Abridged English Teachers’ Guide:
Unit 1: Introduction

This English Teachers’ Guide is an abridged version of the Japanese Teachers’ Guide. Please see the Japanese version for a more complete set of support documents, including unit objectives, instructional tips, additional activities, sample answers, and suggested assessment instruments. Elsewhere on the companion website (“Online Resources”), there are additional scenarios and role-play tasks, extra exercises, assessment suggestions, ideas for technological applications, a full annotated bibliography, and related links. Audio and transcripts are also available online.

Unit 1 provides an introduction with a simulation exercise, in which learners see concrete examples of appropriate or less appropriate use of Japanese in social contexts and learn about the relationship between language and culture, the focal point of this textbook. Learners are then invited to discuss the keys to understanding the interconnection between Japanese language and culture in the following section.

Note: Whenever possible, teachers are encouraged to avoid providing students with these key points before they have a chance to analyze the relationship between language and contextual factors on their own. Instead of giving “correct” answers, teachers can guide students through their self-discovery using an awareness-raising approach, and provide an appropriate level of support according to students’ needs.

The Goals of this Textbook

While the speakers sometimes convey their messages directly, they often just hint at what they really mean and convey their intention indirectly in a tactful manner. This textbook focuses on the Japanese learners’ pragmatic competence, which refers to the ability to understand others’ intentions in the sociocultural context and to convey their own intentions appropriately in the given culture. Teachers are encouraged to impart with learners their knowledge and experience of appropriate language use in the culture by paying close attention to the level of their pragmatic awareness and the cultural identity that learners wish to express.

We also encourage teachers to respect learners’ first language, as well as other languages they may know, and appreciate the interconnection of these languages and cultures. In this textbook we view teachers as facilitators who support learners’ identity negotiation in effective communication in Japanese.

In teaching pragmatics, your intuition as a Japanese speaker is somewhat useful. However, as much as possible, we recommend avoiding stereotyping and a prescriptive approach to language learning. We would discourage teachers from relying too much on their own intuition and saying, for example, “Japanese speakers should not use this expression,” “Japanese native speakers would always say this,” or “I won’t teach what I wouldn’t say myself.” Instead, this textbook is designed to introduce diversity in language use. Within the Japanese language and culture, there is a range of pragmatic norms according to geographical region, generation, gender, and educational background, for example (macro-social variation, Barron, 2005). It would be good to address this diversity and overcome stereotypical ideas that some rigid “rules” exist in Japanese that learners should copy and master.

The unit objectives provided in Units 2–6 have been designed based as much as possible on academic research in cross-cultural/interlanguage pragmatics. Teachers may also wish to refer to the annotated bibliography, which appears at the end of the book and on the website. The checklists and list of learning strategies at the end of each students’ book unit can also facilitate learners’ independent learning of Japanese pragmatics.

Pragmatics has its culturally-oriented side, as well as a language-oriented side, which are intricately intertwined. The cultural aspects (sociopragmatics) refer to the understanding of what constitutes appropriate behavior in the
context, while the language aspects (pragmalinguistics) are primarily concerned with the linguistic control in communicating one’s intentions. It is important to balance these two aspects in pragmatics-focused instruction. It may be useful for teachers to consider learners’ language in terms of both of these aspects: Is the learners’ knowledge of culturally appropriate behavior sufficient? Is there a linguistic problem? Or is it an issue of both language and culture?

It is also important to explore learners’ reasons if they did not choose to emulate sociocultural norms associated with Japanese. Learners’ divergence from native-like use of Japanese does not necessarily cause pragmatic “failure” that impedes communication (see the discussion below in this unit). Is the learners’ language different from the language of typical Japanese speakers because learners lack linguistic competence (e.g., insufficient control of grammar, vocabulary, or idiomatic expressions)? Are learners aware of pragmatic norms in Japanese and do they consider how their language use is likely to be interpreted in the community? Or are learners intentionally being resistant to Japanese norms of behavior in order to express their own cultural identity and values (pragmatic resistance)? It is important that teachers take learners’ intentions into account in assessment, as well as their language production (see the Japanese Teachers’ Guide Exercises 9 and 10 for suggested assessments.)

Below are some specific commentaries for the simulation exercise. Also see the Japanese version of the Teachers’ Guide for a suggested warm-up and wrap-up discussion for this simulation exercise.

Scenario 1

- Clearly the student has caused an infraction here, but the degree of tardiness was probably not considered serious, given the fact that the professor is still offering the student a cup of tea.
- As for the student, he is using すみません sumimasen as an initial expression of apology for being late (すみません、遅れてまして。お待たせして申し訳ありませんでした Sumimasen okuremashte. Omatase shite moushiwake arimasen deshita.)
- Then the second sumimasen is probably uttered from a mixed feeling of apology and thanks. In this situation, the professor is considered a higher authority figure (older in age, and more elevated in social status in his role as professor). S/he waited for the student and is still generously offering him/her tea, which probably reinforces the student’s sense of guilt and gratitude for the generosity. The student is also apologetic for the fact that the professor has gone to the trouble of making the tea. Sumimasen is a perfect word to express both of these feelings of apology and thanks, although the student could also say ありがとうございます arigatou gozaimasu instead of or in combination with the second sumimasen.
- Note that not all professors make a visiting student tea! In a big university, this may be rather rare. But if you are offered tea by your professor or anyone, it’s a good idea to thank the other person for it and drink it. Japanese speakers may feel obliged to finish it or at least take a sip, even if they are not thirsty or care for tea. It is a sign of consideration for you that you should acknowledge.

Scenario 2

- The professor definitely wanted the book back or he wouldn’t have sent you an e-mail. Perhaps the student shouldn’t have gone into such a detailed excuse as you might in English. It is more appropriate to stress that the student acknowledges the infraction and that s/he is extremely sorry for it by giving a series of apologies. In a status differential relationship like this, Japanese speakers often give a brief and vague excuse, such as 私の不注意で watashino fuchuuide “due to my carelessness” or うっかりして ukkari shimashite “due to my neglect,” unless more information is called for. We will discuss and practice these points covered in Scenarios 1 and 2 in the unit on apologizing.
- As in this scenario, when learners are unaware of the range of Japanese pragmatic norms, they sometimes rely on the norms of behavior in their first (and other) languages, consciously or unconsciously (pragmatic transfer).
When the norms of behavior are similar in the first and target languages, communication is likely to succeed (positive transfer). When the norms differ across cultures, misunderstanding may be more likely to occur (negative transfer).

Scenario 3

• In this case, perhaps the clerk is indirectly telling you that he has no desire or ability to order it (unless he says more, like 難しいですね、でもやってみましょう Muzukashii desune, demo yatte mimashou “It’s difficult, but let’s give it a try.”).
• The customer may be dissatisfied that the clerk cannot help, but it is a nice gesture to thank him/her anyway before leaving (e.g., そうですか、わかりました。ありがとうございました Soudesuka, wakari mashita. Arigatou gozaimashita. “Oh, I see. Thank you anyway.”).
• Would it be rude to ask where else the customer might be able to find it? – No, it would be acceptable as long as s/he asks politely. It is in fact likely that the clerk has information that might help the customer about other stores in town. See more in the unit on refusing.

Scenario 4

• In Scenario 3, we discussed an occasion on which Japanese speakers convey their intention indirectly. Learners may apply this knowledge and wonder if the friend in Scenario 4 is making an implicit request. As in this example, learners sometimes apply their pragmatic hypothesis where it does not really apply (overgeneralization). For example, if learners have a stereotypical idea that Japanese speakers talk indirectly, teachers can provide some counterexamples in which this generalization does not quite apply. It is important that learners realize that language use varies according to context.
• In Scenario 4, it seems that the friend really needed help, and she is probably just remembering the kindness when thanking again. Some phrases often used are: この間ありがとうございました kono aida wa arigatou (for casual talk to a speaker of equal status) or 先日はどうもありがとうございました senjitsu wa doumo arigatou gozaimashita (for someone of higher status).
• It is customary in Japanese to thank someone again for a previous favor the next time you get a chance to talk to them. For example, when you receive a really nice gift or a special favor from a friend, it is common to thank your friend not just when receiving it, but also the next time you talk to the friend on the phone or in person. Otherwise, your friend may wonder if you didn’t really care for the gift or didn’t appreciate their help that much. We’ll discuss these points further in the unit on thanking.
• Also, Japanese speakers sometimes thank the other, saying, 先日はどうも senjitsuwa doumo almost in lieu of greeting. This may or may not be related to the level of indebtedness.
• In case learners already know about these cultural practices related to thanking, teachers can elicit and help consolidate that knowledge.

Scenario 5

• The clerk perhaps did expect to hear more polite use of language (desu/masu style) (この本探しているんですか・・・ kono hon sagashite irun desuga...), mostly because of his age. He is elderly and the customer is a young student. Social status may play a part as well, since he is a salaried worker and the customer is in this instance a lowly student. All this tends to be reflected in the language use, especially in the level of keigo. The exalted/respect (honorific) form (sonkeigo) or the humble form (kenjougo) would not be necessary, but the polite desu/masu form would normally be expected in this situation.
• Some learners of Japanese may have an emotional difficulty with the use of keigo or gendered language use due to the status or gender difference that the language seems to bring to light when they use it or are expected
to use it (Siegal, 1996; LoCastro, 1998; Ishihara & Tarone, in press). Even when they are well aware and capable of producing the language form, some learners wish to avoid using it themselves as much as possible (pragmatic resistance, Ishihara, 2008).

