

## Chapter 2 Subjects

### Section 1 Japanese Language

#### I. OVERALL OBJECTIVES

To develop in pupils the ability to properly express and accurately comprehend the Japanese language, to increase the ability to communicate, to develop the ability to think and imagine and sense of language, to deepen interest in the Japanese language, and to develop an attitude of respect for the Japanese language.

#### II. OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT FOR EACH GRADE

[Grade 1 and Grade 2]

##### 1. Objectives

- (1) To enable pupils to acquire the ability to speak about what they are familiar with and other things considering the sequence of events in accordance with the audience, to listen to everything they need to hear to conduct discussions in line with the speaking theme, and to develop an attitude of willingness for speaking and listening.
- (2) To enable pupils to acquire the ability to write sentences or paragraphs on what they have experienced or imagined by sorting out the order of events and by constructing simple structures, and to develop an attitude of willingness for writing.
- (3) To enable pupils to acquire the ability to read with full awareness of the order of unfolding events and the context of the situation and with extending of the imagination beyond the words on the page, and to develop an attitude of willingness to enjoy reading.

##### 2. Content

###### A. Speaking/Listening

- (1) Instructions should be given on the following items in order to develop speaking and listening abilities:
  - a. To select a speaking theme from what pupils are familiar with or their experiences, and to recall necessary events;
  - b. To sort out the order of events and to speak while paying attention to the differences between polite form and plain form in accordance with the audience;

- c. To speak with clear pronunciation with due consideration to posture, shape of the mouth, tone of voice and pitch;
  - d. To listen with interest to everything they need to hear; and
  - e. To discuss matters without digression, while intensively listening to each other.
- (2) Instructions on the items listed in (1) above should be given through, for example, the following language activities:
- a. To give explanations of matters or report on one's experiences, and to give impressions upon listening to them;
  - b. To ask and answer the questions and conclude opinions by conducting group discussions;
  - c. To greet in accordance to a situation and contact familiar persons on necessary matters; and
  - d. To introduce what they would like to convey to familiar persons and listen to it.

## B. Writing

- (1) Instruction should be given on the following items in order to develop writing abilities:
- a. To select a writing theme from what pupils have experienced or imagined and to collect necessary events for the writing theme;
  - b. To devise a simple structure in accordance with the order of events so that thoughts are made clear;
  - c. To write consistent sentences or paragraphs with attention to word or sentence collocations;
  - d. To develop the habit of re-reading the sentences to notice and correct errors; and
  - e. To read each others' writings, and to exchange impressions on them, finding the good aspects.
- (2) Instructions on the items listed in (1) above should be given through, for example, the following language activities:
- a. To write sentences about what they imagine;
  - b. To write sentences to report what they have experienced or to record what they have observed;
  - c. To write sentences to simply explain matters familiar to them;
  - d. To outline in a memorandum and write sentences about what they would like to introduce; and

- e. To write a simple letter about what they like to convey.

### C. Reading

- (1) Instruction should be given on the following items in order to develop reading abilities:
  - a. To read aloud while paying attention to the unity and sound of words;
  - b. To comprehend the overall content, considering the sequential order of events involved and the sequence of the events;
  - c. To read with extending of the imagination of the context of the situation, focusing on the actions of the characters;
  - d. To extract important words or sentences in writings;
  - e. To make connections between what is written and what they have experienced, to organize their thoughts and ideas and to give presentations; and
  - f. To read by choosing books or sentences to enjoy and to acquire knowledge.
- (2) Instructions on the items listed in (1) above should be given through, for example, the following language activities:
  - a. To read enjoyably books or texts and with extending of the imagination;
  - b. To listen to a story being aloud read and to play a part of a story;
  - c. To read books or sentences that explain the mechanism of matters;
  - d. To read books or texts about stories or sciences and to write impressions; and
  - e. To introduce what they like about what they have read.

