

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
UG Course Syllabus Spring 25-26

Japanese Language and Culture for Beginners I

LANG1210

3 credits

Pre-requisites: N/A

Co-requisites: N/A

Exclusion: LANG1211, LANG1212

Name of Course Leader: Koji SHIOMI

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Office Hours of Course Leader: Available by appointment only. Students should contact their section instructor directly with any questions.

Course Description

LANG1210 is a comprehensive Japanese course that builds on learners' basic understanding of *hiragana*, *katakana*, and grammar while developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Who Should Enroll:

- **Beginners:** The enrollment for this course is limited to beginners whose Japanese level is below N4 for JLPT. This course is suitable for students who have the basic knowledge of *hiragana*, *katakana* and fundamental Japanese grammar. **Therefore, the course is not suitable for absolute beginners with no prior exposure to Japanese.**
- For beginners seeking to develop practical communication skills only, consider **LANG1211: Communicative Japanese for Beginners I (2 credits)**. If you prefer to focus on building vocabulary and grammar knowledge, the self-paced online course **LANG1212: Japanese Vocabulary and Grammar Essentials I (1 credit)** may be more suitable. Both LANG1211 & LANG1212 run over 8 weeks and use a pass/fail grading system.
- **Entry Quiz and Beginner Declaration Form:** Students are required to take an entry quiz to prove that they are beginners (below N4 level) with the basic knowledge of *hiragana*, *katakana*, *kanji*, and fundamental Japanese grammar, and submit a beginner declaration form to register for this course.

Course content:

- **Basics of Japanese:** We will start with reviewing *hiragana* and *katakana*, the fundamental writing systems in Japanese, similar to the alphabet in English.
- **Integrated Skills for Japanese:** You will learn the fundamental skills in the Japanese language, including speaking, listening, writing, reading, basic grammar, and related Japanese culture in this course.

- **Textbook Coverage:** We will use the following textbook, covering Lessons 1 to 12:

『大家的日本語 初級 I 改訂版』 *Minna no Nihongo* 2nd Edition (大新書局, 2015)

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Engage in Basic Conversations: Participate in basic Japanese conversations, including greetings, self-introductions, and asking and answering questions about names, nationalities, and daily activities.
2. Describe Locations and Ownership: Describe locations, affiliations, ownership, and the existence of people, animals, and objects using appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures, including movement and transportation.
3. Express Preferences and Opinions: Express preferences, opinions, and reasons using adjectives and appropriate grammatical structures.
4. Recognize and Interpret Language: Recognize and interpret basic Japanese vocabulary, grammar, and writing systems in daily communication.
5. Understand Japanese Culture: Demonstrate an understanding of Japanese culture and social norms.

Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve. Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided below, outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

LANG 1210 Assessment Overview

Assessment Task	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)	Schedule *
Mid-Term Quiz	20%	Week 6-7
Final Quiz	30%	Week 13
Oral Quiz	10%	Week 10-13
Culture Report (in-class x 2)	10%	Week 6-11
Culture Presentation (Group)	10%	Week 13
Chatbot Interaction Report	5%	Week 6-11
Pop Quiz (in-class x 5)	15%	Unscheduled

* For the exact dates of assessment tasks, please refer to the information on the course Canvas site.

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Mid-term Quiz	ILO1, ILO2, ILO4	This quiz assesses students' ability to comprehend basic Japanese conversations (ILO1), describe locations and ownership (ILO2), and recognize and interpret basic Japanese vocabulary and grammar (ILO4).
Final Quiz	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4	This quiz evaluates students' understandings of basic Japanese conversations (ILO1), describing locations and ownership (ILO2), expressing preferences and opinions (ILO3), and recognizing and interpreting basic Japanese vocabulary and grammar (ILO4).
Oral Quiz	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4	This oral assessment tests students' ability to demonstrate basic Japanese conversations (ILO1), describe locations and ownership (ILO2), express preferences and opinions (ILO3), and recognize and interpret basic Japanese vocabulary and grammar (ILO4).
Culture Report (in-class writing)	ILO4, ILO5	This report assesses students' ability to recognize and interpret basic Japanese vocabulary and grammar (ILO4) and demonstrate an understanding of Japanese culture and social norms (ILO5).
Culture Presentation	ILO4, ILO5	This presentation evaluates students' understanding of basic Japanese vocabulary and grammar (ILO4) and their ability to demonstrate an understanding of Japanese culture and social norms (ILO5).
Chatbot Interaction Report	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5	This task assesses students' ability to engage in basic Japanese conversations (ILO1), describe locations and ownership (ILO2), express preferences and opinions (ILO3), recognize and interpret basic Japanese vocabulary and grammar (ILO4), and understand Japanese culture (ILO5).
Pop Quiz (Unscheduled in-class quiz)	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5	These quizzes test students' ability to engage in basic Japanese conversations (ILO1), describe locations and ownership (ILO2), express preferences and opinions (ILO3), recognize and interpret basic Japanese vocabulary and grammar (ILO4), and understand Japanese culture (ILO5).