- The use of keigo may appear to put speakers in a social hierarchy, but it can also be interpreted as a figure of speech in order to show respect to the other person. For example, presenting oneself modestly with humble honorific forms (kenjougo) does not always mean taking a subservient position. It is recommended that learners observe how keigo is used by Japanese speakers (not just the grammatical form, but also the meaning it takes). We will continue this discussion about keigo and other uses of Japanese throughout this textbook.

- Also in this situation, asking わかりますか wakarimasuka “Do you know [where the book is]?” might sound a little rude to the clerk. Although in English it is a commonly used idiomatic phrase, in Japanese it might sound as if you were questioning his professional expertise at locating the book. どこにありますか? Dokoni arimasuka? “Where is it?” would be a more appropriate phrase. Additionally, この本探ししているんですか・ Konohon sagashite irun desuga... “I’m looking for this book…” alone would work just as well as an implicit request.

### Scenario 6

- As you may imagine, personality variables may play a key role in this situation, and there is no one definite or correct answer. However, generally speaking, the request is a reasonable one to make here. The speaker is after all sharing the space. Making an indirect request hinting that s/he has important homework/exams is one way. All the same, since the listener is a close friend, the speaker could make a fairly direct request as well. While doing so, it is important to save the roommate’s face and be tactful. Since they only close friends but also of the same age and status, use of informal language is appropriate. In other words, they don’t need keigo at all, assuming that they do not use it in their regular daily interactions.

- To make the request more effective to maintain good relations with the roommate, there are a number of linguistic strategies for mitigating the request. Using ちょっと chotto or 少し sukoshi “a little” is a good way (ちょっとテレビ小声で話してくれないかんな? Chotto terebi chisaku shite kurenaikana?). We will discuss these and other strategies later in the unit on requesting.

### Scenario 7

- In this situation, the person before you is probably using the apology expression すみません (が) sumimasen(ga) as a conversation opener and also as a way of signaling the upcoming request/complaint. She may also be a bit apologetic for causing the store clerk some trouble in having to deal with this defective item. お手数ですが otesu desuga “(literary) [I realize] I am causing trouble for you” is another commonly used apologetic phrase in this type of situation that softens the force of the request/complaint.

- Returning an item that works perfectly well may not be acceptable in many cases in Japan. It is best to check the store policy in advance, but generally customers are held accountable for the item when they decide to buy it. Customers could try being as apologetic as they can in trying to return an item, and see what happens. In cases where customers are not sure whether to go ahead and purchase a certain product, they can always ask about the store policy (although small retail stores may not even have a policy). If a customer asks, the store may make an exception allowing the customer to exchange it later.

- While this textbook does not detail how to make complaints, if time allows, teachers can design a project in which learners combine multiple speech acts in complaining, such as requesting, thanking, refusing, and apologizing.

### Scenario 8
• Close friends of equal status can be honest with each other and give, accept, or deny compliments more frankly. Young female friends often give and receive compliments about their appearance and possessions as in this case, and are normally free to respond in any way they want. As long as you are close and equal in the relationship, it can also be fine to accept compliments about your ability, performance, or accomplishments.

• On the other hand, this same high school student might deflect or downgrade a similar compliment from someone distant, much older, and higher in status in an attempt to avoid self-praise. Compliments are sometimes seen as creating distance between the speakers in Japanese (rather than building solidarity), and therefore, denying or deflecting compliments is often a diplomatic way to respond to a compliment in order to minimize the distance created by it (Daikuhara, 1986). We will revisit this more in depth in the unit on complimenting.

The intersection between language and culture: Points of Discussion

1. Regarding learning Japanese in relation to society and culture
   a. About diversity in Japanese
      • In dealing with language in a social context, there is always variation among speakers – given their geographical region, generation, gender, educational background, occupation, personality, and so forth. For this reason, there often is no one best way to say something. Rather, there are preferred approaches. It is our intention to feature those preferred approaches and preferred ways of conveying intentions.
      • Although these materials focus on “standard Japanese,” not on the dialect of Japanese spoken in the western part of Japan or any other regional dialects, it would be interesting to integrate these varieties. For example, learners can observe regional language use if they study in the area where another variety of Japanese is spoken. Some discourse structures in a Western-Japan dialect may be completely different from those in standard Japanese. We do not have examples of such regional varieties in this textbook, but through the approach used in this textbook, learners can be equipped with the learning strategies (see the end of units 2–6 in the Students’ Book) with which they can learn regional varieties.
      • The teachers’ guide and online resources introduce some errors or misleading language use commonly found among learners. Teachers can also bring up issues they see among learners to discuss how those language uses may be interpreted in a Japanese-speaking community.
      • Diversity in Japanese can derive not only from regional differences but also from generational, gender, or personal preferences. Teachers and learners can observe authentic language use in relation to these factors. Such an analysis can allow learners to explore the issue of who would serve as an appropriate model for themselves. Learners can also collect language samples outside of the classroom for analysis (learners-as-researchers approach). Animations and films may also be useful when learners have little exposure to authentic Japanese (see online resources for further suggestions).

b. About learners’ identities and their identity negotiation
   • Due to their own subjectivities, learners are found to sometimes diverge deliberately from what they perceive as native-speaker norms (pragmatic resistance). Identity negotiation varies across individuals and can shift over time (Ishihara & Tarone, in press).
   • The range of native-speaker norms is useful in language learning so that students learn to interpret others as intended. However, imposing native-speaker norms on learners in their production may risk being interpreted as a cultural imposition or even as a form of linguistic imperialism, as warned against by numerous researchers in pragmatics (e.g., House & Kasper, 2000; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Thomas, 1983).
   • It is the learners’ prerogative to decide how they express themselves. In case learners intend to diverge from common pragmatic behavior, however, it is important that they are instructed on how the behavior is likely to be interpreted in a Japanese-speaking community. This textbook provides information as to the interpretations and feelings commonly shared by Japanese speakers. Ultimately, however, it is the learners...
themselves who decide how they choose to represent themselves in interactional discourse. (Also see the Japanese Teachers’ Guide for suggestions on assessment for culturally-sensitive instruction of pragmatics.)

c. Learners’ positioning in Japanese culture

- When learners are known to be second language speakers, Japanese speakers may be forgiving of less appropriate language behavior. In fact, some native Japanese speakers are found to use Japanese differently to non-native speakers or assume ignorance of cultural norms on the part of the learners (Gaijinization, Iino, 1996).
- If learners did not use keigo where it is expected, some speakers may not mind. Others reinforce their stereotype of a Western way of thinking or behavior, if the learners are Westerners. In still other cases, lack of pragmatic competence can be interpreted as a sign of faulty personality or can lead to a negative impression of other cultures.
- For communication strategies that allow successful interaction, see the Japanese Teachers’ Guide or go to: http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/japanese/introtospeechacts/CommunicationStrategies.htm.

d. About the learning of keigo and other pragmatic use in Japanese

- As discussed above, it is important that learners develop receptive skills at least, in order to become able to understand what others intend to convey. For learners’ own productive use of language, however, current instructional pragmatics would suggest being sensitive to learners’ identities. When learners’ language use diverges from a preferred range of pragmatic behavior, teachers can assist learners in understanding the possible consequences of such behavior.

e. Advantages and goals of learning Japanese in relation to culture

- In addition to grammar and vocabulary, appropriate language use (pragmatic competence) is an essential component of communicative competence. Even with perfect grammar, learners can offend others and cause misunderstandings with inappropriate language behavior.
- However, acquiring native-like pragmatics competence of a second language is anecdotally reported to take over 10 years in general (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985). Therefore, our primary goal would be to enhance learners’ pragmatic awareness and knowledge of intercultural communication for their independent learning beyond the immediate classroom context.

See the Japanese version of the Teachers’ Guide for discussion on how to use the resources included in the set of materials.

Abridged English Teachers’ Guide:
Unit 2: Giving/Responding to Compliments in Japanese

This English Teachers’ Guide is an abridged version of the Japanese Teachers’ Guide. Please see the Japanese version and for a more complete set of support, including unit objectives, instructional tips, additional activities, sample answers, and suggested assessment instruments. This textbook also has a companion website (“Online Resources”), which offers additional scenarios and role-play tasks, extra exercises, assessment suggestions, ideas for technological applications, and related links. Listening audios and transcripts are also available online.
Exercise 1: Observing Compliments in Japanese

- These two compliments are both about a performance that has been done well. One noticeable difference between complimenting a friend and a professor would be the use (and non-use) of honorifics. In talking to a professor who is older, distant, and much higher in social status, at least the use of desu/masu style would normally be expected, while the same style would sound too polite, distant, and unnatural if used with a close friend. So, using an appropriate level of politeness is a key strategy here, just as it is in performing other speech acts.
- Although complimenting a friend would not be problematic, complimenting someone of higher status can be face-threatening. Because a student’s compliment on the teacher’s performance can be seen as its evaluation, learners would need to be careful about how they phrase their compliment. The following compliments in Japanese might be inappropriate to a senior professor:
  
  先生の授業、よかったです。Senseino jugyou, yokatta desu. “Your class was very good.”
  先生の説明、上手ですね。Senseino setsumei, jouzu desune. “Your explanation is very good.”
  先生のあの本、とてもよく書いていますね。Senseino ano hon, totemo yoku kakete imasune. “That book of yours is very well written.”