### [Items related to traditional linguistic culture and characteristics of the Japanese language]

- (1) Instructions should be given on the following items through the instructions on “A: Speaking/Listening,” “B: Writing,” and “C: Reading.”
  - a. Items related to traditional linguistic culture;
    - (a) To listen to books or sentences being read, such as folktales, myths/legends, and to give presentations;
  - b. Items related to characteristics and rules of language;
    - (a) To gain awareness of language’s function to describe the details of matters and function to convey experiences;

- (b) To gain awareness of the relationships between syllables and words and differences in meaning, depending on stressed syllables;
  - (c) To gain awareness that words are grouped according to meaning;
  - (d) To be able to write special sounds correctly, such as long sounds (*chō-on*), contracted sounds (*yō-on*), and short-stressed sounds (*souk-on*), and to correctly write in a sentence the particles “*ha*,” “*he*,” “*o*”;
  - (e) To understand the use of commas, periods and square brackets 「」 and use them correctly in a sentence;
  - (f) To pay attention to the correspondence between subject and predicate, and
  - (g) To become familiar with the sentence of honorific style.
- c. Items related to characters:
- (a) To read and write *Hiragana* and *Katakana*. To understand the type of words using *Katakana*, and to use *Katakana* in sentences or paragraphs;
  - (b) In Grade 1, to read Chinese characters that are allocated to Grade 1 in the annexed “List of Chinese Characters Classified by Grades” (hereafter referred to the “Classified Chinese Characters”) and to learn to write them in a step-wise manner and use them in sentences or paragraphs; and
  - (c) In Grade 2, to read Chinese characters that are allocated to Grade 2 in the Classified Chinese Characters. To write and use Chinese characters allocated to Grade 1 and use them in sentences or paragraphs. To learn to write Chinese characters allocated to Grade 2 in a step-wise manner and use them in sentences or paragraphs.
- (2) Instruction should be given on the following items for penmanship:
- a. To write a character carefully while paying attention to posture, the appropriate way to hold writing utensils, and the shape of characters; and
  - b. To write a character correctly, paying attention to length, direction, border and intersection of strokes, and to the orthodox order of writing.

[Grade 3 and Grade 4]

## 1. Objectives

- (1) To enable pupils to acquire the ability to speak logically about what they have studied in accordance with the audience and objectives, to listen while paying attention to the focal points of the story and the ability to conduct discussions in line with the course of discussions, and to develop an attitude of speaking and listening while doing creative work.
- (2) To enable pupils to acquire the ability to write sentences while paying attention to the mutual relationship of paragraphs so as to convey what they have studied in accordance with the readers and objectives, and to develop an attitude of writing with creative vision.
- (3) To enable pupils to acquire the ability to read, while grasping the focal points of the content and considering the mutual relationship of paragraphs in accordance with objectives, and to develop an attitude of willingness to expand their reading scope.

## 2. Content

### A. Speaking /Listening

- (1) Instruction should be given on the following items in order to develop speaking and listening abilities:
  - a. To select a speaking theme from their interests, and to collect information regarding the choice of their theme and make notes on the essentials;
  - b. To speak logically with providing reasons and examples and using appropriate words appropriate with polite words in accordance with the audience and the objectives;
  - c. To speak while paying attention to the audience, intonation and stress of words, and pauses;
  - d. To listen while paying attention to the focal points of a speech and ask questions and express impressions; and
  - e. To conduct discussions in line with the course of discussions, with consideration to the similarities and differences of each other's ideas, playing the role of chairperson and present suggestions.
- (2) Instructions on the items listed in (1) above should be given through, for example, the following language activities:
  - a. To give explanations on incidents or report on investigations, and

- to give opinions upon listening to them;
- b. To conduct class discussions, conclude their ideas and exchange opinions; and
- c. To speak based on the interpretation of figures/tables, drawings and photos, and listen to them.

