

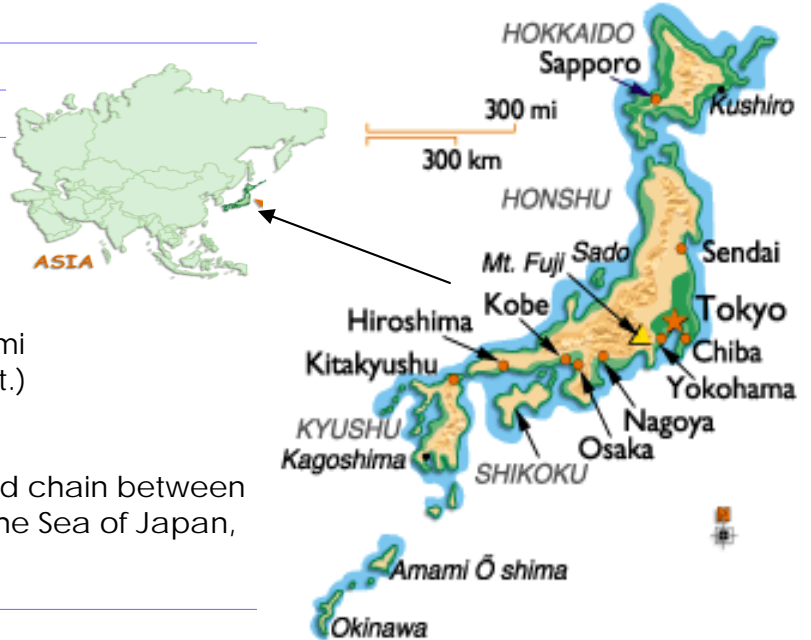
Global Snapshots

Published by Metro International's GLOBAL CLASSROOM for globally minded kids.

JAPAN

Country Facts

Official Name: Japan
Capital: Tokyo
Official Language: Japanese
Currency: Yen (JPY)
Head of State: Junichiro Koizumi
Pop.: 126,771,662 (July 2001 est.)
Largest City: Tokyo
Area: 377,835 sq km
Geography: Eastern Asia, island chain between the North Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan, east of the Korean Peninsula



Meet Your Global Classroom Tour Guide



Name: Satoko Yamamoto

Hometown: Chiba, Japan- 2 hours south from Tokyo

What was the first thing you learned about the U.S. when you came here? I was amazed by people's diversity.

Satoko, the Global Classroom Tour Guide for Japan, is in New York City working on an M.A. in TESOL at Teachers College, Columbia University. At a recent Global Classroom presentation, she taught middle school students about the three Japanese writing systems and how to make an origami frog.

Japan is basically a homogeneous society so all people look similar, but here people are very diverse and they speak different languages. I was overwhelmed. Also, because of frequent earthquakes, Japan doesn't have many tall buildings, so the tall buildings in New York were also overwhelming.

Siblings: 1 older sister who has a two year old son, Ryutaro.

Pets: None currently. I'm a cat lover, but I don't have any cats now.

Favorite Childhood Games: *Hanetsuki*- Japanese Badminton. On New Year's day, girls play this traditional game. We use rackets made of wood and a shuttlecock. I remember playing this game with my sister and cousin on New Year's Day.



Meet Your Global Classroom Tour Guide (continued)



What would you like kids in NY to know about Japan? Japanese culture is very different from Western culture. Even though our lifestyle has been Westernized, we still keep traditional Japanese customs. Japan was isolated for almost 300 years, so we developed our unique culture. We still have traditional costumes, customs, music, arts, way of living, and interpersonal relationships. In Japanese society, we emphasize interpersonal harmony rather than the individual. I think this is characteristic to our culture.

Favorite National Food: I love-*Sushi*, particularly with red snapper, tuna, squid or eel. I grew up close to the sea, so I can enjoy fresh seafood when I go back to Japan. There are some good sushi restaurants in New York, but I feel that something is different between sushi in Japan and sushi here.

Favorite Idiom in Japanese (with an English translation): *kokki* – self-discipline. When I was a child, I read a book called *Asunaro* (tree) story. In that story, a man tells his neighbor that it's easy to spoil yourself, but if you want to succeed and be happy, you have to discipline yourself. I was impressed by this story, and it became my motto.