These three compliments may sound too evaluative and unsuitable to be used with a teacher. Instead, learners might wish to stress the fact that they learned or benefited a lot from the professor’s class (Furukawa, 2000, 2001), as in the following examples:

  先生の授業、とても参考になりました。Senseino jugyou, totemo sankouni narimashita. “Your class was very helpful.”
  先生の説明のおかげで、だいぶわかってきました。Senseino setsumei no okage de, daibu wakatte kimashita. “Thanks to your explanation, I have begun to understand a lot.”
  先生のあの本、非常にためにになりました。Senseino ano hon, hijouni tameni narimashita. “That book of yours was very instructive to me.”

Exercise 2: Observing Compliments in Japanese

- Aside from the strategy of using an appropriate level of politeness (notice the polite but friendly tone of the student in Scenario 2), another strategy to be learned here is maintaining appropriate distance in giving compliments. While in Scenario 1, two friends might go on and talk about the sort of store she bought the T-shirt in and even the amount of money she paid for it. In Scenario 2, the student would not ask the instructor the cost of her clothing. Unless the student were exceptionally close to the instructor and asked it in private, such a question would be too personal for an instructor in the classroom.

Exercise 4: Complimenting Expressions

- Although some adjectives (or adjectival phrases) are believed to be traditionally used by either males or females, in authentic conversations they may be used by either gender, depending on the age of the speakers and the degree of formality (Siegal & Okamoto, 1996, 2003). An assignment in which learners observe how certain adjectives are actually used by Japanese speakers would be instructive.
• The dialogue in Listening 16 may represent a somewhat more formal occasion than the dialogue in Listening 17. The husband in Listening 16, even if he likes the meal, seems to have avoided complimenting his wife in the presence of their guests. He would see his wife as an “insider” (uchi) and his guests as “outsiders” (soto). In Japanese, compliments to “insiders” in front of “outsiders” are likely to be considered self-praising and are therefore avoided.

• In the dialogue in Listening 17, however, the husband joins his guest in complimenting his wife (though not profusely). Perhaps here, the occasion is informal and the husband can be more honest with the guests who are probably fairly close to the hosts.

• The dialogues in Listening 18 and 19 are typical of traditional family interactions, where an attempt is made to avoid being perceived as conceited. Compliments about their family members’ performance, personality traits, or skills are often refused as in these dialogues, although the speaker does not necessarily mean that their family members are unworthy of praise. It is important that learners find out the range of cultural norms for complimenting behavior in Japanese and to interpret the use and non-use of compliments accordingly.

Exercise 6: Responding to Compliments

• The speakers of Japanese here sometimes do accept the compliments they receive. However, note that except in instances of outright refusal to accept the compliment (as in Listening 21 and 24), the recipient has used some strategy or other for mitigating the force of the compliment.

• Whereas in English, compliments normally help to build solidarity between the compliment giver and the recipient, in Japanese, compliments may sometimes also be considered to create distance between the two. This is because the speaker attempts to place the listener in a more respectable position than him/herself by giving compliments (Daikuhara, 1986). Therefore, the listener may sometimes feel the need to downgrade or refuse the compliments so that both parties are back to equal. It is important that learners know the cultural norms for complimenting exchanges and interpret compliments and responses to compliments accordingly.

• With dake “only,” igaini “unexpectedly,” and the stress on the particle wa, the speaker in Listening 23 indicates that she is only good at English, which is unexpected, and that she is not as good in other subject areas. While accepting the compliment, the speaker provides negative information about herself to appear humble.

• Other possible responses to compliments:
  • 上手ってわけじゃないけど、すきなんですよ・言葉を覚えるのはたのしいですね。Jouzutte wake ja nai kedo, suki nandesu/kotobawo oboerunowa tanoshii desune. “It’s not that I am good, but I like it/I enjoy learning language.”

  Whereas jouzu “good, well” involves a positive value judgment, suki “like” and tanoshii “enjoy” do not. Therefore, replacing jouzu with more descriptive words like suki or tanoshii helps avoid self-praise.

  • そんなことないけど、語学は得意な方なんですよ。Sonna koto naikedo, gogakuwa tokuina hou nandesu. “I don’t think so, but I am sort of better at languages (than other subjects).”

  Here, the speaker also replaces the word, jouzu with tokui “good at.” Although jouzu implies an objective judgment that the speaker is better than other people, tokui suggests a comparison of subjects that the speaking is studying. This also helps downgrade the compliment.

  • すばらしい先生に習ってたので。Subarashii sensei ni naratteta node. “A wonderful teacher taught me.” 学校が英語に力入れてたから。Gakkouga eigoni chikara ireteta kara. “My school focused on good English education.”
By means of responses such as these, the recipient of the compliment is implicitly accepting it, but shifting the credit to others, such as a good teacher or the school that provided the good English education (Terao, 1996).

Exercise 7: Compliment Response Strategies

- Although speakers can be honest and accept compliments, especially from someone close and/or equal in status, there are a number of ways in which Japanese speakers attempt to appear modest while accepting or deflecting compliments. Responses to compliments often contain multiple strategies, combining two or three of the strategies we have seen here.
- In other cases, Japanese speakers may prefer deflecting or refusing compliments due to the nature of compliments in the culture, in which compliments are considered to show deference and create distance between the speaker and the listener, rather than building solidarity between the two.
- There may also be gender differences: male speakers are reported to be more likely to accept compliments than females, who tend to downgrade or refuse compliments more frequently (Koike, 2000).

Exercise 9: Summary Exercises for Giving Compliments

- As in performing other speech acts, using an appropriate level of politeness (the plain form, the polite desu/masu form, very polite form, or combinations) is an important strategy in giving and responding to compliments.
- Using appropriate adjectives/adverbs, as well as selecting appropriate complimenting topics, is key in giving compliments.
- When speaking to someone older in age and/or higher than you in status, using appropriate phrasing is an important strategy in giving compliments (especially about the listener’s performance or ability as in Scenario 2 in this exercise).
- Remember to use an appropriate tone of voice in real-life communication. Pronouncing your intensifiers and adjectives emphatically will help to make your compliment sound sincere.
- See the Japanese Teachers’ Guide for assessment suggested for this unit.

Exercise 10: Summary Exercises for Responding to Compliments

- In this exercise, learners are to respond to compliments. In the cases where learners do not use typical strategies commonly preferred in Japanese, consider their possible reasons. Is it because learners did not practice the use of strategies or vocabulary (i.e., due to lack of linguistic ability)? Or do learners feel resistant to using typically Japanese expressions because of their own cultural values? Do learners understand the range of Japanese norms and cultural practices? Are they aware of how their own use of strategies is likely to be interpreted in Japanese?
- If learners need further understanding or linguistic improvement, additional exercises included in the online resources or the feedback teachers provide during class discussion may be effective. If learners deliberately avoid using Japanese norms despite sufficient understanding and linguistic ability, it is important to respect the expression of their subjectivity.
- Note that the dialogues provided in this textbook are just samples, and there are various other ways to respond to compliments that are also appropriate. Teachers can encourage learners to observe the language of Japanese speakers as if learners were a mini-researcher and experiment in real-life communication using the strategies they learned in these exercises. Learners can also observe how people react to them when they
**Exercise 1: Thanks and Apologies in Japanese**

- In Japanese, feelings of apology and gratitude are closely intertwined. They are best understood as being on a continuum rather than reflecting two separate feelings. So, be aware of this strategy of using overlapping concepts and expressions of apology and thanks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling apologetic</th>
<th>Feeling thankful</th>
<th>Mixed feelings of apology &amp; thanks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- *Arigatou* is the most prototypical expression of thanks, and it cannot be used for apology. *Gomen(nasai)* is a common expression of an apology, although this expression can denote “thanks” as well.
- Another strategy is to be aware of how many times expressions of apology and thanks are typically used in Japanese. The amount of repetition may sometimes be higher in Japanese than in English.
- Throughout this unit, the term “an expression of thanks” may often overlap expressions and feelings of apology.

**Exercise 2: Observing Thanks in Japanese**

Let’s review the contextual factors in the two scenarios.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scenario 1</th>
<th>Scenario 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age difference</strong></td>
<td>equal</td>
<td>you are much younger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role/status difference</strong></td>
<td>equal</td>
<td>you are of lower status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closeness or distance</strong></td>
<td>close in both scenarios (maybe closer in Scenario 1)</td>
<td>somewhat similar in both scenarios (maybe greater in 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Magnitude of your request/thanks</strong></td>
<td>somewhat similar in both scenarios (maybe greater in 2)</td>
<td>somewhat similar in both scenarios (maybe greater in 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Notice the clear difference in the language used when talking to an equal-status/age friend (Scenario 1) and when speaking to someone who is older or of higher status (Scenario 2).