## B. Writing

- (1) Instruction should be given on the following items in order to develop writing abilities:
  - a. To select a writing theme from their interests, and to study necessary matters in accordance with readers and objectives;
  - b. To understand the role of paragraphs in the entire body of writing and to construct sentences while paying attention to the mutual relationships of paragraphs so that the ideas are made clear;
  - c. To clarify the focal points of what is to be written and to write by providing reasons and examples in accordance with objectives and needs;
  - d. To write while paying attention to the differences between polite form and plain form in the sentences;
  - e. To correct errors in the sentences and re-write them for better expressions; and
  - f. To present each other's writings and to exchange opinions about the clarity of ideas of the writer.
- (2) Instructions on the items listed in (1) above should be given through, for example, the following language activities:
  - a. To write poems and stories based on what pupils are familiar with or what they have imagined;
  - b. To investigate answers to their own questions, to write reports and compile them into class newspapers;
  - c. To write explanatory sentences by effectively using collected information documents; and
  - d. To write requests, announcements, and thank you letters in accordance with objectives.

## C. Reading

- (1) Instruction should be given on the following items in order to develop reading abilities:

- a. To read aloud so that the focal points of content and the scenes of the story are easy to understand;
- b. To read in consideration of the mutual relationship between paragraphs and between facts and opinions, while grasping the key words or sentences in accordance with objectives.
- c. Using imagination to read based on the descriptions about the personality and the changes in emotions of the characters, and scenes while paying attention to changes in scenes;
- d. To read while paying attention to essentials and details of the writing and to make citations or summarize writing, etc. in accordance with the objectives and needs;
- e. To present each other's thoughts after reading writings and to become aware of the difference of each perception; and
- f. To read by choosing various books or sentences in accordance with objectives.

(2) Instructions on the items listed in (1) above should be given through, for example, the following language activities:

- a. To read stories or poems and to exchange impressions;
- b. To read and use annals, reports, illustrated books, encyclopedias or dictionaries;
- c. To read annals or reports and read summaries with each other;
- d. To select a book that they would like to introduce and explain it; and
- e. To read other books or sentences related to what has been read in order to obtain necessary information.

[Items related to traditional linguistic culture and characteristics of the Japanese language]

(1) Instruction should be given on the following items through the instructions on "A: Speaking/Listening," "B: Writing," and "C: Reading."

- a. Items related to traditional linguistic culture
  - (a) To read aloud or recite simple literary tanka (Japanese traditional poem) or haiku (short form of Japanese poetry), by imagining the scenes and getting the feeling of the rhythm; and
  - (b) To know the meaning of proverbs, clichés and idioms, that have long been used and to use them.

- b. Items related to characteristics and rules of language:
    - (a) To gain awareness of language's function to describe ideas or thoughts; and
    - (b) To become interested in descriptions using Kanji and Kana characters;
    - (c) To write with due attention to *Okuri-gana*, and to be aware of conjugations;
    - (d) To use commas and periods properly when writing, and to indent when necessary, for instance, at the start of a paragraph and for dialogue;
    - (e) To increase the vocabulary required to express and comprehend and to understand that the words are classified by their attributes and functions;
    - (f) To understand how to use the dictionary to use the letters and words required to express and comprehend, and to make a habit of using dictionaries;
    - (g) To have a rudimentary understanding of the composition of a sentence, for example, the relationship between the modifier and the modified.
    - (h) To understand the role of demonstrative and conjunction words in the interrelations of the meanings between sentences, and to use them.
  - c. Items related to characters:
    - (a) In Grade 3, to read roman characters describing simple daily words and to write them;
    - (b) In Grade 3 and Grade 4, to read Chinese characters that are allocated to the respective grade in the Classified Chinese Characters, and to write those Chinese characters already learned in the previous grade and use them in sentences and paragraphs, and to learn the Chinese characters allocated to the respective grades, in a step-wise manner, and use them in sentences and paragraphs; and
    - (c) To have knowledge about the structure of the left-hand and right-hand radicals.
- (2) Instruction should be given on the following items for penmanship:
- a. To understand the composition of a character and to write it

- correctly;
- b. To write Kanji or Kana character, paying attention to their size and layout; and
  - c. To understand the types of strokes and write with a brush paying attention to writing pressure, etc.

