

Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Language Basics

Una King
Wooster City Schools

Purpose:

To introduce my seventh and eighth grade Introduction to Foreign Language students to basic greetings, farewell, courtesy words, and basic phrases in Mandarin Chinese, Japanese and Korean. After two days of practicing each language, the students will pair up and create a very short dialogue in one of the three languages.

State of Ohio Foreign Language Content Standards: (7th Grade)

Communication: Communicate in Languages other than English.

01. Engage in oral, visual or written exchanges to obtain and provide information.

Essential Questions

1. What are the differences between the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages?
2. Do they have alphabets? If so, what do they look like?
3. Is there a way for English speakers to read the words in these languages?
4. How many people speak these languages?
5. What do these written languages look like?
6. What do these spoken languages sound like?
7. What would they like to see if able to travel to these countries someday?
8. Which of these languages would they continue to study if offered?
9. How much more rewarding would a trip to China, Japan, or Korea be if they knew some basic words and phrases?

Rationale

For most of the middle school students who take the eighteen-week Introduction to Foreign Language class, it is their first time in a foreign language classroom. It is very important to expose them to more languages than one might expect in this type of class, basically Spanish and French. My students often express to me a sincere interest in many Asian languages. For most of them, these languages are mysteries.

Teacher Preparation Before Starting Lessons

- have an overhead outline map of Asia.
- find a current travel video for China, Japan, and Korea
- find websites which contain basic vocabulary phrases in Chinese, Japanese and Korean along with audio clips of the pronunciation. (I've suggested some sites in the resource section at the end of this document.)
- practice this until you feel comfortable with the pronunciation
- find websites which contain the alphabets/characters of these languages to show the students in a power point presentation
- create various activities for the students to practice the languages, such as memory games, crossword puzzles, worksheets

Day 1 Students will . . .

- be greeted in Chinese when they come in the door (Ni hao!)
- watch travel video on China
- discuss what was familiar to them in the video and what places they would like to visit someday if they travel to China

Day 2 Students will . . .

- be greeted in Chinese as they come in the door (Ni hao!)
- watch power point presentation as an introduction to the Chinese language (be sure to explain Pinyin.)
- receive handout of Mandarin Chinese Vocabulary
- listen to and repeat pronunciation
- work on either a memory game, crossword puzzle, or other worksheet for practice

Day 3 Students will . . .

- be greeted in Japanese when they come in the door (Konnichiwa!)
- watch travel video on Japan
- discuss what was familiar to them in the video and what places they would like to visit someday if they travel to Japan

Day 4 Students will . . .

- be greeted in Japanese when they come in the door (Konnichiwa!)
- watch power point presentation as an introduction to the Japanese language
- receive handout of Japanese Vocabulary
- listen to and repeat pronunciation
- work on either a memory game, crossword puzzle, or other worksheet for practice

Day 5 Students will . . .

- be greeted in Korean when they come in the door (Annyonghaseyo!)
- watch travel video on Korea
- discuss what was familiar to them in the video and what places they would like to visit someday if they travel to Korea

Day 6 Students will . . .

- be greeted in Korean when they come in the door (Annyonghaseyo!)
- watch power point presentation as an introduction to the Korean language
- receive handout of Korean Vocabulary
- listen to and repeat pronunciation
- work on either a memory game, crossword puzzle, or other worksheet for practice

Day 7 Students will . . .

- be greeted in either Chinese, Japanese or Korean when they come in the door
- divide into pairs based on same-language interest (either Chinese, Japanese, or Korean)
- work with their partners to create a short dialog, using greetings, asking names, asking how the other is doing, using a courtesy word, saying they are glad to have met, and saying goodbye. They will need to write it out so that they can present it to their classmates.
- be asked to take a break from creating this dialog at some point to practice the pronunciation of their target language vocabulary with the teacher
- encourage students to practice this at home with a parent for homework

Day 8 Students will . . .