  *arigatou + gomen* — for equal status
arigatou gozaimasu (Note the politeness marker, keigo — desu/masu style) (or possibly moushiwake nai) — for higher status

- The language of thanks (just like other aspects of Japanese) is often more influenced by age and status than the magnitude of the thanks/indebtedness. So, the key strategy is using appropriate thanking expressions according to the listener and the situation (Kim, 1994).
- Notice how many times expressions of apology and thanks are used in the dialogues. The number may sometimes be higher in Japanese than in English. In interacting with other Japanese speakers, listen to them carefully and observe their use of thanking strategies. Make your own hypotheses regarding appropriate use in Japanese and be willing to renew them as necessary.

Exercise 3: Expressions of Thanks

- Some of the expressions in this exercise (e.g., suman and warii) are often believed to be used by male speakers only. However, both males and females may use them in authentic conversation depending on their age and the degree of formality of the situation (Siegal & Okamoto, 1996, 2003). A project in which learners observe how Japanese speakers use these expressions may be effective.
- Becauseありがとうございます arigatou, どうも doumo, and サンキュー sankyuu are short and informal versions of the most common thanking expression, they are normally used with someone close and/or of equal or lower status than you. When a store clerk is younger than a customer, who is in a “higher” position, it is all right to sayありがとうございます arigatou gozaimasu (as well as more informal expressions likeありがとう arigatou, どうも doumo). It is a nice gesture to be polite to a stranger whether s/he is younger or of lower status. サンキュー sankyuu would be too casual for a store clerk (a stranger), as it is normally used between close friends. However, most Japanese people say nothing or give a light bow to a store clerk, unless they receive extensive help.

Exercise 5: Thanking Strategies

- Note that gratitude is communicated more carefully and fully in Scenario 2, due to the magnitude of thanks and age/status differences between the speakers. The deeper the sense of gratitude is, the more elaborate the verbal expressions are likely to be.
- Gochisousama (desu/shita) is often used as an expression of thanks for a meal or drink.
- It is common practice to use the present tense for expressions of thanks, such as arigatou gozaimasu and gochisou sama desu before or while receiving a favor. However, the past tense is used for a favor that has already been received.

Exercise 6: Thanking Once Again

- The strategy here is to abide by the cultural norm in Japanese – the bigger the favor you received, the greater the likelihood that you would be expected to mention it and to thank the other person for it again
the next time you see/talk to him/her. Otherwise, the person you are talking to may wonder if your gratitude was sincere. For example, in the case of a nice gift or a fancy meal, unless you thank the person again the next time you see him/her, the person may start to doubt that you really enjoyed the present/meal!

Exercise 8: Summary Exercises

- See the Japanese Teachers’ Guide for assessment suggested for this unit.
- When learners have difficulty self-evaluating their own responses, the following prompts may be effective:
  - Did you use the thanking strategies given on the left of the chart?
  - If so, in what respects is your use of strategies similar to and different from the use in the chart? How would your use of strategies be interpreted by your listener?
  - If you didn’t use the strategies in the chart, what reasons do you have? Is it because you needed more practice with the strategies and the vocabulary? Did you feel resistant to what you think is a typical Japanese norm of behavior? (These prompts can enhance learners’ pragmatic awareness of the speaker’s intention and the listener’s intention and provide an appropriate segue into Exercise 9.)
  - If you didn’t use the strategies used in the sample dialogues, what other strategies did you use? How would the use of those strategies be interpreted by your listener?

Exercise 9: Summary Exercises

- In Listening 51, the speaker uses a strategy of intensifying his thanks by using words like hontouni, naganagato “for a long time,” and (ojikan) tappuri “a lot of time.”
- Notice another strategy of placing stress on these words. This helps to deliver a sincere tone. Also, the student is likely to how to the professor as he utters his thanks, since he is speaking to someone of higher status.
- Some degree of keigo is used due to the status difference between the speaker and the professor. The student uses the polite desu/masu style, and even the humble form once (ojikan satte itadaite) in order to show his respect. This is the strategy of using an appropriate level of politeness.
- See the Japanese Teachers’ Guide for assessment suggested for this unit.

Exercise 10: Responding to Thanks

- Since the expression of thanks is the acknowledgment of indebtedness, the recipient of thanks often denies the thanks in an attempt to equalize the relationship. The less indebted the person doing the thanking actually is, the more likely the recipient of thanks is to actually accept the thanks.
- The phrase, zenzen, is normally accompanied by a negative such as zenzen mondai nai “No problem at all” or zenzen kamawanai “I don’t mind at all” and intensifies the force of the utterance. However, it is often used with affirmative structures, especially among younger speakers (e.g., zenzen iyyo, zenzen heiki, zenzen daijobu), still emphasizing that there was/will be no problem.
- Thanks and apologies in Japanese can be responded to in a similar way, just as the expressions of thanks and apologies often overlap (Coulmas, 1981).
- As an additional activity, teachers can lead a discussion on learners’ reactions to the thanking strategies introduced in this unit. When learners’ values or norms of behavior contradicted perceived Japanese norms (e.g.,
using apologizing expressions to communicate thanks, thanking again for previously received favors), how did they feel? Teachers and learners can consider possible consequences of the interactions in which learners do not follow community norms in Japanese.

Abridged English Teachers’ Guide:
Unit 4: Requesting in Japanese

This English Teachers’ Guide is an abridged version of the Japanese Teachers’ Guide. Please see the Japanese version and for a more complete set of support, including unit objectives, instructional tips, additional activities, sample answers, and suggested assessment instruments. This textbook also has a companion website (“Online Resources”), which offers additional scenarios and role-play tasks, extra exercises, assessment suggestions, ideas for technological applications, and related links. Listening audios and transcripts are also available online.

Exercise 1: Observing Requests in Japanese

- Notice that in all sample dialogues, the speakers do not use honorifics, not even the desu/masu style. Also, the level of politeness in the language of requests here does not vary across the situations despite the difference in magnitude of the requests. Compare the request statements you were asked to write down:

| Scenario 1: borrowing notes | • できれば、かしてもらえないかな、ノート。Dekireba, kashite moraenaikanaa, nouto. (Listening 1)  
| | • もしよかったら、ちょっと見せてもらえないかなー、と思って。Moshi yokattara, chotto misete moraenaikanaa, to omotte. (Listening 2) |
| Scenario 2: borrowing a car | • 車、ちょっと貸してほしいんだけど。Kuruma, chotto kashite hoshiin dakedo. (Listening 3) |

- In Japanese, the age and role/status differences often seem to have the largest impact on the level of politeness of a request, rather than the content (magnitude) of the request (e.g., Mizutani, 1985). Here, a strategy to be learned is using an appropriate level of politeness in the language of requesting. On the other hand, in English, the content (magnitude) of the request sometimes has a larger impact on the level of politeness of a request rather than the age and role/status differences. For example, a request such as “Mom, tea,” might sound rather rude by English standards while it shows an intimacy/closeness between a child and a mother (Rinnert, 1999).
- Another strategy that all the speakers use in the sample dialogues is offering a reason for the request. The presentation of a convincing reason makes the request sound legitimate.
- Note another strategy—downgrading the imposition of the request. Words like ちょっと chotto “a little (while),” 少し sukoshi “a little,” and たった tatta “only” are effective attempts to minimize the magnitude of the request. See the effort it takes to make the request of borrowing a car for a week seems so minimal!

| Scenario 1: borrowing notes | ちょっと見せてもらえないかなー、と思って。Chotto misete moraenaikanaa, to omotte. (Scenario 1: borrowing notes) |
| Scenario 2: borrowing a car | たった一週間なんだけど、ほんと一週間なんだけど、車、ちょっと貸してほしいんだけど。Tatta isshuukan nanda kedo, hontou isshuukan nanda kedo, kuruma, chotto kashite hoshiin dakedo. (Scenario 2) |
Exercise 2: Observing Requests in Japanese

- Besides the strategy of using an appropriate level of politeness, learners should note other strategies: identifying the topic, checking availability, and being pessimistic.
  - **Using an appropriate level of politeness**
    Speakers in these scenarios are likely to use some degree of honorifics (the desu/masu style) in talking to a host father/mother. As closeness develops in the relationship, however, no use of honorifics is also appropriate, as in Listening 6. In Exercise 1, we have seen that the **age and role/status of the speakers tend to influence the language more often than the magnitude of the request.** The same seems to be true here as well, because there is little difference in the level of politeness between Scenario 1 (smaller request) and Scenario 2 (larger request).
  - Notice the three strategies being used here.
    - **The speaker identifies the topic,** putting the listener on the same page (**3週間後の日曜日なんですねけど Sanshuukangono nichiyoubi nandesu kedo**). This identifying the topic is a commonly used strategy and useful in various situations. For example, **この前のテストのことなんですねけど kono maeno tesutono koto nandesu keredomo “About the last test”** (in speaking to a college professor)
      来週の会議の件なんですが raishuunokaiigi no kene nandesu ga “Next week’s meeting” (in talking to a boss)
    - **The speaker checks the listener’s availability** (**お父さん、忙しいですよね otousan, isogashii desuyo ne**) even before making the actual request. This is a face-saving strategy that helps the speaker to avoid asking a request that is impossible for the listener to comply with.
    - While checking the listener’s availability, the **speaker is also being pessimistic** (**お父さん、忙しいですよね otousan, isogashii desuyo ne “You are going to be busy, aren’t you?”**). This makes the speaker sound hesitant and humble, which are good qualities in making a request in Japanese.