[Grade 5 and Grade 6]

#### 1. Objectives

- (1) To enable pupils to acquire the ability to speak accurately about their own ideas and what they would like to convey in accordance with objectives and intent, to listen while understanding the intent of the speaker, to conduct discussions in a planned manner and to develop an attitude of listening and speaking appropriately.
- (2) To enable pupils to acquire the ability to write passages about their ideas while keeping in mind the whole structure of the writing, in accordance with the objectives and intent, and to develop an attitude of writing appropriately.
- (3) To enable pupils to acquire the ability to read passages while grasping the content and major points in accordance with objectives, and to develop an attitude of broadening and deepening their thoughts through the reading.

#### 2. Content

##### A. Speaking/Listening

- (1) Instruction should be given on the following items in order to develop speaking and listening abilities:
  - a. To select a speaking theme from their own ideas and what they would like to convey, which is to be associated with accumulated information and knowledge;
  - b. To speak using appropriate language in accordance with the situation while contriving story structure so that matters can be communicated clearly in accordance with the objectives and intent;
  - c. To understand the difference between standard Japanese and dialect and to speak in standard Japanese when necessary;
  - d. To listen while grasping the intent of the speaker and to organize thoughts by, for example, comparing one's own opinions; and

- e. To conduct discussions in a planned manner, taking a clear position and intent of each other.
- (2) Instructions on the items listed in (1) above should be given through, for example, the following language activities:
- f. To give explanations or reports by presenting supporting documents and give advice or suggestions upon listening to them;
  - g. To conduct debates, etc., about what has been studied and formed; and
  - h. To recommend a thing or a person, and listen to the recommendation.

## B. Writing

- (1) Instruction should be given on the following items in order to develop writing abilities:
- a. To select a writing theme from ideas, to collect matters to be written, and to organize the matters with an overview of the entire writing in accordance with the objectives and intent;
  - b. To think about the effects of structure in the entire body of a sentence to clearly express one's own thoughts;
  - c. To make distinctions among facts, impressions and opinions and to write simply or in details in accordance with objective and intent;
  - d. To write in such a way as to convey one's thoughts by making citations and using figures/tables or graphs;
  - e. To verify and contrive the effect of expression; and
  - f. To present each other's writings and to exchange advice, focusing on how to express oneself.
- (2) Instructions on the items listed in (1) above should be given through, for example, the following language activities:
- a. To write poems, tanka or haiku and to write stories or essays based on what they have experienced or imagined;
  - b. To investigate the issues of one's own and to write and edit the writings that express opinions or that report activities.
  - c. To write passages to convey to many people the good points of a matter.

## C. Reading

- (1) Instruction should be given on the following items in order to

develop reading abilities:

- a. To read aloud or recite to convey one's thoughts or ideas;
- b. To devise an effective way of reading, for example, by comparing books or sentences in accordance with the objectives;
- c. To grasp the main theme with an accurate understanding of the content of the passage in accordance with the objective and to understand the relationship among facts, impressions and opinions and to read while clarifying one's thoughts;
- d. To understand the depictions of the interrelations and sentiments of the characters and the scenes, and organize one's thoughts about an excellent depiction;
- e. To present each other's thoughts after reading the books or sentences, and to broaden and deepen their thoughts; and
- f. To select and compare various books or sentences to read, in accordance with objectives.

(2) Instructions on the items listed in (1) above should be given through, for example, the following language activities:

- a. To read an autobiography and to reflect upon one's own life;
- b. To use opinion-oriented passages or explanatory passages to solve one's own problems;
- c. To read newspapers by paying attention to the way they are edited and the way articles are written; and
- d. To write a recommendation upon reading a book.