- be greeted in either Chinese, Japanese or Korean when they come in the door
- spend a few minutes practicing their Chinese, Japanese, or Korean dialog with their partners.
- present these dialogs to the class
- discuss the process of learning a bit about each of these Asian languages. Be sure to go over pertinent essential questions. Ask if anyone was able to practice with a parent last night. If so, what were the reactions of the parents?
- Take an informal poll of how many students would choose to study one of these three languages at the high school level, if they were offered. (Be sure to share this information with the foreign language department as well as building administration).

Some background language information . . .

There are said to be over 6,900 living languages currently in the world today. Out of those languages, here's the "top 20" list, according to the Ethnologue, 15th Edition.

Language	Number of Native Speakers (in millions)
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1. Chinese	1,205
2. Spanish	322
3. English	309
4. Arabic	206
5. Hindi	181
6. Portuguese	177
7. Bengali	171
8. Russian	145
9. Japanese	122
10. German	95
11. Javanese	76
12. Telugu	70
13. Marathi	68
14. Vietnamese	67
15. Korean	67
16. Tamil	66
17. French	65
18. Italian	62
19. Western Punjabi	61
20. Urdu	61

It's interesting to see this list. As a student growing up in the 1970's-1980's, the main languages offered in American schools seemed to be English, Spanish and French. If you were fortunate, you may have been able to choose between German and Latin. With so many people speaking Chinese, why aren't we making it more available to our students?

Chinese

Chinese has many dialects. Although they are referred to as dialects, they are not all mutually intelligible. Mandarin Chinese is spoken by over 850 millions speakers. Chinese does not have an alphabet. Every word in Chinese is represented by a unique character (pictograph) or combination of characters (ideograph). There are more than 50,000 Chinese characters, but only about 3,000 are used on a daily basis. It seems like a hard language to read, but it's actually very efficient. Learning to write it, though, takes practice as it is not only a skill, but an artform. Even though Chinese has many different dialects, it is these characters which unify the communication. There is a system, called Pinyin, which represents Chinese sounds for those who can't read Chinese characters. It is challenging, though, because some Pinyin letters sound different than their corresponding English letter sound.

Chinese is a tonal language. You must pronounce the word correctly and give it the right pitch or tone. There are four tones in Chinese. When reading Pinyin, there are tone markers placed above each syllable. These tones can be confusing, since we don't do this as English speakers. I read on a learn mandarin Chinese Weblog (there was no name associated with this to credit), a very interesting explanation of Chinese tones. It has helped me understand the sounds.

1st tone – it's level, like the second syllable of "tadaa!"

2nd tone – it's rising, like the tone of the surprised question: What?

3rd tone – it goes down, then up, like the irritated and somewhat exaggerated tone used with the word "so" in the following context. "You haven't given me any reason to do it." "So? Do it anyway!"

4th tone – it's falling, like the tone on used with the word "hey", in "Hey! You there!"

Please note: The numerals 1,2,3,4 at the end of each syllable on the Mandarin Chinese page represent the different tones.

Japanese

Japanese is said to be the easiest language to pronounce, when compared to Chinese and Korean, but the grammar is very difficult. There are no tones to worry about in Japanese, but there are two alphabets and the use of Chinese characters, called Kanji! Hiragana is the main alphabet. It is used to native Japanese words, grammatical markings, and sentence endings. Katakana is another Japanese alphabet, used for foreign words such as names and words that stem from other languages.

Korean

The name for the Korean writing system is Hangul. It's the only writing system that has a creator and a birthday. Hangul day is celebrated in Korea on October 9th. Hangul is an invented writing system. It has many advantages. The shape of the letter represents the sound that it makes. The letters have fixed sounds associated with them. Because of such a

system, there are very few dyslexics in Korea, and the literacy rate for Korean adults is nearly 100%. Korean is the most difficult language to pronounce, though, when compared to Chinese and Japanese.