Exercise 5: Evaluating Requesting Expressions

- e. 鉛筆忘れたらんですけど。
  The use of **desu** is normally too polite for a close friend. Also, this expression is very indirect and imposes slightly too much guesswork on the part of the listener (Rinnert & Kobayashi, 1999). If you say **鉛筆忘れたらんですけど Enpitsu wasureta dakedo kashite kurenai?**, it will be more appropriate in this situation. **鉛筆忘れたらんですけど** **Enpitsu wasureta dakedo alone may also be appropriate if accompanied by the proper gesture or gaze, such as pointing at or simply looking at the friend’s extra pencil.**
- g. 鉛筆貸してください。
  The use of **kudasai** is too polite for a close friend. Also, because **kudasai** is a polite imperative, this expression sounds a bit too imposing and abrupt.

Exercise 6: Simulation Exercises for Making a Request

- Main strategies used in the sample dialogues:
  - **Using an appropriate level of politeness**
    Since the two roommates are good friends of equal status, the use of honorifics in general and in requests would be a little unnatural.
  - **Using downgraders**
    The speaker uses certain words (such as **sukoshi, chotto**) in order to downgrade the request.
そのテレビの音がちょっと気になっちゃって、音少し下げてくれないかな？ Sono terebino otoga chotto kini nachatte, oto sukoshi sagete kurenai kana?

- **Expressing apologies and/or gratitude**
  Also notice a few apologizing and thanking expressions that are used after the request is made.

- **Being pessimistic**
  The use of negatives (e.g., ない nai, ません masen) makes the speaker sound hesitant or humble, which is a good quality when making requests in Japanese.

  音少し下げてくれないかな？ Oto sukoshi sagete kurenai kana?
  Compare:
  コンピューター貸してもらえますか？ Konpuuta kashite moraesu ka? “Could you lend me your computer?”
  コンピューター貸してもらえませんか？ (more polite) Konpuuta kashite morae masenka? “(literally) Couldn’t you ...?”

- In interacting with other Japanese speakers, listen carefully to observe their use of these strategies and the situation. Make your own hypotheses regarding appropriate use of Japanese and be willing to renew them as necessary.
- See the Japanese Teachers’ Guide for assessment suggested for this unit.

**Exercise 7: Simulation Exercises for Making a Request**

- Let’s review these dialogues in terms of the strategies effectively used:
  - **Using an appropriate level of politeness:** Compare the requests in Exercises 6 and 7.
    - Exercise 6: Asking a roommate to turn down the volume of the TV
      そのテレビの音がちょっと気になっちゃって、音少し下げてくれないかな？ Sono terebino otoga chotto kini nachatte, oto sukoshi sagete kurenai kana?
    - Exercise 7: Asking a kouhai (a younger clubmate) to loan you 1000 yen
      もしよかったら、1000 円貸してくれない？ Moshi yokattara, sen en kashite kurenai?
      けいちゃん、あの、悪いんだけど、ちょっと 1000 円貸してくれない？ Kei chan, ano, waruin dakedo, chotto sen en kashite kurenai?

  The level of politeness of the requests is much the same in Exercises 6 and 7, regardless of the magnitude of the imposition. The language of requesting in speaking to a roommate and a kouhai is unlikely to involve the use of honorifics.

  - **Reinforcement of the request:** Since the listeners in the sample dialogues are initially unwilling to comply with the request, the speakers need to reinforce their request:
    お願い。 Onegai. “Please.”
    頼むよ。このとおり。 Tanomuyo. Kono toori. (pleading gesture) “I’m asking you. Look, please.”
    そんなこと言わないで、コンサート見られないから。 Sonna koto iwanaide, konsaato mirenaire ka. “Don’t say that, I won’t be able to see the concert.”

  - **Promising to repay/pay back:** This is an effective strategy specially in a situation where you borrow money!
    絶対返す。Zettai kaesu. “I’ll definitely pay you back.”
    このコンサートが終わったらすぐ ATM に行ってお金返すからさ。 Kono konsaatoga owattara sugo ATM ni itte okane kaesu karasa. “I’ll go to an ATM and pay you back immediately after the concert.”

  - **Showing consideration for the listener:** The expression like もしよかったら moshi yokattara “if it’s okay with you” is often used and exhibits the consideration of the speaker for the listener.
  - **Using downgraders (chotto)**
### Expressing apologies and gratitude (ありがとうございます arigatou, 悪いんだけど waruin dakedo)

#### Exercise 10: Summary Exercise

- Here is a detailed look at Listening 42. Multiple colors in the next two charts show various strategies and the language that corresponds to each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the student says</th>
<th>Key points in the language (Each color in the left column corresponds to that here.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. You get his attention and indicate you have a request to make. | ➢ Getting the professor’s attention by addressing him  
 ➢ You could also use the strategy “Getting a pre-commitment” by asking his availability. (e.g., 今よろしいですか Ima yoroshii desuka?) |
| あ、田中先生。A, Tanaka sensei. | ➢ Speaking hesitantly  
 ➢ Getting a pre-commitment  
 ➢ Identifying the topic  
 ➢ Offering reasons for the request  
 ➢ Showing consideration for the listener  
 ➢ Using a downgrader  
 ➢ Using an appropriate level of politeness (considering the situational factors, a very polite request using the humble honorific form, itadaku) |
| 2. You explain your situation and make a request. | ➢ Speaking hesitantly  
 ➢ Offering reasons for the request  
 ➢ Expressing apologies  
 ➢ Using an appropriate level of politeness (considering the situational factors, a very polite request using the humble honorific form, itadaku) |
| はい、あの、実はちょっと相談があるんですが、あの、レポートのことなんですね。あの、今クラスのレポートをしているんです、なかなか進んでいないんです。で、あの、先生、もしよろしければ、もう少し東を延ばしていただけないでしょうか。Hai, ano, shitteimasu. Demo, ano, hontouni moushiwake nain desu keredomo, kyuuni chotto iriirona kotoga arimashte, mada peepaaga owatte inaide, hontouni moushiwake nain desu keredomo, ano, nobashite itadake nai deshouka? | ➢ Speaking hesitantly  
 ➢ Offering reasons for the request  
 ➢ Expressing apologies  
 ➢ Using an appropriate level of politeness (considering the situational factors, a very polite request using the humble honorific form, itadaku) |
| 3. You admit it, and ask again. | ➢ Speaking hesitantly  
 ➢ Offering reasons for the request  
 ➢ Expressing apologies  
 ➢ Using an appropriate level of politeness (considering the situational factors, a very polite request using the humble honorific form, itadaku) |
| 4. You thank him. | ➢ Speaking hesitantly  
 ➢ Offering reasons for the request  
 ➢ Expressing apologies  
 ➢ Using an appropriate level of politeness (considering the situational factors, a very polite request using the humble honorific form, itadaku) |
**Expressing gratitude**

- Strategies used in Listening 43:
  - ちょっとお願いがでして chotto onegaiga arimashite “I have a favor to ask of you” – **Getting a pre-commitment**
  - 他にレポートの締め切りを２つ、同じ週にかかえまして hokani repoto no shimekiri wo futatsu, onaji suuni kakaete mashiite “I have two more deadlines for other papers in the same week” – **Offering reasons for the request**
  - もしできれば moshi dekireba “if possible” – **Showing consideration for the listener**
  - もし、よかったら moshi yokattara “if it’s okay with you” – **Showing consideration for the listener**
  - 先生のレポートの締め切りを延ばせていただけないでしょうか senseino repotono shimekiri wo nobashite itadake nai deshouka? “Wouldn’t it be possible to get an extension of the paper?” – **Using an appropriate level of politeness** (considering the situational factors, a very polite request using the humble honorific form, itadaku)
  - 期日を延ばしていただけませんか？ kijitsu wo nobashite itadake masenka? “Would it be possible to get an extension?” – **Using an appropriate level of politeness** (considering the situational factors, a very polite request using the humble honorific form, itadaku)
  - 少し早いんですけれども sukoshide iin desu keredomo “just a bit [of an extension] would be fine” – Using a downgrader
  - つともあの、枚数が長くて、あの、すごく時間がかかると思います。 Futatsu tomo ano, maisuuga nagakute, ano, sugoku jikanga kakuruto omoimasu “Both papers are long and, um, I think they’ll take me a really long time” – **Offering reasons for the request**
  - すみません sumimasen “I’m sorry” – **Expressing apologies**
  - 本当にどうもありがとうございます。 Hontouni doumo arigatou gozaimasu. “Thank you very much.” – **Expressing gratitude**
  - As you probably noticed, frequent use of the hesitation marker, あの ano, to sound hesitant and humble! Ano tends to be used in deference more than the hesitation marker えーと eto. The use of ano and the expression of apologies/thanks assist in creating an appropriate tone of voice to make the request more effective.
  - See the Japanese Teachers’ Guide for assessment suggested for this unit.