[Items related to traditional linguistic culture and characteristics of the Japanese language]

(1) Instruction should be given on the following items through the instructions on "A: Speaking/Listening," "B: Writing," and "C: Reading."

a. Items related to traditional linguistic culture:

- (a) To understand the outline of the content of Japanese or Chinese classic literature that is familiar to them and post-modern literary writing, and read them aloud; and
- (b) To read writings that explain classic literature and to understand the viewpoints and perceptions of people in previous eras;

b. Items related to characteristics and rules of language

- (a) To gain awareness of the differences between spoken and written language;
  - (b) To gain awareness of changes in language along with the passage of time and the differences in language between generations;
  - (c) To write sentences correctly, paying attention to *Okuri-gana*, and to write in correct *Kana-zukai*;
  - (d) To deepen the understanding of structures and changes in words, and to have an interest in the origin of words;
  - (e) To understand the relationship between phrases in a passage;
  - (f) To have an interest in the feeling for words and the sense of language in the use of words;
  - (g) To understand that there are various structures of a sentence or a passage;
  - (h) To become familiar with the usage of honorific expressions in everyday life; and.
  - (i) To gain awareness of literary devices such as metaphor and repetition.
- c. Items related to characters:
- (a) In Grade 5 and Grade 6, to read Chinese characters that are allocated to the respective grade in the Classified Chinese Characters, to write those Chinese characters already learned in the previous grade and use them in sentences or paragraphs, and to learn the Chinese characters allocated to the respective grades, in a step-wise manner, and use them in and sentences or paragraphs.
  - (b) To acquire knowledge about the origins and characteristics of *Kana* and Chinese characters.
- (2) Instruction should be given on the following items for penmanship:
- a. To select the size of character(s) and layout, paying attention to the relationship the whole paper, and to write the characters while paying attention to the speed of writing;
  - b. To select a writing brush in accordance with objectives, and to write by making use of its characteristic; and
  - c. To write letters using a brush while paying attention to the movement of the tip of the brush and the connection of prescribed

form.

### III. SYLLABUS DESIGN AND HANDLING THE CONTENT

1. In designing the syllabus, consideration should be given to the following:
  - (1) Concerning the instruction on items included in the Content for each grade in Subsection II, consideration can be made, if necessary, to teach them in an elementary manner in the preceding grade or in an advanced manner in the following grade, giving flexibility to the instruction.
  - (2) Concerning the items indicated in the “A: Speaking/Listening,” “B: Writing,” “C: Reading” and “Traditional linguistic culture and characteristics of Japanese language” indicated in the Content for each grade in Subsection II, each item should be taught in a closely related manner and all should be developed in balance. In doing so, teachers are to make an effort to use school libraries systematically and thoroughly. Also, effort should be made to increase the effectiveness of guidance by, for example, providing pupils with opportunities to use IT equipment.
  - (3) Concerning the instruction on “A: Speaking/Listening” of the Content for each grade in Subsection II, approximately 35 school hours per year should be allocated to the composition works in Grade 1 and Grade 2; and likewise, 30 hours to Grade 3 and Grade 4, and 25 hours to Grade 5 and Grade 6, in order to ensure intended and planned instruction. In this case, effort should be made to increase the effectiveness of instruction by, for example, developing and utilizing materials for spoken language.
  - (4) Concerning the instruction on “B: Writing” of the Content for each grade in Subsection II, approximately 100 school hours per year should be allocated to the composition works in Grade 1 and Grade 2; and likewise, 85 hours to Grade 3 and Grade 4, and 55 to Grade 5 and Grade 6. In this case, as many opportunities as possible should be provided for writing practice.
  - (5) Concerning the instruction on “C: Reading” of the Content for each grade in Subsection II, consideration should be given to increase the interest of pupils to read and to encourage them to perform reading activities positively in everyday life, and at the same time, instruction

should be provided in relation to instruction on reading in other subjects as well as in the school library. When using school libraries, teachers should help pupils to select necessary books or information by paying attention to the titles and types of books, and looking for necessary information by index. Moreover, a variety of books for the pupils should be selected, without any inclination to particular kinds, for the development of desirable personality.