Mandarin Chinese Vocabulary

Greetings and Farewells in Mandarin Chinese

Hi! Hello!	Ni4 hao2.
Good morning!	Zao3 chen2 hao3.
Good evening.	Wan3 shang4 hao3.
Good night.	Wan3 an1.
Goodbye.	Zai4 jian4.
See you later.	Zai4 jian4.
See you tomorrow.	Ming2 tian1 jian4.
See you again.	Zai4 jian4.
Good night.	Wan3 an1.

Courtesy Words in Mandarin Chinese

Please.	Qing3.
Thank you.	Xie4 xie4.
Thank you very much.	Fei1 chang2 gan3 xie4.
You're welcome.	Bu2 ke4 qi3.
I'm sorry.	Dui4 bu4 qi3.
Excuse me, may I ask you something?	Qing3 wen4.

Welcome!	Huan1 ying2, huan1 ying2.
Congratulations!	Gong1 xi3 ni3

Basic Phrases in Mandarin Chinese

What's your name?	Ni3 gui4 xing4?
My name is . . .	Wo3 jiao4 . . .
Nice to meet you.	Ren4 shi1 nin2, hen3 gao1 xing4.
This is my calling/visiting/business card.	Zhe4 shi4 wo3 de0 ming2 pian4.

How are you?	Ni4 hao2 ma0?
Very well.	Hen3 hao3.

Yes.	Shi4.
No.	Bu4.

If you would like the your students to address you in Chinese, have the students say your last name followed by "Lao Shi" Example: King Lao Shi

Japanese Vocabulary

Greetings and Farewells in Japanese

Hi! Hello!	Konnichiwa.
Good morning!	Ohayou gozaimasu.
Good afternoon.	Konnichi wa.
Good evening.	Konban wa.
Good night.	Oyasuminasai. (Have a good rest.)

Goodbye.	Sayonara. (not used when leaving home unless you'll be gone a long time.)
I'm going but I'll be back.	Ittekimasu
See you later.	Itterasshai.
See you.	Dewa mata.
See you tomorrow.	Mata ashita.

Courtesy Words in Japanese

Please.	Onegai.
Thank you.	Arigatou./ Doumo.
Thank you very much.	(Doumo) arigatou gozaimasu.
You're welcome.	Doutashimashite.
I'm sorry.	Gomen nasai.
Excuse me.	Sumimasen. (Can be used to get someone's attention.)
Welcome!	Youkoso.
Congratulations!	Omedetou.

Basic Phrases in Japanese

What's your name?	Namae wan an desu ka?
My name is . . .	_____ desu.
Nice to meet you.	Douzo yoroshiku onegaishimasu.
This is my calling/visiting/business card.	
Are you well?	Ogenki desuka.
I'm fine.	Genki desu.
Yes	Hai.
No	Iie.

If you would like the your students to address you in Japanese, have the students say your last name followed by "Sensei" Example: King Sensei

Korean Vocabulary

Greetings and Farewells in Korean

Hi! Hello!	Annyonghaseyo. (used for all times of day) Annyong. (may be said to friends or kids, but NEVER to people older than you.)
Goodbye.	Annyonghi gyeseyo. (when you, the guest, are leaving)
Goodbye.	Annyonghi gaseyo. (when you, the host, are saying goodbye to guests.)
See you later.	Najung-e bayo
See you tomorrow.	Nae-il boepkesoyo.
Take care.	Salpyogaseyo. (when you are parting, or when you, the host, are saying goodbye to guests.)
Good night. (to sleep)	Annyonghi jumushipshio.

Courtesy Words in Korean

Please.	Butak hamnida.
Thank you. (formal)	Kamsahamnida.
Thank you. (less formal)	Komapsumnida.
You're welcome.	Chonmaneyo.
I'm sorry. (intense)	Joesonghamnida.
I'm sorry. (less intense)	Mianhamnida.
Excuse me. (getting attention)	Shillyehamnida.

Welcome!	Oso oseyo.
Congratulations!	Chukhahamnida.