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**Exercise 11: Summary Exercise**

- Here is a close look at the language of requesting once again. The following chart summarizes the effective request strategies used in the sample dialogues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common strategies that are used in this situation</th>
<th>Strategies used in the sample dialogues (Each color in the left column corresponds to that in this column.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>Opening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Getting attention</td>
<td>あ、山田先輩。 A, Yamada senpai.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Getting pre-commitment</td>
<td>実はちょっと相談があるんですけど。 Jitsuwa chotto soudanga arun desukedo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Checking on availability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td>Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Using an appropriate level of politeness (considering the situational factors, a polite or very polite request using the <em>desu/masu</em> or humble form)</td>
<td>✔️ 代わってもらえませんか？ <em>kawatte morae masenka</em>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Showing consideration for the listener</td>
<td>先輩に、あの、あさっての仕事を代わっていただけないのかなー、と思って。 <em>Senpaini, ano, asattewa shigotowo kawatte itadake naino kanaa, to omotte.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Offering reasons for the request</td>
<td>もしよかったら <em>moshi yokattara</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>できれば <em>dekireba</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>前からねだって映画があるんですね。それのチケットを友達からもらったんですけど、それが明後日で切れちゃうんですよ。できれば行ってたいなあって思うんですけどけども。 <em>Maekara neratteta eigaga arun desune. Soreno chikettowo tomodachi kara morattan desu kedo, sorega asattede kirechaun desuyo. Dekireba itte kitainaato omoun desu keredomo.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>実はですね、私、どうしても行きたい映画があって、 <em>Jitsuwa desune, watashi, doushitemo ikitai eigaga atte,...</em> その日のチケットをもらったんですね。 <em>Sono hino chikettowo morattan desu...</em> あの、で、どうしても、あの、友達と映画を見に行きたいと思うんですけども、Ano, de, doushitemo, ano, tomodachito eigawo mini ikitaito omoun desu keredomo,...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Offering compensation</td>
<td>また先輩の、あの、忙しいときに私が、あの、代わりますので。 <em>Mata senpaino, ano, isogashii tokini watashiga, ano, kawari masu node.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ✔️ Using appropriate tone (e.g., using hedges like *ano*) | すみません。 *Sumimasen.* |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closing</th>
<th>Closing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Expressing gratitude</td>
<td>ありがとうございます。 <em>Arigatou gozaimasu.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Expressing apologies</td>
<td>ありがとうございました。 <em>Hai, arigatou gozaimashita.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Discussion on the cause of learners’ divergence from typical Japanese norms of behavior can be an effective additional activity here. For example, native English speakers may adjust the politeness of a request based on the content (magnitude) of a request rather than the role/status difference. They may also provide a long, detailed explanation for the request as they do in English. Furthermore, they might use a direct request where an indirect request is more appropriate in Japanese. When teachers encounter these cases, they may consider possible reasons. Did learners practice the use of strategies or vocabulary enough? Or do learners feel resistant to using typically Japanese expressions because of their own cultural values? Do learners understand the range of Japanese norms and cultural practices? Are they aware of how their own use of strategies is likely to be interpreted in Japanese?

• If learners need further understanding or linguistic improvement, additional exercises included in the online resources or the feedback teachers provide during class discussion may be effective. If learners deliberately avoid using Japanese norms despite sufficient understanding and linguistic ability, it is important to respect the expression of their subjectivity.

• See the Japanese Teachers’ Guide for assessment suggested for this unit.

Abridged English Teachers’ Guide:
Unit 5: Refusing in Japanese

This English Teachers’ Guide is an abridged version of the Japanese Teachers’ Guide. Please see the Japanese version and for a more complete set of support, including unit objectives, instructional tips, additional activities, sample answers, and suggested assessment instruments. This textbook also has a companion website (“Online Resources”), which offers additional scenarios and role-play tasks, extra exercises, assessment suggestions, ideas for technological applications, and related links. Listening audios and transcripts are also available online.

Exercise 1: Observing Accepting and Refusing Invitations in Japanese

• As illustrated in the examples, highlight that making a direct/indirect refusal (saying no) and providing a reason for the refusal are common strategies in the discourse of refusals, although either one could be omitted or just hinted at.

• Get learners to notice the change in the level of politeness while talking to a friend as opposed to talking to a teacher. As with any other speech acts, using an appropriate level of politeness is highly important.

• Direct learners’ attention to the hedging expressions of the refusals in the second example (refusing the teacher’s invitation) (Scenario 2, Listening 4). (Parts in red are core refusal statements.)

あの、ちょっとあのアルバイトの方が入ってまして、あの、行くことができないんですけれども。
“Well, I’m afraid that, um, I have to work part-time and, um, I am not able to come.”

Markers for upcoming refusals

それでちょっと申し訳ないんですけど、あの、今回のだけはちょっと、あの、遠慮させていただいてくださいかな、と思ってますので。
“Well, I’m really sorry, but I don’t think I can make it this time.”

• Also note that incomplete sentences are used to avoid sounding too assertive (see both examples above).
Exercise 2: Observing the Context of Refusals

- Both sample dialogues include mention of a reason/reasons why the speakers cannot comply with the requests. Note that one strategy is knowing the cultural norm in Japanese that, particularly in formal refusals, generic reasons are likely to be acceptable and to be considered polite in most refusal situations (Naitou, 1997) unless a specific reason is requested in the course of the conversation.
- Even if an employee is asked by a boss to give a more specific reason, the employee may still not reveal everything s/he has in mind as in the sample dialogue. The employee may just give a generic excuse (which we will cover in Exercise 3) or tell a white lie. Note that bringing private matters into one’s public life tends to be considered a taboo in Japanese society, and using a white lie to avoid the embarrassment is often acceptable.
- Note that a white lie is often used as a face-saving strategy when the speaker does not want to comply with the listener’s request or invitation. It is normally considered polite to give a reason the speaker has no control over, rather than directly saying that the speaker simply does not want to comply (Moriyama, 1990).
- In talking with a close friend, however, speaking honestly may be more appreciated, depending on the personality and relationship (Moriyama, 1990). So the speaker needs to choose an appropriate reason for the refusal according to the conversation partner and the situation.
- Note again the strategy of using an appropriate level of politeness according to the conversation partner and the situation.
- As you see, cultural norms for interpreting and performing speech acts are very complex. Learners can listen to other Japanese speakers carefully to observe their use of speech act strategies along with the situation. Learners can make their own hypotheses regarding appropriate use of the target language and renew them as necessary.
- In this exercise, teachers can direct learners’ attention to the magnitude of the request in each situation. In either case, the magnitude of the request is somewhat major. However, the conversation partners are different; the speaker is interacting with a boss, someone older and of higher status in Scenario 1, and with a close, equal-status friend in Scenario 2.
- Teachers might use various ways of assessing learners’ responses such as self-correction and peer feedback in pairs or in small groups.

Exercise 3: Reasons for Refusals

- While in English, presenting a detailed explanation for a refusal is often expected, in Japanese, presenting a generic reason for the refusal tends to be accepted and appropriate (Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990). However, if the conversational partner requests further information, the speaker might need to be more specific.
- When speaking to someone close, regardless of whether they are of equal or different status, the speaker might be expected to be honest and frank (Moriyama, 1990). More specific information may well be appreciated and make your refusal more sincere.
- In this listening exercise, teachers could highlight how generic reasons for refusals are used in a power-differential relationship.

Exercise 4: Making Your Refusals Incomplete
• Leaving the sentence incomplete is a strategy used to appear less assertive and more hesitant. It shows the speaker’s consideration for the listener, and thus is regarded as polite. In a study of refusals by native speakers of Japanese, 24% of the refusal expressions were left incomplete, and over half of them were used for someone of higher status than the speaker (Shimura, 1995).

Exercise 5: Refusing Insistent Requests/Invitations

• Encourage learners to direct their attentions to a range of effective refusal strategies and different language styles and variations in use. In the sample dialogues, the speakers use various strategies in order to refuse the invitation without hurting their listener’s feelings or offending them or to refuse and communicate honest feelings. It is important to review the strategies and the language in conjunction with the context in which they are used.

Scenario 1
Strategy 1: Providing a reason for the refusal
• 再来週の土曜日はちょっと予定が入っちゃっているんですよ。サークルの忘年会も同じ日なんで。Saraishuu no doyoubi wa chotto yotei ga hiratsume yo. Saakuru no bounenkai mo onaji hi nan de.
  “I have some plans already that day. I have another year-end party at my club on the same day.”

Strategy 2: Stating positive feelings
• 私も行きたいんですけれども Watashi mo ikitai desu keredomo “I want to go too.”

Strategy 3: Promising future acceptance
• 新年会は絶対行きますから Shinnenkai wa zettai ikimasu kara. “I’ll come to the New Year’s party, for sure.”

Strategy 4: Apologizing/stating regret (Listening 24)
Notice that this speaker apologizes three times!
• あの、ちょっと大学のサークルに入ってまして、そのサークルの忘年会も同じ日なんと申し訳ないですけど Ano, chotto daigaku no saakuru ni haittemashite, sono saakuru no bounenkai mo onaji hi niandesu yo, mou shihiwake naide desukedo. “Well, I belong to a club at the university and I have another year-end party at the club on the same day, I’m afraid.”
• ああ、だいぶ前に約束しちゃっただんだけど、すみません。Aa, daibu maeni yakusoku shichatta monde, sumimasen. “Well, I’m sorry, but I made the commitment quite some time ago.”
• はい、すみません、どうも。Hai, sumimasen, doumo. “No, I’m really sorry.”