- (6) In the lower grades, consideration should be given to increase the effectiveness of instruction, actively seeking cooperation in other Subjects such as living environment studies. Particularly in Grade 1, consideration should be given to the relationship with content of language in pre-school education.
  - (7) Based on the objectives of moral education listed in Subsections I-2 of Chapter 1 “General Provisions” and in Subsection I of Chapter 3 “Moral Education”, instructions concerning the content listed in Subsection II of Chapter 3 “Moral Education” should be given appropriately. The instructions should be in accordance with the characteristics of Japanese language and should be related to the period for moral education.
2. Instruction on “Items related to traditional linguistic culture and characteristics of the Japanese language” of the Content for each grade in Subsection II should be dealt with as follows:
- (1) The items listed in (1) related to “traditional linguistic culture and characteristics of the Japanese language” should be dealt with as follows:
    - a. In the case where specific items should be taught in an integrated manner or repeatedly, such items should be taken up separately to focus on learning;
    - b. Instructions on traditional linguistic culture should be given in every grade to have pupils become familiar with classic literature;
    - c. Instruction on Chinese characters shall be pursuant to Subsection II, and should be dealt with as follows:
      - (a) Chinese characters allocated to each grade can be taught, if necessary, in the preceding grade or in the following grade, with due consideration to the workload imposed on pupils;
      - (b) For Chinese characters allocated to the following grade or any

other ones, consideration can be presented by, for example, providing *furigana*, with due consideration to the workload imposed on pupils;

- (c) For instruction on Chinese characters, the shape of Chinese characters indicated in Classified Chinese Characters should be regarded as the standard.
- (2) Instruction on penmanship with a hard pen should be provided in every grade, and instruction on penmanship with a writing brush should be provided from Grade 3 or above. Instruction on penmanship with a writing brush should be provided to develop the pupil's basic ability to reproduce with a hard pen and to write characters correctly and in the correct form. The number of school hours allocated for instruction on penmanship with a writing brush should be approximately 30 school hours/year for each grade.
3. Concerning teaching materials, care should be taken for the following points:
- (1) Concerning teaching materials, proper topics and themes should be carefully selected in a harmonious manner in accordance with the developmental stages of the pupils, with an aim for balanced acquisition of various language skills, including speaking/listening, writing and reading, and to establish a reading habit by developing attitude of gaining familiarity through books. Furthermore, teaching materials should be selected in such a way so that language activities listed in (2) of "A: Speaking/Listening," "B: Writing" and "C: Reading" of the Content for each grade in Subsection II can be sufficiently executed.
  - (2) Teaching materials should be selected with due consideration to the following points:
    - a, To be instrumental in increasing interest in the Japanese language and developing an attitude of respect for the Japanese language;
    - b. To be instrumental in developing the ability to communicate, the ability to think and imagine, and sense of language;
    - c. To be instrumental in developing the ability and attitude to make fair and proper judgment;
    - d. To be instrumental in developing an attitude to have scientific and logical views and ideas and to broaden perspectives;

- e. To be instrumental in brightening life and fostering the will to live strongly and truthfully;
  - f. To be instrumental in cultivating the heart to respect life and care for others;
  - g. To be instrumental in cultivating love of nature and the ability to feel awe and be responsive to beauty;
  - h. To be instrumental in developing an understanding and affection for the tradition and culture of Japan;
  - i. To be instrumental in developing an attitude to desire the development of the nation and society with an awareness of Japanese.
  - j. To be instrumental in cultivating the spirit of international cooperation, with an understanding of the civilizations and cultures of the world.
- (3) Concerning the teaching materials for “C: Reading” of the Content for each grade in Subsection II, a variety of writing styles should be used in a harmonious manner, covering commentary-style works and literary works.