# JAPAN: Places, Images, Times & Transformations

Suggestions for the Middle and High School Classroom

# Vocabulary Borrowing - Hiroshi Nara

* **Objectives:**
  + Understand the history of foreign words in Japan and how international relations impacted the development of the Japanese language.
  + Understand the value and grammatical function of borrowed words in Japanese.
* **Suggested Units for Inclusion:**
  + ELA units that explore language development and how cultural and historic events impact language.
  + Japanese units that introduce katakana or loan words.
* **Lesson Ideas:**
  + 1. Individual Research Homework
    - Students can be assigned the *study questions* or *develop questions for the class to discuss*
  + 2. Class Discussion
    - Students break into groups and research how vocabulary has historically changed in the English language across various decades. Students look into the etymology of these words, their function in English, and then try to make a comparison to a loan word in the Japanese language referenced in the article. Students then present their words to the class or write a summary of what they learned.
  + 3. Classical Japanese Reading / Writing Practice
    - Japanese students are either given a list of borrowed words in the Japanese language or they research their own. Their job is to create a short lesson to explain the narrow use of these borrowed words and how they differ from other, similar words in Japanese. Use the example of tsue vs. sutekki that the author gives in the article.
* **Study Questions:**
  + What types of vocabulary did Japan borrow from China? Why did Japan start borrowing vocabulary from China?
  + What changes did foreign words cause in the sound structure of the Japanese language?
  + What happened at the end of the 16th century that began a new influx of foreign vocabulary words? What kinds of words were introduced?
  + During the Edo period, why did the Japanese borrow many words from the Dutch as opposed to other Western countries?
  + When did Japan start borrowing vocabulary from the English language? What kinds of interactions did Japan have with these English-speaking countries?
  + Why did the Japanese come up with a new word for baseball?
  + What three functions do borrowed vocabulary have in society?
  + In the case of sutekki vs. tsue, what does the author mean when he says that one word has a more “narrow” meaning?
  + What writing system is usually used to write non-Chinese loanwords?
  + What is “clipping” and what are a few examples of foreign words clipped in Japanese?
  + What part of speech do most foreign words become in Japanese, regardless of their part of speech in their original language?