Grading Rubrics

Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided on Canvas. These rubrics clearly outline the criteria used for evaluation. Students can refer to these rubrics to understand how their work will be assessed.

Final Grade Descriptors:

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage in Basic Conversations: Demonstrates exceptional ability to participate in basic Japanese conversations with clear pronunciation and appropriate use of vocabulary and grammar.• Describe Locations and Ownership: Accurately describes locations, affiliations, and ownership with a wide range of vocabulary and complex grammatical structures.• Express Preferences and Opinions: Clearly and effectively expresses preferences and opinions, providing detailed reasons and using a variety of adjectives and grammatical structures.• Recognize and Interpret Language: Shows excellent recognition and interpretation of basic Japanese vocabulary, grammar, and writing systems, with minimal errors.• Understand Japanese Culture: Demonstrates a deep understanding of Japanese culture and social norms, providing insightful observations and connections.
B	Good Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage in Basic Conversations: Participates in basic Japanese conversations with good pronunciation and mostly appropriate use of vocabulary and grammar.• Describe Locations and Ownership: Describes locations, affiliations, and ownership accurately, though with some minor errors in vocabulary or grammar.• Express Preferences and Opinions: Effectively expresses preferences and opinions, providing reasons and using a range of adjectives and grammatical structures.• Recognize and Interpret Language: Recognizes and interprets basic Japanese vocabulary, grammar, and writing systems well, with some minor errors.• Understand Japanese Culture: Demonstrates a good understanding of Japanese culture and social norms, with relevant observations and connections.

C	Satisfactory Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in Basic Conversations: Participates in basic Japanese conversations with significant pronunciation issues and frequent errors in vocabulary and grammar. • Describe Locations and Ownership: Describes locations, affiliations, and ownership with frequent errors, making understanding difficult at times. • Express Preferences and Opinions: Struggles to express preferences and opinions clearly, with limited reasons and frequent grammatical errors. • Recognize and Interpret Language: Recognizes and interprets basic Japanese vocabulary, grammar, and writing systems with many errors, often hindering understanding. • Understand Japanese Culture: Demonstrates a limited understanding of Japanese culture and social norms, with few relevant observations and connections.
D	Marginal Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in Basic Conversations: Participates in basic Japanese conversations with significant pronunciation issues and frequent errors in vocabulary and grammar. • Describe Locations and Ownership: Describes locations, affiliations, and ownership with frequent errors, making understanding difficult at times. • Express Preferences and Opinions: Struggles to express preferences and opinions clearly, with limited reasons and frequent grammatical errors. • Recognize and Interpret Language: Recognizes and interprets basic Japanese vocabulary, grammar, and writing systems with many errors, often hindering understanding. • Understand Japanese Culture: Demonstrates a limited understanding of Japanese culture and social norms, with few relevant observations and connections.
F	Fail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in Basic Conversations: Unable to participate effectively in basic Japanese conversations due to severe pronunciation issues and numerous errors in vocabulary and grammar. • Describe Locations and Ownership: Fails to describe locations, affiliations, and ownership accurately, with pervasive errors that hinder understanding. • Express Preferences and Opinions: Unable to express preferences and opinions clearly, with inadequate reasons and pervasive grammatical errors. • Recognize and Interpret Language: Fails to recognize and interpret basic Japanese vocabulary,

		<p>grammar, and writing systems, with errors that severely hinder understanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand Japanese Culture: Demonstrates little to no understanding of Japanese culture and social norms, with irrelevant or incorrect observations and connections.
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Course AI Policy

At HKUST, we embrace innovation and technology, including Generative AI. Some of the assignments in this course aim to foster innovative thinking by using chatbots for both language learning and cultural exploration.

Our approach relies firmly on pedagogical principles, with an ethical commitment to ensure fairness in the use of AI. If students use AI tools in course assessments, they must adhere to the principles of academic integrity.

To learn more about how to use GenAI tools appropriately in language courses, students are required to complete a Canvas learning module developed by the Center for Language Education. This module can be found on the course Canvas site. Students should ensure they have completed it before attending class.

Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Feedback on assignments will include strengths and areas for improvement where relevant. Students who have further questions about the feedback including marks should consult the instructor within five working days after the feedback is received.

Resubmission Policy

Resubmissions are not accepted, except in exceptional circumstances.

Required Texts and Materials

Course materials and additional resources are provided via Canvas.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to [Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry](#) for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.