

Get Fluent In Japanese

The Top Tips & Ideas I used to get Fluent in Japanese

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*here's to making you super fluent, really
quickly!*

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1 Konnnichiwa

Konnichiwa, my name's Richard Graham and in this book I'm going to show you some of the hints and tips I've used to get fluent in Japanese. It took a while, but nowadays I speak every day in Japanese, in business and often on TV as well as having regular articles and columns, in Japanese, in the Japanese press. So if you want to master the Japanese language, here is my advice as well as a top ten highly impressive Japanese phrases list at the end!



2 Speaking Is Easy

The first step to speaking Japanese is to realize that it is easy. Whilst writing takes a little while, thanks to all the kanji characters, actually speaking Japanese is one of the easiest languages to learn. You can certainly do it. Some people think they can't, so they can't. But you know you can, so you can!

① できると思えば、できる

Rule No. 1: Dekiru to omeba dekiru. Think you can and you can! And if you make a mistake, it doesn't matter:

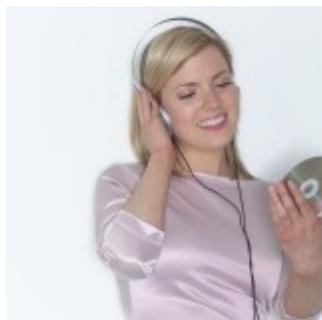
② もう一回

Rule No. 2: If you lose, you just say "mou ikkai." Try again!

3 Enjoy Yourself

The second step is to have fun. You don't see Japanese as work, but as play. To achieve this the key is to do what excites you, but do it in Japanese. Do you have a passion for anime or manga or fishing, or fashion? The latest stock prices or the hottest J-pop? What about your family or friends? What gets you going? What's the one thing that if taken away from your life would have the biggest influence on you? Now imagine reading, listening and talking passionately about that subject, but in Japanese!

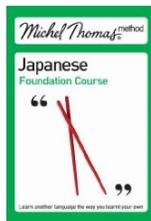
4 Listen Every Day



Get as many Japanese Language CDs or mp3s as you can and listen to them all the time. "But I'm too busy!" say most people, and I quite sympathize! That's why I'd recommend listening to them on your way to work or school, either in the car or on an mp3 player. Get into the routine and you soon see how much has sunk in.

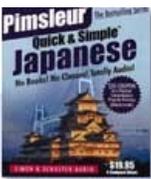
The trick is to get several different CDs from several different places. That way you get all the basic phrases many times, but presented in a different way. If you're in the car, repeating along is great, but obviously don't do this if you take the subway to work!

Of course make sure you pick up my special songs for learning Japanese (Have a look at <http://www.genkienglish.net/genkijapan/download.htm>.) and here are my reviews of the best other materials out there.



Michel Thomas Japanese

I speak several languages, including fluent Japanese, and in my opinion the Michel Thomas method is **the** best method of learning **any** language full stop. It's the one I always go to. He's a genius! Highly recommended. [Click for more](#), or [buy now!](#)



Pimsleur Japanese

I also like the [Pimsleur courses](#) mainly because I used them very successfully to learn Spanish in a month or so. They have a "[Quick & Simple](#)" starter pack and also a full on "[Gold Course](#)". They are a touch expensive, but second only to Michel Thomas. Click [here for more](#): or [buy now](#)



Rocket Japanese

[Rocket Japanese](#) is a newbie on the block and it's all available as mp3 and software downloads, which is a big plus point. But the really cool thing is that they have a [free 7 day trial](#), so even if you don't want to pay the full price you get a full week's worth of learning for free, which is a total bargain and worthwhile trying out! [Click for more](#) or [buy now!](#)



Earworms Japanese

I must say I quite like the [Earworms Rapid Japanese](#) series and I actually bought this CD for my Mum when she wanted a quick way to learn some Japanese phrases. It's not an in depth programme like the others, but it's a fun, cheap extra to compliment them. [Click for more](#) or [buy now!](#)

5

Get A Word Tank

This is what made all the difference for me. If you live overseas, or in Japan itself, a Canon Word Tank and its "memory" function works a treat. There are other makes of electronic dictionary, but I've recommended Canon to loads of friends over the years and they've all said how magical it is!

What you do is that every time you hear a word you don't know, you look up it in the dictionary and then put it in the memory.

Now when you have 10 minutes spare on the train, or wherever, you simply call up the words and test yourself. The reason I recommend Canon is that they have a cool trick where first of all it shows the Kanji characters, then you press a button and it brings up the English and how to read the word. This is great in itself for learning both vocab and kanji.

