつ)いうちに打(う)て 所変(ところか)われば品変(しなか)わる 逃(に)がした魚(さかな)は大(おお)きい 帯(おび)に短(みじか)し、たすきに長(なが)し かわいい子(こ)には旅(たび)をさせよ

MEASUREMENT TERMS

These are units of measurement commonly used in everyday conversation in Japan. Familiarity with them helps with everything from shopping to making plans to participating in ordinary conversations in Japanese.

LEVEL 2	Temperature: Celsius (°C)
LEVEL 3	Weight: gram (g), kilogram (kg)
LEVEL 4	Length: centimeter (cm), meter (m), kilometer (km)

The

35TH NATIONAL JAPAN BOWL

will tentatively be held on

April 23-24, 2027.

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