Scenario 2
Strategy 1: Providing reasons for the refusal
• あれ、でも、ディスカッションベースのクラスだからさ、役に立たないと思うよ、ノート見たって。Are, demo, disukasshon beesu no kurasu dakarasa, yakuni tatani to momoyou, nooto mitatte. “But it’s a discussion-based class, so I don’t think looking at notes helps.”
• いつも私に借りてもっかりじゃないか? Itsumo watashini karite bakkarijanai? “You always borrow my notes.”
• うん、ちょっとあんたね、英語下手なんだからさ Un, chotto antane, eigo heta nandakarasai “You aren’t that great at English, so why don’t you come to class to study a bit?”

Strategy 2: Making the refusal statement (Notice how direct the refusal expression can be between close friends!)
• だめ。Dame. “No.”
• うん、だめだ。Un, dame dame. “Um, no, no.”

Strategy 3: Offering an alternative
Exercise 6: Refusing Offers

- It is important to be aware of the cultural norm of making “ritual refusals” before accepting an offer in Japanese culture. Fine-tuning the interpretation of such typical routines at a Japanese dinner table is also important. In other words, when someone offers learners food or drink over and over again, they shouldn’t take it personally – s/he is not being persistent in order to convince them to have more, but is merely being polite by making sure that they don’t eat or drink too little on account of shyness on their part!
- It is also important to know typical expressions for refusing offers (in dining situations in particular). Note that the phrase 結構です kekkodesu “No, thank you” is polite and appropriate for an older person or someone of higher status, but would sound too formal with friends (Ikoma & Shimura, 1993). Some expressions of refusal appropriate for use with a friend would be:
  - うん、もういい。おなかいっぱいなの。 Un, mou ii. Onaka ippanano. “No, thanks. I’m full.”
  - すごくおいしかったけどもうおなかいっぱいだから・・・ Sugoku oishikatta kedo mou onaka ippaidakara… “It was really good but I’m full...”
  - いや、もう十分食べたよ。 Iya, mou jiubun tabetayo. “No, I’ve eaten enough.”
- See the Japanese Teachers’ Guide for assessment suggested for this unit.

Exercise 7: More Refusal Strategies

- According to a questionnaire study, when native speakers of Japanese get the response, 考えておく kangaietoku “I’ll think about it,” approximately 50–60% of them would expect to get a positive response if the speaker-listener relationship is close, but only 30% would expect this with more distant relationships. However, this strategy is hardly ever used with an conversational partner who is older or of higher status than the speaker. This is because the expression implies that the decision will be made based on the speaker’s preference or convenience, rather than that of the listener (Moriyama, 1990).

Exercise 9: Summary Exercise

- In this exercise, learners will engage in a written dialogue, then listen to a sample dialogue and self-evaluate their language use in comparison with the sample dialogue. Two levels of assessment are involved: choice of strategies (what strategies were used) and use of strategies (how effectively they were used). The task form is in the textbook.
- Two types of assessment are presented here: learners’ self-evaluation and teacher’s evaluation. For the teacher’s evaluation, a sample evaluation form is provided in the Japanese Teachers’ Guide. This form can also be used for a learners’ self-evaluation.
- For self-evaluation, teachers can encourage learners to assess their own language use. Again, note that there are two levels of evaluation: choice and use of strategies. First, have them complete the written dialogue. Then, have them listen to the first sample dialogue and evaluate the responses in the dialogue in the left
column. Next, learners can evaluate their own language use by comparing it with the sample dialogue they have analyzed in the left column. They are asked to fill in this evaluation in the right column. Teachers should provide learners with some evaluation criteria for the appropriateness of the choice and use of their refusal strategies. For example,

- Did you use the refusal strategies listed in the left column?
- If so, how similar and appropriate was your use of each strategy?
- If not, what else did you say/write? How appropriate do you think it was?
- See the Japanese Teachers’ Guide for assessment suggested for this unit.

Exercise 10: Summary Exercise

- In this situation, learners engage in a dialogue by playing the role of an employee who is much younger in age and lower in status than the boss. The employee has known the boss for about a month, but note that this is not a work-related request. Therefore, the employee probably will not feel compelled to accept his invitation. However, some politeness and face-saving strategies are necessary in refusing the invitation.
- Notice that the speaker in the sample dialogues apologizes or expresses regret a number of times for not being able to go to the concert. They also give some reasons for refusals but they may not go into details about what they were planning to do that night. A general excuse (土曜日は都合が悪いので Doyoubi wa tsugo ga warui node “Saturday isn’t a good day for me”) might be sufficient.
- Although this is not a work-related conversation, the judgment of the relationship is most likely to be based on their relative status, age, and familiarity. So most employees would use at least desu/masu style in speaking to their bosses on an occasion like this. They may even insert some exalted or humble form depending on the listener’s personality.
- As an additional activity, learners can discuss what cultural differences they have found in the act of refusals in English and in Japanese. What cultural reasoning underlies Japanese norms of refusals? What individual differences might there be among Japanese speakers? Also, discuss questions and concerns you may have about refusals of invitations, requests, advice, and offers.
- Learners can also discuss how they react to or feel about refusals/refusal strategies in this unit when some Japanese norms of behavior conflict with learner’s personal beliefs or preferences (e.g., when refusing someone’s offer by using a white lie). In conjunction with this, also discuss possible negative consequences for not deciding to use an expected social norm in refusing in Japanese. Teachers are encouraged to consider for themselves how learners’ resistance should be dealt with in the classroom.
- See the Japanese Teachers’ Guide for assessment suggested for this unit.

Abridged English Teachers’ Guide:
Unit 6: Apologizing in Japanese

This English Teachers’ Guide is an abridged version of the Japanese Teachers’ Guide. Please see the Japanese version and for a more complete set of support, including unit objectives, instructional tips, additional activities, sample answers, and suggested assessment instruments. This textbook also has a companion website (“Online Resources”), which offers additional scenarios and role-play tasks, extra exercises, assessment suggestions, ideas for technological applications, and related links. Listening audios and transcripts are also available online.

Exercise 1: Observing Apologies in Japanese
• The Japanese apologizing expressions used in the dialogue were: ごめんなさい gomennasai, 申し訳ありません moushiwake arimasen, and (本当に)すみませんでした (hontouni) sumimasen deshita.
• Learners may find that Japanese speakers repeat the apology several times. One or two times may not be enough for a serious offense. The key strategy to learn from this exercise is that repetition is an important sign of sincerity in formal or serious-offense situations, and that different apologizing expressions, not just one, are likely to be used repeatedly in formal apologies.
• Also notice how emphatically the speakers give apologies. As they are pronounced, vowels in apologizing expressions are often lengthened hesitantly. This speech feature will often communicate a tone of sincerity.

**Exercise 2: Observing Apologies in Japanese**

• Teachers can encourage learners to be aware that repetition is important in an informal setting as well as in a formal one. It’s a sign of sincerity that shows how sorry you are.
• Knowing the most likely recipients of various apologizing expressions is important. Note that in informal situations with close listeners, variants of gomen (e.g., ごめん gomen, ごめんね gomenne, 本当にごめん (ね) hontouni gomen(ne), ごめんなさい gomennasai) can often be repeated. ごめんなさい gomennasai is often used in relationships that are a little distant or in somewhat serious situations. Other apologizing expressions, such as すみません sumimasen or 申し訳ありません moushiwake arimasen usually sound too formal or distant for use with close friends.
• It’s also important to use an appropriate level of politeness in apologies and in the language in general. Pay attention to the level of politeness in the language. For example, what level of politeness do you observe in the speaker’s language in Exercise 1 and 2?

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No keigo (no honorifics)</th>
<th>忘れてきてしまった wasurete kite shimatta “I left it”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desu/masu honorific style</td>
<td>忘れてきてしまったんです wasurete kite shimattan desu “I left it”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that in the sample dialogues, the speaker uses honorifics (desu/masu, respect forms, humble forms) in talking to someone older and not very close (Scenario 1), but does not use the desu/masu style in talking to an equal-status close friend. In Japanese, it is crucial to use an appropriate level of politeness according to the person you are speaking to.

• Let’s review some situational factors in the Exercise 1 and 2 “apologizing to the landlord” and “apologizing to a friend” situations that influence the level of politeness in the language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exercise 1</th>
<th>Exercise 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age difference:</td>
<td>you are younger</td>
<td>equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role/status difference:</td>
<td>landlord-tenant</td>
<td>equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness or distance:</td>
<td>more distant than Exercise 2</td>
<td>close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnitude of your infraction: (judging from the listener’s reaction)</td>
<td>greater than Exercise 2</td>
<td>lesser than Exercise 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exercise 3: Functions of Apologizing Expressions**
• This exercise guides the learners to further their understanding of the various functions and roles of apologizing expressions. In Unit 3, students have learned that すみません sumimasen is often used for thanking in addition to apologizing and that apologizing and thanking are intricately intertwined in Japanese. In general, when one feels greater indebtedness, then s/he feels the need to apologize, while when one feels less indebted, s/he may be more likely to give thanks (Miyake, 1994).

Exercise 4: Apologizing Expressions in Context

• The following explanations might be helpful for learners:
  
  • **Example:**
Considering the fact that you are talking to a status-equal friend, ごめんな gomen or variants of ごめんな gomen (e.g., ごめんな gomenne) would be an appropriate choice. ごめんなさい gomennasai would be another possibility but might sound slightly too formal in this situation.