But the magic is in the power of association. When looking back through the words you instantly recall when you put it in there, "Ah! That's what so-and-so said at the party the other week!" or "Ah, that's from that TV show I saw last week" and all the memories get bound up with the word! Just take it with you EVERYWHERE!

It's always worthwhile picking the best one you can afford, the top of the range have some many useful features.

But the one I used was top of the range ten years ago, so you could pick up a nice bargain on ebay!



6

Gotta Get A Shower

This is a trick that I used to help me learn Japanese. You know in a morning and you wake up, you think to yourself "What time is it? Oh no! Quick, gotta get a shower, then some breakfast, then that meeting at 9 o'clock! Oh no!" etc. Well, I used to do that in Japanese! Take a bit of time to figure out the things you want to say and then use them everyday. The best thing about this idea is that even if you make mistakes no-one will ever hear them! If you find one day that you want to say something and you don't know how to say it in Japanese, just look it up. Either use your Wordtank or ask a teacher or friend.

7 Before You Sleep

Here's another great trick that people have been using for ages to practice writing. But as you don't have the time for writing yet, grab yourself a tape player or audio recorder and speak into it all the things you did today. As with the tip above, if you can't say something, look it up. It's great practice and it's a great source of materials if you have Japanese lessons, simply bring a copy along with you and get the teacher to go through it!



8 TV Once A Week

Thanks to YouTube, satellite and bilingual TVs, as well as DVDs, it's now really easy to watch programs, anime or movies in Japanese. But don't start off by saying "right, I'm only going to watch TV in Japanese from now on!" Just like swimming, you don't start by jumping in the deep end of the pool. Start off in the shallow water, just watch one program a week in Japanese, then gradually move on, and eventually you'll be swimming on your own, and be able to watch anything in the original Japanese. Don't worry if you don't understand it all, I only understand 80% of some American TV shows. ;)

9 A Little At A Time

Research shows that instead of a big study session once a week, a little everyday is much more effective. Get in to a routine and don't allow your mind to forget what you have learned. See everyday as a chance to add something extra to your Japanese potential. Make it a routine. Like learning to play baseball or to ride a bike, or a little exercise, whatever you do everyday, you get good at it! Do a little Japanese everyday and you will get good at it.



10 Every Step Counts

Realize that learning Japanese everyday is like putting pennies in the bank. Every time you save a few pennies, the amount in your account increases and increases. Japanese is the same, every time you do even just a little bit it adds and adds to how good you are. What if instead of 5 minutes everyday you did 10? What about 20 instead of 10? Every minute is a minute invested. Think of how those minutes of study are building up, penny by penny, minute by minute to make you a wonderful speaker of Japanese.

11

Cool Japanese To Use

These are some of the basic words and phrases that you will hear over and over again. You can hear them all pronounced at

<http://www.genkienglish.net/genkijapan/japanese.htm>

Sometimes I think it would be possible to survive with just these basic words! They are almost guaranteed to have Japanese people saying how good you are.

かわいい Kawaii Means "Cute"

But everything in Japan is cute! Use it for everything from mobile phones, to telling your friends how cute their kids are.

好き? Suki Means "Like"

It is pronounced similar to the winter sport. If you say it like a question, it means "Do you like this?". Your answer can be a "suki", meaning "Yes, I do!". Or try "karaoke, suki?" meaning "Do you like karaoke?"

美味しい Oishii Means "Delicious".

If you taste something nice, either food or drink, simply say "oishii" to give it your seal of approval! It can often be heard on TV cookery programmes

すごい Sugoi Simply Means "Cool"!

When someone shows you something, they do something great or you find something particularly cool, simply say "Sugoi"! Cool!

元気 Genki Means "Energetic".

Genki is a really cool word meaning "active", "energetic", "full of life", but when used as a greeting it means "How are you?". The formal version is "O genki desu ka?", the answer being "Genki desu". This is where the name GenkiJapan.net comes from!

暑い Atsui Means "Hot".

But it's also used as a greeting in Summer as Japan gets very hot! "Atsui desu ne?" ("It's hot today, isn't it?") is a conversation starter used by everyone.

寒い Samui Means "Cold".

Then after one week of nice weather in October everyone starts saying "Samui desu ne?" ("It's cold today, isn't it?") because it is so very cold!

頑張って Ganbatte Means "Keep Going" Or "Go For It!"

This is a great phrase to encourage someone. For example in a race, or looking a bit tired at work, a quick "Ganbatte!" will give them a quick boost!

本当 Honto Means "Really?"

