

# "Japanese" in the Classroom:

*from crutch to springboard...*

## Japanese & English are different:

- Sounds
- Written symbols
- Sentence structure
- Vocabulary

## Japanese & English are similar:

- Developed in highly advanced island nations
- Written symbols imported from dominant continental culture
- Inconsistent relationship between sounds and written symbols
- Hybrid languages with two vocabulary sets: **native** and **import** from dominant continental culture (Japanese/Chinese & Anglo-Saxon/Latin)
- Affix-like systems for composing word meanings (Chinese Kanji & Latin/Greek roots)

## Teaching from similarities makes sense:

- Students feel more comfortable and capable
- Shows multi-lingual ability by example
- Engages students' critical thinking skills
- Connects to students' native-language learning circuits and resources
- Students see that language is a human communication tool rather than an eternal memorized rule

## Katakana English

- Build common, useful vocabulary instantly
- Show that modern Japanese is not so Japanese
- Trace loan words from English (ケーキ cake), Portuguese (パン pan), Chinese (ラーメン ramen), etc.
- Show students how to flex katakana pronunciations back into native sounds and rhythms

## Japanese symbols as visual aids

- 濁点 DAKUTEN (点々 TEN-TEN) to demonstrate voicing of English plural (-s), past (-ed), etc.
- 母音 BO-IN / 子音 SHI-IN kanji to demonstrate phonetic patterns: CVC = 子母子
- 所 TOKORO / 数 SUU / 物 MONO / 事 KOTO / 名 MEI kanji in fill-in-the-blank pattern sentences

## Phonetic changes in word transformations

- English plural (-s) and past (-ed) & Japanese compound words (～はし -hashi / ～かわ -kawa)
- English numbers (30 thirty) & Japanese numbers (300 さんびやく sanbyaku)

## Grammatical similarities

- English plurals & Japanese ～たち -tachi
- English future tense and Japanese つもり tsumori
- English prepositions & Japanese 助詞 JOSHI

## Levels of speech

- English polite speech & Japanese 敬語 KEIGO
- English Latinate vocabulary & Japanese 漢語 KANGO

## Cross-linguistic puns

- Puns are a traditional part of Japanese literature, drama, and comedy
- Puns stimulate outside-the-box thinking
- Puns are fun!
- A B C D E F 字