  • **Ex. 4-1:**
The most common answer in this situation would be すみません sumimasen, which is appropriate for use with a stranger to both apologize and thank the person for picking up whatever was dropped. Other options include 申し訳ありません moushiwake arimasen (which is more polite and often used for someone older than you), and ごめんなさい gomennasai (which is a little more informal and might be more often used for someone younger than you). Notice that these two apologizing expressions do not communicate the feeling of thanks that すみません sumimasen would.

  • **Ex. 4-2:**
  Gap 1: The most common answer in this situation would be すみません sumimasen, which is appropriate for use with a stranger to get his/her attention. Other options might include 申し訳ありません moushiwake arimasen (which is more polite and often used for someone older than you), and ごめんなさい gomennasai (which is slightly more informal and might be more often used for someone younger than you), but these expressions are appropriate only when there is a clear reason to apologize, such as for interrupting the conversation the listener is engaged in.
  Gap 2: The most common answer in this situation would be すみません sumimasen, which is appropriate for use with a stranger to get his/her attention. Other options include 申し訳ありません moushiwake arimasen (which is more polite and often used for someone older than you), and ごめんなさい gomennasai (which is a little more informal and might be more often used for someone younger than you).
  Gap 3: The most common answer in this situation would be すみません sumimasen, which is appropriate for use with a stranger both to apologize for the trouble and to thank him/her for trying to help. Other options might include 申し訳ありません（でした） moushiwake arimasen (deshita) (which is more polite and often used for someone older than you), and ごめんなさい gomennasai (which is a little more informal and might be more often used for someone younger than you), but these expressions are appropriate only when there is a clear reason to apologize, such as for interrupting the conversation the listener is engaged in.

  • **Ex. 4-3:**
  Gap 1: This is a polite idiomatic expression to open a telephone conversation late at night. The speaker can say 夜分すみません yabun sumimasen, 夜分失礼します yabun shitsurei shimasu, or 夜分申し訳ありません．
せん sumimasen (more polite). If the speaker is calling someone of higher status than you or a friend who lives with his/her parents, it is safe to use either of these expressions. However, the speaker can just say 夜分にごめん yabunni gomen (or 遅くにごめん osokuni gomen), or may not have to apologize at all to a close friend who is just answering your call.

Gap 2:
In this situation, すみません sumimasen would be the only option. It is used as a mild apology for troubling the family member late at night.

Gap 3:
The most common answer in this situation would be すみません sumimasen, which is appropriate to use both in apologizing for the trouble and in thanking the other person for his/her help. Other options include 申し訳ありません (でした) moushiwake arimasen deshita, which is more polite and more often used for someone older than you. Since 申し訳ありません moushiwake arimasen would not communicate your thanks, it would sound like you are making an additional apology for calling and troubling the listener late at night.

Exercise 5: Apologizing Expressions

- The speakers’ genders can be guessed to a certain extent through the use of “な” or “ね” as in example #1, ごめんな gomennna. However, what is typically believed to be feminine/masculine language can often be used by both genders (Siegal & Okamoto, 1996, 2003). Guide your learners to observe authentic language use so that they can analyze typically masculine and feminine expressions, instead of teaching that な is a masculine expression and ね is feminine. This point has been introduced in Unit 2, Exercise 4, and can be revisited here.

Exercise 9: Summary Exercise

- Strategies for apologizing that we have seen in this exercise are:
  - Providing an appropriate reason
  - Being aware of how to appropriately present the reason (providing a detailed excuse only when asked in causing a serious infraction to someone of higher status)
  - Communicating a lack of intention to cause the infraction
  - Using an appropriate intensifier and pronouncing it emphatically
  - Using an appropriate amount of repetition for apologizing expressions
  - Using an appropriate level of politeness in apologizing expressions and in the language in general

- Since learners have learned that apologizing expressions are likely to be repeated in Japanese, they may wonder how they go about concluding their apologizing sequence. As you see in the sample dialogues in this exercise (and in Exercise 10 as well), speakers use the present tense of the apologizing expressions, and then shift to the past tense (e.g., すみませんでした sumimasen deshita, 申し訳ありませんでした moushiwake arimasen deshita) to conclude the conversation. In this exercise, the student says, 今回は大変ご迷惑おかけしました Konkaiwa taihen goneiwaoku okake shimashita.

- However, the usage of 失礼しました/shitsurei shimasu/shimashita is different and slightly more complex. In a nutshell, the present tense, shitsurei shimasu, is often used to signal an upcoming small offense/impoliteness. For example, one says it before/when entering a professor’s office (as this can be seen as an invasion of his/her space), or before answering a phone call if it disrupts an ongoing
conversation. In contrast, the past form, shiturei shimashita can be used as an apologizing expression for some infraction committed in the past. For more details, see Okamoto & Tamon (2000).

- Teachers can encourage learners to self-evaluate their own apologizing expressions. Learners can compare their own responses to those provided in the textbook that were given by Japanese university students. For example, guide learners to be aware of the following points:
  - 2a: In addition to the different types of apologizing expressions, encourage learners to analyze the level of politeness. For example, in Listening 47, a humble form (i.e., 加藤と申しますが Kato to moushimasuga, 伺うことができなくなってしまったです Ukagau kotoga dekinakunatteshimattandesu) is also used in addition to desu/masu. Furthermore, these apologizing expressions are often used with intensifiers, such as 本当に hontou, どうも doumo, 大変 taihen, and 誠に makotoni. These intensifiers are often emphasized and pronounced clearly in order to show sincerity in tone.
  - 2b: Guide learners to think about whether the amount of repetition for apologizing expressions is appropriate for this situation in consideration of those used by Japanese students. They may use various apologizing expressions rather than repeating the same expression when dealing with someone who is older or whose social status is higher.
  - 2c: Japanese students often appeared to communicate a lack of intention to cause the infraction.
    - Before presenting a reason for the apology, 実は jitsuwa is often used so that the listener can prepare for what will follow next. Example: 実は私的なことですが、今朝家族の父が倒れて、母からすぐに帰ってきてほしいと言われまして・・・今からすぐにでも帰らなければなりません。本当に急で申し訳ありません。Jitsuwa shitekina koto desuga, kesa jikka no chichi ga taoremashite, haha kara suguni kaette kite hoshii to iware mashite... Imakara suguni demo kaeranakereba narimasen. Hontou ni kyuude moushiwake arimasenga. “I’m sorry for this personal reason, but my father collapsed this morning and at home my mother asked me to come home right away. I need to go home as soon as possible. I’m really sorry for such short notice.”
    - 〜しまった〜shimatta expresses something is beyond the speaker’s control.
      Example: すみません、今日になって突然都合がつかなくなってしまったんです。Sumimasen, kyouni natte totsuzen tugou ga tsukanaku natte shimattandesu. “I’m sorry but something suddenly came up and I’m not available today.”
  - 2d: Common reasons that Japanese students used are “being realistic” and “being beyond one’s control.”
  - 2e: Notice that Japanese students tended to start with a generic reason, using idiomatic expressions such as 急に都合が悪くなりまして kyuuni tsugou ga waruku narimashite (Turn 4), and provide reasons in details gradually as a conversation went on (急に高熱が出てきてしまいまして、外出できそうにないんです kyuuni kounetsu ga deteshaimashite, gaishutsudekisouninainandesu (Turn 6). They didn’t provide a detailed reason until the teacher requested it. In English, it is considered sincere and appropriate to provide detailed reasons for requesting and apologizing, whereas it is often perceived as an excuse and being negative in Japanese. However, in Japanese, when you are talking to someone whose social status is higher, such as a teacher or a boss, giving a long detailed reason could be considered rude and selfish.

- See the Japanese Teachers’ Guide for assessment suggested for this unit.

Exercise 10: Summary Exercise

- See the Japanese Teachers’ Guide for assessment suggested for this unit.
• It is important for learners to listen to other Japanese speakers carefully to observe their use of speech act strategies just as we did in the exercises. Learners are encouraged to make their own hypotheses regarding appropriate use of the target language and to be willing to renew them as necessary.

• In the cases where learners do not use typical strategies commonly preferred in Japanese, consider the possible reasons. Is it because learners did not practice the use of strategies or vocabulary (i.e., due to lack of linguistic ability)? Or do learners feel resistant to using typically Japanese expressions because of their own cultural values? Do learners understand the range of Japanese norms and cultural practices? Are they aware of how their own use of strategies is likely to be interpreted in Japanese?

• If learners need further understanding or linguistic improvement, additional exercises included in the online resources or the feedback teachers provide during class discussion may be effective. If learners deliberately avoid using Japanese norms despite sufficient understanding and linguistic ability, it is important to respect the expression of their subjectivity.

• As an additional activity, learners can discuss how they have felt about the apologizing strategies that were in conflict with their own values (if any). For example, English speakers often think it is appropriate to explain the reasons for their faults in detail. On the other hand, in Japanese culture, detailed explanation to a person who is older or whose social status is higher might sound more like an excuse, thus, it is often avoided. How do learners feel about differing norms of behavior in Japanese and English? Also learners can consider what consequences they may face if they decide to diverge from using sociocultural norms typically preferred in the community.