If a friend says they've just got a hot date, you simply say "Honto?" meaning "Really?". The answer is "Honto!" meaning "Yeah!". It can also be used in non-sarcastic ways.

大丈夫 Daijyobu Means "OK"

Whilst "OK" is sometimes understood in Japanese, "daijyobu" is much more common. Use it as a question to ask "Are you OK?" or to say something is fine it's "Daijyobu desu!"

～したい Shitai Means "I Wanna Try It!"

You are bound to get asked if you want to do something like calligraphy or flower arranging with the phrase "Shitai?", to express your enthusiasm simply say "Shitai!" and the experience is yours.

疲れた Tsukareta Means "tired"

Again this is one of those groovy words where it's easy to make into a question or answer. Simply say "tsukareta?" with a question sound to ask if someone is tired, and respond with "tsukareta!" to say you are.

何 "Nani?" Means "What?"

If you didn't quite catch something then you can say "nani?" and they'll repeat it. Just like the English "What?" it's not too polite, but it's fine with people you know!

楽しい "Tanoshii" Means "Fun!"

You'll hear this lots, either as a question "tanoshii?" ("Are you having fun?") or answer "Tanoshii!" ("This is fun!") Very useful!

面白い "Omoshiroi" Means "Interesting"

It seems that everything you do in Japan is either "tanoshii" for plain "fun" or "omoshiroi" if it's interesting in the "That's cool, I want to know more" type of way. Again, use as a question or answer!

終わり "Owari" Means "The End"

That's the end of our phrase section. But believe me if you can master these dozen or so phrases you'll be able to have great conversations, 本当！！

12 Language Exchange

Once you have the basic phrases and words sorted out now it's time to use them on real people. Thanks to Skype & Instant Messaging it's very easy to do what's called a "language exchange". You meet up online with a Japanese friend who wants to learn English. You agree to talk once a week. Half the time you speak English, that's for their practice, then for half the time you speak Japanese, for your practice.

I'm going to have an exchange board set up on the GenkiJapan.net site soon, but for the time being try looking for language exchanges on google. They are very popular in Japan. As usual with anything online, keep an eye out for the weirdos, but if you find a reliable site with some good people it's a great way to meet Japanese friends, learn Japanese for free and you never know you might even find a free "homestay" place to stay when you next visit Japan!

13

Set Your Goals

Goals are important. Just how good do you want to be? Remember you can become as good as you like. Whatever you set your goal as, that is what you will achieve. Can you see yourself speaking to a famous person or supermodel in Japanese? Can you see yourself laughing and joking with friends in Japanese? Keep that image in your head.



14

You Can Do It!

Confidence is the key. You are special. You can do it. You are a very clever person, after all you've had the energy to keep reading right to the end of this book! It's not brain surgery, it's not genetic engineering, it's just Japanese. Stay with it, just five minutes a day and you will become better than you ever imagined. It's all up to you. Decide to become a great speaker. Believe it will happen, and it will.

15 Do It Today!



So you're all geared up ready to be able to speak Japanese today? Well, do it! Don't wait until tomorrow. Tomorrow never comes! Don't think; do it! There's never been a better time for you to start. Whatever you are doing after reading this book, do it in Japanese. If you are going to the shops, call in at a book store and buy some CDs. If you are in the house, put on YouTube in Japanese. If you are planning what to make for dinner, think about what you would like - in Japanese. Head over to the [GenkiJapan.net](http://www.GenkiJapan.net) website and play some games in Japanese. The best time to start is right now! It took me 6 months to be able to hold a basic conversation, a year to teach a NASA science project in Japanese and just over 18 months to talk about politics live on NHK TV! It's all confidence, think you can do it and you can, just keep trying everyday and above all...

Be genki,

Richard

<http://www.GenkiJapan.net>

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Extra Resources

If you'd like to hear me speaking Japanese then have a look at my Japanese vlog at:

<http://www.KeiKaiWa.com>

I also have websites for learning other languages:

For Spanish: www.GenkiSpanish.com

For Thai: www.GenkiThai.com

For Korean: www.GenkiKorean.com

For German: www.GenkiGerman.com

If you want to get a job teaching English in Japan then have a look at my English Teaching site at

<http://www.GenkiEnglish.com>

Or if you fancy making a money online and living where you choose, have a look at my Lifestyle Design blog at

<http://www.LocationFreeLifestyle.com>

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Genki Japan Pack

Finally there is my special “Easy to Learn Japanese” Download Pack of all my Learning Japanese Songs with free Katakana, Hiragana and Posters ebooks!



It's highly recommended! Full details at:

<http://www.genkienglish.net/genkijapan/download.htm>