

## Japanese Language

There is no requirement that you know how to speak Japanese before you become a 4-H delegate to Japan. You may have already studied Japanese, or be interested in learning a bit before you go to Japan. 4-H will be giving you a handbook with greetings, instructions on how to introduce yourself and other useful phrases. Everyone will learn how to introduce themselves and to say a few common phrases.

Japanese vowels are pronounced in a different way than English, particularly the E and I. To learn how to pronounce the words, please look it up on the internet. Here is one site which explains Japanese pronunciation.

<http://japanese.about.com/library/blhiraganaaudio.htm>

If you want to learn more, there are many sites which teach Japanese. One is a YouTube series produced by the Japan Society in New York. Here are links to some of their videos.

[Introduction - Japanese Lesson 1](#)

[Counting Numbers 1 - 100 - Japanese Lesson 2](#)

They also have a series called “waku waku Japanese” at these links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSrpkd8X4MQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSrpkd8X4MQ&feature=c4-overview-vl&list=PLF97A549D60C2EBA4>

If you are interested in learning Japanese, the more you learn before you go, the more you will be able to “pick up” while you are on the exchange. For example, if you learn the hiragana and katakana alphabets, you can practice by reading signs and packages in Japan. Hiragana is commonly used for Japanese words, while Katakana is used for words borrowed from other languages and in advertising. Your name is an English word, so you would write it in Katakana. If you try to read, for example, the fruit labels at the supermarket, you will learn the names of foods. Your host family will help you.

Another way to begin learning is to look up the Japanese words for the items in your photo album and label the photos in both English and Japanese. You can write them in Japanese hiragana and katakana. You can also write Japanese in English letters, called Romaji. For example, if you have a photo

of your dog, you can also label it with the word “Inu”, the Japanese word for dog.