Basic Phrases in Korean

What's your name?	Dangshinui irumun mu-ot imnikka?
My name is . . .	Je irumum _____ imnida.
Nice to meet you.	Mannaso bangapsumnida.

How are you?	Otoke jinaeshimnikka?
Fine, thank you.	Jal jinaemnida.
Yes.	Ye.
No.	Anio.

If you would like the your students to address you in Korean, have the students say your last name followed by "Sonsaengnim" Example: King Sonsaengnim

You may remind your students that in the above Romanization of the Korean . . .

An "a" sounds like "ah" (as in "palm" or "calm")

An "o" sounds like "uh" (as in "or" or "fun")

An "u" sounds like "oo" (as in "pull")

An "e" sounds like "eh" (as in "pet")

An "i" sounds like "ee" (as in "peel")

An "ae" sounds like "a" (as in "apple")

An "oe" sounds like "oe" (o with an umlaut)

Resources . . .

There are an incredible amount of resources available online if you are interested in teaching your students basic Chinese, Japanese or Korean. I recommend looking over the following websites and books. There are also a multitude of foreign language materials at your local library and bookstore for your own personal reference.

Ask Asia. Online. 25 March 2007.

<<http://www.askasia.org/>>

Audio Tutorial of Basic Chinese. Online. 25 March 2007.

<<http://www.wku.edu/~yuanh/AudioChinese/index.html>>

BBC Languages – Real Chinese. Online. 25 March 2007.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/chinese/real_chinese/>

Bramble, P. Sean. Culture Shock! A Guide to Customs and Etiquette Japan. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International (Asia) Private Limited, 2004.

China Photo Tour China. Tourist Information. Online. 26 March 2007.

<<http://virtourist.com/asia/china/index.html>>

China Travel Service. Online. 26 March 2007.

<<http://travelchinaguide.com>>

Chinese Characters and Culture. Online. 26 March 2007.

<<http://zhongwen.com/>>

Chinese Phrases for Travelers. Online. 26 March 2007.

<<http://chinese.travel-way.net/>>

Chinese Script and Language. Online. 26 March 2007.

<<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/chinese.htm>>

Conversational Chinese Online. Online. 25 March 2007.

<<http://www.csulb.edu/~txie/ccol/content.htm>>

Ethnologue, Languages of the World. Online. 26 March 2007.

<<http://www.ethnologue.com/home.asp>>

Get a Chinese Name. Online. 22 March 2007.

<www.mandarintools.com/chinesename.html>

Learn Japanese. Online. 23 March 2007.

<www.learn-japanese.info/>

Learn Japanese – Free Japanese Lessons! Online. 23 March 2007.
<<http://www.freejapaneselessons.com/>>

Learn Japanese Free. Online. 23 March 2007.
<<http://www.learnjapanesefree.com/>>

Learn Korean. Online. 25 March 2007.
<www.learnkorean.com/>

Learn to Speak Korean Online. Online. 25 March 2007.
<<http://learnkorean.elanguageschool.net/>>

Let's Learn Korean. Online. 25 March 2007.
<http://english.gg.go.kr/e_kr/letsLearn.jsp>

Let's Learn Korean. Online. 25 March 2007.
<http://rki.kbs.co.kr/learn_korean/e-text.htm#01>

Sinclair, Kevin and Po-yee, Iris Wong. Culture Shock! A Guide to Customs and Etiquette China. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International (Asia) Private Limited, 2001.

Tones of Mandarin Chinese. Online. 25 March 2007.
<www.chinese-outpost.com/language/pronunciation/tones-of-mandarin-chinese.asp>

Tour 2 Korea Groups. Online. 25 March 2007.
<<http://club.tour2Korea.com/study>>

USC Chinese Department. Online. 25 March 2007.
<<http://www.usc.edu/dept/ealc/chinese/character/>>

Vegdahl, Sonja and Hur, Ben Seunghwa. Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette Korea. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International (Asia) Private Limited, 2005.

Your Complete Resource on Asia. Online. 25 March 2007.
<<http://www.asianinfo.org/>>