Favorite thing about living in NY: There are many things to do. For example, you can go to many museums. My favorites are the Museum of Natural History and the Frick Collec-

tion. We can also enjoy food from all over the world that we do not have in Japan. And, people in New York are ambitious. I feel I'm stimulated in many ways and I can broaden my horizons.

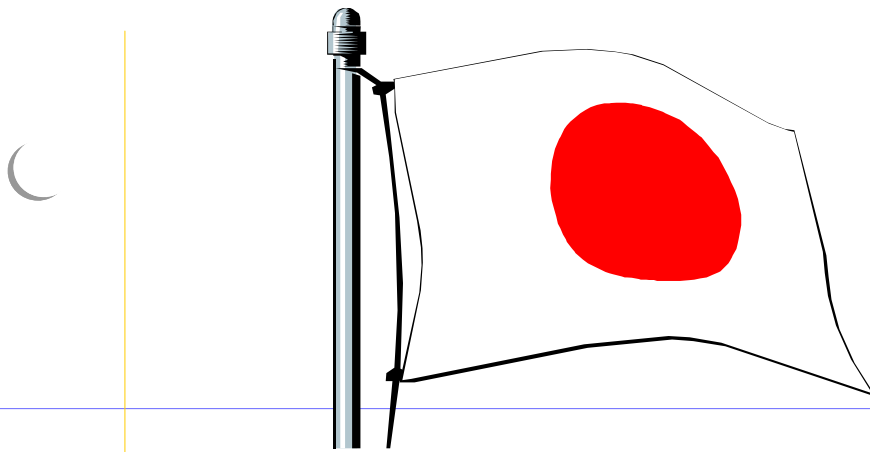
Favorite Native Holiday/Festival: Sakura Viewing! In April, Cherry Blossom trees are in bloom in Japan and people go out and appreciate the cherry blossoms. Some people have picnics under the trees and some sing karaoke. For Japanese people, cherry blossoms symbolize spring. Since the business and school years begin in April, they also symbolize a new year. That's why the cherry blossom is so special to the Japanese.

What made you want to study in another country? I had been teaching high school English for 8 years but I always felt I didn't have enough background knowledge and

skills, so I wanted to study TESOL at a graduate school in the United States. Teaching English involves not only linguistic skills but also cross cultural communication, values, and customs. So, I thought that I needed to live in an English-speaking country.

What do you want to do when you finish your degree? I'll go back to Japan and teach English at a high school again. If I have a chance, I'd like to seek a higher degree in the States.

What advice would you give students from the U.S. who want to visit or study in Japan? Many of my friends who have visited or lived in Japan tell me that they were fascinated by Japan and want to come back. If you visit Japan, you might get culture shock, but I hope you will like Japan and its people.



You Can Learn More About Japan by Visiting the Following Websites:

Kids Web Japan: Culture, History, Politics, Economy.

<http://www.jin.jcic.or.jp/kidsweb/index.html>

Japan just for kids: Read up on Japanese art, music, drama, and dance.

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/glokid/japan/index.htm>

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/glokid/japan/portrait.htm>

<http://www.mtsu.edu/~intr020c/>

Learn Japanese:

<http://Japanese.about.com/blbeginner.htm>

Lonely Planet: Japan

Facts and figures, culture, history, and tourist information.

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/north_east_asia/japan/index.htm

Japan in New York:

Consulate General of Japan in New York City

<http://www.cgj.org/en/p/01.html>

Japan Society

<http://www.japansociety.org>

Asia Society

<http://www.asiasociety.org>

Columbia University, Dept. of East Asian Language & Culture

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ealac>

Global Classroom brings trained international speakers into New York City schools to do presentations about their countries/cultures. To learn more about Global Classroom, please contact the Global Classroom staff at info@metrointl.org or 212.431.1195.

LEARN JAPANESE!

日本語を覚えよう！

Below are a few expressions that will come in handy when in Japan.

You can read Japanese as it is written.

1. こんにちは
Konnichiwa
Hello!
2. ありがとう
Arigatou
Thank you!
3. どういたしまして
Doutashimashite
You're welcome.
4. はじめまして
Hajimemashite
How do you do?
(Nice to meet you.)
5. おはようございます
Ohayougozaimasu
Good morning.
6. わたしの名前は～です
Watashi no namae
wa desu
My name is...

